Iowa Arts Education Data Project Handbook:

Harnessing the Power of Data to Support an Equitable and Well-Rounded Education
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**Introduction**

The Iowa Arts Education Data Project showcases Iowa’s high school arts education data through a user-friendly, interactive dashboard. The dashboard is intended to promote meaningful dialogue around arts education across the state and to encourage data-driven decisions by schools, districts, educators, community members, and policymakers that support an equitable and well-rounded education for all students.

The Iowa Arts Education Data Project displays high school course and enrollment data by fine arts discipline - dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and media arts/other - as well as by grade level, gender, and building demographics. Stakeholders can use the data to understand what arts participation looks like across the state, as well as in their communities. The following questions can be addressed: What is the status of arts education in Iowa? What does arts education programming and participation look like at the state level, the regional level, the district level, and the building level? Who has access to arts education? Who does not? What are our trends over time? Using the dashboard, stakeholders can determine areas of strength as well as areas of need. Providing a variety of demographic lenses as well as various grain sizes by which to view the data - state, AEA region, district, and school - this powerful tool provides compelling snapshots of arts education access and opportunities across Iowa.

This handbook was developed to facilitate understanding and navigation of the Data Project’s dashboard as well as to provide strategies to lead data-driven conversations and create strategic arts improvement plans informed by the data.

**Explore the Data**

To view the dashboard, visit [https://educateiowa.gov/artseddata](https://educateiowa.gov/artseddata). No login is required. It is publicly available and meant to be viewed, visited, and shared widely.

The dashboard offers several grain sizes - state, AEA region, district, and school - to offer differing lenses through which to examine and consider arts education in Iowa. Various data presentations, featuring maps, graphs, and a variety of visuals can be viewed and understood by clicking on the eleven tabs atop the webpage:

1. Welcome
2. State Overview
3. Arts Disciplines
4. Arts Participation
5. Year Over Year
6. Trends Over Time
7. Disciplines Offered
8. School Profile
9. Course Finder
10. Comparisons
11. Instructions & Info
Welcome and State Overview

The first two tabs, entitled “Welcome” and “State Overview” give visitors a big picture of arts course participation across our state. The “Welcome” page displays statewide arts enrollment statistics, and arts enrollment data by free and reduced lunch (FRL), grade level, and arts discipline. The second tab, “State Overview,” showcases a deeper look at arts enrollment statistics by nine geographical regions, or Area Education Agencies (AEAs). Additionally, this tab also allows viewers to view district-level enrollment by arts discipline, as well as compare district or school arts enrollment from one discipline to another.

Arts Disciplines and Arts Participation

The third and fourth tabs, “Arts Disciplines” and “Arts Participation”, offer comprehensive views of arts enrollment by discipline and course. Viewers can utilize this tab to determine arts discipline-specific enrollment by grade level, gender, and FRL category. Specific course enrollment data within each discipline is accessible across these tabs as well; dashboard users can determine how many schools across Iowa offer Photography or AP Art History courses as part of their visual arts curriculum, for instance. Also, of note on these tab views are the arts student-arts teacher ratios displayed by discipline and available at the state, AEA, and district levels.

Note: Discipline enrollment represents unique enrollment so it may not represent the sum of course enrollments. For example, if student A is enrolled in both Concert Band and Orchestra, that is two enrollments at the course level but one unique enrollment at the music discipline level.

Year Over Year and Trends Over Time

The fifth and sixth tabs, “Year Over Year” and “Trends Over Time”, summarize how overall arts enrollment has changed from year to year, as well as how changes in enrollment have occurred by discipline, and how populations of students have been affected. These changes and trends can be viewed from a state or district lens.
Disciplines Offered

“Disciplines Offered,” the seventh tab on the dashboard, showcases which arts disciplines are being offered in Iowa, and exactly which districts and schools are offering them. Dashboard users can view a map of Iowa, select the minimum number of arts disciplines offered (0-5) and see which districts and schools are offering two out of five, or five out of five arts disciplines, for instance. Another option on this tab view is to generate a list of schools that offer a specific arts discipline, such as dance, in their curriculum.

