

# An Unfinished Canvas



## Allocating Funding and Instructional Time for Elementary Arts Education



Research conducted by SRI International

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# **Allocating Funding and Instructional Time for Elementary Arts Education**

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# PROLOGUE: KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM *AN UNFINISHED CANVAS*

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In early 2007, SRI International released the results of a statewide study on the status of arts education in California under the title *An Unfinished Canvas. Arts Education in California: Taking Stock of Policy and Practice*. The findings from that study became the impetus for this comparative examination of funding and instructional time dedicated to elementary arts education. A summary of key findings and recommendations from *An Unfinished Canvas* follows.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Overview of Arts Education in California

- 89% of California K-12 schools fail to offer a standards-based course of study in all four disciplines—music, visual arts, theatre, and dance—and thus fall short of state goals for arts education.
- Methods of delivering arts instruction vary by school level, often resulting in a limited experience at the elementary level and limited participation at the secondary level.
- 61% of schools do not have even one full-time-equivalent arts specialist, although secondary schools are much more likely than elementary schools to employ specialists.
- At the elementary level, arts instruction is often left to regular classroom teachers, who rarely have adequate training.
- Arts facilities and materials are lacking in most schools.
- Standards alignment, assessment, and accountability practices are uneven in arts education, and often not present at all.

### Arts Education in Elementary Schools

- 90% of elementary schools fail to provide a standards-aligned course of study across all four arts disciplines.
- Elementary students who receive arts education in California typically have a limited, less substantial experience than their peers across the country.
- Inadequate elementary arts education provides a weak foundation for more advanced arts courses in the upper grades.

### Arts Education in Middle and High Schools

- 96% of California middle schools and 72% of high schools fail to offer standards-aligned courses of study in all four arts disciplines.
- Secondary arts education is more intense and substantial than elementary arts education, but participation is limited.

### Change Over Time in Arts Enrollment

- Enrollment in arts courses has remained stable over the last 5 years, with the exception of music, which has seen a dramatic decline.

### Unequal Access to Arts Education

- Students attending high-poverty schools have less access to arts instruction than their peers in more affluent communities.

## **Barriers to Meeting the State's Arts Education Goals**

- Inadequate state funding for education is a top barrier to the provision of arts education, and reliance on outside funding sources, such as parent groups, creates inequities.
- Pressure to improve test scores in other content areas is another top barrier to arts education.
- At the elementary level, lack of instructional time, arts expertise, and materials are also significant barriers to arts education.

## **Sources of Support for Arts Education**

- Districts and counties can play a strong role in arts education, but few do.
- Schools are increasingly partnering with external organizations, but few partnerships result in increased school capacity to provide sequential, standards-based arts instruction.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **State Policy-Makers**

- Increase and stabilize education funding so that districts can develop and support a standards-based course of study in each of the four arts disciplines.
- Strengthen accountability in arts education by requiring districts to report on the arts instruction provided, student learning in the arts, and providers of arts instruction, and by supporting the development of appropriate, standards-aligned assessments for use at the state and district levels.
- Rethink instructional time to accommodate the state's goals for meeting proficiency in English-language arts and math, while still providing access to a broader curriculum that includes the arts.
- Improve teacher professional development in arts education, especially at the elementary level, and consider credential reforms.
- Provide technical assistance to build districts' capacity to offer comprehensive, standards-based arts programs.

### **School and District Leaders**

- Establish the infrastructure needed to support arts programs by developing a long-range strategic plan for arts education, dedicating resources and staff, and providing for the ongoing evaluation of arts programs.
- Signal to teachers, parents, and students that the arts are a core subject by providing professional development for teachers and establishing assessment and accountability systems for arts education.

### **Parents**

- Ask about student learning and progress in the arts, and participate in school and district efforts to improve and expand arts education.
- Advocate for comprehensive arts education at the state and local levels.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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*An Unfinished Canvas* found that California’s elementary schools face unique challenges in providing all students with sequential, standards-based arts education. In particular, elementary principals identified inadequate funding and insufficient instructional time as significant barriers to the provision of arts education. For this study, we sought to further understand the impact of funding and time on elementary arts education. To do so, we examined the allocation of funding and instructional time in 10 schools across five states (Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, and California). Below is a summary of key findings.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Instructional Time Allocated for Elementary Arts Education

- Few California elementary schools offer sequential, standards-based instruction in both music and visual arts. Furthermore, many California elementary schools offer arts programs to only a portion of the student body. The exemplar schools offer instruction in both music and visual arts to 100% of their students, beginning in kindergarten.
- Typical California elementary schools and most of the exemplar schools devote little time to theatre and dance.
- Schools in other states may have more time for arts instruction because they have longer school days.
- In other states, elementary classroom teachers’ preparation periods are often used for instruction by arts teachers.
- A few exemplar schools “save time” by integrating arts instruction with other subject areas—an approach that appears to require ample support to be successful.

### Funding Allocated for Elementary Arts Education

- California lags behind the national average on per-pupil educational spending and also appears to spend less per pupil on elementary arts education.
- In the exemplar schools, the bulk of arts spending goes toward arts teachers’ salaries. In contrast, most California elementary schools do not allocate enough funding to arts education to pay for full-time arts teachers. The recent California allocation for arts education is insufficient to pay for arts teachers’ salaries.
- Schools in case study states tend to rely on arts teachers as the primary source of arts instruction. Generally, California elementary schools cobble together a wider range of instructors, including parent volunteers and arts professionals.
- The exemplar schools commonly use outside instructors to *supplement* the core arts program, whereas many California schools use outside instructors as *primary* providers of arts instruction.
- Using classroom teachers to deliver arts instruction can be effective *if* teachers are provided with adequate professional development and support from arts teachers or other professionals, which can add substantial costs.
- The exemplar schools rely on general funds to pay for arts teachers’ salaries and other core program elements, institutionalizing funding for the programs. In contrast, only about half of California elementary schools use general funds as the primary funding source for arts education.

- Lacking sufficient general funds, California elementary schools with well-developed arts programs frequently rely on outside sources (such as parent donations, parcel taxes, or grants) to fund core program elements. This revenue pattern leads to instability and inequities in arts offerings across California elementary schools. The exemplar schools also take advantage of outside funding sources but not to the same extent.

### **Other Systemic Supports for Elementary Arts Education**

- Formal accountability systems can encourage elementary schools to meet state standards.
- District-level efforts to plan, review, and oversee arts education programs can also provide important support for sustained arts education.
- Community expectations can create informal accountability for arts education. This engagement can be systematically fostered in various ways at the local level. For example, performances and exhibitions can increase community awareness of arts education and create a potent group of advocates for arts programs.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE**

### **Systemic Reform**

- To meet the state policy goal of having all elementary students receive a sequential, standards-based course of study in all four arts disciplines, significant changes are needed in the overall level of funding for schools and the amount of available instructional time.

### **Local Reform**

- Districts should establish some form of accountability system so that communities are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the arts programs in their schools.
- Districts should spend the annual state funding for arts education (\$109 million in 2007–08) strategically to plan comprehensive arts programs.
- School systems should collaborate with local partners to ensure outside instructors support a sequential, standards-based course of study.

# INTRODUCTION

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In California, budget shortfalls and competing priorities have interfered with the state's goal of providing each elementary student with sequential, standards-based arts instruction in each of the four core arts disciplines: dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. Across the nation, many states and schools are facing the same challenges to providing arts education. Yet some jurisdictions seem more likely to have comprehensive arts programs in public elementary schools. This study investigates policies that help make these programs possible—specifically, policies related to time and funding resources.

For this study, SRI conducted case studies of 10 elementary arts programs in jurisdictions that are known to have policies that are more conducive to the provision of arts education than California. This report describes how these programs stand apart from the typical arts education offerings in California public schools. The study's aim is to provide California policy-makers and educators with examples and lessons from other jurisdictions that have been more successful in providing all students with access to arts education. These examples and lessons are particularly important at this time, when California has made new investments in arts education: In 2006, the state committed an unprecedented amount of funding to arts education, including \$500 million in one-time funds for arts and physical education and \$105 million in ongoing funding.

This study builds on an earlier study of arts education in California, conducted by SRI in 2006 on behalf of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. For that study, SRI fielded a statewide principal survey, analyzed statewide databases, and conducted in-depth studies of 31 schools to understand how arts education is implemented in California. The report resulting from that study, titled *An Unfinished Canvas. Arts Education in California: Taking Stock of Policies and Practices* (Woodworth et al., 2007), provides general data on the state as a whole, as well as more detailed information from the sample of case study sites.

*An Unfinished Canvas* found that California is far from meeting its own standards in arts education and that elementary schools in particular are failing to provide a standards-aligned course of study in all four arts disciplines. (Only about 10% of California elementary schools actually meet state requirements.) The study also showed that California is lagging behind other states. Not only are California's elementary schools less likely to offer arts instruction, but those that do offer it for less total time. In those California elementary schools that offer arts instruction, only 32 and 28 hours per year of music and visual arts instruction are provided, respectively, compared with 46 and 44 hours per year nationally.

