



Arts Education in Denver Schools: Envisioning Excellence

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Denver Quality Arts Task Force

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Introduction

Scope and Purpose

This paper sets forth to paint, in broad strokes, a picture of arts education in Denver schools. It asks questions about what kind of outcomes we want to see in the future and how we can support a system to get us there given limited resources and competing priorities.

A+ Denver is an independent, non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization working to bring the power of Denver's citizens to school reform. A+ Denver members are comprised of community and business leaders, parents, representatives from local foundations, and universities. Our singular goal is to do whatever is necessary to bring about dramatic improvement in student achievement so that all Denver children have the opportunity to reach their highest potential through the foundation of a quality K-12 education.

This project was inspired by an increasingly rich visual and performing arts culture in Denver that includes many of the best cultural facilities in the region and thousands of highly skilled artists, performers, and musicians working in the creative industries. We wondered whether arts education in Denver schools was keeping pace with Denver's growing reputation as a hub for arts and culture. In what ways have our schools been able to take advantage of the wider artistic community? What is Denver's vision for arts education and what kind of support will it take to get there?

A+ has and will continue to focus on academic achievement in Denver, but does not believe that this focus excludes the arts. To the contrary, we believe that providing a system-wide high quality arts education supports academic achievement and attainment and contributes to overall student success.

We are not the first to look at arts education in Colorado, but believe we can add to the conversation about how to support Denver Public Schools (DPS) in creating pathways for emerging artists of all socioeconomic backgrounds, while providing high quality opportunities for students to excel in the arts.

Defining the Arts

Because the arts are constantly evolving, we use a very inclusive definition of *arts* that encompasses traditional fine arts such as painting, sculpture, architecture, theatre, dance and music, and modern fine arts like film, photography, design, literary arts, culinary arts, and digital design.

Importance of the arts

There are dozens of reasons to care about the arts, but for this paper, A+ is focused on three key benefits. First is the intrinsic value arts provide to individuals and societies in fostering creativity, intellect, joy and aesthetic appreciation.

Second is the value of the arts in supporting cognitive development and academic achievement. Third is the role the arts play in our local and national economy.

Intrinsic Value of the Arts

The arts enrich our lives with meaning, beauty, passion, joy, and ideas. They reflect our values, aesthetics and purpose. Forty thousand year-old cave paintings testify to humans' desire for artistic expression. Maxine Greene, a philosopher and arts education expert at Lincoln Center for the Arts in Education, makes the case for the arts in the following way: "The aesthetics of any culture--like its beliefs, symbol systems, traditions, its history--are fundamental to a culture's identity."¹ Our cultural identity both shapes and is shaped by our relationship to art. With communities in the United States increasingly divided by ideologies and cultural intolerance, the arts play a vital role in promoting shared experiences, even around the most controversial performances and exhibitions.

Academic Achievement and Cognitive Development

Achievement

Hundreds of studies have linked arts participation to academic achievement. According to a recent report by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, "decades of research show strong and consistent links between high-quality arts education and a wide range of impressive educational outcomes."² These outcomes include student persistence, SAT scores, learning other languages and critical thinking. For example, of 2005 SAT-takers, those who had taken four years of arts scored an average of 58 points higher on the verbal section and 39 points higher on the math section than those who had taken half a year or less of arts. In Denver, students in high level arts classes at both East High School and John F. Kennedy High School performed far better on CSAPs in every subject than those who did not consistently participate in arts and music. The same patterns emerge at the middle school level, further supporting the role of the arts in schools. Figure 1 has been adapted from one provided by Denver Public Schools. ³

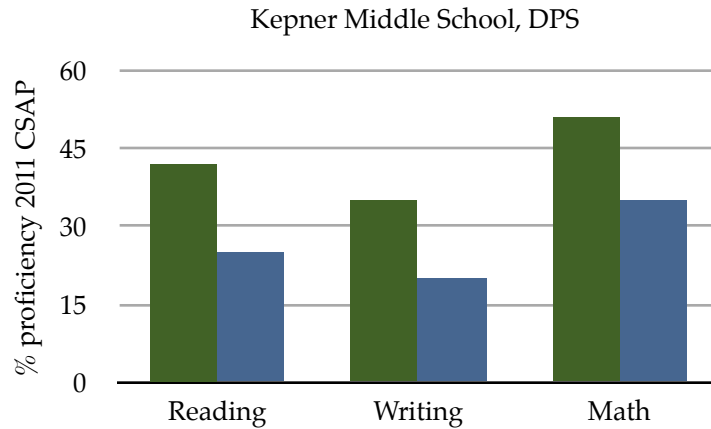
People are drawn to the arts not for their instrumental effects, but because the arts can provide them with meaning and with a distinctive type of pleasure and emotional stimulation. We contend not only that these intrinsic effects are satisfying in themselves, but that many of them can lead to the development of individual capacities and community cohesiveness that are of benefit to the public sphere. - RAND, Gifts of the Muse

Figure 1: DPS Middle School Students' CSAP Performance

(This chart was reproduced from a DPS document called "Linkage of Arts to Student Achievement," dated July 11, 2011. The data was presented by DPS Arts Dept. staff to the

DPS CPAC Mill Levy Subcommittee in May, 2012)

"The young man who picks up a clarinet or even a paintbrush or a pen is not likely to pick up a needle or a gun: he has better things to do" - Jane Alexander



■ Arts-proficient (students enrolled in Band Intermediate, Strings Intermediate) ■ Non arts-proficient

While arts participation correlates strongly to almost every measure of academic success, from test scores to attendance to graduation rates, we should be wary of assuming the arts are directly responsible for all of these outcomes and relying on arts to raise achievement or to justify the arts. Like most social sciences, the variables are hard to isolate, and causal relationships hard to prove.

Cognitive Development

Scientists are beginning to understand some of the reasons behind increased achievement and student learning. In 2004, neuroscientists from seven top universities were brought together by the Dana Consortium to “grapple with the question of why arts training has been associated with higher academic performance.” Their report, “Learning, Arts, and the Brain,” was released in 2008. Conclusions included:

- An interest in a performing art leads to a high state of motivation that produces the sustained attention necessary to improve performance and the training of attention that leads to improvement in other domains of cognition.
- Specific links exist between high levels of music training and the ability to manipulate information in both working and long-term memory; these links extend beyond the domain of music training.
- In children, there appear to be specific links between the practice of music and skills in geometrical representation, though not in other forms of numerical representation.⁴

Low-income students who play in the orchestra or band are more than twice as likely to perform at the highest levels in math as peers who do not play music. In James Catterall's well-known longitudinal study, *Doing Well and Doing Good by Doing Art*, low-income students at arts-rich high schools were more than twice as likely to earn a B.A. as low-income students at arts-poor high schools. - Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education

In another study, researchers from Stanford found that, “mastering a musical instrument improves the way the human brain processes parts of spoken language” and that “people with musical experience found it easier than non-musicians to detect small differences in word syllables.”⁵ In September 2012 Dr. Perri Klass blogged in the *New York Times*: “when children learn to play a musical instrument, they strengthen a range of auditory skills. Recent studies suggest that these benefits extend all through life, at least for those who continue to be engaged with music.”⁶ A Michigan State investigation of Nobel Laureates and other prominent scientists showed that they were more two to five times more likely to have an arts or music avocation than the average American. One quarter of the Science and Math Nobel Laureates play music, and most of the biographies of Nobel Laureates describe an early involvement in the arts as being critical to their creative and problem-solving habits later in life.⁷

“Above all, we are coming to understand that the arts incarnate the creativity of a free people.

When the creative impulse cannot flourish, when it cannot freely select its methods and objects, when it is deprived of spontaneity, then society severs the root of art” - John F. Kennedy

There are many other studies that explore the relationship between the arts, cognitive development and academic achievement.

One national initiative, announced in April of 2012, will affect Denver. The President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities will be working in some of the nation’s lowest performing schools to test the hypothesis that “high quality and integrated arts education boosts academic achievement, motivates student learning, and improves

school culture in the context of overall school reform.”⁸ Noel Community Arts School in Denver was one of eight schools selected for a grant to participate in the initiative and to become test cases for the arts role in school reform.

While academic achievement and cognitive development are compelling reasons to support the arts in our schools, A+ believes that the arts ought not to be valued only because of their service to other subjects, but also because they are a critical part of a well-rounded education.

National Economy

Our national economy is dependent on the arts to build and sustain creative industries, and to foster creativity in all industries.

Building a more creative workforce

In *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine urged lawmakers and others to increase “specialty schools [to] immerse students in high-quality science, technology, and mathematics,” or STEM schools. The primary reason given was that the U.S. would not be able to preserve its national and economic security unless it optimized “knowledge-based resources, particularly in science and technology.” The National Academies had looked at the economy, looked at the classroom, looked back at the economy, and started to panic. The US has continued to respond to the call to action made by the National Academies and others, and as recently as July 2012 President Obama announced a STEM teacher corps.

Nationally, the [arts] industry generated \$135.2 billion of economic activity—\$61.1 billion by the nation's nonprofit arts and culture organizations in addition to \$74.1 billion in event-related expenditures by their audiences. This economic activity supports 4.13 million full-time jobs and generates \$86.68 billion in resident household income. Our industry also generates \$22.3 billion in revenue to local, state, and federal governments every year—a yield well beyond their collective \$4 billion in arts allocations. - Arts and Economic Prosperity IV, Americans for the Arts

The case linking the arts to our global competitiveness has not been articulated as consistently or clearly as the case for sciences. However, a 2008 report called *Ready to Innovate* released by the Conference Board and Americans for the Arts argues that US businesses are

concerned by the lack of creativity in the workforce, and that the arts are a powerful way to build creativity. To make their case, the report’s authors surveyed 155 U.S. business executives and 89 school superintendents and school leaders to determine the skills and abilities that cultivate creativity. The survey results reflect employers’ recognition that “building an innovative workforce will depend on developing employees’ creative abilities.” The Conference Board reported that, “57 percent of the 155 employer respondents indicated they had difficulty finding qualified applicants with the desired creative skills” and that “for both employers (56 percent) and superintendents (79 percent), a degree in the arts was the most significant indicator of creativity.”⁹

Building a more creative workforce depends on many factors, and one of these is the arts.

