

UNEVEN REPORTING LIMITS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF STUDENT ACCESS TO ARTS EDUCATION

Our first report on the availability of arts education in Minnesota schools is incomplete because so many schools have not complied with the mandatory reporting requirements. We cannot definitively say what percentage of students do not have access to the three arts courses that should be available to them in high school. It may be that their school has reported that they are not providing the courses, or it may be that the schools have not reported in at all. The data we have so far does not allow us to tell the difference.

The statute says, *“high schools must offer at least three and require at least one of the following five arts areas: media arts; dance; music; theater; and visual arts.”* For the purpose of this report, we will be calling the “areas” *“disciplines.”*

- So far **165 schools, representing 24 percent of Minnesota’s high school students, have not yet submitted their data.**
- Only **20 percent of high schools** have affirmatively reported that they are providing access to the required arts education offerings. They serve just 37 percent of Minnesota’s 252,181 high school students.
- **The level of access may be lower, or even higher.** The schools that have not reported are of many different sizes and locations so it’s hard to predict what the data would look like if they had.
- The good news is that between 2015 and 2017 **there was an increase in the number of schools that reported into the Department of Education**, decreasing the number of students whose access to arts education is unreported from 66,518 students to 61,203.

The requirement for schools to report arts courses offered and student participation is relatively new in Minnesota and many other states. Reporting on arts courses for grades 9 through 12 began in the 2010–2011 school year and reporting on kindergarten through eighth grade started in the 2017–2018 school year. These new requirements presented a learning curve for schools and communities, slowing their reporting.

This is a major limitation in this report that we hope will be corrected over time as more schools meet the mandatory reporting. We can see that the state system has work to do to get all schools to report, and the good news is that they are working to be sure all districts and schools know about these requirements. While we acknowledge these limitations, the information in this report provides an important first look into what schools are offering. We expect that in the near future the reporting will be more robust.

It is also important to note that change is coming. The state recently began requiring reporting on arts courses for kindergarten through eighth grade, so in a few years we will have a broader picture of access to arts education. In addition, new Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in the Arts are going through the rulemaking process now, and it is estimated they will be implemented by the 2021–2022 school year. These standards have shifted from grade-banded (multiple grades reported together) to grade level for kindergarten through eighth grade. This change will likely affect course offerings as districts work to ensure that students have access to the required number of arts disciplines at each grade.

WE CAN GET A MORE COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THE AVAILABILITY OF ARTS EDUCATION IN MINNESOTA’S SCHOOLS IF WE ALL MAKE A CONCERTED EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE OUR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT OFFICIALS TO COMPLY WITH THE MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENT. THERE IS WORK TO DO. YOU CAN FIND OUT IF YOUR SCHOOL HAS COMPLIED WITH THE MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AT CREATIVEMN.ORG.

AND YES, REPORTING IS MANDATORY.⁽¹²⁾



SO, FROM OUR LIMITED DATA, WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ACCESS TO THE REQUIRED THREE ARTS DISCIPLINES?

Note that the law says that high schools must **offer** at least three arts disciplines during the school day **and that students are required to complete one arts credit for graduation**. Whether or not students are **participating** in the courses, and why, are different questions altogether. Therefore, it is important to look both at how many schools are complying with the law and how many students are participating in the required number of arts disciplines.

- Only **20 percent of schools** report that they provide access to at least three arts disciplines.
- Only **37 percent of students** are in schools that report that they provide the three required arts disciplines.
- However, **76 percent of students** are in schools that report they provide at least some arts instruction.
- **Traditional public schools are doing much better than Charter schools in providing access to arts courses.** Only **6 percent of Charter Schools** report they provide access to three arts disciplines required by Minnesota Statute, compared to **23 percent of Traditional Public Schools**

which have reported the same. Stated in terms of the percentage of students in each type of school, **11 percent of students** at Charter Schools, compared to **38 percent of students** at Traditional Public Schools, have been reported to have access to the three arts disciplines.

- From the data submitted so far, we can see that where a student lives and attends school can have an impact on availability of arts education. There seems to be a “donut effect” to the access of arts education offerings. **Schools in the suburban ring tend to report offering better access to arts education**, with inner city schools and rural schools reporting less access. High-access outliers are sprinkled across the state.

