



STATE OF THE ARTS

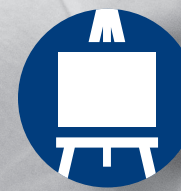
IN CHICAGO
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

PROGRESS REPORT | 2020-21

ingenuity



INTRODUCTION



Ingenuity's mission is to ensure that every student, in every grade, in every school in Chicago Public Schools (CPS), has access to the arts as part of a well-rounded education.

This mission is rooted in the CPS Arts Education Plan,¹ which was published in 2012 to elevate the role of the arts in CPS, bring arts access to all students, and define quality arts education. The State of the Arts in Chicago Public Schools (SOTA) report has, for the past nine years, employed data to chronicle the advancement of CPS arts education while also identifying areas for improvement and opportunities for growth.

This report provides updates on how CPS schools and the arts partner community fared in bringing the arts to CPS students in the 2020–21 school year, the first full year of data collected during the COVID-19 pandemic.² Data reveals both the resilience of and struggles within school communities: schools had some success in maintaining access to the arts at levels similar to what was seen in 2019–20, with small drops across most measures, and struggled to sustain their performance in measures of the quality of the arts programs they offered.

The data also reflects the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on arts partners and their partnerships with CPS schools: while some partners had access to technology tools that enabled them to more easily pivot to deliver online learning experiences to CPS students, there is no doubt that the absence of in-person learning and field trips severely limited school partnerships.

We offer this report to provide all arts education stakeholders in Chicago with a shared understanding of the full context in which they are operating. We hope that, armed with the big-picture view and insights we provide here and in our other data publications, Chicago's arts education community can develop and deploy strategies to close the gaps in arts education quality and access and push us, collectively, toward a future in which every CPS student has access to a high quality arts education.

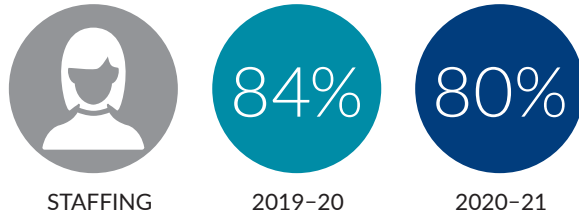
¹ *The Chicago Public Schools Arts Education Plan 2012–15: Bringing the Arts to Every Child in Every School*. Chicago: Chicago Public Schools, 2012.

² Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ingenuity and the CPS Department of Arts Education (DAE) are not publicly releasing final CSC ratings or individual school scores for the 2019–20 and 2020–21 school years.

SOTA 2020–21 KEY FINDINGS³

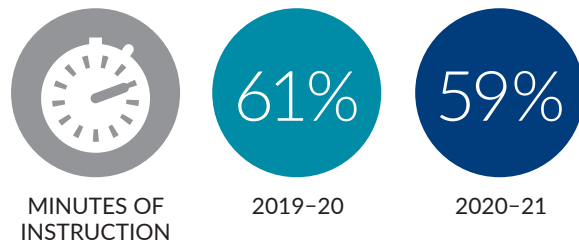
ACCESS MEASURES

The share of schools rated as Excelling or Strong in **Staffing in the Arts** decreased from 2019–20 to 2020–21.

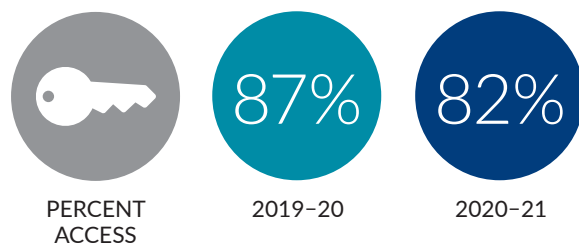


High schools (78%) are considerably more likely than elementary schools (62%) to be rated as Excelling in the Staffing measure.

The percentage of reporting elementary schools that rated as Excelling or Strong in **Minutes of Instruction** decreased slightly from 2019–20 to 2020–21.



The share of reporting elementary schools that rated as Excelling in the **Percent Access** measure fell from 2019–20 to 2020–21.



While **Disciplines & Depth** ratings remained steady in 2020–21, the number of high schools offering multi-level coursework dropped in all disciplines.



DANCE
4 fewer schools



MUSIC
2 fewer schools



THEATRE
5 fewer schools



MEDIA ARTS
1 fewer school



VISUAL ARTS
8 fewer schools

Visual arts and music coursework remain the most frequently offered disciplines in high schools.

³The data presented in this report is accurate as of January 25, 2022.

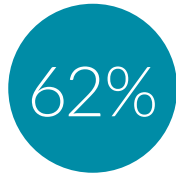
SOTA 2020-21 KEY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

QUALITY MEASURES

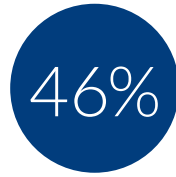
While a vast majority of schools utilize some form of arts learning standards, only 46% of high schools and 62% of elementary schools use the updated **Illinois Arts Learning Standards**.



ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS



ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



HIGH SCHOOLS

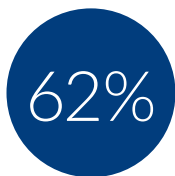
More than 80% of schools have the arts represented in **school governance** structures.



SCHOOL GOVERNANCE



ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
ARTS INCLUDED IN
THE SCHOOL-WIDE
STRATEGIC PLAN



HIGH SCHOOLS
ARTS INSTRUCTOR ON
THE CURRICULUM OR
INSTRUCTION TEAM

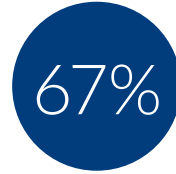
The percentage of schools reporting some form of **family and community engagement** decreased from 2019-20 to 2020-21.



FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT



2019-20



2020-21

All forms of engagement (school-based exhibits, performances, volunteer opportunities, and community events) have dropped to at least 20 percentage points below their 2018-19 levels.



SOTA 2020-21 KEY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

ARTS PARTNERS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The arts and culture sector was among the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The number of **arts partners** working in one or more CPS schools has dropped by 47% since 2018-19.



ARTS PARTNERS



More than 90% of schools had at least one **arts partner**.

However, schools had an average of 3.7 fewer **arts partnerships** in 2020-21 than they did in 2018-19.



Excluding online and digital programming, partnerships of every type have fallen over the past two years.

Partnerships that involve **field trips** have dropped by 84% since 2018-19.



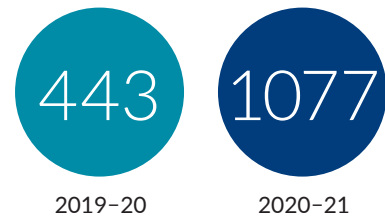
FIELD TRIPS



Partnerships that involve **online programming** more than doubled.



ONLINE PROGRAMMING



CREATIVE SCHOOLS CERTIFICATION



CREATIVE SCHOOLS CERTIFICATION

All of the analysis and insights in this report come directly from data collected and stored in artlook®, Ingenuity’s online hub for arts education information. Every year, Arts Liaisons, nominated by principals to be champions of the arts at every CPS school, log into their school’s artlook® profile to complete the Creative Schools Survey.

The data Arts Liaisons provide through artlook® is used to determine schools’ Creative Schools Certification (CSC) scores.⁴ The CSC is the result of a collaboration between Ingenuity and the CPS Department of Arts Education (DAE), with years of input from numerous stakeholders including principals and teachers. It is organized around two elements: Access and Quality.

Access elements capture more resource-intensive arts investments related to a school’s provision of access to arts education opportunities. Quality elements focus on more resource-neutral arts investments related to the approach a school has in bringing the arts to its students.

The CSC uses a points-based scoring scale in which every school can receive up to 100 points. Points are then converted to an overall rating of Emerging, Developing, Strong, or Excelling. For more information on the CSC, see Ingenuity’s website.

ACCESS TO THE ARTS

The most weighted elements in the CSC are Access indicators that reflect the extent to which schools successfully provide their students with access to classroom arts education opportunities. These Access elements, taken together, account for 64 out of 100 available points in the CSC and measure:



ARTS INSTRUCTOR STAFFING LEVELS



MINUTES OF INSTRUCTION
(among elementary schools)



SHARE OF STUDENTS WHO HAVE ACCESS TO THE ARTS
(among elementary schools)



THE NUMBER OF DISCIPLINES AND DEPTH OF INSTRUCTION OFFERED IN THOSE DISCIPLINES
(among high schools)

Early in the 2021–22 school year, Ingenuity and the CPS Department of Arts Education released Creative Schools Roadmaps to each CPS school based on data from the 2020–21 school year.

The Roadmap is a customized report sent each year to principals and arts liaisons that details the school’s scoring on each element of the CSC as well as how their school compared to others in their Network and in the District as a whole.

In addition to identifying areas of strength and opportunities for growth, each Roadmap recommends supports to help schools improve on specific metrics. These supports include opt-in professional learning opportunities, grants for capital building improvements for arts spaces, and invite-only grants for increasing arts instructional minutes or courses.



⁴ This ninth State of the Arts Report is the second using an updated CSC scoring rubric. The rubric—and how it differs from the original CSC—is detailed on Ingenuity’s website. Due to the change to CSC scoring, we do not report on CSC scores from prior to the 2019–20 school year here.