Colorado Economy

Students that study arts may or may not go on to pursue careers in the creative industries. Even if they don't, there are multiple benefits to studying art. However, because the creative industries comprise the fifth largest sector of Colorado's economy, it is important that (in addition to preparing students for other sectors) Denver schools deliberately prepare students to compete in these industries.

Preparing students for the creative industries may increase career opportunities for DPS graduates - preparing them to fill roles in the creative economy now being filled largely by candidates from outside DPS and outside Colorado. ¹⁰ Right now about 4% of DPS graduates major in arts related fields at Colorado colleges, compared to about 8% of private school graduates. If we set specific goals (7 or 8%, for example) we could elevate the importance placed on arts at the primary and secondary level. (Graduation goals could be benchmarked using the Individual Career and Academic Plan).¹¹

There are more than 8,400 companies in Colorado's creative industry cluster. Employees at these companies account for about 3.8% of total Colorado private sector covered employment as compared to 3.5% for the U.S. - Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, June 2011

Of the more than eighty members of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, fewer than three are from Colorado.

Additionally, we would have a data point with which to measure progress.

In addition to arts taught within traditional high schools and colleges, creative skills required by Colorado's 21st Century economy can be addressed by the expanding field of Career and Technical Education. The Denver Stagehands Local (IATSE #7) faces such a demand for technicians that it has been known to raid the local electrical and carpenters unions. With the ever-expanding quantity and quality of

scientific and cultural facilities, there's a tremendous opportunity for DPS to home-grow a talent pool equal, if not superior, to the traditional practice of importing creative talent.

What student outcomes do we want to see in Denver?

Nationally, we have not yet clarified the kinds of outcomes we want to see in the arts. In 2011, The President's Committee on the Arts and The Humanities (PCAH) released a report that made recommendations for improving arts education. The authoring committee, chaired by Michelle Obama, George Stevens Jr., and Margo Lion, points out that arts education is on the decline and that we must increase and improve arts education because it will raise academic achievement and global competitiveness.¹² The report is similar, in some ways, to the *Gathering Storm* reports, except that it focuses on arts instead of math and science. Both argue that our national competitiveness is

"It is in Apple's DNA that technology alone is not enough—it's technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields us the results that make our heart sing." –Steve Jobs, in introducing the iPad 2 in 2011

threatened by shortcomings in our education system. One key difference is that the National Academies are very clear about the kinds of measurable targets and strategies they think we need to see in the sciences to be globally competitive, whereas the outcomes that PCAH outlines are less clearly defined and harder to measure. While the National Academies declared several years ago that “by 2010 [we should] increase the number of students who take at least one AP or IB mathematics or science exam to 1.5

million, and set a goal of tripling the number who pass those tests to 700,000,”¹³ PCAH envisions “a climate in American schools where all students are engaged, where they come to school and to class eager to learn, where they speak and write and solve problems with self-confidence and discipline, and where their innate gifts of creativity and innovation are nurtured and encouraged.” To realize this vision, PCAH’s main recommendations include increasing our focus on integrated arts education (where arts are taught in concert with other subjects) and utilizing teaching artists, like an “Artists Corps.” Because the outcomes PCAH articulates are hard to measure in a way that links them to the arts, states, districts and schools are left with quite a bit of leeway in how they approach the arts. In other words, our community must define its own goals.

“I must study Politicks and War that my sons may have liberty to study Painting and Poetry Mathematicks and Philosophy. My sons ought to study Mathematicks and Philosophy, Geography, natural History, Naval Architecture, navigation, Commerce and Agriculture, in order to give their Children a right to study Painting, Poetry, Musick, Architecture, Statuary, Tapestry and Porcelaine.” - John Quincy Adams

What exists now in DPS

Denver Public Schools approaches arts education with very limited resources and competing priorities such as student achievement in core subjects. Two dozen conversations and several school visits over the course of about two months yielded a glimpse into Denver’s art education, but raised more questions than they answered. We set forth to inventory programs across schools, but dozens of phone calls to schools left us with a very incomplete picture. As we will talk about later, this is the kind of information that should be available - not just to policymakers - but to parents.

“At a time when employers demand a more creative workforce 53% of high school students are not taking any arts courses.” - Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper

We want to thank Denver Public Schools for helping us better understand the strengths and challenges within the district and schools by providing us with information about spending, programs and participation. While there are many examples of excellent programs¹⁴, a few initial observations about the challenges facing the district are detailed below.

Challenges

1. Few clear goals

2. **Few requirements**
3. **Inconsistency of quality programs throughout the district**
4. **Unequal access to strongest programs**
5. **Few measures of quality**
6. **Few clear pipelines for students studying the arts or a specific artistic discipline**
7. **Budget and resource challenges**
8. **Few strategic partnerships**

(1) Few clear goals

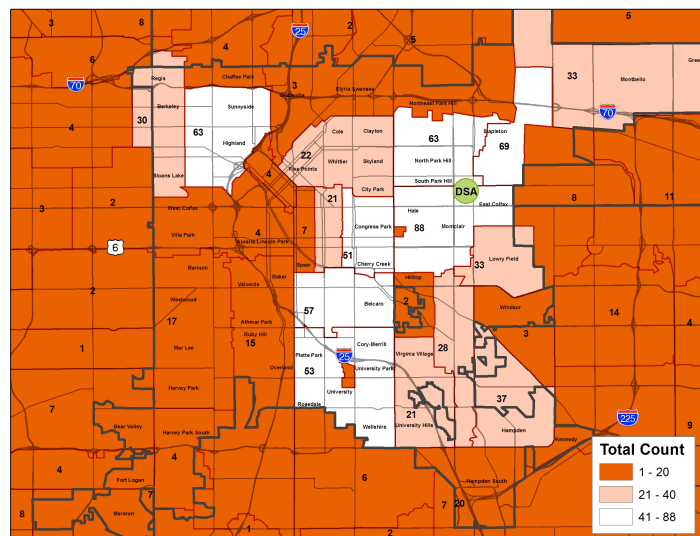
Is our K-12 system producing strong student outcomes in the arts? Do we have enough students participating in orchestras, ballet companies, theater companies, bands, choirs, gallery shows, and creative enterprises like design, architecture and the culinary arts? Are students pursuing post-secondary degrees in the arts? Are enough students attending top arts colleges? These are impossible questions to answer without clear targets and tools for measuring the results. Scattered data points suggest that we can do better. Last year CalArts, one of the most prestigious arts universities in the world, received applicants from almost a quarter of Denver School of the Arts' (DSA) graduating class (25 applicants) but only *three* applicants from the rest of the district. DSA, which admits students based on auditions, has not consistently admitted DPS students from a single school west of I-25 for at least the past three years. DSA would prefer to see a representative applicant pool, but the reality is that many communities do not have arts programs that prepare students for serious study in the arts. The Denver Young Artists Orchestra only received 12 applications from DPS students requiring financial aid¹⁵.

We believe that with a stronger vision for arts education in Denver, and a roadmap for getting there, all students who dream of becoming artists or receiving a strong arts education will have that opportunity. However, it is incumbent on the larger community to help shape a multi-year vision for what we want to see with clear goals.

(2) Few requirements

The quality of arts education in Denver varies greatly by school, as does the amount of time students spend studying art. This is in part because few requirements are placed on students or schools. While some schools prioritize the arts, the

Feeder Zip Codes for Denver School of the Arts



Dark red areas represent zip codes where 5 or fewer students live; Pink represents areas where between 5-15 students live; and White represents those areas where nearly all DSA students live. The red and pink areas are explained - in some cases - by distance from DSA or low population density. In other cases, they are red or pink because they are essentially “arts deserts” with few or weak arts programs. (see Appendix E for a larger version of this map)

requirements of our system are low. For example, some schools provide very little arts instruction, while others incorporate arts into every subject. Denver only requires one unit (10 semester hours) of the arts for high school graduation, which can be satisfied by taking arts or Career and Technical Education.¹⁶ In theory, a DPS elementary school with the minimum of a 1.0 Arts FTE (can also be a combination of two .5

“We have a parent volunteer who comes in once per week for 45 minutes to teach art classes.” -DPS Principal

FTE arts disciplines) should provide a minimum of two hours of arts instruction per week, if not more. In practice, there is strong anecdotal evidence to suggest students are not always getting this level of arts instruction. While the district maintains records of the number of arts teachers at each school, records are not kept of the number of sections of a particular arts discipline that students actually receive. For example, we might know that school “A” has two .5 FTEs qualified as “arts” teachers, but we don’t know that students are getting an hour of music and an hour of visual arts each week. One arts teacher might be teaching physical education and the other might be teaching history.

In comparison to low arts requirements in Denver and some other US districts, New York State requires every student in grades 1-6 to receive instruction in dance, music, theater and visual arts. Every school provides public information about how their arts program works, what kind of arts students study, and the number and type of arts opportunities in and out of school. Australia requires approximately 640 hours of arts study per student before 8th grade (or 2.2 hours per week each year), and then encourages students to focus on one or more art forms between grades 9-12. (See Appendix A for a detailed look at several countries)

(3) Inconsistency of quality programs

DPS has moved away from a centralized, cookie cutter approach to curriculum and instruction, opting instead to allow schools greater autonomy in exchange for accountability for student achievement. A+ strongly supports this approach when there are clear expectations for how success is measured. The district has continually refined what success means in math and literacy but has done little to define success in the arts.

As one art teacher put it, “Everyone is pretty much doing their own thing.”

