

# arts for all

Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education

## Defining School Level Quality in Arts Education

Since its inception, the *Arts for All* initiative has focused efforts at the school-district level, and as such the data collected has been from the school district perspective, most notably through *Arts in Focus* and the Arts Education Performance Indicators (AEPI) reports. While findings from the 2008 AEPI report revealed an overall growing foundation for arts education, *Arts for All* has not had the opportunity to track instructional quality at the school-site level.

In 2008, evaluator Lynn Waldorf became the principle investigator for the *Arts for All* Case Studies focused on the first 11 vanguard school districts. Waldorf's case study report has been instrumental in developing the current strategies being pursued through the Wallace-funded implementation programs. The Wallace Foundation grant challenged *Arts for All* to deepen data collections efforts, focusing on quality, equity, and access. In 2009, Waldorf and her new organization the Griffin Center for Inspired Instruction, began developing the first ever school-site indicators looking at quality arts education, equitable delivery, and student access.

To develop these indicators, Waldorf employed the following tactics:

1. Literature review of more than 60 relevant publications.
2. Phone interviews with national arts education administrators, experts, researchers.
3. Convened local arts education leaders in a quality think tank to identify pertinent issues that impact arts instruction in the Los Angeles County context: workforce development—especially in creative careers; poverty, racism and ethnic tensions; and teaching the Visual and Performing Arts and other core standards.

## Lens #1: Pedagogy

*Defined as: The capacity of arts instructors and the design for comprehensive, accessible arts instruction.*

**Expert Instructors.** The school employs highly qualified teachers in the visual and performing arts and contracts with additional individuals and groups with expertise in the arts as supplemental instructors and professional development coaches.

**Arts as Core Subjects.** The school offers a curriculum of sequential, standards-based instruction in the major arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre and visual arts) that includes arts-integrated lessons and meets the social and cognitive needs of all students.

**Accessibility Assessment.** The school staff regularly monitors the assessment and appropriate placement of students in arts classes and reviews master schedules to ensure equitable access for all.

## Lens #2: Student Learning

*Defined as: Specific criteria for the demonstration of student learning in the arts, as articulated in the curriculum and tied to educational, artistic, and community values.*

**Academic Focus.** The arts curriculum emphasizes the acquisition of arts knowledge, cross-curricular connections, and learning strategies.

**College and Career Preparation.** The arts curriculum includes real-life applications that prepare students for post-secondary education, focused training, and eventual employment.

**Artistic Rigor.** Arts instruction is comprehensive, coherent, and challenging at every grade level, and fully incorporated into the core curriculum.

**Cultural Inclusivity.** Arts instruction fosters team and community building across diverse student populations. Learning processes are designed to acknowledge and incorporate students' personal experiences along with other global perspectives.

## Lens #3: Environment

*Defined as: Tangible and evident program elements, including funding, facilities, material resources, instructional time, and the exhibition of student work.*

**Fiscal Commitment.** The school budget includes allocations for arts education that align with objectives set forth in the broader District Arts Education Plan.

**Creative Spaces.** Facilities and storage areas are designed to support full implementation of sequential instruction in the major arts disciplines.

**Materials, Supplies and Equipment.** Standards-aligned instructional resources are used in all discipline-based and arts-integrated classrooms and courses, in each of the major disciplines, at every grade level. Supplemental resources are made available to meet the needs of diverse populations of learners.

**Time on Task.** Designated instructional time exists for students to develop and apply arts knowledge and skills in the major disciplines and to access knowledge in other subject areas through arts-integrated learning.

**Visibility of Arts Learning.** There is ample evidence of the range and diversity of student learning in and through the arts, as displayed in every classroom, hallway, office, and school publication, as well as in school and community performances.

## **Lens #4: Community**

*Defined as: The relationships among those who directly or indirectly impact arts instruction through their decisions and actions.*

**Articulated Arts Plan.** Through explicit policies and practices, school leadership makes it clear that arts education is a responsibility of the whole school and is critical to the realization of the school's mission and vision.

**Arts Learning Community.** Teachers are provided with the planning time, professional development opportunities, and financial resources needed to participate and collaborate in reflective learning groups regarding instruction, student learning, and assessment in the arts.

**Informed, Engaged Parents.** Parents are kept informed about the school's arts education program and the progress of their children, assist with arts learning activities, and attend exhibitions and performances.

**Broad Support.** Administrators, teachers and parents collectively engage in building and nurturing the support of local arts and cultural providers, community service groups, local businesses, corporations, foundations, civic agencies, and other influential citizens.

## **Other Data To Be Collected**

**Barriers to Arts Education.** The identification of factors that influence a school's ability to provide quality arts instruction in an equitable manner.

**Student Demographics.** Monitoring systems are consistently employed to ensure that subpopulations of students are not placed disproportionately or inappropriately into lower arts tracks or denied access to rigorous arts courses and programs of study.

***Arts for All* is led by an Executive Committee. Members are:**

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