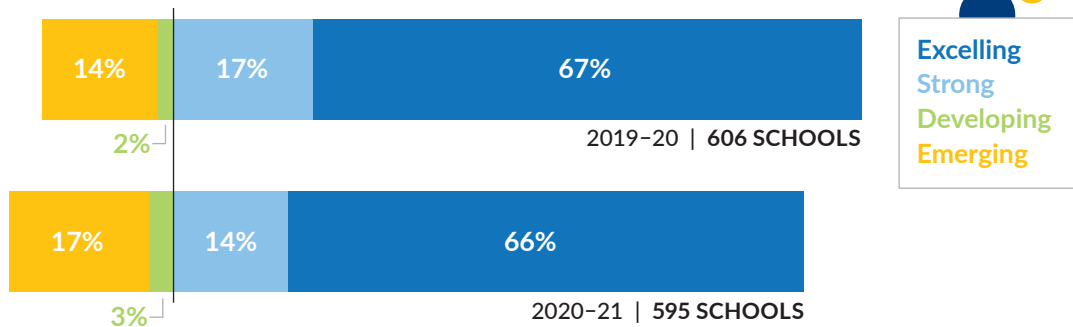
STAFFING

Certified arts instructors are an essential part of embedding and anchoring the arts within a school. Arts instructors provide the access, minutes of instruction, and breadth and depth of instruction that students receive. More than any external providers, arts instructors understand their school’s culture; they are well-positioned to teach a curriculum that is backwards-mapped from arts learning standards in order to address their students’ needs and identities.

In addition to teaching their students, arts instructors are essential in creating connections with the wider community of arts educators who seek to bring their passions to CPS students. In the 2020–21 school year, as in previous years in which it was measured, the addition of an arts teacher in a school was also associated with an increase in the number of external arts partnerships in a school.⁵ Because of this, arts staffing is the first key element of both elementary and high school CSC ratings. The ratio of arts teachers to students in a school is an indicator of the reach that teachers have relative to the student population, with lower ratios being most desirable.

Eighty percent of CPS schools are rated as Excelling or Strong in providing access to arts education opportunities; this represents a drop of four percentage points from the 2019–20 school year. The percentage of schools rated as Emerging on this measure increased from 14% to 17% in 2020–21.

CSC STAFFING RATINGS (ALL SCHOOLS)



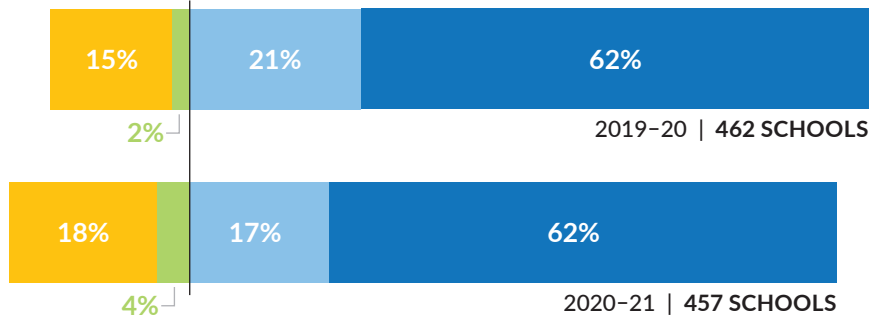
Excelling
Strong
Developing
Emerging

⁵The presence of one additional arts teacher in a school was associated in 2020–21 with an increase in the number of organizations the school partnered with by, on average, 0.8. For years preceding the COVID-19 pandemic, the presence of an additional arts teacher was associated with an increase of 1.1 partnerships.



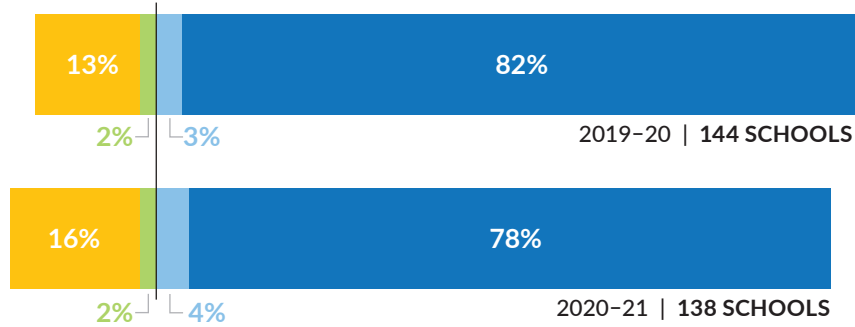
These drops in schools rated as Excelling or Strong on the staffing measure, as well as the accompanying increases in the share of schools with few to no arts teachers, are present in both elementary and high schools. As shown in the figures below, high schools are far more likely than elementary schools to be rated as Excelling in the measure of arts teacher-to-student ratio, though the proportion of high schools with that rating dropped from 82% in 2019–20 to 78% in 2020–21.