In the arts, decentralization has resulted in a highly variable “product” delivered to students. The district’s primary focus has been on supporting arts teachers and measuring impact by the number of certified arts teachers, as opposed to measuring what students know and can do in the arts. Imagine if DPS reported on what students know in mathematics by citing the number of certified math teachers as opposed to what students know and can do with math as measured by multiple types of math assessments.

Changing school leadership also makes continuity of programming challenging. As one arts organization that works in various schools put it, “arts programs completely vary among schools. It is hard to work with schools for multiple years because a whole new set of teachers and principal the next year could change everything.” School leaders devote very different levels of resources and time to different art disciplines. Art programs depend on the school leader’s values and priorities; the educational model of the school; parent influence; and resources and capacity. As one art teacher put it, “Everyone is pretty much doing their own thing.” For example, one school we spoke to asks a parent volunteer to teach visual arts once per week for 45 minutes and has hired someone qualified in dance to teach physical education. Another school the same size (and similar budget) has hired two half-time instructors to teach music, art, dance and performing arts. Kids rotate between classes on a weekly basis and take an arts class every day for 45 minutes. Some inconsistency among schools might be an efficient and

At a time when employers are demanding a more creative work force, 53% of high school students in Colorado are not taking any arts courses.

acceptable way to approach the arts if that variability is intentional, transparent and the programs that are in place are high-quality. However, “arts deserts” should not persist.

(4) Unequal access to strongest programs

The only established “gold standard” for arts education in Denver is Denver School of the Arts (DSA). DSA is a strong school, both artistically and academically. However, demand far outweighs supply. Last year, 1,103 students applied for 213 spots. For those who do not get in, there are few alternative options at this point that have demonstrated strong results in both the arts and academics.

“Many students from DPS elementary, middle, and high schools have no program to adequately prepare them to either consider an arts career or to successfully audition into DSA” -DSA Teacher



Scott Graham, DSA, Pennies on Wood “Christian” 2011

Equality of access is an issue for DSA because admissions are based on blind auditions and many students from lower-income families have not had enough training in an arts discipline. DSA would like to see a more economically diverse qualified applicant pool. The fact is that few low-income families have the same access to private instruction as wealthier families do, so they are at a disadvantage as far as preparation goes. William Kohut, the principal at DSA, gave this example.

“At the current time we have a limited number of students within Denver Public Schools that apply for, audition for or are prepared for acceptance into the Band, Dance, Guitar, Orchestra, Piano, Guitar and Theater programs at Denver School of the Arts. Last year we had 29 orchestra applicants. The applicants all participated in a blind audition process. Of the 26 who completed the audition, two were from DPS schools and neither were qualified.”

DSA currently serves a student population of 13% low-income students in contrast to Denver Public Schools overall low-income population of 73%. DSA’s administration is committed to changing this disparity. Conversations between DSA and DPS are ongoing about expanding to the elementary level to begin preparing students earlier. This would be a substantial advantage for poor families. The new campus K-5 would also likely be located near the existing DSA school, creating a pipeline for neighborhood students.

DSA is not the only arts-intensive school in DPS. Kunsmiller, located on the other end of the district in southwest Denver, will eventually be a K-12 school that focuses on the arts. Right now, the school has 770 students and is 78% Free/Reduced Price Lunch. The school, which is not audition-based, has several primary goals. It aims to graduate 100% of

its students, and for those graduates to matriculate to two or four year local postsecondary institutions, enter into creative industries and/or become lifelong patrons of the arts. The school faces some challenges academically, but is showing growth. Most recently, DPS has added the arts-intensive Rachel Noel secondary school (Grades 6-12) in the far Northeast.



Kunsmiller student art display

External organizations that provide arts instruction such as the Art Student League of Denver (ASLD runs after-school and Saturday youth classes and free community outreach programs) are able to provide some scholarships, but find that their biggest challenge in “providing youth programs inclusive of all income levels” is transportation. Because DPS is such a geographically dispersed

district with limited public transportation, providing wide access to arts programs can be expensive and logistically difficult.

(5) Few measures of quality

Standards and assessments don't *create* quality content and instruction, but can provide incentives and direction for school leaders, teachers and students.¹⁷ Arts assessments cannot mean another bubble test, but must be holistic and flexible. Arts standards in Colorado cover Dance, Music, Visual Arts and Drama, and provide guidelines about what students should know. (The Common Core of national standards does not address the arts.)¹⁸ These standards are excellent, and it would be great to know if students are meeting the standards. We have geography and civics standards now, but we have no idea if students are meeting those standards. Ultimately, we will need some kind of assessment to

The Rhode Island Board of Regents has stipulated that all students in the state must demonstrate proficiency in an art to graduate.

determine whether students are gaining skills and an understanding of the arts. *Ideas for ways to approach assessment are discussed in the recommendations section of this paper.*

(6) Few clear pipelines for students

studying the arts or a specific artistic discipline

An ideal system would be designed so that skill building in the arts or in a specific arts discipline would be unbroken from the primary grades through high school. For example, if Jane starts to learn dance in Kindergarten, there should be a way for her to continue to improve through high school, whether at a traditional school, an arts focused school, or an accessible (free or low cost) after-school program.

(7) Budget and resources challenges

From a school and district perspective, time, money and competing priorities create barriers to offering strong arts programming and more arts-focused schools. Schools typically cite time as the biggest constraint to offering arts, but pressure to increase achievement and tight budgets also threaten arts programming. Mill levy funds allocated for the arts since in 2003 provide \$6.5 million per year. Denver employs approximately 315.5 FTEs (364 total full and part-time instructors) in the arts, which equates to approximately \$21 million or about 4.2% of total DPS salaries (assuming an average salary plus benefits of \$65,000). Assuming about 82,000 students in DPS, we spend about \$256 per student on art teachers' salaries.

Offering the arts is a choice for many public schools in Colorado. School leaders say time is the biggest barrier to providing more in-depth arts education to hone in-demand work force skills such as imagination, creativity and innovation. (Colorado Creative Industries, 2008)

We need more information in this area to determine spending parity. On the surface, our spending doesn't seem unreasonably low. In 2008, SRI International (a research institute hired by the Hewlett Foundation) looked at arts spending at 10 exemplary schools in Minnesota, Kentucky, Massachusetts and New Jersey. They determined that "most exemplar schools spend between about \$150 and \$350 per pupil on arts teachers' salaries." We added a column with a back-of-the-envelope estimate of Denver's average to compare Denver to other places. Figure 2 shows this comparison, though more research is needed in this area.

Figure 2 **Per-Pupil Arts Expenditures on Arts Teachers in Selected Exemplar Schools (SRI: 2008) compared to Denver's average per-pupil expenditure on Arts Teachers (A+: 2011)**

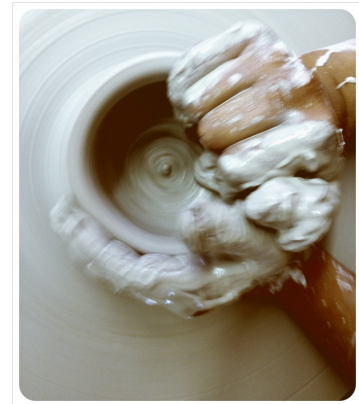
Denver	Kentucky	Minnesota	New Jersey	Massachusetts
\$256 (average)	\$133	\$269	\$364	\$264

(Figures are unadjusted for regional cost differences. Both the Kentucky and Minnesota schools hired approximately 2 FTE of arts teachers, yet the Minnesota school spent about twice as much in unadjusted dollars.¹⁹ Note also that while Kentucky, Minn., N.J. and Mass. are expressed in 2008 dollars, Denver is expressed in 2011 dollars.)

(8) Few strategic partnerships

Denver schools do engage in partnerships with external providers. However, the partnerships are often based on individual relationships, and are not typically developed in a systematic way.²⁰ Well-developed partnerships depend on motivated teachers and principals with access to the time and money to take advantage of opportunities. For example, an art teacher may or may not receive a catalog from the Scientific Cultural Collaborative describing external opportunities. (The SCC plays an important role connecting many local arts organizations to several school districts). That teacher may or may not go to the DPS site to find out what kinds of opportunities are available. He may or may not have the support, time and money to bring students to an exhibit or performance (or vice versa).

Among community arts organizations themselves, there are few coordinated efforts to ensure that services are provided in an equitable and systematic way. One community arts organization representative commented that she believes there is a “need for someone to organize external providers to make sure programming in schools is effective and efficient.”



A young boy throws a pot during a Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA) ceramics class.

Recommendations

Vision

A+ envisions Denver Public Schools becoming a national model for districts across the country, not just academically but in the arts as well. We see a district in which every student, regardless of race or income level, can develop her talents and pursue her dreams. Ultimately, we see a place where a higher percentage of low-income and minority students study the arts than in any other urban US school district, and where many students go on to study and develop careers in artistic disciplines.

Strategies

1. **Strategic planning & sustainability**
2. **Assessing student performance**
3. **Extended learning opportunities**
4. **Increasing strategic partnerships**
5. **Focusing on depth versus breadth**
6. **Approaches to curriculum and instruction**
7. **Increased transparency and communication with parents and students**
8. **Increased accountability for dollars**
9. **Increased funding**

**"Art is a nation's most precious heritage. For it is in our works of art that we reveal ourselves, and to others, the inner vision which guides us as a nation. And where there is no vision, the people perish."
President Lyndon Johnson**

(1) Strategic planning & sustainability

Denver needs a strategic plan for the arts and a group responsible for executing and monitoring that plan. We are hopeful that many of the recommendations in the report will be considered by that planning body.