*An Unfinished Canvas* also made it clear that the greatest barriers to elementary arts education are inadequate funding (84% of principals identified this barrier as moderate or serious) and insufficient instructional time (also 84%). The latter is a particular issue at the elementary level because of school scheduling; without set class periods, elementary schools have greater discretion over how time is apportioned and typically do not set aside dedicated time for arts instruction. Furthermore, arts instruction at the elementary level is frequently delivered by classroom teachers. Classroom teachers typically lack the training necessary to provide sequential, standards-based arts instruction, therefore making such instruction less likely to occur (Guha et al., 2008). Another frequently cited barrier (reported by 75% of principals) is the pressure to improve test scores in other subject areas such as reading and math. California's accountability system pressures teachers

to allocate the greatest amount of time to a subset of subjects that have the most influence on their school's achievement rating and consequently less time to the arts and other subjects.

With the findings from *An Unfinished Canvas* as a backdrop, this study investigates how other jurisdictions support greater access to arts instruction at the elementary level. In particular, this study set out to investigate two topics:

1. How other states, districts, and schools support the allocation of more *fiscal resources* to arts education than typical California elementary schools
2. How other states, districts, and schools provide more *instructional time* for arts education than typical California elementary schools.

While addressing these two issues, researchers explored the contextual factors (e.g., support systems and accountability policies) that supported the allocation of these key resources for arts education through in-depth case studies of schools.

To select case study states, SRI researchers conducted a high-level review of state policies relating to arts education. At the same time, the researchers sought the assistance of national experts (e.g., academics, foundation staff, leaders of advocacy groups) to help identify states (and jurisdictions or school systems within California) reputed to have formal policies that support arts programs by, for example:

- Providing enough resources—time and money—so that schools have the flexibility to offer arts to most or all students (e.g., through greater than average per-pupil funding in a state or programs to extend the school day)
- Requiring that resources be dedicated to arts (e.g., arts-dedicated funding or arts instructional time requirements)
- Monitoring arts outcomes and thus creating an incentive for schools to offer quality arts programs
- Providing assistance with planning, professional development, and curriculum development.

Relying on our analysis of state policies, coupled with expert nominations, researchers generated a list of eight jurisdictions for further investigation. To assess the policy environment in each of these states, SRI researchers conducted phone interviews with 10 arts leaders at the state level and developed state profiles to gather more information on specific policies regarding the provision of arts instruction to students in grades kindergarten through 12, including overall funding levels, the adoption of arts standards, the availability of arts certification for teachers, high school graduation and college admission requirements, and any requirements for dedicated arts programming.

Finding states that met these criteria proved challenging. In some cases, state policies that appeared promising were discovered to be inconsistently implemented and therefore not useful for the study. In other cases, state policies were not explicit or practices were found to depend greatly on local resources and the commitment of particular individuals. In addition, several states were nominated on the basis of the strength of their preparation programs for arts teachers; we did not choose them because it was not clear whether these teacher preparation programs influenced the allocation of resources for elementary arts education (although they most likely affect the quality of programs). Finally, to achieve some geographic diversity, we intentionally selected no more than one state in a single region of the country. Ultimately, researchers chose the following five jurisdictions for the reasons indicated:

- Kentucky, because it has the only currently implemented state testing and accountability system that includes arts education and because it has strong public arts agencies and grant



programs. Experts reported that, as a result of these factors, elementary schools typically allocate funding and time for arts education.

- Massachusetts, because it has relatively high overall levels of school funding and also a pilot program that provides funding for increasing the length of the instructional day. Insufficient instructional time was a noted barrier to arts education in California.
- Minnesota, because it has a state-funded professional development center for the arts and has a generally strong reputation for arts education.
- New Jersey, because it has relatively high funding levels and nearly all its elementary schools have at least one full-time arts teacher on staff.
- Alameda County in California, because it has an arts learning initiative that provides substantial support for teachers and administrators in area “anchor” schools. This choice permits the examination of a system-level effort to improve arts education within California.

Once states were selected, SRI chose, by a combination of criteria and local nomination, specific schools to be exemplar schools—examples that are *typical* of given contexts. Criteria for nomination were simply that the elementary schools had reputations for providing good arts education yet did not supplement their program with extensive private funding or succeed for another atypical reason, such as an unusually successful leader or advocate. In other words, we were looking for typical schools offering solid arts education programs within a supportive policy environment. From the nominated schools, researchers selected schools that served urban, suburban, and rural areas; schools at varying levels of student performance; and schools with differing levels of funding. However, we purposely avoided schools where funding from an atypically strong tax base or parent contributions might support a stellar program that would be out of the financial reach of more typical schools in the state.

Across these five jurisdictions, researchers visited 10 schools in 10 districts (Exhibit 1). Further information on the research methods and each school is provided in the appendix.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Summary of Case Study States and Schools**

State	Number of Exemplar Schools	School Characteristics
Kentucky	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A school in a rapidly growing community (transitioning from rural to suburban) serving a community with above-average income for the state</li> <li>▪ A school with a relatively diverse student population in an economically depressed town</li> <li>▪ A school serving a college town surrounded by a largely rural area with an above-average income for the state</li> </ul>
Massachusetts	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A school in a midsize central city, serving a diverse student population with relatively high proportions of low-income students</li> </ul>
Minnesota	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A rural school serving students of average income for the state</li> <li>▪ A school serving a semirural college community</li> <li>▪ A suburban school in a district with a history of strong support for the arts, serving students just below state average income</li> </ul>
New Jersey	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A moderate income suburban school located about 30 minutes outside of a major metropolitan area</li> <li>▪ An urban school in a low-income, high-minority school district</li> </ul>
Alameda County, California	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An urban charter school serving predominantly low-income minority students</li> </ul>

Because the exemplar schools were selected for their particular policy context, this study does not offer generalizable data about arts education across the nation or in the states where the schools are located (in contrast to *An Unfinished Canvas*, which does provide generalizable data about California arts programs). In this report, specific figures and details refer only to the exemplar schools under discussion, and data presented in ranges represent the variation found only among the study's exemplar schools. Nonetheless, these data fulfill the purpose of the study: to contrast California's arts education programs with programs in other places where policy contexts encourage the allocation of more time to arts instruction or provide more reliable funding.

The two main sections that follow correspond to the study's two themes of time and funding. The first section summarizes findings about how much instructional time the case study schools devote to arts education, how many students participate, and how schools structure their schedules to accommodate arts instruction. The second section examines other states' spending levels, how different staffing arrangements and instructional models affect spending, and how differences in funding sources affect the stability and equity of funding. A brief third section examines additional supports for arts education in the exemplar schools, including formal accountability systems, district-level planning efforts, and strategies for building community support for arts education. The final section offers a few implications for policy and practice.

# INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

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**Few California elementary schools offer standards-based, sequential instruction in both music and visual arts. Furthermore, many California elementary schools offer arts programs to only a portion of the student body. The exemplar schools offer instruction in both music and visual arts to 100% of their students, beginning in kindergarten.**

In California, only 58% of elementary schools offer sequential, standards-based instruction in music and only 42% offer sequential, standards-based instruction in visual arts. Even fewer, 33%, offer a sequential, standards-based course of study in both music and visual arts. In addition, even in California schools that offer instruction in music and/or visual arts, only a portion of the student body (53% and 54%, respectively) participates in that instruction. Case studies conducted for *An Unfinished Canvas* provided insight into how and why this occurs. For example, many elementary schools offer music courses solely for specific grade levels (e.g., fourth and fifth graders) or particular students (e.g., instrumental music classes offered on a pull-out basis).

In contrast, all the exemplar schools offer courses of study in both music and visual arts, and *all students* across all grades participate, beginning in kindergarten. When additional courses like instrumental music are offered to a subset of the student population, they are supplemental parts of the program. For example, in one Minnesota elementary school, all the students receive 50 minutes of music instruction each week and 50 minutes of visual arts. In addition, about 30% of fourth and fifth graders also participate in 30 minutes of orchestra, and 60% of fifth graders participate in 60 minutes of band per week.

The minutes of visual arts or music instruction *for participating students* are relatively comparable in California and the exemplar schools. For example, in California schools that offer instruction in visual arts or music, the typical participating student receives 47 minutes and 53 minutes of instruction, respectively. Exemplar schools offer a similar amount of instruction in each discipline, ranging from 40 to 90 minutes a week in visual art and 30 to 90 minutes in music, with both disciplines averaging about 60 minutes of instruction per week. Thus, if students participate in arts instruction, they are likely to receive comparable amounts of instruction in both California schools and exemplar schools. The differences lie entirely in whether or not arts instruction is available at all. California schools offer arts instruction to just over half of elementary students, on average, whereas all exemplar schools provide instruction to 100% of students.

Because California elementary schools do not dedicate enough instructional time for *all* students to participate in the arts instruction they offer and many do not allocate instructional time for the arts at all, California elementary schools fall short of meeting the state's goals for arts education. The gap between policy and practice is most stark in California's least affluent schools, which are less likely to offer arts instruction than more affluent schools. In contrast, exemplar schools located in communities ranging from rural Kentucky and Minnesota to urban and suburban New Jersey and Massachusetts offer sequential arts instruction in at least two disciplines.