Course Finder

Using “Course Finder,” the dashboard’s eighth tab, viewers can search for one or more specific arts courses. All schools offering the specified courses will appear in both list form and visually on a state map. Also available on this tab view is the option to see all arts course offerings or discipline-specific arts offerings for a selected school. Note: The courses displayed are based on national SCED codes. Districts may have multiple courses at the district or building level that are associated with a single SCED code.

School Profile

The ninth tab, “School Profile,” offers an in-depth profile for a school of the user’s choice. On this tab view, one can see basic information about the school - locale, FRL category, number of students - and the following data points: course count by discipline and year, number of arts teachers by discipline, and enrollment trends from year-to-year.

Comparisons

The tenth tab, entitled “Comparisons,” allows dashboard users to select districts and schools to compare their arts enrollment statistics. Through this view, overall arts enrollment rates, enrollment by arts discipline, arts enrollment by grade level, FRL enrollment statistics, and other data points are offered.
Instructions & Info

Lastly, the final and eleventh tab, “Instructions & Info,” offers some definitions, tips, and guidance around general dashboard navigation. In particular, the following two points mentioned on this page are particularly important to note: 1) clicking on or hovering one’s cursor over visual displays throughout the dashboard often reveals additional information or explanations of the data; and 2) the filter icon available on the top right hand corner of many dashboard tab views allows the user to change the grain size of the data, from statewide to district, and sometimes to school building level.

Symbols and Icons

- Click to access the filtering options that affect all the charts on the dashboard
- Close the filter selection window
- Hover over this symbol for more information or instructions
- Click this icon to show another visualization, usually a data table/list

Start a Conversation

Once you have begun to explore the data on our dashboard, consider gathering stakeholders in your area to engage in a dialogue about the state of arts education in your community. Together, diverse stakeholders can use the dashboard as a jumping-off point to have purposeful, collaborative, and data-driven conversations around the current state of arts education in their communities.

Determining stakeholders

Naturally, the first step will be to determine which stakeholders should be present around the table to form your arts data team. Consider amongst and beyond the following: arts and non-arts educators, administrators, community members, arts organizations, professional arts education associations, teaching artists, artists, students, business owners, civic organizations, school board members, legislators, community partners, and higher education representatives. Ideally, your arts data team will meet thrice or more annually to analyze the data, examine areas of growth and need, and plan for future success.

Though the data dashboard only includes high school course enrollment data, the Iowa Arts Education Project should encourage vertical, K-12 conversations around arts enrollment and student participation. As such, to engage in meaningful conversations that support arts-rich educational systems, elementary and middle school educators and administrators should also be included in your data team.

Analyze the data together and ask questions

Once you have gathered as a team and spent time viewing the dashboard data, the following questions may help you dig more deeply into the significance or “story” of the data:

• What percentage of your student population are involved in arts programs in general? In dance? In media arts? In music? In theatre? In visual arts?

• How does our school/district compare to other schools/districts nearby and those of comparable student populations?

• What are our school/district’s graduation requirements? Does our school/district have a fine arts graduation requirement?
• How does a school’s/district’s graduation requirements impact fine arts participation?
• How does participation in various arts programs align with the diversity in the student population? Are (unintended) barriers present?
• What is the percentage of students participating in various offerings?
• What do the participants report learning and what benefits are being realized by the participants?
• What collaboration is taking place regarding arts education?
• What are K - 8 influences that result in high school arts participation?
• How does range of offerings impact participation? (Example: dance, theater, vocal music, instrumental music, media arts, visual arts, etc.)
• When are the offerings provided? After school? During the day?
• How are barriers to participation being removed or addressed?
• What offerings are provided on an extra-curricular and/or co-curricular basis?
• Where are exemplary arts opportunities happening?
• How do we know these offerings are high-quality?
• What are the state-level requirements for fine arts and are our schools/systems compliant? (See following page on Chapter 12 requirements)
• Do schools with higher levels of arts programming and involvement have increased academic performance? What is the correlation between arts participation and academic achievement?
• How is our district/school addressing our students’ social and emotional learning needs and competencies? How are we connecting our students’ arts involvement to their social and emotional well-being?
• Consider arts involvement not reflected in the data that exist outside of the school setting. What arts programming is available at the community level? Of the available programming, what is made widely available to all students and is available free of charge?