The DPS arts department has multiple roles, primarily engaging with art teachers to “support, guide, and deepen their content, instructional, and leadership capacity.”²¹ The arts are not specifically discussed in the Denver Plan²²; thus, it is hard to know whether there is a roadmap with explicit goals and outcomes for students. Many large cities have created three-to-five year strategic plans specific to the arts, and many have done so in partnership with outside groups (e.g. philanthropic, governmental, institutional groups). We recommend Denver also convene a group of stakeholders to create a plan for action and sustainability. This planning committee should meet at least four times per year and be informed by both the work of the mill oversight committee and the Arts Resource Council. The strategic plan for the arts should outline a vision for arts education that is in concert with the district’s many other priorities, goals and strategies.

(2) Assessing student performance

Portfolio Assessments

There has not been an opportunity for a strong evaluative component in the arts. However, by creating clear standards and measuring student progress toward these standards, we both elevate the role of the arts and continually improve curriculum and instruction.

We need a system for measuring what students are doing in the arts. Such a system should include information on both teachers and students. We should track who has credentials and what they're teaching and what students know and are able to do. DPS is currently starting to create a pilot assessment in the arts. We believe these assessments should be accelerated, piloted in 5-8 schools, and evaluated by an outside group.

The arts do not lend themselves to the typical metrics used to evaluate schools, teachers, and students. Art curriculum produces a unique, creative product, difficult to measure in a standardized way. One way to assess student performance is to require that every student compile a portfolio for graduation. Many school districts in Rhode Island, for example, use a portfolio approach to demonstrate proficiency. A portfolio approach is authentic and holistic, but can be expensive and difficult to evaluate consistently.

Honors diplomas

Differentiated diplomas may also provide a way to allow students to demonstrate what they know and can do beyond the accumulation of Carnegie Units. Some districts offer "honors" diplomas that require students to work on a project which might be an exhibit, a performance or a thesis. Under recent legislation (SB08-212 and HB10-1273), DPS could recognize excellence in the arts by allowing for a number of enhanced honors diplomas each year. There would need to be a process and criteria for getting an enhanced diploma that might include the sign off of specific teachers and arts professionals in addition to a minimum GPA as well. The arts are best suited to nontraditional assessments (such as portfolios and honors diplomas), but assessment depends upon a good review process for student work by expert panels.

Colorado's CAP4Kids initiative includes the development of post-secondary and work-force Ready Endorsed Diplomas which will guarantee students admission to moderately selective colleges. Two of the seven qualifying subject areas (in addition to Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and World Languages) are the "arts" and "career and technical education." These endorsed diplomas may also offer a way to assess, recognize and reward achievement in the arts.

(3) Expanded Learning Opportunities

Approaches to leveraging outside resources to improve equality of access and student outcome

Expanded learning offers a way to build a creative culture that values the full day and the full year. By aligning after-school programs to the in-school arts experience, students can gain skills quickly. Expanded learning can be structured in many ways, ranging from center-based programs to those directed by schools. A few examples are included in the table below.

Rhode Island has succeeded in "building a system that allows students to work outside of school to do competency based work that counts toward their graduation requirement. The work done outside of school is judged by qualified school personnel so that the school feels that the outside experience has been sufficiently rigorous." - Rhode Island Council on the Arts

A few examples of roles community theater institutions could play include school-based introduction to creative careers, enrichment programs such as eShakespeare, Dramatic Learning, and Living History; technical assistance for school-based performance events; "externships" and other professional development for teachers; backstage tours and career orientation for students; internships; scholarships, e-Mentorships and webinars. - Gully Stanford, College in Colorado

(See appendix C for a more detailed description of several programs).

	Expanded learning examples
SCC Coordinated Science and Arts Enrichment	Since 1990, the SCFD Tier II organizations (recently joined by Tier I) have coordinated standards-based enrichment programs to complement arts and science education in public schools.
Denver Center for Performing Arts Education	Like its colleagues--the Symphony, Ballet, Opera, Art Museum and others--the DCPA Education Department collaborates with middle and high school arts, language arts, social studies and science teachers to provide additional dimensions both in school, after school and in the field.
El Sistema (Garden Place)	Now at Garden Place Elementary, El Sistema is an orchestra program that started in Venezuela. Just over 100 students participate during the school day, and 90 participate after school. To be a part of El Sistema, students commit to attending class every day after school and one Saturday per month. By 2013 El Sistema will grow to 257 students, including 32 four-year-olds.
Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA)	DAVA serves about 1,000 kids (primarily in Aurora) per year on-site and 900 in schools through its outreach program. Programs are free and serve children ages 3-17, covering everything from painting to pottery and video. DAVA offers Family Arts, the OASIS Open Studio, a middle school Job Training in the Arts program, and an outreach program. DAVA hosts guest artists, recruits and trains volunteers/interns, and partners with outside groups such as the Colorado Film School. The organization also provides support around college applications and art portfolios for high school students.
Think 360 Arts	Think 360 works to improve learning opportunities in and through the arts for children and youth, particularly in under-served communities. It focuses on training teachers and teaching artists in arts integration techniques through professional development programs and the Aesthetic Education Institute of Colorado. Think 360 Arts connects its roster of more than ninety professional teaching artists in all disciplines, to schools across the state with their educational performances, workshops and artist residencies. The organization works with pre-K through 12th graders in schools, libraries, recreation centers and youth diversion programs in 23 counties across Colorado, reaching over 32,000 children. 40% of the schools served by the organization are Title I.

(4) Increasing strategic partnerships

An umbrella or coordinating organization might be charged with connecting schools to external partners in a systematic and equitable way. In most other cities, there is an outside organization that takes the lead, along with the major urban school district, to connect art providers with schools and neighborhoods, and in many cases, raise money (see Appendix B). Having a coordinating body (or clearinghouse)-could potentially decrease duplicate efforts among community organizations and identify (and correct for) areas that are underserved and take full advantage of dozens of community resources. The following table explores some potential roles for various organizations and institutions involved in the arts in Denver.



**Private Partnership Illustration:
The Build San Francisco Institute**

The Architectural Foundation of San Francisco has created the Build San Francisco Institute, a half-day high school program for students interested in design, construction, engineering and architecture. The Build San Francisco Institute is a unique community educational partnership, involving AFSF, San Francisco Unified School District and more than two dozen major San Francisco firms. The program combines a rigorous academic program with mentorships in the partner firms, so that students not only gain new knowledge, but also have the im-

mediate experience of applying that knowledge in a real world setting. Photo: Architect Richard Hannum explains design and construction process to 2006 Build SF students (www.asfs.org)

Partner organization (type)	Potential roles
Tier I institutions (e.g. museums)	Institutional partners like Denver Arts Museum, Denver Center for Performing Arts, Colorado Ballet, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design have created partnerships with Aurora Public Schools that could be replicated in Denver. The Denver Arts Museum has created its own “industry certificate” for participating students.
Universities and institutes of higher learning	A few opportunities here include concurrent enrollment, professional development opportunities to teachers, and open-door opportunities for K-12 students to attend exhibitions and presentations of student projects and student work.
Philanthropic organizations	Philanthropic organizations in Denver have been strong supporters of the arts. This task force believes that an arts education funding collaborative would be a powerful tool to align funding priorities with a larger vision for arts education in Denver.
External providers (e.g. visiting artists or community centers)	There is a rich ecosystem of external organizations in Denver that can provide an array of supports, including arts facilities, visiting artists, and summer and after-school opportunities. These opportunities could be better coordinated so that they increase schools’ capacities.
City of Denver	There are multiple roles that the city could play, from a strategic planning role to incentivizing employers to take an increased role in preparing students for careers in the arts. An expanded role for the city could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Including arts education as an integral part of the Cultural Strategic Plan; -Creating, partnership with SCFD, a community arts enrichment database, drawing from SCFD activities reporting. The city could support initial set up of the database. - Taking on a liaison role to connect all DPS arts education stakeholders, potentially by appointing a creative sector pipeline liaison; -Hosting an annual celebration of art in schools and highlighting arts education in programming and venues.

Partner organization (type)	Potential roles
Scientific Cultural Facilities District (SCFD)	SCFD collects detailed data about how and where external organizations are connecting with Denver students. Right now, the information is in a format that is difficult to access and analyze. There is a valuable opportunity to compile the data into a central database, allowing us to see what kind of educational impact SCFD dollars are having on Denver’s communities. Parents could potentially look up a given school and see what outside opportunities and partnerships the school engages in. A map showing where arts funds are spent could be a valuable tool that would allow us to identify arts “deserts” and ensure widespread access to programs.
Professional Artists and Trades (IATSE, SAG, AFTRA, Actors Equity and Denver Musicians Association)	Professional artists have many roles to play in a well-developed arts education system. “Visiting Artists” programs (artists who perform for students or provide instruction in schools) are one way of including the private sector in arts education. There are other opportunities as well, like linking businesses (like architectural firms) with schools or programs.
State	There might be an opportunity to encourage participation in the arts; or to explore opportunities for alternate teacher licensure in the arts.

(5) Focus on depth verses breadth

Given limited time and money, it is difficult for every school to offer high quality, consistent instruction in multiple artistic disciplines. At best, most students at the elementary level are exposed to a few major art disciplines at an introductory level before entering middle school. At that point, the number of students taking art classes drops off sharply.

The drawback from the student perspective to the “tasting menu” approach is that exposure must be followed by an opportunity (and possibly a requirement) to focus more deeply on one or more disciplines, or there is little artistic development. In some ways, exposure to arts at the elementary level is like taking one or two years of a language. Students may gain enjoyment, cognitive development and learn some of the basics; however, they will never learn the language. From a teacher’s perspective, he or she must be a generalist but rarely has an opportunity to teach at an advanced level. Students should be given the opportunity to pursue their talent on a serious level from an early age, with



Boy shows off paper violin at El Sistema Colorado (ESC) at Garden Place. ESC launched in January, 2012 at Garden Place Elementary, ESC’s pilot at Garden Place, is a combination of during and after-school programming, launched in partnership with The Piton Foundation, and key additional support from other foundations and private donors in Denver. Currently, one hundred four-year-olds and kindergartners participate daily in school (2 to 2.5 hours/week) and 90 first, third and fourth graders participate after-school (10+ hours/week), learning general music, choir and strings. For the after school program, students and parents must commit to daily attendance, as well as one Saturday per month and regular performances in the Denver community. Monika Vischer, Board Chair of ESC (and a member of this task force), insists that the high intensity of the program is non-negotiable because the orchestra “has to have a critical number of hours to have an impact on students.”

the benefit of continuity through high school. At the same time, from a district level, we must disperse types of art programs throughout the city so there is some access from different geographic points. This is a difficult task and few (if any) cities have done it well.