**Typical California elementary schools and most of the exemplar schools devote little time to theatre and dance.**

*An Unfinished Canvas* showed that California students who participate in arts education receive more instruction in music and visual arts than in theatre and dance. In fact, very few California elementary schools offer a sequential course of study in theatre (16%) or dance (14%). In those few elementary schools that do offer theatre or dance, instructional time is limited. The average

participating California elementary student receives 53 minutes per week of instruction in music and 47 in visual arts but only about 20 minutes of instruction in dance and theatre.

The schools visited in this study are comparable. They offer far more instruction in music and visual arts than in theatre and dance. Only two of the 10 schools offer any theatre. In one school it is offered as a unit taught by the librarian, and in the other it is part of the curriculum taught by the “performing arts” teacher. (In two additional schools in Kentucky, standards in theatre were addressed to some extent, although the researchers did not find time consistently allocated to theatre instruction. The design of Kentucky’s accountability policy, described later, suggests how this might occur.) Seven of the schools offer dance, generally as a unit of physical education. Even in schools offering these subjects, they are offered at a lower level of intensity. The exemplar that offers the most theatre and dance instruction provides 45 minutes of visual art instruction and 90 minutes of music instruction per week, compared with only 15 and 30 minutes per week for theatre and dance, respectively. In the other schools that provide dance instruction, the average time ranges from 5 to 15 minutes per week. This typically comes from a physical education unit dedicated to dance, ranging from 2 weeks to 6 weeks in length.

**Schools in other states may have more time for arts instruction because they have longer school days.**

State policy often dictates the minimum length of time that students receive daily instruction, but most districts negotiate the length of the school day as part of their contract with teachers. In California elementary schools, the average length of the school day (including instructional and noninstructional time) is 6.28 hours, making 31.4 hours of school time each week. Other states have longer school weeks, as does the nation on average (see Exhibit 2).

**Exhibit 2  
Average Length of Elementary School Week  
in California and Case Study States**

State	Average Length of Elementary School Week, in Hours
California	31.44
Massachusetts	32.24
New Jersey	32.32
Minnesota	32.76
National Average	33.44
Kentucky	33.91

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Schools and Staffing Survey 2003–04 Public School File. Query retrieved from Data Analysis System 2.0 on October 19, 2007, at <http://nces.ed.gov/dasolv2/tables/index.asp>

The relatively short school day in California may be why elementary principals so consistently identified insufficient instructional time as one of the top barriers to arts education in California. With a longer school day, the exemplar schools can include arts instruction for all students without sacrificing instruction in other subjects. For example, with the 2-hour difference between the average school week in California and the national average, California students could have an average of 30 minutes of instruction per week in each of the four arts disciplines.

Even in states where the average school day is longer, educators have found the need to extend the school day. In the pilot Expanded Learning Time program in Massachusetts, a longer instructional day is reducing the competition for instructional time between the arts and other subjects. The most

common approach, however, which exists in many California schools as well, is to have afterschool programs that supplement instruction. (See Exhibit 3 for examples of arts instruction outside traditional school hours.)

### Exhibit 3 Extending Learning Time

To test the effects of extending the school day, Massachusetts is running an Expanded Learning Time pilot program where 10 schools across five districts receive an additional \$1,300 per pupil to extend the school day. In the participating school we visited, the school day was extended from 5 hours and 50 minutes (about 29 hours per week) to 7 hours and 50 minutes (about 39 hours per week). In the additional time, students receive more math and literacy instruction, electives, field trips, and greater arts exposure and instruction. The schools formed partnerships with community-based arts organizations to bring local artists into the school to assist classroom teachers in providing all students age-appropriate, standards-aligned arts instruction.

Many schools visited use time after school for supplemental arts instruction. For example, one urban school has a partnership with the Boys and Girls Club, which runs its afterschool program. The Boys and Girls Club hires a few of the school's teachers as part of its staff, and those teachers use the time to hold rehearsal for various performing arts groups. While this provides a subset of students with access to additional arts opportunities, unlike the Expanded Learning Time program in Massachusetts, not all students attend the program. The contrasting examples of Expanded Learning Time and a more typical afterschool model show not only how afterschool activities can be used as an important supplement to core arts instruction, but also why using afterschool time is often not a good strategy for providing universal access to arts education.

#### **In other states, elementary classroom teachers' preparation periods are often used for instruction by arts teachers.**

In all the exemplar schools, two related factors reinforce the notion of protected time for arts instruction: the expectation that classroom teachers have preparation periods and a tradition of having arts teachers—certified teachers whose education specifically prepares them to teach the arts—to cover those periods for classroom teachers.

Elementary classroom teachers in many states expect to have a preparation period several times a week, if not daily. In many places, this expectation is negotiated into the collective bargaining agreement, and schools and districts cannot eliminate it without negotiating changes to the teacher contract. In other places, even if a preparation period is not contractually required, teachers are accustomed to having this time, and removing it from the schedule would require a major change in the status quo. In the exemplar schools, staff reported that the existence of teacher preparation periods and the tradition of using arts teachers to cover them was the key to reinforcing arts education in schools. As one music teacher in an exemplar school reported, “I provide negotiated prep time for teachers.... I’m not sure what would happen if it wasn’t required by the teacher’s union.”

#### **A few exemplar schools “save time” by integrating arts instruction with other subject areas—an approach that appears to require ample support to be successful.**

*An Unfinished Canvas* reported that California schools were less likely than schools in other states to hire arts teachers to deliver instruction. Of those California elementary schools offering music or visual arts instruction (90% and 77% of schools, respectively), only 40% rely on a full-time certified music teacher and only 14% rely on a full-time certified visual arts teacher. In the nation as a whole, among elementary schools offering music and visual arts education (94% and 87% of schools, respectively), the comparable figures are 72% and 55% respectively.<sup>1</sup> Lacking arts teachers, many California elementary school classroom teachers integrate arts instruction into other content areas to support students’ learning of other material while providing them with arts

<sup>1</sup> While these are the most recently available national data, they come from 1999–2000.

experiences. (It is less common for classroom teachers to regularly dedicate instructional time to stand-alone arts instruction.) When well implemented, integrated arts instruction can provide students with a coherent picture of how the arts are connected to other content areas. Many arts activities that classroom teachers in case study schools described, however, fall short of providing students with a sequential course of study in the arts, most likely because many “integrated” arts activities are not designed to provide instruction or reinforcement in a sequence of instructional goals aligned with arts standards.

When integrated instruction was more successful in the exemplar schools, it was because classroom teachers and arts teachers or visiting artists collaborated, with the arts experts bearing the greater responsibility for providing students with standards-based arts instruction. The nature of the collaboration varies across schools. In one school in Kentucky, the music and visual arts teachers are given one day at the start of each year to provide a day-long workshop for their colleagues on how to integrate the arts into “core” subject areas. Throughout the year, the arts teachers share their lesson plans with classroom teachers and vice versa so that each teacher can reinforce both arts and core content in each other’s classrooms. However, teacher reports suggest that while participating teachers share their lesson plans, not all of them are integrating the arts in their classrooms.

In the California exemplar school, arts teachers team-teach with classroom teachers. In this school, students receive 45 minutes of instruction per week from both their classroom teacher and an arts teacher and it can be in any of the four arts disciplines. The principal of this school reported that integrated instruction, while a worthwhile goal, requires considerable time for planning and professional development. Classroom teachers are partnered with arts teachers to provide integrated arts instruction and have weekly planning times together. Teachers in his school have an 11-month contract and spend much of their additional work time planning. Even with the additional planning and preparation time, the majority of classroom teachers in this school did not report providing any integrated arts instruction beyond the time they spent team-teaching with the arts teachers.

These examples of collaboration between arts teachers and classroom teachers appear to be rare, and they suggest that true integration between the arts and other subjects can be challenging to implement. While integrating arts instruction into other subjects may be pedagogically powerful and may maximize students’ instructional day, the collaboration necessary to make it successful appears to require a substantial amount of teacher time. In the exemplar schools, this time came either from teacher contract time dedicated for planning or professional development or through schools paying to have two adults in the classroom during instruction—or both. These program features can have important cost ramifications, which are discussed in greater detail in the next section.

# FUNDING

As described above, California students tend to spend less time in school than their counterparts in other states. Moreover, California elementary schools are less likely than schools across the country to have dedicated arts teachers. Instead, they rely largely or solely on regular classroom teachers to provide arts instruction within the constraints of a relatively short school day. The differences in these delivery models have substantial implications for the costs of the arts programs.

## **California lags behind the national average on per-pupil educational spending and also appears to spend less per pupil on elementary arts education.**

Many other states spend more total money per student than California. When adjusted for differences in wages between states, California's per-pupil expenditure is below the national average and lower than any other state where case studies were conducted (see Exhibit 4).