TYPE OF COMMUNITY*	SCHOOLS					STUDENTS		
	NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOLS IN THIS GROUP	PERCENT OF NON-REPORTING HIGH SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF NON-REPORTING HIGH SCHOOLS	HIGH SCHOOLS THAT REPORT THEY MEET STATE STANDARDS BY PROVIDING ACCESS TO THREE ARTS DISCIPLINES	PERCENT OF HIGH SCHOOLS THAT REPORT THEY PROVIDE AT LEAST SOME ARTS ACCESS	PERCENT OF ALL STUDENTS KNOWN TO HAVE ACCESS TO THREE ARTS DISCIPLINES	PERCENT OF ALL STUDENTS KNOWN TO HAVE ACCESS TO AT LEAST SOME ARTS COURSES	PERCENT OF ALL STUDENTS KNOWN TO BE PARTICIPATING IN ANY ARTS COURSES
LARGE CITY	52	62%	32	17%	38%	30%	47%	31%
MID-SIZED CITY	6	50%	3	50%	50%	96%	96%	45%
SMALL CITY	17	29%	5	18%	71%	38%	83%	44%
LARGE SUBURB	81	36%	29	31%	64%	42%	75%	41%
MID-SIZED SUBURB	5	20%	1	40%	80%	75%	100%	62%
SMALL SUBURB	1	0%	0	0%	100%	0%	100%	68%
FRINGE TOWN	21	10%	2	33%	90%	42%	90%	55%
DISTANT TOWN	42	38%	16	26%	62%	45%	78%	50%
REMOTE TOWN	30	27%	8	17%	73%	36%	86%	53%
FRINGE RURAL	45	27%	12	20%	73%	26%	80%	46%
DISTANT RURAL	73	37%	27	15%	63%	19%	71%	43%
REMOTE RURAL	109	28%	31	10%	72%	12%	72%	49%
ALL SCHOOLS	482	34%	165	20%	66%	37%	76%	44%

*Large city: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of 250,000 or more. Mid-sized city: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000. Small city: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population less than 100,000. Large suburb: Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population of 250,000 or more. Mid-sized suburb: Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000. Small suburb: Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population less than 100,000. Fringe town: Territory inside an urban cluster that is less than or equal to 10 miles from an urbanized area. Distant town: Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 10 miles and less than or equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area. Remote town: Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 35 miles from an urbanized area. Fringe rural: Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster. Distant rural: Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster. Remote rural: Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster.

REPORTED ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN ARTS DISCIPLINES

Of those schools that have reported, **participation in Visual or Media Arts (25 percent) and Music (22 percent) were highest** among the artistic disciplines. It is likely that it is because **Visual or Media Arts and Music are also the most widely offered** of the arts disciplines. High school students are required to take one credit in the arts (equivalent to one year of study) and they may take it in any of their high school years, so it is not surprising that participation would be less than 100 percent in any given year.

	VISUAL OR MEDIA ARTS	MUSIC	THEATER	DANCE
PERCENT OF HIGH SCHOOLS KNOWN TO BE OFFERING EACH DISCIPLINE	63%	63%	21%	2%
PERCENT OF ALL STUDENTS IN ALL SCHOOLS KNOWN TO BE PARTICIPATING IN EACH DISCIPLINE	25%	22%	2%	0.47%
NUMBER OF STUDENTS REPORTED TO BE PARTICIPATING IN EACH DISCIPLINE	64,053	56,451	5,377	895
NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITHOUT REPORTED ACCESS TO EACH DISCIPLINE	63,547	64,488	159,810	238,718