(6) Approaches to curriculum and instruction

Specific approaches to arts education may be articulated further in a strategic plan, and may frequently be determined at the school level. However, because they frequently came up in discussion during task force meetings, it is worth mentioning here. For example, many in the group felt strongly that arts integration into most subjects was the best approach, including integrating the arts into STEM schools (STEAM). Others believe we need more arts-specific schools accessible to all students, and/or that schools ought not to try to be experts in every art field but instead focus on a couple of things that they can develop. For example, every student who attends “Acme” Elementary School studies the piano and drawing, and can do both well by the sixth grade. Perhaps the best way to move forward would be to require schools to determine their own approach, but to be very specific about which approach they are taking. They might, for example, choose to identify themselves as:

- 1) Arts Integration School: e.g. Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math STEAM**
- 2) Creative Industries School: e.g. Career Technical Education (CTE) leading to industry or CTE Certificates**
- 3) School with One or Two highly specific arts concentrations**
- 4) School with Arts instruction separate from other disciplines**
- 5) Visual and Performing Arts Mastery School**

The crucial element is that each is done well. To increase the probability that this will happen, DPS (or the larger arts community) should clearly define what each approach looks like at the school and classroom level, and then monitor execution of the model.

(7) Increased transparency and communication with parents and students

Right now, a complaint of parents is that they do not know what kind of arts education is available in schools. What schools have the best band programs? Where should I send my child if he is interested in ceramics? There is a need for a more transparent system, whether that be online or a part of the school choice literature that parents receive. Parents should be able to easily learn each school's approach to the arts, including both internal programs and the external (before/after school opportunities) programs that are offered. A tool should provide a level of detail that parents need for practical reasons (e.g. do I have to buy my own instrument?). To get to a place where this kind of transparency is possible and helpful, the necessary components likely include: (1) a central database, (2) a director level position within the district responsible for overseeing arts education, and (3) capacity building opportunities for schools, particularly principals. Along with the database, the district might consider adding a section to the SPF framework that includes the arts.

School Survey

Percent of students at this school who reported on the 2011-2012 School Survey that they participated in the following types of arts courses by arts discipline:

Arts Discipline	TOOK ONE OR MORE CLASSES DURING SCHOOL DAY		WERE OFFERED, BUT DID NOT TAKE CLASS DURING SCHOOL DAY		WAS NOT OFFERED THE CLASS	
	This School	All Schools	This School	All Schools	This School	All Schools
Dance	5 %	17 %	21 %	24 %	74 %	59 %
Music	45 %	36 %	38 %	20 %	17 %	44 %
Theater	27 %	15 %	42 %	23 %	31 %	61 %
Visual Arts	58 %	46 %	31 %	18 %	12 %	36 %

Excerpt from New York City Public Schools report card released annually to parents of every school. Entire report card can be found at: http://schools.nyc.gov/documents/ArtsReport/2011-12/ArtsReport_Q172.pdf

(8) Increased accountability for dollars

Mill-levy accountability should be part of the continuing conversation about resources for the arts. Current guidelines include stipulations that funds be “used to staff arts FTE positions only” and that, “teacher allocations are for arts instructors that are licensed, endorsed, or highly qualified, in visual art, music, dance, and/or drama and implement standards-based instruction.”

Moving forward we must both rethink current parameters and be more vigilant about monitoring them. Money should be allocated according to what will have the greatest positive impact on student learning in the arts. Along with the number of arts teachers (now the primary measurement), we should also look at the number of and type of classes--what assessments students are taking, and how students are performing. We should know exactly how much we are spending and where and what the return on investment is (measured by proficiency and participation in the arts, career interests, declared majors at the postsecondary level, etc.)²³ To monitor progress and provide fiscal oversight, we recommend that:

- (1) An oversight council be formed (or that an existing group be tasked) with fiscal oversight. Such a council would also be responsible for the transparency, communication, and funding issues addressed elsewhere.
- (2) An “advocate” role be assigned to someone with access to the district but also some independence. This position could be live, for example, in the DPS Foundation. The Oversight Council and Independent Advocate could be combined into a broadly representative group, such as exists to represent students with special needs.

(9) Increased funding

A+ strongly supports passage of the 2012 bond and mill. We recommend that the strategic planning committee have access to all spending, including both the General Fund and Mill dollars. Specific funding recommendations include:

- Manage the mill according to specific outcomes, including what students know and can do in the arts;
- Create a designated funding source for arts education;
- Ensure that all schools, including current arts-focused schools, are included in the mill funding;
- Incentivize SCFD funded organization to contribute to arts education, prioritize arts education collaboratives, and focus resources into specific schools/areas/initiatives;
- Perform a cost benefit analysis that includes cost projections.

Conclusion

A+ believes that the arts are a critical part of child's education, and that Denver has a unique opportunity to excel where other urban districts have not. This work has just begun, and with increased support and a clear plan for arts education, we believe Denver will become a national exemplar.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix A: An international look

International comparison²⁴

Almost every developed country, including the US, has arts standards for students through the 12th grade. However, the degree to which these are adopted and assessed varies in the US because our school systems are so decentralized. Most other developed countries place equal emphasis on music and the visual arts, utilize a national curriculum that includes the arts, and implement standards and assessments requiring arts instruction through the 12th grade.

The following information has been summarized and quoted from data provided by The College Board. (Some of the data on Finland was researched independently.)

Australia

The standards form a part of the arts curriculum set forth in very fine detail. Visual art, media arts, music, dance and drama comprise the arts curriculum. The curriculum is generally organized according to three strands of learning in art: generating, realizing, and responding

The Australian arts curriculum could be considered as exemplary in the breadth of its scope, the considerable attention dedicated to defining its own language, and the lengths it goes to recognizing the differences in abilities and learning opportunities at the different age/grade levels. It considers the importance of the arts in the roles they may play in other parts of the general curriculum: literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, cross-cultural and environmental awareness, and social and ethical development. Uniquely among the countries studied, it provides a link for a comprehensive documentation and explanation of the research that informs the curriculum.

160 hours are dedicated to arts instruction in K-8. 9-12 students choose specialization.

Austria

Arts standards include: visual arts, visual media and environmental design and everyday aesthetics, including architecture, urban design, historical preservation, pop culture, and several others. Music education for grades 1-2 and 3-4 is divided into six subject matter "core areas": vocal music, instrumental music, movement (includes dance), creation, listening, and basic knowledge. Music and visual arts education is mandatory in grades 1-4 in 6 areas, and students may choose to specialize in secondary school. Typically this is extra-curricular, but *2 arts classes per week are mandated in addition to extra-curricular activities.*

Canada

Standards include: dance, drama, music, visual arts.

The Ontario Curriculum in the arts defines “curriculum expectations” – the knowledge and skills that students are expected to have at the end of each grade level: 1-3, 4-6, 7 and 8. Each grade level is organized into 4 strands representing the four forms of art encompassed by the curriculum.

Assessment addresses how evaluations should be conducted at different grade levels and the actual criteria to be considered. Instructional strategies are discussed in detail in a separate section. Categories of skills and knowledge to be assessed are: Knowledge and Understanding; Thinking; Communication; and Application.

China

For the visual arts, the standards appear to have been divided into two related categories: “fine art” and “art.”

Music objectives are addressed in categories as well: attitude and values, process and method, and knowledge and skills. Specific standards are outlined by grade band.

Students take 9 years compulsory visual arts and music education.

Finland

Standards include music, literary arts, dance, performance arts (circus and theater), visual arts, and crafts.

At both primary and secondary school levels there is a focus on architecture and on visual culture: comic strips, advertising, the mixture of text and image. The standards are divided by grade bands (grades 1-4, 5-9, and Secondary School), and within each band there are learning objectives, notes on core contents, and assessment guidelines.

Music, visual arts, and craft are addressed in the National Core Curriculum. The curriculum is divided into grades 1-4, 5-9, and secondary school.

Assessment criteria varies in each category at each grade band. At the early grades, for example, students must participate in group singing and know how to sing, following a melody line and with the correct rhythm. By the end of 8th grade they "know the fundamentals of visual communication and media technology: photography or video photography, the processing of digital images, and graphic design" and can "design a meaningful product that is polished, ecological, and aesthetically pleasing."

Japan

Japan encourages a love for the arts by enhancing appreciation for the arts, cultivating fundamental abilities, and enriching sentiments.

Mandated hours of instruction in the arts decline through the primary and secondary school years from a high of *70 hours each for Arts and Handicrafts and Music in the second primary year down to 50 hours each by the 6th year to a low of 35 hours each by the end of the third year of secondary school.* Students in upper secondary school usually complete an elective from among Music, Fine Arts, Crafts Production, and Calligraphy.

Singapore

Singapore's learning standards for visual arts are: Fine Art, Design, and Digital Media and Music.

Singapore's national art curriculum includes extensive and fairly well-defined assessment tools. The guiding principles for the design of assessment are appropriateness (tools and methods are well related to what is taught); consistency (objectivity of criteria carried out over time); and timeliness.

UK

Art and Music standards are determined for each band (stage) ages 5-16. The National Curriculum links learning in the arts to spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Each key stage has an "attainment target" that sets out the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils of different abilities and maturities are expected to have by the end of each key stage.