**Exhibit 4**  
**Total 2003–04 Per-Pupil Spending**

	Unadjusted for Wage Differences	Adjusted for Wage Differences
California	\$7,673	\$6,952
Kentucky	\$6,861	\$7,731
Massachusetts	\$11,015	\$10,163
Minnesota	\$8,405	\$8,658
New Jersey	\$13,338	\$11,858
National average	\$8,310	NA

Note: Unadjusted figures (Johnson, 2006) were adjusted using the Comparable Wage Index (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004; Taylor, Glander, & Fowler, 2006)

Existing data sources make it difficult to determine with certainty whether other states also spend more on arts education and, if so, precisely how much more. Expenditures reported in Exhibit 5, however, suggest that elementary schools with comprehensive arts programs in other states likely outpace typical California elementary schools on spending for arts education by a considerable margin.

## **In the exemplar schools, the bulk of arts spending goes toward arts teachers' salaries. In contrast, most California elementary schools do not allocate enough funding to arts education to pay for full-time arts teachers. The recent California allocation for arts education is insufficient to pay for arts teachers' salaries.**

Most exemplar schools spend between about \$150 and \$350 per pupil on arts teachers' salaries. There is a substantial range among the 10 exemplar schools, however. Two schools spend more than \$500 per pupil on arts teachers' salaries, in one case because of the school's instructional model and in the other because of a proportionally higher number of teachers providing arts instruction. With only one exception (a Massachusetts school where arts teachers deliver stand-alone instruction and classroom teachers also coteach the arts with outside artists) arts teachers' salaries represent 70–90% of the schools' total arts expenditures (see Exhibit 5).

**Exhibit 5**  
**Per-Pupil Arts Expenditures in Selected Exemplar Schools**

Per Pupil Expenditures by Category	Kentucky: Arts teachers and professional development for classroom teachers	Minnesota: Arts teachers and integrated arts instruction program partially provided by classroom teachers	New Jersey: Arts teachers	Massachusetts: Arts teachers and artists coteaching arts with regular classroom teachers
Arts teachers	\$133	\$269	\$364	\$264
Classroom teachers and administrators	\$11	\$72	\$10	\$203
Outside providers and field trips	\$17	\$5	\$0	\$86
Professional development, materials, other (e.g., transportation)	\$35	\$25	\$15	\$15
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$196</b>	<b>\$370</b>	<b>\$390</b>	<b>\$568</b>

Note: 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. Numbers may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Comparing per-pupil dollar amounts spent on arts education in California and other states lends a sense of perspective to California's 2006 funding boost. In addition to one-time (2006) funding of \$500 million for arts and physical education, California has devoted \$109 million (for 2007–08) in ongoing funding, or about \$16 per pupil per year, for arts education. Exhibit 5 suggests that \$16 per student can cover smaller arts expenditures, such as materials costs and field trip buses, but cannot begin to support the big-ticket item: instruction by an arts teacher. Although arts teachers cost more than other program staffing alternatives, they are the primary reason why the exemplar schools are able to deliver standards-based arts instruction to all students.

Another way to put the figures in Exhibit 5 in context is to note that the per-pupil amount these schools are spending on arts teachers is less than the difference between their state's average adjusted per-pupil spending and California's. That is, if California's schools were funded at the level of the national average, they could hire arts teachers at the same level as the exemplar schools and still have funds left over.

**Schools in case study states tend to rely on arts teachers as the primary source of arts instruction. Generally, California elementary schools cobble together a wider range of instructors, including parent volunteers and arts professionals.**

Compared with case study states, California elementary schools use arts teachers less frequently to deliver arts instruction. National data on the prevalence of full-time, certified visual arts and music teachers (Carey et al., 2002) show that California lags behind case study states in the prevalence of arts teachers in elementary schools. In New Jersey, where two of the exemplar schools are located, 95% of elementary schools have at least one full-time equivalent arts teacher (New Jersey Arts Education Census Project, 2007), compared with only 25% of California elementary schools (Woodworth et al., 2007).

*An Unfinished Canvas* revealed that California elementary schools commonly use classroom teachers to deliver most arts instruction, with some supplemental instruction from arts professionals and volunteers. These instructors are typically less expensive than certified arts teachers (see Exhibit 6).



**Exhibit 6**  
**A California Elementary School Hiring Arts Instructors on a Limited Budget**

One California elementary school visited for *An Unfinished Canvas* was known to have a district commitment to providing arts instruction. The district receives relatively low state funding, however, and has not been able to generate substantial private resources to support arts instruction. An elementary school in the district with an enrollment of about 280 students K-5 has 0.2 FTE of an itinerant music teacher, who teaches all fourth and fifth graders music 100 minutes a week and also offers a band elective. The cost is about \$55 per student in the school and is the school's only expenditure for a certified arts teacher.

Given low levels of funding and a desire to offer music to K-3 students, the school hired a community expert (who also runs a music school) as a consultant for \$3,360 per year (\$12 per student in the school) to teach each K-3 class for an average of 34 minutes per week. In addition, the school participates in a local partnership that provides musical performances. Each class can attend one to two of these each year, at minimal cost.

Finally, the district relied on classroom teachers to provide some instruction in the visual arts, theatre, and dance. The instruction provided by classroom teachers, however, varied in many ways, including the disciplines taught, frequency of instruction, and the degree to which standards were incorporated. Although leaving arts instruction to classroom teachers did not add any additional costs to the school's bottom line, it led to arts education that failed to systematically meet state standards.

The total expenditures on staffing arts instruction for kindergarten through fifth graders at this school amounts to about \$70 per student, almost all of which supports instruction in only fourth and fifth grade. (Note that SRI did not collect itemized data on materials costs as part of *An Unfinished Canvas*, so this may be a slight underestimate of total arts expenditures.) With only 0.2 FTE arts teacher and without a viable alternative plan for delivering arts instruction, the school was not able to offer a sequential, standards-based program in any discipline besides music; and in music most students received instruction from a community music expert who lacked state certification in music education.

Source: Data collected for *An Unfinished Canvas* <http://www.ed-data.org/fiscal/TeacherSalary.asp?reportNumber=4096&level=06&fyr=0506&county=09&district=73783#teachersalaryschedule-annualsalary>

Calculations of salary and benefits expenditures assume a benefits ratio of 1:28, the national average for teachers. Source of the ratio: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecec.nr0.htm>.

This approach to staffing for arts instruction is quite different from the staffing approach used by the exemplar schools. All the exemplar schools are in districts that employ arts teachers. They generally do not give classroom teachers—or arts professionals or volunteers—primary responsibility for delivering arts instruction, as is often the case in California. The lack of arts teachers on staff at most California elementary schools saves money but may contribute to schools' failure to meet state goals for arts instruction.

**The exemplar schools commonly use outside instructors to *supplement* the core arts program, whereas California schools often use outside instructors as *primary* providers of arts instruction.**

Outside instructors enable schools to offer a wide range of services without having to hire more staff. These instructors, who range from professional teaching artists to parent volunteers, may provide schools with direct student instruction or exposure through performances and exhibits. In the exemplar schools, visiting artists are used to supplement arts programs in a variety of ways. For example, schools might spend 1% to 5% of their arts budget (up to \$25 per pupil) to bring in dancers for a performance or a visiting artist to work with students to paint a mural. In other places, outside instructors are an important source of expertise in disciplines where the school's arts program is weaker (e.g., theatre or dance) and account for 10% to 14% of the schools' arts expenditures (up to \$85 per pupil). Even in the schools with higher spending on external instructors, these individuals supplement instruction, rather than providing the heart of the arts program.

In contrast, California schools often use outside instructors to deliver the core of their arts program. Outside instructors can be quite low cost because some are virtually free to schools (e.g., parent volunteers) and others (e.g., teaching artists) may be paid at lower hourly rates than teachers and

may not receive benefits. For example, two of the more comprehensive elementary arts programs visited for *An Unfinished Canvas* relied on parent volunteers to deliver core components of the visual arts instruction. Before becoming “arts docents,” the parent volunteers were required to attend a special training, which addressed how to implement a kit of standards-based visual arts lessons. Although individual parents may have had an arts background and the lessons they presented were designed by experts and aligned with the standards, the program model was driven by a desire to keep costs low rather than hire the most qualified instructors.

Outside instructors can save costs, but using them to provide core arts instruction is inconsistent with state guidance as articulated in the California Visual and Performing Arts Framework, which calls for classroom teachers and arts teachers to direct arts instruction and to take advantage of community resources to strengthen the core program. Because outside instructors vary in their experience working with children and in their familiarity with the standards, some locales have policies to ensure that these instructors meet certain minimum knowledge requirements of both the state standards for instruction in those disciplines and their respective arts disciplines (see Exhibit 7).

**Exhibit 7**  
**Helping Teachers and Schools Find Artists to Provide Standards-Based Instruction**

Most of the exemplar schools supplement arts teachers’ instruction with instruction by visiting artists. While this option has many appealing qualities (e.g., it can help diversify students’ arts experiences, can connect students with artists practicing in their own communities, and can inject a professional, authentic standard), outstanding artists do not necessarily have the pedagogical knowledge necessary to deliver instruction to young children.

To help increase the chances visiting artists will provide high-quality instruction, the Kentucky Arts Council, a government agency, has created a roster of artists who have been approved by a panel of experts (including arts teachers, arts administrators, and peer artists) to design and implement arts instruction aligned with state standards. Although these artists do not have the depth of pedagogical training of certified arts teachers, this system ensures that the artists meet some basic standards for providing students instruction in the arts.