What are Iowa’s arts education requirements?

When analyzing your local and statewide arts education data, it is useful to understand Iowa’s requirements for arts education. It is important to note that state code is not meant to be considered best practice - code represents the minimum threshold districts and schools are required to meet.

State Requirements for Arts Education in Iowa (as outlined by Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 12):

Grades 1-6: Music and visual art are required for all students. The time allocated to music and art is locally determined.

Grades 7 and 8: Music and visual art must be taught in each of grades 7 and 8. However, it is locally determined whether or not to make them required for all students. The time allocated to music and art is locally determined.

Grades 9-12: Fine arts must be annually offered and taught and include at least two of the following: dance, music, theatre, and/or visual art. The time allocated to the arts is locally determined. Districts can decide to have a fine arts requirement/graduation requirement at the high school level.
Create and Implement a Strategic Arts Improvement Plan

Once you have spent some time examining the data on the dashboard with your arts data team or other members in your community and have identified areas for improvement, you can begin to create a strategic arts improvement plan based on the data and local considerations. When first developing a plan for future success, it will be helpful to frame your conversations around the following three basic questions: “What is our current state? What is our ideal state? How will we get there?”

Developing a Strategic Arts Improvement Plan

In order to draft a well-informed strategic arts improvement plan grounded in best practice, it is also advisable to research attributes of high-quality arts education programs, such as the Opportunity-to-Learn Standards from the National Art Education Association and the National Association for Music Education. For more information, see “Evaluating Your Arts Programs” under the Supporting Resources section in this handbook.

There are many iterations of strategic plans, but most share the same general framework. Below is an example of a sample process that you might consider or adapt to your local context and needs.

1. Establish Vision and Mission
2. SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis: essentially exists as a summarized view of your current state of arts education access and participation.
3. Identify Long-Term Goals for Improvement
   a. Equitable access to the arts
   b. Student arts engagement
   c. Student arts participation
   d. Arts staffing, student to teacher ratio
   e. Relevancy, engagement, authenticity, diversity of arts offerings
4. Identify yearly objectives and action steps tied to each objective to meet your long-term goals. Each objective should be as SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based - as possible. Action steps or plans should clearly detail how each objective will be achieved. In addition, action steps should follow a progress monitoring system. How will progress towards your objectives be monitored? Who will be involved in your check-in meetings and who often will you meet?

As you develop your yearly objectives and action steps, consider:

- Survey students, parents, and the community about course offerings.
- Engage parents as advocates for a well-rounded education.
- Engage local, state, and regional resources in improving arts curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Explore ways your local arts programs can optimally support students and families.
- How might arts organizations work with schools to increase arts participation in their communities? How can community arts organizations support and partner with area schools?
- Apply strategies to increase engagement in the arts.
- Investigate any discrepancies between course offerings, requests made, and credits earned. Do the courses taught match those that students have requested? What’s driving any discrepancies?
- How will you be monitoring your progress?
Implementing Your Strategic Arts Improvement Plan

Once a strategic arts improvement plan has been written, agreed upon, and understood by all stakeholders, regular communication and evaluation systems are vital for successful implementation. These processes help maintain focus and execution and should allow room for new learning and periodic adjustments over the implementation timeline. Consider the following points and questions as you implement your plan to ensure increased arts educational access and participation in your community; they may provide a framework for your regularly scheduled check-ins or progress monitoring meetings with your arts data team.

• Track Iowa Arts Education Data Project dashboard data annually and analyze based on success indicators: Are you meeting your objectives? What are your trends over time?
• Monitor your action steps: Are you meeting your targets? What are your successes? Your shortcomings? What new learnings or challenges have emerged?
• How are you communicating your strategic arts improvement plan and implementation to stakeholders and community members?
• Celebrate and share your successes broadly and continue to imagine new opportunities and possibilities with your team, your district and your community.

Supporting Resources

The following resources may increase your understanding of equity, access, arts program evaluation, arts standards and curriculum, and the impacts of participation in the arts. They may also aid in developing and implementing strategic improvement plans with the arts represented as an indicator of success.