Appendix B: Cities around the country

Highlights from other US cities²⁵

Los Angeles

As of the 2011-2012 school year, 48 of LA County's 81 districts and 14 charters joined a collaboration that serves 560,465 students, called Arts for All. Their goals are to: achieve "a school board-adopted arts education policy and plan, district-level Arts Coordinator, funding specifically allocated for arts education from the general budget, and a student to credentialed art teacher ratio of no more than 400 to 1." They focus on quality as defined by 16 quality indicators, under the categories of pedagogy, student learning, environment, and community.²⁶ Program elements include professional development for teachers provided by outside partners such as theater companies and the LA performing arts center. The "Leadership Fellows" program--which targets superintendents to principals and aims to encourage regional learning communities, policy planning, data collection and reporting, connecting teachers to artists in residency through a database and Community Arts Teams--is described here:

"Arts for All's arts education planning process begins with the formation of a Community Arts Team (CAT) comprised of stakeholders from within the school district and the community. CATs can include board of education members, district and school administrators, parents, students, teachers, artists and arts organization representatives. The inclusiveness of the CAT is important because the crafting and approval of arts education policy and plan create consensus on a vision and provide a roadmap for achieving goals. Shared leadership and collaboration are key to building strong arts education programming... CAT works with strategic planning coaches provided by Arts for All. Coaches guide the Community Arts Team in key focus areas including standards-based curriculum design, student assessment, professional development, instruction, methodology and building partnerships."²⁷

Philadelphia

Art Rising is a "community-wide effort to improve and expand equitable access to high quality arts education opportunities for children in the Greater Philadelphia Region."

"In 2008, city and area leaders saw that the quality of education for all Greater Philadelphia's youth had to be increased in order to keep the region vibrant and competitive in a world economy. Over the course of a year, more than 100 individuals and organizations came together to discuss to address the urgent need of integrating the arts into the

education of all youth in Greater Philadelphia. Responding to this unprecedented call to action, the Philadelphia Education Fund, Fleisher Art Memorial and Public Citizens for Children and Youth formed a unique strategic partnership and created ArtsRising. The organization works:

- In Schools to Ensure Access to a High-Quality Education Inclusive of the Arts for Every Child.
- In Communities to Celebrate Our City's Thriving Neighborhoods.
- In Life to Engage Young People and Prepare Them for Success in School and Beyond.”

Arts Rising connects students to activities and summer programs, provides professional development for teachers, and advocates for funding in 7 schools - called “arts Zones.” The zones are key to the Arts Rising’s efforts and are “areas anchored by schools that are linked integrally to their surrounding neighborhoods and arts resources in the communities and the larger city. ArtsRising has focused on middle schools because it is in these critical years that children fall off track to high school graduation.” Within the zones, the organization focuses on: “Arts Integrated Teaching – including learning in the classroom and during out-of-school time for students; Exposure to and Participation in Arts Experiences – for students in school, during out-of-school time and at locations other than the student’s school; Professional Development – activities that build capacity for classroom teachers certified arts teachers and independent and/or organization-based teaching artists; and Pathways of Engagement for Families and Neighborhoods – ways for parents and community members to influence policy, advocate for and celebrate the arts and arts education.”²⁸

Portland, Oregon

The Right Brain Initiative “is a community-wide partnership of schools, private donors, artists, local government, cultural groups and everyday citizens.” They work in five Portland districts with about 30 schools to “provide a roster of skilled artists, fundraising assistance to schools through Run for The Arts and special project grants, professional development workshops for artists and teachers and advocacy for the arts.” Within the schools, “teachers and artists work together as a team to develop arts-integrated learning experiences, coached by The Right Brain Initiative staff.”²⁹

“The vision of the program is to give every K-8 student in the region access to the arts regardless of neighborhood, language, or income. The program does not replace existing arts education in the school setting. Instead, the arts are woven into core curriculum, giving teachers new tools to engage students in a creative process that connects back to other subjects.”³⁰

Minneapolis

The district works with a nonprofit called AchieveMinneapolis, which has supported them in fundraising and implementing an arts integration program called Arts for Academic Achievement (AAA). According to their 2006-2009 Comprehensive Arts Plan, AAA calls on the talents of over 5,000 artists. As part of the program, “students and teachers collaborate with diverse artists in theater, dance, visual art, music, creative writing, and media arts on projects that create ‘arts-rich’ classrooms and schools.” Nearly 100 arts institutions support or collaborate with AchieveMinneapolis and the district.

City	District Partners	Elements	Funding
Los Angeles	Arts For All: led by LA County Arts Commission	<p>Community Arts Teams - assessments, curriculum, instruction</p> <p>Professional development (provided by theater companies, LA performing arts center, etc)</p> <p>Leadership Fellows program - targets district leaders and principals</p> <p>Policy planning and advocacy</p> <p>Data collection and reporting</p> <p>Connecting teachers to artists in residency</p>	<p>Pooled fund of approximately 30 foundations and corporations, such as Sony and Boeing.</p> <p>National grant (NEA, DOE)</p> <p>(\$600,000 annual budget)</p>
Philadelphia	Arts Rising: led by Philadelphia Education Fund, Fleisher Art Memorial and Public Citizens for Children and Youth	<p>Arts Zones: middle schools that serve as hubs and exemplars</p> <p>Professional Development</p> <p>Connecting schools to neighborhood arts organizations & artists in residency</p> <p>Advocacy</p>	<p>10-15 foundations and corporations (e.g. PECO Energy, Wallace Foundation)</p> <p>(\$846,000 annual budget)</p>
Portland	The Right Brain Initiative managed by the Regional Arts and Culture Council; partners include Young Audiences, Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Harvard Project Zero	<p>Once organization identifies schools with which it will work,</p> <p>(1) an arts planning team is created, consisting of two teachers, an administrator, and an arts specialist. Each school is matched with an Arts Integration Facilitator from the Right Brain staff.</p> <p>(2) Ongoing professional development is provided for planning teams and teaching artists.</p> <p>(3) School planning teams identify learning goals and select an artist (or artists) from the Right Brain artist roster.</p> <p>(4) selected artist(s) and school arts team co-plan student experiences to ensure appropriate curriculum connections to meet learning goals</p>	<p>Corporations, foundations, individuals, and public entities (including \$15/student pd by district at participating schools)</p> <p>(\$816,000)</p>

City	District Partners	Elements	Funding
Dallas	Thriving Minds managed by Big Thought partnering with City of Dallas, Dallas Independent School District and 100 cultural and community organizations	31 free after school enrichment campuses (in visual and performing arts, science and technology) Summer camps Fine arts instruction in schools Curriculum Professional development (to teachers and artists)	Corporations, government and foundations, including IBM, city of Dallas, BOA, Ford, Wallace (\$40 million)

Many cities that have made arts education a priority have several common elements, including:

- A lead community organization that works with the school district and coordinates a host of other organizations, schools, artists and institutions
- Fundraising efforts that rely heavily on foundations, corporations, and government in some cases
- Emphasis on professional development led by outside organizations
- Reliance on visiting artists or artists in residency
- Emphasis on engaging community groups and organizations to increase school capacity
- Emphasis on summer and after-school programs or centers

Appendix C: Community based organizations

Partnering with community-based arts programs is one way to increase efficiency and access to arts programming for students. DAVA, or Downtown Aurora Visual Arts, mentioned above (funded by the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) and grants), has been operating for nearly 20 years and offers after-school and summer programs for youth in Aurora. DAVA serves about 1,000 kids per year on-site and 900 in schools through their outreach program. Programs are free and serve children ages 3-17, covering everything from painting to pottery and video. They offer Family Arts, the OASIS Open Studio, a middle school Job Training in the Arts program, and an outreach program. Student work is shown in the DAVA Gallery. DAVA hosts guest artists, recruits and trains volunteers/interns, and partners with outside groups such as the Colorado Film School. The organization also provides support around college applications and art portfolios for high school students.

Approximately 11,000 of Aurora's students participate in after-school programs aimed at enriching the school day with programming that includes music, arts, and academics. Some of these programs provide serious and valuable programming and others are more like daycare settings. There may be opportunity to target and scale the strongest of these arts (and other) programs to ensure access to exceptional, focused and high intensity instruction on a consistent basis over five or ten years. This kind of intensity is more likely to result in students who have truly mastered and engaged in that specific discipline.

A new program, El Sistema Colorado (ESC), launched in January, 2012 at Garden Place Elementary, a DPS Title 1 school where 98% of the student population is on free or reduced lunch. ESC is inspired by the highly regarded orchestral program developed in Caracas, Venezuela over 35 years ago and recently featured on CBS's *60 Minutes*. Distinguished by providing free access to all students with intensive ensemble instruction, El Sistema is changing the lives of hundreds of thousands of children, their families and communities in Venezuela. *The London Times* recently named their top youth orchestra in Venezuela as one of the finest in the world. El Sistema Colorado's pilot at Garden Place, a combination of during and after-school programming, was launched in partnership with The Piton Foundation along with key support from other foundations and private donors in Denver. Currently, one hundred four-year-olds and kindergartners participate daily in school (2 to 2.5 hours/week) and 90 first, third and fourth graders participate after school (10+ hours/week), learning general music, choir and strings. For the after school program, students and parents must commit to daily attendance, as well as one Saturday per month and regular performances in the Denver community. Monika Vischer, Board Chair of ESC (and a member of this task force), insists that the high intensity of the program is non-negotiable because the orchestra "has to have a critical number of hours in order to have an impact on students."

By fall 2013, ESC at Garden Place will grow to 260 students with a full orchestra, serving all grade levels, ECE through 5th grade. Participants remain in the orchestra/choir through high school graduation while also mentoring younger students. El Sistema Colorado's current cost is approximately \$1800 per student (or \$150 per month). Per student

costs are estimated to fall as the program grows. By comparison, Kaleidoscope (one current after school program in DPS) costs approximately \$300 per month in tuition for 5 days of before and after school care. While Kaleidoscope's fees may be competitive with other childcare providers, we use this example because it suggests that providing strong arts instruction after school could actually cost less than providing more traditional childcare.