REPORTED STUDENT ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN HIGH AND LOW POVERTY SCHOOLS

Of those schools that have reported, **access to Art and Music programs is lower** for students in schools where more than 75 percent of students receive Free/Reduced Price Lunch when compared to other students. **Non-reporting schools are most likely to be located where more than 75 percent of students receive Free/Reduced Price Lunch.** Participation rates, however, did not vary significantly.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH*	1–25% LOW POVERTY SCHOOLS	26–50% MID-LOW POVERTY SCHOOLS	51–75% MID-HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS	76%+ HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS
PERCENT OF SCHOOLS REPORTING THAT THEY PROVIDE ACCESS TO ANY ARTS COURSES	79%	75%	79%	61%
PERCENT OF ALL STUDENTS WHO ARE IN SCHOOLS THAT HAVE REPORTED ACCESS TO THREE ARTS DISCIPLINES	39%	43%	16%	33%
PERCENT OF ALL STUDENTS WHOSE SCHOOLS HAVE REPORTED ACCESS TO SOME ARTS COURSES	74%	66%	71%	51%
PERCENT OF ALL STUDENTS WHOSE SCHOOLS REPORT THEIR PARTICIPATION IN ONE OR MORE ARTS DISCIPLINE	44%	44%	48%	39%
REPORTED PARTICIPATION IN VISUAL OR MEDIA ARTS	26%	25%	28%	23%
REPORTED PARTICIPATION IN MUSIC	22%	23%	25%	20%
REPORTED PARTICIPATION IN THEATER	2%	2%	2%	4%
REPORTED PARTICIPATION IN DANCE	0.6%	0.1%	0.1%	1%

*The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) under the National School Lunch Program provides a proxy measure for the concentration of low-income students within a school. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those from families with incomes that are between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals.

REPORTED STUDENT ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOLS SERVING MAJORITY STUDENTS OF COLOR

Approximately 10 percent of Minnesota schools serve majority students of color or indigenous students. While there are smaller differences in most categories, the biggest difference between these schools and schools serving majority white students is in whether schools report **they provide access to any arts courses**.

	SCHOOLS SERVING MAJORITY STUDENTS OF COLOR	SCHOOLS SERVING MAJORITY WHITE STUDENTS	ALL SCHOOLS/ ALL STUDENTS
SCHOOLS			
SCHOOLS REPORTING THAT THEY PROVIDE ACCESS TO THREE REQUIRED ARTS DISCIPLINES	15%	20%	20%
SCHOOLS REPORTING THAT THEY PROVIDE ACCESS TO ANY ARTS COURSES	43%	68%	66%
STUDENTS			
STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS REPORTING ACCESS TO THREE REQUIRED ARTS DISCIPLINES	33%	37%	37%
STUDENTS WITH ACCESS TO ANY REPORTED ARTS COURSES	65%	77%	76%
REPORTED STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN ONE OR MORE ARTS DISCIPLINE	38%	40%	44%
REPORTED PARTICIPATION IN VISUAL OR MEDIA ARTS	26%	22%	25%
REPORTED PARTICIPATION IN MUSIC	15%	21%	22%
REPORTED PARTICIPATION IN THEATER	2%	2%	2%
REPORTED PARTICIPATION IN DANCE	.84%	.42%	.47%

WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

As a parent or community member you can look at the school-by-school information on CreativeMN.org to see if your student is getting access to the arts education required by law, or if your school has not yet reported whether or not they are offering the required arts disciplines.

If you find that your school or district is not reporting, or not offering, the required amount and variety of arts courses you may be interested to know that education leaders in your community—the school board and administrators—make these decisions. Whether these decision makers are not aware of arts education requirements under the law or chose to prioritize other areas is unknown. Minnesota has very strong “local control” laws that make sure most decisions are made at the school board level. This can be good because it allows school boards to respond to local needs. However, local control also means that any two students in the state may receive very different educational experiences. Local control means that if your school is not meeting the arts requirements it may be they are not aware of the requirements, or they may have chosen to fund other things than the required arts education courses.

SO, WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT THAT? IT'S SIMPLE, REALLY. CONTACT YOUR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS AND ASK THEM TO:

- 1 Comply with mandatory reporting, so you can know if they are offering the required arts education opportunities, and if they are not,
- 2 Ask them to make sure your school is providing the required arts education opportunities.

Parents and community members are the most important voices in your school.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

SCHOOL BY SCHOOL ANALYSIS AND MUCH MORE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT CREATIVEMN.ORG.