

FAQS - KING COUNTY ARTS EDUCATION DATA DASHBOARD PROJECT

What is the King County Arts Education Data Project?

The King County Arts Education Data Project is a partnership between OSPI (the state department of education) and 4Culture (King County's cultural agency) designed to provide data on high school arts enrollment through a user-friendly, interactive, color-coded data dashboard. The dashboard provides data views at the county, school district, and high school level and looks at the arts enrollment data through the lenses of gender, ethnicity/race, and student characteristics and programs.

Why did 4Culture initiate this project?

4Culture believes that arts learning is a critical component of a well-rounded education and that aesthetic awareness, creative skill building, and direct student experience with a diversity of artistic disciplines can effectively address different learning styles, bridge cultural differences, and contribute significantly to student engagement, as well as school and community health. As the cultural funding agency for King County, 4Culture works to make the region vibrant. Over many decades, 4Culture has supported and worked to advance arts education in King County schools. Recent investments helped develop a model program for Principal Arts Leadership through school-based teams and intentional planning. In 2016, 4Culture funded a countywide study Cornerstones of Creative Capacity as a result of which [Six Key Features for Equity in Arts Education](#) were identified.

What is the goal of the project?

This project is intended to provide crucial information to education leaders, teachers, families and community partners about who is participating in arts education in King County's high schools and who is not. Our hope is that local dialogue can then identify the policies, patterns, systems, and structures that are getting in the way of arts participation for every student. The goal is to support and report on the increased participation in arts learning over the coming years.

Isn't arts education optional?

Washington state law defines the arts – dance, music, media arts, theatre, and visual arts – as part of “basic education.” The arts are not optional enrichment activities, and our state school districts are required to teach and measure student progress in this core subject. K-12 arts learning standards describe a connected series, or a continuum, of essential learnings necessary to create students who are proficient in the arts disciplines. The existing requirement of one arts credit for high school graduation was recently increased so that Class of 2019 onwards will be required to have two arts credits on their high school transcript.

Why is the data project important?

We know that learning in and through the arts helps our students develop the important 21st Century skills of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Studies have shown that skills such as teamwork, project completion, self-expression, problem solving, the ability to generate new ideas and approaches, and the willingness to take risks – important for the new economy of this century – are all developed and nurtured through arts learning. [Research also confirms](#) that students with sustained arts involvement are much better at setting and achieving ambitious goals, more engaged in their communities, and more likely to go to college.

The [creative economy](#) is one of the fastest growing areas of employment in the country, and indeed, the world. As areas of industry are automated or eliminated, the creative economy is where new opportunities for careers and livelihoods are emerging. Students who have the opportunity to develop strong creativity and critical thinking skills through arts classes as part of their educational experience will be ready to take advantage of these opportunities as they move from school into their future lives.

Who is involved in this project?

4Culture and OSPI are launching the Data Project as a King County pilot and efforts are underway to enlist additional partners so that the project can be expanded statewide. At the national level, several states are already involved in similar data projects around school-based arts enrollment and this group is continuing to grow.

In addition to developing the data dashboard, 4Culture and OSPI are collaborating on the tools and resources to support local district and community-based conversations to examine the data. Some communications tools are also in the works.

Where does this data come from?

The Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) is a longitudinal data system managed by OSPI to collect, store and report data related to students, courses, and teachers in order to meet state and federal reporting requirements, and to help educators and policy makers to make data driven decisions. This longitudinal data system records classes taken by every high school. For some years, participation in arts classes has been part of the data collected from school districts across the state as part of CEDARS reporting. This data has been analyzed and is being shared in a variety of views in the interactive arts data dashboard. Data will be added annually, to show progress over time.

What about middle school course-taking?

Middle school data were not used for the Arts Education Data Project as districts are not required to report individual courses through the CEDARS system for their middle schools. The hope is that projects, such as the Arts Education Data Project, will result in improved data quality at both the elementary and middle school levels, which will ultimately allow the data to be reported. Once the data quality improves, middle school data can be included in the dashboard.

How can we find out what arts learning is being provided in elementary schools?

Washington elementary schools are not required to report subject-level data so information on arts learning in Grades K-5 is not currently available. Districts are required to submit the annual arts assessment verification report as required by RCW 28A.230.095.

What about private schools and charter schools?

This project uses information about students and course taking from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) the primary agency charged with overseeing K-12 public education in Washington state. Charter schools are considered public K-12 schools and as such are included in this project. Private schools are not part of the public K-12 system and are therefore not included in this project.

What is the process for updating our data if we discover that it has changed?

The data is taken directly from the CEDARS data which districts reported to OSPI last Fall. If you have questions about your data, we suggest you start by examining how the course codes were assigned. Each district submits data to OSPI in the Fall and had several weeks to review and check the data and make any adjustments or corrections. Data already reflected in the dashboard cannot be changed but moving forward it will be important to check the course codes to make sure they appropriately represent the arts courses being provided in your district. You can review the state course codes here:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/CEDARS/Manuals.aspx>

What does the data tell us about arts education in King County high schools?

The data emphasizes the need to continue to address inequities in access to and participation in the arts in school. The data shows that students receiving free and reduced-price lunch, students with disabilities, and students who are English language learners all participate in the arts at lower levels than peers who are not in these categories. Race and ethnicity demographics also show disparities when compared across the board and to the student body as a whole. Schools with a higher proportion of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch have significant lower arts participation across the board than schools with a lower proportion of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

Why aren't more students taking arts courses when the classes are available in their school or district?

There are many potential reasons why students may not be enrolled in available arts course. These reasons and circumstances will often be different in different districts and must be looked at in context and with a view to each school's and district's unique student population, school environment, and course offerings. Policies, patterns, systems, and structures in each district will have different impacts on the data. We encourage each district to form a local data team to take a closer look at the data and what factors might be creating barriers to student participation.

Some possibilities to consider:

- Guidance counselors may not be aware of the growing creative workforce and may be advising students not to sign up for arts education courses;
- Due to limited class availability and scheduling, students may be unable to fit the desired arts programs into their school day;
- Students may be unable to take electives because of more intensive math and language arts requirements; and
- Students may feel unskilled and intimidated if arts education courses were missing or limited in their elementary schools.

Why isn't OSPI insisting that arts are taught to every student?

Washington is a “local control” state, which means that each local school district makes its own decisions about how to address and teach what each student is expected to learn and know for every grade level. For all subject areas districts have the obligation to provide instruction (arts included), however, how much time they allot (except PE [WAC 392-410-135](#)), how it's scheduled, and how it is delivered is up to individual districts.

What funders have contributed to the development of this project?

So far, this has been a collaboration between 4Culture and OSPI, with 4Culture funding the data analysis and creation of the interactive data dashboard. Discussions are underway to enlist some additional funders to help complete the statewide work. We also hope that funders will be attracted by the system wide approach to this and be interested in investing in the development of district's strategic arts plans.

What's next for the King County Arts Education Data Project?

Since 4Culture is the cultural authority for King County, the program has been piloted here; however, the program will not be completed until all high school data from across the state are also included. We are working on partnerships that will help extend the project statewide, and OSPI also hopes to apply the model to other content areas where student data has been collected but not yet shared. With an ongoing relationship and data-sharing agreement in place between 4Culture and OSPI, this two-year baseline will be extended as the data from the current school year – and the years to follow – are added. Meanwhile, 4Culture and OSPI intend to catalyze and support some locally-based conversations to take a closer look at what the data tells us.