In California, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission has established a comparable program by creating a directory of artists and arts programs in the community that adhere to the California arts standards.

Collaboration between arts teachers and external instructors can reduce the potential weaknesses of relying on external providers to provide instruction. With someone to coordinate instruction across providers, students are more likely to receive a sequential course of study in the arts. For example, in an elementary school in Kentucky, the visual arts teacher provides standards-based instruction and uses grant funding to bring in community artists to give students additional opportunities to create art. In this case, the teacher can ensure that all required content is addressed, while the community artists provide students authentic art-making experiences. This is, in fact, the key difference between how the exemplar schools and many California schools use external providers. The exemplar schools use these instructors to improve program scope and quality, whereas in many California schools they are used in lieu of certified arts teachers.

**Using classroom teachers to deliver arts instruction can be effective *if* teachers are provided with adequate professional development and support from arts teachers or other professionals, which can add substantial costs.**

Without training and support, classroom teachers are unlikely to be effective providers of standards-based arts instruction. In SRI's current research and in *An Unfinished Canvas*, classroom teachers in elementary schools reported that they are generally unfamiliar with the arts standards and are not comfortable providing arts instruction (Guha et al., 2008). Similarly, one teacher from Minnesota commented on the large number of standards required across the core subjects and said that teachers "have enough standards. We can't worry about the arts standards also."

Although it is certainly possible for classroom teachers to provide high-quality arts instruction, it is not an easy task for schools to accomplish. For example, one school in Minnesota uses classroom teachers to provide 1 hour of stand-alone visual arts instruction every other week, with the help of a visual arts teacher. The arts teacher begins a student lesson or project on alternating weeks and provides the necessary information and lesson plans for classroom teachers to complete the project during the following week. This instructional model is promising, but it has been difficult to implement because the classroom teachers do not have regularly scheduled time to collaborate with the arts teachers. The arts teacher prepares lesson plans, instructions, and explanations of the standards that are being taught but never has the opportunity to meet with classroom teachers and discuss delivery methods.

Another instructional model found in the Alameda County charter school pairs classroom teachers and arts teachers to teach integrated lessons together. The performing arts and visual arts teachers each work with half of the classroom teachers over the course of a semester; at the end of the semester, they switch. The arts teachers and the classroom teachers (in grade-level teams) set aside time to work together weekly. They debrief on the previous week's lesson and plan for the week ahead. In addition to requiring regular time for planning, this model is relatively expensive as the school is paying for two instructors to teach simultaneously.

Unlike the typical California school that uses classroom teachers to provide arts instruction, the exemplar schools that do so are providing the teachers with guidance and support from arts teachers. Particularly in the case of the Alameda County charter school, the intent of the team teaching is not to save money; but also to provide students with integrated instruction and classroom teachers with professional development. Even with extra planning time and investment, however, these programs using classroom teachers to deliver arts instruction are having mixed results. This study and *An Unfinished Canvas* suggest that if schools are serious about providing high-quality arts instruction, they need to either use arts teachers or be prepared to offer highly intensive assistance to classroom teachers, neither of which is happening with any frequency in California.

**The exemplar schools rely on general funds to pay for arts teachers' salaries and other core program elements, institutionalizing funding for the programs. In contrast, only about half of California elementary schools use general funds as the primary funding source for arts education.**

Schools may use a variety of funding sources to support their programs: general funds, state categorical funds, and private funds, among others. School general funds are typically composed of both state and local tax contributions, are the largest source of school funding, and can be used to cover all types of costs. In *An Unfinished Canvas*, researchers found that many California elementary schools do not rely heavily on general funds to support arts education. In this study, however, the schools visited rely almost exclusively on general funds, creating a more stable source of funding that allows programs to build capacity over time.

In California, only about half of elementary schools (54%) use general school or district funds as a significant or top source of funding for their arts programs. In California case studies for *An Unfinished Canvas*, researchers found that the schools that do rely largely on general funds often have relatively spartan offerings. For example, one large urban district funded 18 itinerant music teachers out of general funds. The program these teachers could offer was limited by the fact that the district had more than 35 elementary schools serving nearly 23,000 students, or 1,300 students per music teacher. Any additional arts programming at the elementary level was provided irregularly by classroom teachers or through grants. Perhaps because California's funding levels are relatively low, schools tended not to allocate sufficient general funds for arts education to support programs at the level required to meet state standards.

Unlike many California schools, the exemplar schools largely use general funds for arts education. Most of these schools pay for 89% to 99% of arts expenditures through general funds. (The two exceptions are the California charter school and the Massachusetts school participating in the pilot program described in Exhibit 3.) In all the non-California schools, general funds pay for teachers' salaries, the primary expenditure of the arts programs.

The use of general funds for arts teachers' salaries helps institutionalize the expectation that arts education will continue, protected, from year to year. Reliance on general funds creates a steady, reliable resource for schools, and programs supported by such funds can make long-term plans based on knowledge of their approximate future funding level. In contrast, parcel taxes, grants, and private funds—all of which were the cornerstones of some of the more extensive California elementary arts programs reported on in *An Unfinished Canvas*—are by nature not embedded into school finance structures on an ongoing basis.

In California, teachers and administrators alike commented that arts programs are often the first to be cut when funding becomes tight. In the exemplar schools, even though some have tight or declining budgets (in fact, the spending level in one of the exemplar schools is about 60% of the state's average per pupil spending), the continuation of arts programs at near-current levels is considered nonnegotiable. For example, to address budget shortfalls a Kentucky school in one of the lowest funded districts in the state has chosen to raise elementary class sizes rather than cut arts programming. In Massachusetts, because of declining enrollment the exemplar school's district has been forced to make substantial cuts, including closing several schools, yet arts programs remain intact. A Minnesota district facing budget shortfalls has treated the arts equally to other subject areas, making an across-the-board 10% materials cut for all programs. In another Minnesota district, the arts were protected from cuts altogether. Administrators there explained that cutting the arts would have been unacceptable to the community, a strong source of support for arts education. The use of general funds, the institutionalization of arts teachers, and a range of supports for arts education (described below) ensure that arts programs are as likely as other programs to retain funding over time.

**Lacking sufficient general funds, California elementary schools with well-developed arts programs frequently rely on outside sources (such as parent donations, parcel taxes, or grants) to fund core program elements. This revenue pattern leads to instability and inequities in arts offerings across California elementary schools. The exemplar schools also take advantage of outside funding sources but not to the same extent.**

As an alternative strategy, many California schools pursue outside funding for arts education. About half (53%) of all schools reported that they rely “greatly” or “somewhat” on outside funds from parent groups, foundations, or local businesses, for example, to support their arts programs. This strategy, while functional in the short term, is neither systemic nor sustainable for many schools because without consistent funding, their ability to plan for long-range goals is limited.

Furthermore, across the state, schools' reliance on outside fundraising contributes to inequities in access to arts education. Many schools in high-poverty communities are unable to raise substantial outside funds and are left with few resources for arts programs. In contrast, schools in more affluent communities are significantly more likely to seek and receive enough outside funding to provide substantial resources for arts programs. For example, one affluent California school with a strong arts program has slightly less than 2 full-time equivalent (FTE) arts teachers to teach dance, music, theatre, and visual arts to about 400 students. In addition, the visual arts program has a partnership with a local cultural organization and another with a visiting artist, offers several visual arts lessons each year through the district's parent volunteer program, and provides necessary arts materials for students. Like the exemplar schools, this school spends the vast majority of its arts budget on arts teachers' salaries and benefits. Instead of using general funds for these positions, however, the district's parent-teacher organization pays for about 38% of salaries and benefits, and a local parcel tax pays for the other 62%. In general, *An Unfinished Canvas* found that California schools that rely only on general funds are unable to meet state policy goals for arts education, whereas those that are closer to meeting state goals often rely heavily on outside funding sources and are more likely to be located in affluent communities.

In contrast, the exemplar schools use private funds to cover only 1% to 7% of total arts expenditures. As described, this study specifically selected schools that use primarily public funds to support arts education. While some of these schools also seek additional private funding, they use it to supplement the arts budget and provide "frills," not to provide core support or pay for instructors' salaries. In other words, schools in other states are usually able to sustain their arts programs with available general funds. Furthermore, with such a small portion of the arts budget funded by outside money, there may be fewer inequities in arts spending across schools.



## OTHER SYSTEMIC SUPPORTS

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Setting aside instructional time for the arts and identifying and protecting consistent, reliable funding are important structural supports for arts education. Like typical California schools, however, the exemplar schools had limited funding and instructional time and many demands for both these resources. In exploring the factors that led the exemplar schools to nonetheless dedicate resources to arts education, researchers encountered other components, such as accountability mechanisms and district-level systems and structures that ensured continued support of arts programming in schools.