Another interesting after school program in DPS has been created at Bryant Webster (K-8) and features a mariachi band and Ballet Folklórico. The program is intensive and well-regarded. However, like El Sistema, it is specific to just one school and the opportunities for students to continue studying music at the same intensity once they leave the schools is limited (El Sistema plans to allow students to remain in the orchestra after 5th grade if they choose to take a bus back to the school).

Appendix D: Colorado Arts Standards

Colorado State Standards: Drama

1. Create
 - a. Use a variety of methods, new media, and technology to create theatrical works through the use of the creative process for performance, directing, design, construction, choreography, playwriting, scriptwriting, and dramaturgy
 - b. Create drama and theatre by interpreting and appreciating theatrical works, culture, and experience through scenes and scenarios, improvisation, creating environments, purposeful movement, and research
2. Perform
 - a. Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles
 - b. Express drama and theatre arts skills in a variety of performances, including plays, monologues, improvisation, purposeful movement, scenes, design, technical craftsmanship, media, ensemble works, and public speaking
 - c. Demonstrate the evolution of rehearsal and product through performance and/or production teamwork while simultaneously validating both as essential to the theatre making process
3. Critically Respond
 - a. Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of theatre history, dramatic structure, dramatic literature, elements of style, genre, artistic theory, script analysis, and roles of theatre practitioners through research and application
 - b. Discern and demonstrate appropriate theatre etiquette and content for the audience, self, venue, technician, and performer
 - c. Make informed, critical evaluations of theatrical performance from an audience member and a participant point of view, and develop a framework for making informed theatrical choices

Colorado State Standards: Music

1. Expression of Music
 - a. Employ musical skills through a variety of means, including singing, playing instruments, and purposeful movement
 - b. Demonstrate the expressive elements of music – including melody, harmony, rhythm, style, genre, texture, voicing/instrumentation, mood, tonality, and form – through voice, musical instruments, and/or the use of electronic tools
 - c. Perform music with appropriate technique and level of expression at an appropriate level of difficulty in sight reading and prepared performance
 - d. Demonstrate the processes of development of musical literature from rehearsal to performance, exhibiting appropriate interpersonal and expressive skills, both individually and within ensembles

2. Create Music

- a. Create music by composing and/or arranging what is heard or envisioned, in notated or non-notated form, with or without the use of music technology, demonstrating originality and technical understanding
- b. Display instrumental or vocal improvisation skills by performing extemporaneously what is created in the mind

3. Theory of music

- a. Read and employ the language and vocabulary of music in discussing musical examples and writing music, including technology related to melody, harmony, rhythm, style, genre, voicing/orchestration, mood, tonality, expression, and form
- b. Demonstrate melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic aural skills through identification, transcription, and vocalization or instrumental playback of aural musical examples

4. Aesthetic Valuation

- a. Make informed, critical evaluations of the effectiveness of musical works and performances on the basis of aesthetic qualities, technical excellence, musicality, or convincing expression of feelings and ideas related to cultural and ideological associations
- b. Develop a framework for making informed personal musical choices, and utilize that framework in the making and defending of musical choices
- c. Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of aesthetics in music, appropriate to the particular features of given styles and genres, as it relates to the human experience in music
- d. Know the place of each of the participants in the performance environment and practice appropriate audience participation; recognize the place and importance of music in life

Colorado State Standards: Visual Arts

1. Observe and Learn to Comprehend

- e. Recognize, articulate, and debate that the visual arts are a means for expression
- f. Make informed critical evaluations of visual and material culture, information, and technologies
- g. Analyze, interpret, and make meaning of art and design critically using oral and written discourse
- h. Explain, demonstrate, and interpret a range of purposes of art and design, recognizing that the making and study of art and design can be approached from a variety of viewpoints, intelligences, and perspectives

5. Envision and Critique to Reflect

- a. Recognize, demonstrate, and debate philosophic arguments about the nature of art and beauty
- b. Recognize, demonstrate, and debate the place of art and design in history and culture
- c. Use specific criteria to discuss and evaluate works of art
- d. Critique personal work and the work of others with informed criteria
- e. Recognize, articulate, and implement critical thinking in the visual arts by synthesizing, evaluating, and analyzing visual information

3. Invent and Discover to Create

- c. Recognize, interpret, and validate that the creative process builds on the development of ideas through a process of inquiry, discovery, and research
- d. Develop and build appropriate mastery in art-making skills using traditional and new technologies and an understanding of the characteristics and expressive features of art and design
- e. Create works of art that articulate more sophisticated ideas, feelings, emotions, and points of view about art and design through an expanded use of media and technologies
- f. Recognize, compare, and affirm that the making and study of art and design can be approached from a variety of view points, intelligences, and perspectives

4. Relate and Connect to Transfer

- c. Identify, compare, and interpret works of art derived from historical and cultural settings, time periods, and cultural context
- d. Identify, compare and justify that the visual arts are a way to acknowledge, exhibit and learn about the diversity of peoples, cultures and ideas
- e. Transfer the value of visual arts to lifelong learning and the human experience
- f. Explain, compare and justify that the visual arts are connected to other disciplines, the other art forms, social activities, mass media, and careers in art and non-art related arenas

Dance

1. Movement Technique and Performance

- a. Understand that dance performance requires technical competency
- b. Demonstrate competence and confidence in performing a variety of dance styles and genres
- c. Demonstrate awareness of fitness, wellness, and the body's potential for movement
- d. Participate in a dance production
- e. Demonstrate thinking skills such as describing, analyzing, interpreting, evaluating, and problem-solving through dance movement and verbal discussion

2. Create, Compose, Choreograph

- b. Demonstrate and use the principles and practices of choreography in the creative process
- c. Improvise and create movement based on an intent or meaning
- d. Demonstrate an understanding of form and structure to create dances
- e. Demonstrate thinking skills such as describing, analyzing, interpreting, evaluating, and problem-solving through dance movement and verbal discussion

3. Historical and cultural context

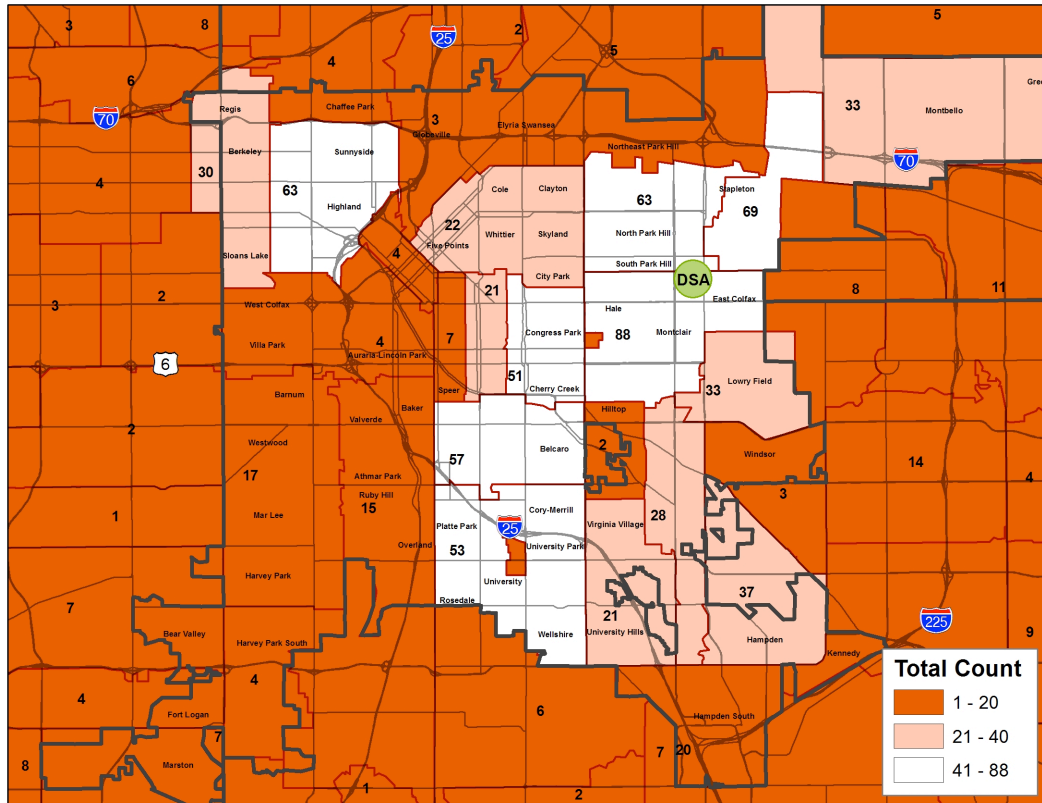
- b. Understand and appreciate a dance in terms of the culture in which it is performed
- c. Explore and perform dance styles from various cultures and times
- d. Demonstrate thinking skills such as describing, analyzing, interpreting, evaluating, and problem-solving through dance movement and verbal discussion

