



**ArtsEd Washington** is a statewide not-for-profit organization working to advance arts education for all students in grades K-12, through leadership, partnership, and communication. Our efforts are dedicated to improving how arts education is understood, funded and taught in Washington state's public schools.

## Arts Education Quick Facts

### Arts education is the law in Washington state.

- Arts education, as defined by Washington state law, includes all four disciplines: dance, music, theater, and visual art.
- Arts education is *not* an optional enrichment activity. In accordance with the *Basic Education Act*<sup>1</sup>, arts education is a *mandated* core subject and required to be taught in Washington state schools.
- Despite this mandate, in Washington state,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of elementary students receive only two hours or less of arts education each week<sup>2</sup>.

### Arts learning is essential to success in school, work and life.

- Learning in and through the arts supports an understanding across multiple academic disciplines, supporting overall school engagement. The arts nurture the critical thinking and complex problem solving that are essential in fostering a deeper understanding by applying knowledge, and making meaning of the material, rather than just memorizing.
- Credible research<sup>3</sup> has demonstrated consistently better outcomes for students highly involved in the arts including better grades, less likelihood of dropping out, and more positive attitudes about school. These same studies show that high levels of arts participation make the greatest difference for economically disadvantaged students.

### Arts education should be provided fairly to all students.

- Curriculum and instruction in the arts must be provided during regular school hours and build on learning each year, in the same way that teaching and learning happens in other core subjects.
- Schools integrating the arts are better positioned to address achievement gaps, while schools without the arts are perpetuating educational inequities, denying students proven pathways to success.

### Creative attributes are the cornerstone for achievement in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

- In Washington state, creative occupations between 2006-2008 increased by 2.5%, and 100,000 creative sector jobs were reported in 2008<sup>4</sup>.
- Companies are seeking innovative employees<sup>5</sup> who have the ability to imagine new services, create new opportunities, and develop inventive solutions to solve problems.
- A Global CEO Study<sup>6</sup> commissioned this year by IBM found that more than 1,500 CEOs from large and small companies in 60 countries, representing 33 different industries, noted as their top answer that the most important leadership competency needed to manage in an increasingly complex world was CREATIVITY.

<sup>1</sup> RCW 28A.150.210 - Basic Education Act (<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.150.210>).

<sup>2</sup> Arts Education Research Initiative, 2009. Washington State Arts Commission ([www.arts.wa.gov/education/aeri.shtml](http://www.arts.wa.gov/education/aeri.shtml)).

<sup>3</sup> Critical Evidence, AEP (<http://bit.ly/ekHVpt>).

<sup>4</sup> *Creative Vitality Index* (extracts), 2010, Washington State Arts Commission

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/21/opinion/21friedman.html>.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www-03.ibm.com/press/us/en/pressrelease/31670.wss>.

## Arts Education: An Overview

### The issue: Washington students are not receiving the complete education they were promised.

Washington State law *requires* that all school districts in the state teach<sup>7</sup> and measure<sup>8</sup> student progress in the arts. But in many schools young people are not getting the arts education they are entitled to. According to Washington State Arts Commission's 2009 study<sup>9</sup> on the status of arts education throughout the state, **1/3 of elementary students get less than one hour of arts instruction per week and 1 out of every 10 schools offers no formal arts instruction at all.**

Most people agree that one hour per week is not enough for students to learn what they need from the arts, and yet schools – struggling with time and money – lack a “roadmap” showing them how to incorporate arts into the curriculum.

As a result, arts learning varies from district to district, and from school to school. While all schools face economic limitations, some of this disparity is due to priorities; some schools aren't aware that arts education greatly enhances the learning environment; and some don't know that it helps children to flourish.

*"If the 3rd grade teacher loves the arts, the children get a lot of arts exposure. Then that child goes to 4th grade, and if that teacher doesn't like the arts, they'll get no exposure. We don't teach any other subject that way. Imagine if your children came home from school to say 'We're not doing any math this year because my teacher doesn't like it.'"*

~Michael Kaiser, Kennedy Center president  
as quoted during his 2009 Arts in Crisis tour

### The answer: Arts in schools = equitable access to all students.



**For the kids in our state to have the best chance of fulfilling their potential, learning in and through the arts must be part of their education.** To achieve this, *we must all work together* to provide our children with the complete education they are entitled to. Math, science, reading, social studies, health/fitness *and* the arts function together to effectively educate the “whole child”.

A quality education in and through the arts is critical for children – especially those that are considered “hard to reach” – academically challenged or unmotivated, with emotional and/or behavioral problems. While some children can access arts education readily, other children go without perhaps because their parents can't afford it or because their school doesn't provide it. This is not fair.

### ArtsEd Washington: Advancing arts education.

A standard K-12 curriculum, that includes arts education as part of everyday learning, fosters well-rounded graduates who enter college and the workforce with creative skills and a competitive edge.

This is why **ArtsEd Washington...**

- Advocates for **schools** as *THE* best place to provide an **equitable** and **dependable** delivery of arts education through teaching and learning, guided by **rigorous standards - the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in the Arts.**
- Provides tools and framework to schools and districts to improve their capacity to teach the arts.
- Works extensively with parents, policymakers, and the broader universe of community members and businesses to educate, inform, and catalyze change.

**To learn more about ArtsEd Washington or for more information to support you in your work, please visit [www.ArtsEdWashington.org](http://www.ArtsEdWashington.org) or call 206.441.4501.**

<sup>7</sup> RCW 28A.150.210. Basic Education Act (<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.150.210>).

<sup>8</sup> Essential academic learning requirements and assessments, verification reports (<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.230.095>).

<sup>9</sup> Arts Education Research Initiative, 2009. Washington State Arts Commission ([www.arts.wa.gov/education/aeri.shtml](http://www.arts.wa.gov/education/aeri.shtml)).