### **Formal accountability systems can encourage standards-based arts education.**

One way that states can create accountability for arts education is to include it in state assessments. For example, the State of Kentucky requires assessment at grades 5, 8, and 11 in “arts and humanities,” which includes all four visual and performing arts disciplines, including their historical and contemporary roles in culture. At the fifth grade level, the assessment includes 12 multiple choice questions and one open-response item that may cover any of the four arts disciplines. This testing program holds all schools accountable for student achievement in all four arts disciplines. At all the schools visited in Kentucky, staff members spoke of the positive effects of assessment in the arts on resource allocation for arts instruction. Although the arts constitute only 5% of a school’s total score on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System, the results are reported to the public and schools have a strong interest in performing well. As one arts teacher said, “One reason [that the arts are an important part of our instructional program] is that it’s included in our state assessments. You can’t really ignore it.... Good thing for us.” Two of the Kentucky exemplar schools systematically monitor coverage of the arts standards, just as they do for other core subjects; one does this under the direction of its state technical assistance team (a group sent from the state to schools with lower-than-desired performance on state tests). This accountability can be especially important in arts disciplines, such as theatre and dance, where schools have not hired certified arts teachers to ensure that students receive a sequential course of study in the given discipline. In these cases, classroom teachers are responsible for providing students with the content knowledge necessary to successfully answer multiple-choice questions and potentially a constructed response question as well.

State testing in the arts is not a simple solution, however, and is not necessarily the only or the best way to ensure that resources such as instructional time and money are devoted to arts instruction. Some Kentucky educators, for example, critique the state arts assessments on the grounds that the paper and pencil format deemphasizes central components of an arts education, such as performance and creative expression. Still, while there is contention about the format of the test, everyone interviewed agreed that including the arts in the assessment has raised the visibility of arts instruction, increased the likelihood that schools devote resources to the arts, and encouraged classroom teachers and arts teachers to provide standards-based arts instruction.

Minnesota takes a different approach to holding schools accountable for offering standards-based arts programs. Publicly available school report cards list two criteria and whether or not the school meets them. The criteria are:

1. Students at this school can participate in: dance, media arts, music, theatre, and/or visual arts.

2. Students can meet arts standards in three of the following areas: dance, media arts, music, theatre, and/or visual arts.

This approach does not attract some of the criticisms that the Kentucky accountability system draws and is much cheaper and easier to implement. However, it does not place the same degree of pressure on schools to ensure that students are meeting state standards in the arts disciplines. In fact, teachers and administrators in Minnesota did not report increased pressure to provide arts education as a result of these public reporting requirements. In the remaining states, researchers did not hear about the effects of state accountability policies on the allocation of resources for arts instruction. Instead, researchers encountered other strategies for making schools account for their arts programs, beyond formal accountability policies.

**District-level efforts to plan, review, and oversee arts education programs can also provide important support for sustained arts education.**

All three of the districts we visited in Minnesota have established infrastructure and capacity for arts education through dedicated planning and curriculum review committees. The status of the arts curriculum is placed on par with other subjects by including it in regular 5- and 7-year core subject review cycles, alongside math, reading, and science. The 7-year cycle also ensures program quality and standards by allowing 1 year for examining the current program, followed by recommendations, plans, curriculum piloting, implementation, and 2 years of monitoring. Curriculum committees offer a cyclical focus, but districts can also use committees to create an ongoing constituency that will support arts education year after year. One of the Minnesota districts in this study has created standing committees for music and visual arts that include the district curriculum coordinator, past and current teachers, board members, and parents. These committees may approve arts expenditures, negotiate arts partnerships, or plan professional development for arts specialists. Committee members form a constituency for arts education while ensuring that there will be dedicated time for planning and implementing a coherent, sequential, and standards-based arts program.

A few California counties have arts initiatives under way with districts in their jurisdictions. Comprehensive long-term planning for standards-based arts programs is a key component of those initiatives. In one county, setting targets for allocating a higher percentage of school expenditures to arts education is a key component of the planning process.

**Community expectations can create informal accountability for arts education. This engagement can be systematically fostered in various ways at the local level. For example, performances and exhibitions can increase community awareness of arts education and create a potent group of advocates for arts programs.**

Districts and schools can also take steps to raise awareness, create support, and foster informal accountability for arts education in their communities. As in the example above, some districts establish formal committees to review their arts education program or create an arts curriculum. These committees can include community members and encourage the community to view the arts as an institutionalized part of the schools. In one district that was experiencing budget cuts, the community formed committees assigned to research particular areas. Because the committees included community members who supported arts education, they provided important support for maintaining arts funding, according to district officials.

Another way that schools and districts foster community involvement and support for the arts is through student performance and exhibition. Some districts have made significant investments in improving their high school performing arts facilities, arguably because they are the central performance facilities for the entire community. While student performances may provide a significant proportion of community entertainment in rural districts in particular, they can play an



important role in building community involvement in any school. The urban elementary school we visited in New Jersey held themed performances showcasing multiple arts disciplines four times a year. The visual arts teacher displayed student work in the auditorium where parents came to see the choir, drummers, and various dance groups perform. The performances served dual purposes of building the relationship between the school and its community and creating a strong base of community support for the arts programs. Other districts have heightened awareness of arts education by posting student artwork around town and establishing districtwide choir and band groups that travel and promote their district's arts program.

One concern some might have about the prominence of displays and performances in some arts programs is that they may lead to an overemphasis on the subset of arts standards that are showcased. Although this concern appears to have some merit, in some cases it is the trade-off for institutionalizing the arts into a community's schools. Districts' reputations for arts instruction can help to raise and sustain community expectations. In Minnesota, for example, the principal commented that the district has a strong reputation for the arts and that it has been "a tradition for this school district for years." The district's reputation and the ongoing recognition it receives help institutionalize arts programming as a permanent fixture in the district.

While California schools fall short of the exemplar schools in many areas, in our earlier work we saw examples of arts representation on important district committees as well as performances and displays that galvanized support for the arts in many schools across California. In one case of a visual arts teacher's displaying student work in prominent locations throughout the community, when district funding declined and the school board met to consider cuts, no one considered cutting this teacher's position. Also, in a state where elementary arts is often short on instructional time and funding, it is worth noting that the displays and performances themselves are inexpensive and frequently occur outside the instructional day.

Formal and informal accountability mechanisms can help the arts establish an ongoing presence in district curricula. Whether by being accountable to the state, to parents, or to the community at large, arts programs in the districts discussed above most likely have stronger and more enduring arts programs than they would have otherwise.



# IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

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This report presents evidence from exemplar schools—elementary schools reputed to have strong arts programs yet supported by levels of public funding that are typical for their state. All the schools have more resources, in terms of instructional time and funding, devoted to arts education than typical California elementary schools. With the higher level of resources, the exemplar schools all rely substantially on certified arts teachers to ensure that students have access to a sequential, standards-based course of study. Features of arts programs that were supplemental in these schools—like visiting artists, field trips, or pull-out band programs—are central components of the arts programs in many California elementary schools. As a result, the typical California strategy often does not support comprehensive planning and delivery of a sequential, standards-based course of study in the arts. Examining the contrast between the exemplar schools and typical California elementary schools highlights the need for systemic education reforms. Recognizing the lengthy and iterative process of systemic reform, we also have identified three practices in exemplar schools that local schools and districts can enact in their efforts to support improved arts education.

## SYSTEMIC REFORM

**To meet the state policy goal of having all elementary students receive a sequential, standards-based course of study in all four arts disciplines, significant changes are needed in the overall level of funding for schools and the amount of available instructional time.**

Absent major changes, the arts are in direct competition with other subjects for limited amounts of critical resources. The cases examined for this report and the previous *An Unfinished Canvas* echo the core conclusion of *Getting Down to Facts*, in which a series of studies of California’s education policies demonstrate the need for systemic reform of school finance and governance. *Getting Down to Facts* identifies challenges that public schools face in meeting the demands of California’s accountability system. In particular, researchers noted that many California schools receive insufficient funding, that funding levels are unstable and inequitable, and that the school finance system hinders local autonomy to make key decisions that could improve educational outcomes (Loeb, Bryk, & Hanushek, 2007). SRI’s earlier research showed that arts programs are jeopardized by the both low funding levels and the unstable revenue stream (Woodworth et al., 2007).

Issues of this magnitude are beyond the scope of this study but must be considered in the pursuit of improved access to arts education in California. California policy-makers have pledged to begin working to address the problems identified in California’s public education finance system. In the meantime, we have identified three areas for consideration as local stakeholders explore strategies for institutionalizing the allocation of sufficient resources for elementary arts education in the current policy environment.

## LOCAL REFORM

**Districts should establish some form of accountability system so that communities are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the arts programs in their schools.**

This report presented two states’ strategies for holding schools accountable for providing students with a sequential, standards-based course of study in the arts: standardized testing of students (Kentucky) and reporting on student access to arts education (Minnesota). In addition, we documented informal strategies that promote local accountability through increased involvement in and awareness of arts education. While these approaches are very different, each provides

communities with information about arts education in their schools. This information can support communities' efforts to demand arts programs that meet state goals.