4. Reflect, connect, respond

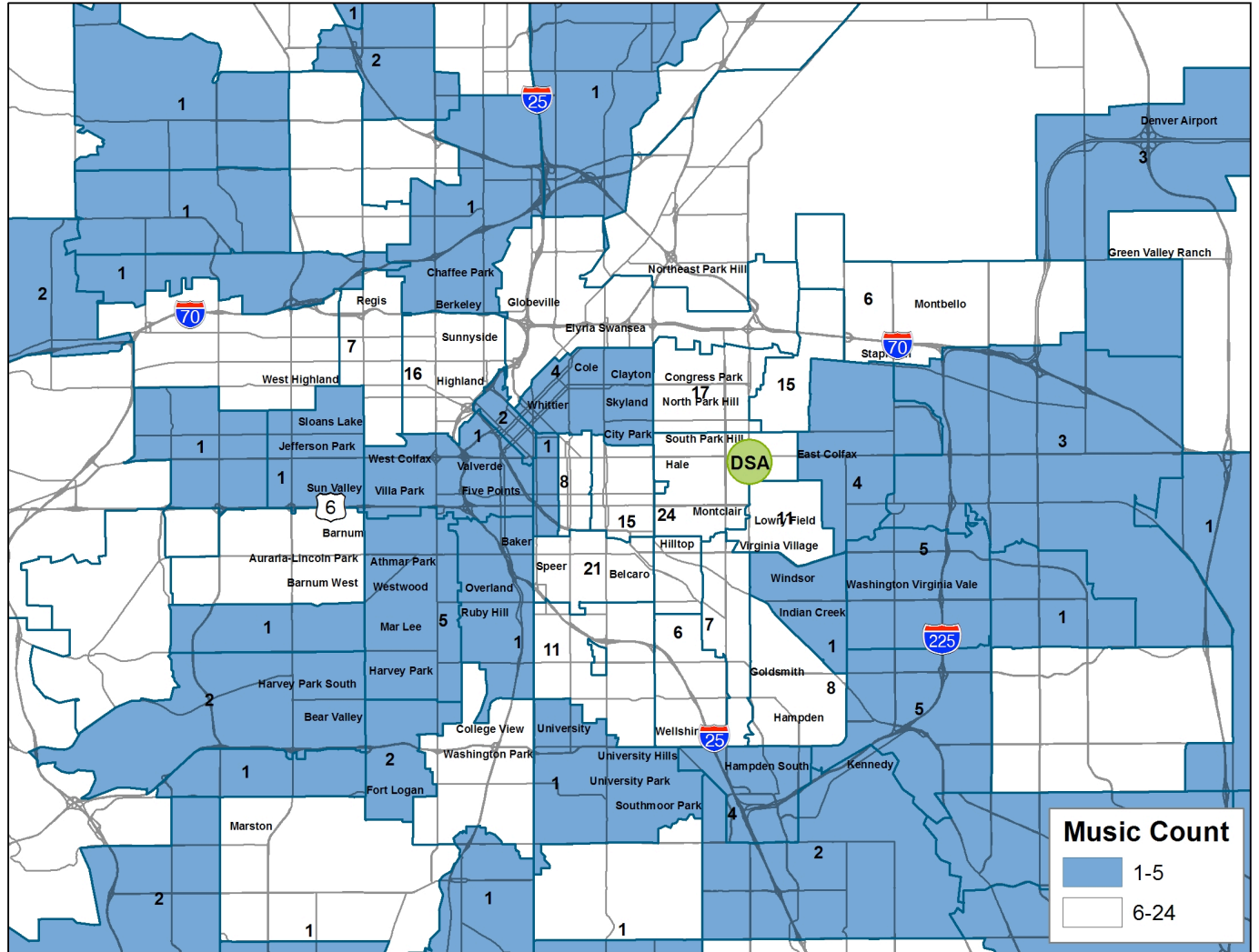
- b. Use criticism and analysis to reflect upon and understand new works, reconstructions, and masterpieces
- c. Discover connections to academic content areas, social activities, mass media, and
- d. careers
- e. Demonstrate thinking skills such as describing, analyzing, interpreting, evaluating, and problem-solving through dance movement and verbal discussion

Appendix E: Denver School of the Arts Feeder Patterns

All Students



Music Majors



Endnotes

- ¹ Greene, Maxine. "The Aesthetic And The Artistic In Aesthetic Education." Maxine Green, 2009. Web. 11 June 2012. <http://wik.ed.uiuc.edu/index.php/Aesthetic_Education>.
- ² President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. "PCAH Launches the Turnaround: Arts Initiative to Help Improve Low-Performing Schools." President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. United States Government, n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2012.
- ³ Linkage of Arts to Student Achievement, Denver Public Schools (7/11/12)
- ⁴ Gazzaniga, Michael. "Learning, Arts, and the Brain," The Dana Consortium Report. Dana Press, NY. 2008.
- ⁵ Trei, Lisa. "Musical training helps people process language more efficiently" News release, Stanford Press Office. Web. 12 Aug. 2012. <http://news.stanford.edu/pr/2005/pr-music-111605.html>
- ⁶ Klass, Perri. Early Music Lessons Have Longtime Benefits. Web 12 Sept 2012. <http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/10/early-music-lessons-have-longtime-benefits/?src=me&ref=general>
- ⁷ Root-Berstein, Robert. "Arts Foster Scientific Success," Springer Publishing Co., Journal of Psychology and Science and Technology, Vol. 1, No. 2. 2008 Web. 12 Aug. 2012. <http://www.ippsr.msu.edu/ppie/Presentations/Successes.pdf>
- ⁸ President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. "PCAH Launches the Turnaround: Arts Initiative to Help Improve Low-Performing Schools." President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. United States Government, n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2012.
- ⁹ Lichtenberg, Jim, Christopher Wook, and Mary Wright. "Ready to Innovate." Ready to Innovate: Are Educators and Executives Aligned on the Creative Readiness of the U.S. Workforce? The Conference Board, Mar. 2008. Web. 11 June 2012. <<http://www.conference-board.org/publications/publicationdetail.cfm?publicationid=1452>>.
- ¹⁰ While we don't know of any surveys that have validated claims of the "Colorado Paradox" in the creative enterprises, anecdotal evidence suggests that we import much of our creative talent.
- ¹¹ Another new ingredient in Colorado's P-20 educational continuum has been the development of the ICAP or Individual Career and Academic Plan: all 8th grade DPS students take a set of career interest assessments and attend a Career Fair which features professionals from all 17 of Colorado's recognized Career Clusters, including the arts. Emerging studies prove that students with established career plans are more likely to persist through high school and college into productive careers: the arts consistently rank in the top 5 career interests. With the Governor's recognition of Colorado's Creative Industries as a Key Industry Cluster, career interest assessment complements the assessment of academic proficiency and learning and life skills.
- ¹² President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. "PCAH Launches the Turnaround: Arts Initiative to Help Improve Low-Performing Schools." President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. United States Government, n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2012.
- ¹³ Rising Above the Gathering Storm." Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future. The National Academies Press, 2007. Web. 11 June 2012. <http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=11463>.

¹⁴ Denver has pockets of excellent art programs. Some of these include mariachi, ballet and puppetry. New arts-focused schools and programs are regularly coming online. There are several new arts focused schools that show promise though they have yet to demonstrate academic success. For example, Noel will begin adding more arts programs with support from a national grant. Kunsmiller serves 770 students (so far) and offers students - most of whom are from low-income families - an opportunity to spend large blocks of time studying a combination of fine arts (e.g. sculpture) and technical arts (e.g. technical theater). Smith Renaissance School and Cole Arts and Science both differentiate themselves based on an arts focus. A few academically strong schools with reputable arts programs include Odyssey, Brown, McMeen, Montclair, Steck, Steele, Lincoln, Cory and Polaris. Colorado Early College (CEC) has programs driven by the creative industries. Over the past two years, East High School, traditionally recognized for its film program, has tripled the number of students taking the AP Studio Art; and almost a third of the arts students are pursuing art at the collegiate level. A handful of students are attending Rhode Island School of Design, California College of Art, Art Center in Pasadena and San Francisco Art Institute. These are just a few examples. A+ believes we can build on these successes, scale the strongest programs, and create new ones so that we ensure accessibility, quality, a pipeline and high academic rigor.

¹⁵ DYAO received applications from 85 DPS students and accepted 75 of those. 12 students from DPS applied for financial aid

¹⁶<http://www.dpsk12.org/policies/Policy.aspx?-db=policy.fp3&-format=detail.html&-lay=policyview&-sortfield=File&File=IKF&-recid=32846&-find=>

¹⁷ Teacher evaluations based on the “Leading Effective Academic Practice” framework (LEAP) are being developed and piloted to measure quality teaching in the classrooms, including arts classes. The LEAP framework is part of a series of initiatives by DPS to empower educators. Assessing instruction has the powerful potential to improve teaching and learning, but is much more effective if student learning is simultaneously measured.

¹⁸ See appendix D for Colorado’s arts standards

¹⁹ Gallagher, H.A., Campbell, A.Z., Esch, C.E., Malin, H., Mayes, N., & Woodworth, K.R. (2008). An unfinished canvas. Allocating funding and instructional time for elementary arts education. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International (ex. 5)

²⁰ Three primary ways organizations and institutions (like orchestras and museums) become connected to schools are: 1. schools themselves develop relationships with community organizations; 2. DPS’ Arts Department publishes events and opportunities on its website (including a list of available community resources), reaches out to schools directly; 3. The Scientific and Cultural Collaborative (part of SCFD) publishes an annual catalogue for teachers that lists SCFD partners and potential opportunities for students.

²¹ Denver Public Schools website <http://arts.dpsk12.org/>

²² <http://2010denverplan.dpsk12.org/pdf/Final2010Denver%20Plan.pdf>

²³ Department of Labor and Employment collects this information but it has been thus far inaccessible

²⁴ The College Board, International Arts Education Standards: A survey of the arts education standards and practices of fifteen countries and regions, New York, NY, August 2011.

²⁵ Culbert, Jane. Arts and Cultural Education: A Survey of Model Programs. WolfBrown, May 2011.

²⁶ Arts for all: Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education. “Defining School Level Quality in Arts Education” http://www.lacountyartsforall.org/docs/downloads/2011/04/11/afa-school_level_indicators.pdf

²⁷ <http://lacountyartsforall.org/for-school-districts/district-community-arts-teams>

²⁸ <http://www.myartsrising.org/artszones>

²⁹ <http://therightbraininitiative.org/about-the-right-brain-initiative/who-we-are/schools/>

³⁰ Culbert, Jane. Arts and Cultural Education: A Survey of Model Programs. WolfBrown, May 2011.