Defining Equity and Access:
Looking for a place to start defining and understanding access and equity in education? The Glossary for Education Reform offers the following resources:

• Access
• Equity

Evaluating Your Arts Programs:

Dance: National Dance Education Organization’s “Opportunity-to-Learn Standards for Dance”
“These OTLs in Dance provide information about effective and necessary curriculum, scheduling, staffing needs, materials and equipment requirements, safe practices, and facilities. They describe necessities for effective delivery of instruction and identify an environment in which learning dance can occur.”

Music: National Association for Music Education’s “Opportunity to Learn Standards”
“These OTL Standards identify the resources that need to be in place so that teachers, schools, and school districts can give students a meaningful chance to achieve at the levels spelled out in the National Core Music Standards. They are rather considered guidance on the Curriculum and Scheduling, Staffing, Materials and Equipment, and Facilities that must be in place if the promise inherent in the Core Music Standards is to be realized – that all American students must have the opportunity to achieve music literacy”.

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Theatre: Educational Theatre Association's “Opportunity to Learn Standards”
These grades 6-12 Opportunity-to-Learn (OTL) Standards for theatre instruction have been prepared by the Educational Theatre Association. They identify the resources teachers, schools, and districts need to ensure that students can achieve at or above standard aligned to levels suggested in the 2014 National Core Theatre Standards.

Visual Arts:
National Art Education Association (NAEA) Position Statement on Scheduling, Time, Enrollment, Facilities, Funding and/or Resources for Visual Arts Education
NAEA's “Opportunity to Learn Standards”: “Specific indicators are provided to help administration, teachers, and parents - with or without an arts background - to judge the quality of a school or school district’s visual arts education program.” This resource is not available online, but a print version is available for purchase.

All Arts Disciplines: The following resources were designed by Create CA, a partnership between the state departments and arts organizations in California:
Arts Education Program Questionnaire
Rubric for District Arts Education Programs

Funding Your Arts Programs:
The Fine Arts and Title IVA (Iowa Department of Education)
Opportunities for STEAM Education Through ESSA and Perkins V (Education Commission of the States)
Resource Library: ESSA and the Arts (Arts Education Partnership)

Impact of Arts Participation:
The Arts Education Partnership (AEP), a national network of more than 100 organizations dedicated to advancing the arts in education through research, policy, and practice, has developed ArtsEdSearch, a searchable online clearinghouse of research focused on the outcomes of arts education for students and educators.

Iowa Department of Education Arts (IDOE) Resources:
IDOE page on arts education and the Iowa Fine Arts Standards
Iowa’s Social Emotional Learning Competencies

National Standards Resources:
National Core Arts Standards site for dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts standards and resources.

Social Emotional Learning and the Arts
Arts Education and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework is designed to illuminate the intersection between arts education and social-emotional learning to allow for the intentional application of appropriate teaching and learning strategies, with the overarching goal of enhancing Arts Education.
More Information About the Project:

The Iowa Arts Education Data Project is made possible through a partnership with Quadrant Research, a pioneering national leader in arts education data. Visit https://www.artseddata.org/ to learn more about Quadrant Research and how other states across the country involved in similar projects use their arts education dashboards to inform policy and practice.

FAQs

How is the data collected? Is my school participating?
The data presented on the dashboard includes arts participation and course enrollment information schools and districts are required to report to the Iowa Department of Education. All required data submitted to the state is shown on the dashboard. The data is collected annually, every winter.

What if the data doesn’t provide an accurate assessment of my school’s programs?
A two-week viewing window will be given to districts and schools prior to the dashboard’s release every spring. District and schools will be able to communicate any inaccuracies or inconsistencies at that time.

Why is only high school arts participation available?
Elementary and middle schools are not required to report arts course data to the Iowa Department of Education. The Arts Education Data Project only includes data that schools and districts are required to report, or part of the state’s longitudinal data system.

How are non-public schools reflected in the data?
If a non-public school in Iowa reports student-level data to the state, that data is shown on our dashboard. Because some non-public schools do not have student level systems to keep detailed data, not all non-public schools are represented on the dashboard.

Questions? Contact Angela Matsuoka, Fine Arts Consultant with the Iowa Department of Education at angela.matsuoka@iowa.gov.