**Districts should spend the annual state funding for arts education (\$109 million in 2007–08) strategically to plan comprehensive arts programs.**

While the current annual allocation for arts education is historically significant, the average per-pupil allocation is relatively small. One way districts and schools might spend these funds is to buy materials necessary for arts education. While this would probably fill a need, it would also leave no residual mark on arts programs should the funding end. Moreover, it would not leverage the state allocation to build a more comprehensive arts program. Instead, districts should use at least some of the funds strategically to develop a plan for implementing an arts program that meets state standards. Exemplar school districts had significant infrastructure to support arts education, including dedicated arts coordinators, standing districtwide arts committees, and short-term strategic planning and curriculum review committees. California's schools can borrow this approach by creating strategic plans that both establish long-term goals and form constituencies to support those goals. However, many California districts and schools will need support and technical assistance, perhaps drawing on existing state infrastructure such as The California Arts Project (TCAP) or the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA).

**School systems should collaborate with local partners to ensure outside instructors' abilities to support a sequential, standards-based course of study.**

In each of the exemplar schools, arts teachers provide the majority of arts instruction. Greater access to credentialed arts teachers to deliver a sequential, standards-based course of study in California is certainly a worthy goal. But it is unlikely that many schools could rapidly reallocate the time and financial resources required to implement such a program model in the near future. As a short-term remedy, districts and counties could contribute to developing an infrastructure within which outside experts could work with classroom teachers to plan and deliver instruction. For example, districts and counties could collaborate to screen arts organizations interested in working in schools and provide schools with information on approved organizations. Classroom teachers could then plan instruction with the visiting artists to ensure that the lessons are pedagogically appropriate for students and are connected to a sequential, standards-based program of instruction.

These implications for policy and practice should be considered in the context of related recommendations made based on the findings from *An Unfinished Canvas* (presented in the preface to this report) and in light of teacher capacity to teach to California's arts standards (Guha et al., 2008). Moreover, *Getting Down to Facts* (Loeb, Bryk, & Hanushek, 2007) highlighted the tremendous need to reform the state's school finance and governance system. Stakeholders need to consider the current report in light of these broader issues, which would play a key role in any policy solution aimed at enabling most California elementary schools to meet state standards.

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# APPENDIX

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## RESEARCH METHODS

This report is based on case studies conducted in 10 elementary schools in five jurisdictions: Alameda County, California; Kentucky; Massachusetts; Minnesota; and New Jersey. The report describes how these policy environments were selected and why the particular schools were chosen as exemplars among typical schools with strong arts programs in these contexts. This appendix provides more information on the data collection and analysis, as well as background information on each jurisdiction selected for inclusion in this study.

In each participating school, researchers relied on three sources of data to understand the allocation of instructional time and funding for arts education and the factors that supported decision-makers in allocating those resources to arts instruction:

- Interviews—For each school, researchers interviewed the principal, an arts teacher from each discipline that was staffed with such a teacher, two classroom teachers, and one or more additional school or district leaders. Interviews concerned primarily the allocation of resources—both time and funding—for arts education. They also included questions about what factors were considered in deciding to allocate resources for arts education. Finally, if relevant to the informant’s role, researchers also asked about the instructional program, including the role of arts standards and other policies in instruction, and the degree of integration between the arts and other subjects.
- Questionnaires—In each school, researchers asked all teachers to complete a short questionnaire about the instructional time they devote to stand-alone and/or integrated arts instruction, as well as any financial resources they personally allocate to arts instruction (e.g., out-of-pocket expenditures, grants they control). The purpose of this activity was to gain a broader perspective and determine whether teachers dedicated resources to arts education that were not captured via interviews. The results of these questionnaires corroborated the main findings of the interviews, namely, that classroom teachers were not typically providing stand-alone arts instruction, that they were not typically providing a sequential, standards-based course of study in the arts through integrated instruction, and that they were not typically dedicating funding to arts instruction at even a moderate level. For example, teachers might spend \$25 per year on arts materials, but it was more typical for teachers to report \$0 spending on arts education than to report spending more than \$50 on arts education.
- Budget review—In each school, researchers requested a detailed budget of all expenditures for arts programs, specifically salary and benefits for arts teachers; salary and benefits for arts administrators; proportional salary and benefits for administrators or classroom teachers who dedicated a portion of their time to arts instruction (either stand alone or integrated); cost of hiring outside arts professionals; cost of materials, textbooks, and arts-dedicated technology; cost of professional development in arts instruction, including applicable fees and the cost of providing substitutes or time during the teacher contract (e.g., student-free days reserved for professional development) for teachers to participate in professional development; cost of field trips (including transportation); and miscellaneous costs associated with the arts program. In calculating expenditures, researchers included regularly occurring costs (e.g., textbook adoption) and prorated them by the periodicity with which they occurred. Researchers did not include one-time costs (e.g., construction of

a new performing arts center) in calculating expenditures for the 2006–07 school year (regardless of when funds were expended).<sup>2</sup> For each expenditure, researchers gathered data on the source of funds (e.g., general funds, federal grant or program, state grant or program, parcel tax or other arts-dedicated public funding, private/foundation grant, parent contributions, or other private funding). In some schools, the principal compiled these data on a worksheet researchers sent to the school in advance. In other cases, principals, arts administrators, and/or district finance personnel provided researchers with itemized budgets. In some jurisdictions, researchers received data in both ways. In all cases, researchers reviewed the documentation with administrators during an interview to clarify expenditures and funding sources and confirm researcher understandings of the allocations. These interviews ensured consistency in interpretation of questions across schools. When researchers completed their analysis of the data, they sent a confirmation to the school to verify facts (e.g., how frequently arts textbooks were adopted, the cost of field trip transportation, the source of specific grants), check the accuracy of basic descriptive data about the school (e.g., pupil enrollment), and request any missing data.

Researchers organized the expenditure data into policy-relevant categories: arts teachers' salaries and benefits, salaries and benefits for classroom teachers and administrators, outside providers and field trips, and other. Sources of funding for expenditures were categorized as: general fund (which might include both state and local sources depending on the state's school finance formula), state or federal grants, local parcel tax or other arts-dedicated funding, and private funds.

To understand the allocation of instructional time, researchers identified the average minutes per week of instruction provided by arts teachers to each grade level. If a music teacher met with all students in a K-5 school for one 40-minute period each week, the average minutes was 40. If researchers had encountered a case where the music teacher met only with the 3-5 grades in that school for 40 minutes a week, the average minutes per week for the entire school would have been 20 minutes. If the music teacher served all students for 40 minutes per week for only one of the two semesters, the average minutes per week would similarly have been 20 minutes for all students for the school year. The questionnaires were an important source of researchers' understanding of classroom teachers' arts instruction. They revealed that, in most schools, arts instruction by classroom teachers was sporadic. For example, many teachers reported doing "Readers Theater" or visual arts activities tied to holidays (e.g., making Mothers' Day gifts). Many teachers reported these activities on the questionnaires as examples of "integrated" arts instruction. Exhibit A-1 explains why researchers did not classify the majority of these activities as arts *instruction*.

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<sup>2</sup> Elementary schools do not typically have specially equipped, dedicated facilities. Furthermore, facilities are typically funded through sources outside the general fund, giving individual schools little discretion over the allocation of funds.



## Exhibit A-1

### Defining Integrated Arts Instruction

One of the ways that some schools provide arts experiences for their students is through arts integration. Many of the classroom teachers in this study described using songs, crafts, and skits as part of lessons in social studies, math, and other areas of the curriculum. Although these activities engage students in hands-on learning, often they do not meet the arts learning goals established by the state. For the purpose of this study, we determined that in order for learning activities to be considered arts instruction, they must adhere to the following criteria:

- The goals for instruction in the arts are based on either the state/national arts standards or some other structured learning guide;
- The teacher provides arts instruction that builds on existing arts knowledge;
- Instruction in the arts is consistent and reinforced through further learning activities.

These criteria help to distinguish arts integration from projects that may be good arts activities but do not provide a sequential course of study in the arts.

Some common elementary school activities are easily distinguished as not truly being arts instruction, such as holiday craft-making and singing for fun without any musical instruction. A more nuanced example came from several classroom teachers who described doing "Reader's Theater" activities as part of literacy instruction. In Reader's Theater, students act out stories that they are reading. As one fourth grade teacher described it: "The students take Tall Tales, folk tales, etc...and transform them into 'scripts' and assign characters. The students then act out their 'play.'" This strategy may be very powerful for improving students' literacy skills, and students may touch upon some of the theatre standards. The teachers implemented it, however, without having clear goals for which arts standards were being taught or reinforced. As a result, the theatre instruction is too haphazard to be part of a course of study that is truly sequential, and the researchers did not consider it to be fully integrated arts instruction, in which the arts and literacy learning goals are on equal footing.

Other projects that teachers described as arts integration meet the above criteria. In one school, the visual arts teacher brought in an artist-in-residence to develop a painting unit in conjunction with a science unit that involved visiting a local watershed. In this unit, students learned about painting with the artist while observing and learning about wildlife in the watershed. The school's visual arts teacher made sure that the work was connected to state arts standards and reinforced the sequential, standards-based instruction she was delivering in her visual arts class. Consequently, these activities met arts objectives as well as science objectives and are therefore a good example of integrated arts instruction.

Most classroom teachers provide arts instruction (both stand-alone and integrated instruction) sporadically, so the researchers decided to count these teachers' minutes of arts instruction only when the allocation of time was consistent because of some supporting structure. Examples of such structures include classroom teachers reserving 30 minutes each week for arts instruction or classroom teachers consistently working with an arts teacher to provide instruction. The decision to include the time allocation was based on the predictability of time allocations to arts instruction at a grade level or throughout the school. Therefore, the researchers may have underestimated the amount of arts instruction classroom teachers provided. However, given how infrequently teachers reported providing arts instruction and given that many of the arts *activities* teachers reported do not fit within our criteria of providing *instruction*, if the underestimation exists, it most likely has a very minor effect on overall findings.

The researchers triangulated the data from multiple sources within each school to create a case study write-up. Then they conducted iterative cross-case analyses to determine study findings.

## POLICY BACKGROUND

### Alameda County, California

The Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE) sponsors the Alliance for Arts Learning Leadership.<sup>3</sup> The county has created a network between its 18 school districts and artists and arts organizations, universities, parents, and community organizations to develop accountable leadership; create a professional development network; and advocate for “arts learning for every child in every school, every day.”

In three school districts, Berkeley, Oakland, and Emery, ACOE works more intensively with district leaders and principals and teachers in 38 schools, as part of its Arts Learning Anchor School initiative. This is a strategic initiative to build the capacity of arts providers in the northern part of the county to provide professional development to teachers and schools, with the intent to expand to all 18 school districts over time.

Support at the district level is through the development and implementation of district arts plans with assistance from ACOE district coaches and regular meetings (about four times a year) that convene district leadership teams. Each school is also charged with developing an arts learning plan, and part of that process entails working with partners—highly experienced arts educators from local arts organizations and some arts specialists—who have content knowledge in the arts. These arts educators and lead teachers are supported through monthly seminars. Additional support for the Anchor Schools includes professional development for principals (three times a year) aimed at supporting the implementation of their arts learning plan and professional development for teachers that supplements the site-based professional development they receive.

For the last 4 years, ACOE has supported a number of individuals at all levels of the system in attending summer institutes with Harvard’s Project Zero. The ACOE initiative is grounded in the Teaching for Understanding and Studio Thinking Framework, which apply to teaching and learning across disciplines. The thinking frames, developed by Harvard University’s Project Zero, guides teachers’ decisions about what to teach (topics), how to establish learning goals and communicate them to students, how to engage students in activities (or performances) that show what they’ve come to understand, and how to integrate ongoing assessment.<sup>4</sup>

Funding for ACOE’s initiative comes from both public and private sources—including the United States Department of Education, and the California Department of Education, local parcel taxes, and private regional and national foundations.

### Kentucky

Education reform in Kentucky grew out of a 1989 court decision (*Rose vs. Council for Better Education*) that found the state’s education financing was inequitable and the entire education system was unconstitutional. Included in the court’s description of adequate education was “sufficient grounding in the arts to enable each student to appreciate his or her culture and historical knowledge.”<sup>5</sup> The court’s decision led to the Kentucky Education Reform Act, which resulted in statewide standards and the Program of Studies. The Program of Studies outlines the content standards required for high school graduation and calls for monitoring the standards through a statewide assessment. In the arts and humanities, Kentucky has developed and is using a statewide arts assessment in the fifth, eighth, and eleventh grades. The assessment covers the four arts disciplines as well as historical and cultural aspects of arts.

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<sup>3</sup> See [www.artiseducation.org](http://www.artiseducation.org)

<sup>4</sup> <http://learnweb.harvard.edu/ALPS/tfu/>

<sup>5</sup> *Rose v. Council for Better Education*, 790 S.W.2d 186, 60 Ed. Law Rep. 1289 (1989); retrieved from <http://www.wku.edu/library/kera/rose.htm>.

The state requires certification for music and visual arts teachers. Stand-alone certification is available for dance and music. There is no arts requirement for regular classroom teachers. Kentucky supports several organizations that focus on arts education. The Kentucky Department of Education, in partnership with The Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts, supports summer teacher academies at six sites across the state. Teachers are paid a stipend to attend, and they receive a week of training from professional artists in two art forms (music and dance or drama and visual arts).<sup>6</sup> In addition, the Kentucky Arts Council provides grants, professional development, curriculum resources, and a roster of professional teaching artists; Kentucky Educational Television provides Arts Toolkits for schools; and Kentucky Alliance for Arts Education provides professional development, curriculum resources, and advocacy for arts education.

## **Massachusetts**

In 1999, the Massachusetts Board of Education adopted an arts curriculum framework that includes content and performance standards for visual arts, theatre, music, and dance. Massachusetts offers support to teachers, helping to ensure the arts curriculum is implemented. The state has separate licensing for dance, music, art, and theatre teachers. At the elementary education level, approved programs for licensure must include basic principles and concepts in art, music, drama/theatre, and dance. Massachusetts requires both specialists and regular education teachers to participate in 150 hours of professional development hours every 5 years. Professional development for arts teachers is provided by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, organizations such as Boston Area Kodaly Educators and The New England chapter of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association, and local school districts.

An innovative part of the education reform plan in Massachusetts is the Expanded Learning Time program, which is funded through the state's Department of Education. In 2005–2006, 16 school districts received grants to explore the idea of and plan expanded school days for raising student achievement. Five districts were able to complete implementation plans. For the 2006–2007 school year, 10 schools in these five districts received \$1,300 per pupil to implement their Expanded Learning Time school redesigns. The increased funding and time provide the potential for increased arts education.

## **Minnesota**

In Minnesota, public elementary and middle schools must offer programming in at least three, and require participation in two, of the following disciplines: visual art, music, dance, and theatre. In addition, school districts are charged with ensuring students meet the appropriate arts standards in these disciplines. Elementary teacher candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge of the arts disciplines, and the state requires licensure for dance, theatre, music, and visual art specialists.

Minnesota is home to the Perpich Center, a state agency dedicated to improving arts education in grades K-12. The center was created in 1985 and houses a professional development and research group, an arts high school, and a library. The center's professional development and research group supports a variety of programs including arts courses, arts education conferences, and planning grants. The Comprehensive Arts Planning Program (CAPP) provides school districts funding and technical assistance to develop a 5-year comprehensive arts plan.

## **New Jersey**

In 2005, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted new arts standards in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts. According to New Jersey statute, these standards are mandatory and each district is required to implement and report on them. The state requires licensure for teachers of dance, theatre, music, and visual art through regular or alternative certification. At the high school level, New Jersey requires five credits (1 year of instruction) in the visual and performing

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<sup>6</sup> Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts; retrieved from <http://www.kentuckycenter.org/education/kiae.asp>.

arts beginning with the 2004–05 freshman class; at the elementary and middle school levels, instruction is supported by arts standards.

New Jersey schools have one of the highest per-pupil spending levels in the country. On average they have a higher funding level than California and the other case study states (see Exhibit A-2). The additional resources available to New Jersey schools may enable schools and districts to increase their arts programming through arts specialists, visiting artists, or materials.

The higher funding in some of New Jersey’s districts is a result of *Abbott vs. Burke* (1981), which found that the education urban school children received was inadequate and unconstitutional. The 31 “Abbott” school districts, as classified by New Jersey’s Department of Education based on court-identified factors, are given state aid to provide them with the same per-pupil operating budget as the wealthiest New Jersey school districts. The “Abbott parity aid” is adjusted annually according to the spending and enrollment of the wealthiest districts.

**Exhibit A-2  
School Summary**

Location	School Enrollment	% FRPL	% White	% Black	% Hisp	% Asian	Fourth Grade ELA Proficient and Above	Fourth Grade Mathematics Proficient and Above	NCES Locale
<b>California</b>		<b>48</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>56</b>	
School 1*	176	79	9	9	74	7	40	45	City: Large
<b>Kentucky</b>		<b>49</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>57</b>	
School 1	296	99	73	26	2	0	43	26 <sup>†</sup>	Town: Distant
School 2	621	10	97	1	1	0	85	90 <sup>†</sup>	Rural: Fringe
School 3	262	53	71	18	5	4	55	59 <sup>†</sup>	Town: Distant
<b>Massachusetts</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>	
School 1	449	60	33	17	44	4	57	30	City: Midsize
<b>Minnesota</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>71</b>	
School 1	614	25	85	2	11	2	71	77	Town: Fringe
School 2	437	38	85	2	12	1	69	57	Town: Remote
School 3	639	41	55	21	17	6	64	66	Suburb: Large
<b>New Jersey</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>82</b>	
School 1 <sup>‡</sup>	479	68	3	29	68	0	55	56	City: Small
School 2	486	10	85	8	2	5	91	90	Suburb: Large

Sources: CCD Public school data 2005–2006 school year; school report cards from respective states

\*Demographic information includes about 60 students who participate in a separate program housed within the same school. Test score data retrieved from <http://star.cde.ca.gov>

<sup>†</sup>Fifth grade test scores are reported for mathematics.

<sup>‡</sup>Demographic information includes grades 6–8, with 50–60 students per grade. The middle grades at this school were excluded from our analysis of the allocation of instructional time and expenditures for elementary arts education.







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