CSC STAFFING RATINGS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



Excelling
Strong
Developing
Emerging

CSC STAFFING RATINGS FOR HIGH SCHOOLS



Excelling
Strong
Developing
Emerging



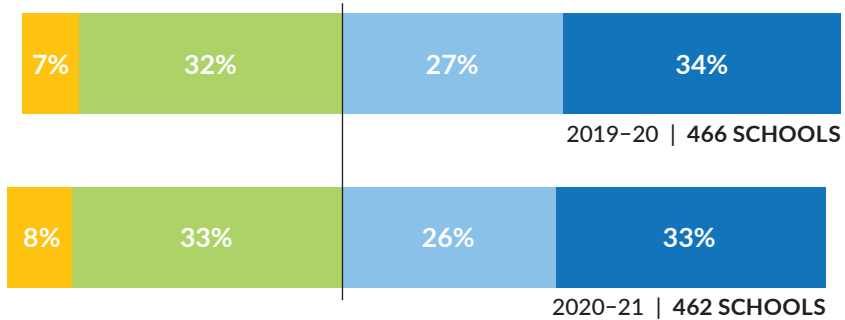


MINUTES OF INSTRUCTION

The second key element in the CSC rating for elementary schools is Minutes of Instruction, which is calculated as the average minutes of arts instruction students in elementary schools receive across the school year in any arts discipline, assuming they had access to at least one arts course. Instructional minutes in elementary schools ensure students have the time and space to create, be inspired, and develop their artistic point of view. More instructional minutes mean more opportunities to explore new disciplines, expand students' abilities to creatively engage, and form connections across content areas.

In spite of the disruption caused by learning remotely for part of the 2019–20 and the entirety of the 2020–21 school year, elementary schools continued to schedule arts instruction at levels comparable to what was offered before the pandemic. Fifty-nine percent of schools rated Excelling or Strong on this measure in 2020–21 compared to 61% the prior year. It is worth noting that this measure captures the number of minutes of instruction *offered* to students. Student *attendance* varied during remote learning across all subjects and is not captured by this measure.

CSC MINUTES OF INSTRUCTION RATINGS



Excelling
Strong
Developing
Emerging



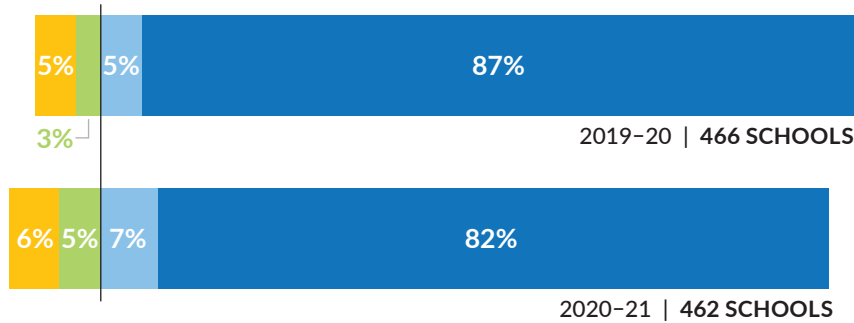


PERCENT ACCESS

In addition to Staffing and Minutes of Instruction, the elementary school CSC rubric accounts for the share of students in K–8 grades who have access to any arts instruction. Where the Minutes of Instruction measure is focused on the amount of instruction offered to students who are enrolled in arts courses, the Percent Access measure is focused on what proportion of students have access to the arts at all. In order to rank as Excelling in this measure, 100% of students must have access to at least some arts instruction.

The percentage of schools rated as Excelling dropped from 87% in 2019–20 to 82% in 2020–21. This is a notable decline, but the 82% is still slightly higher—even at this lower level—than what was reported in 2018–19 (81%).

CSC PERCENT ACCESS RATINGS

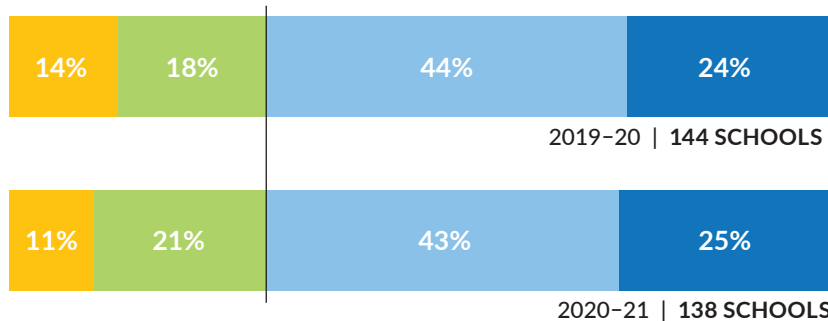


DISCIPLINES & DEPTH

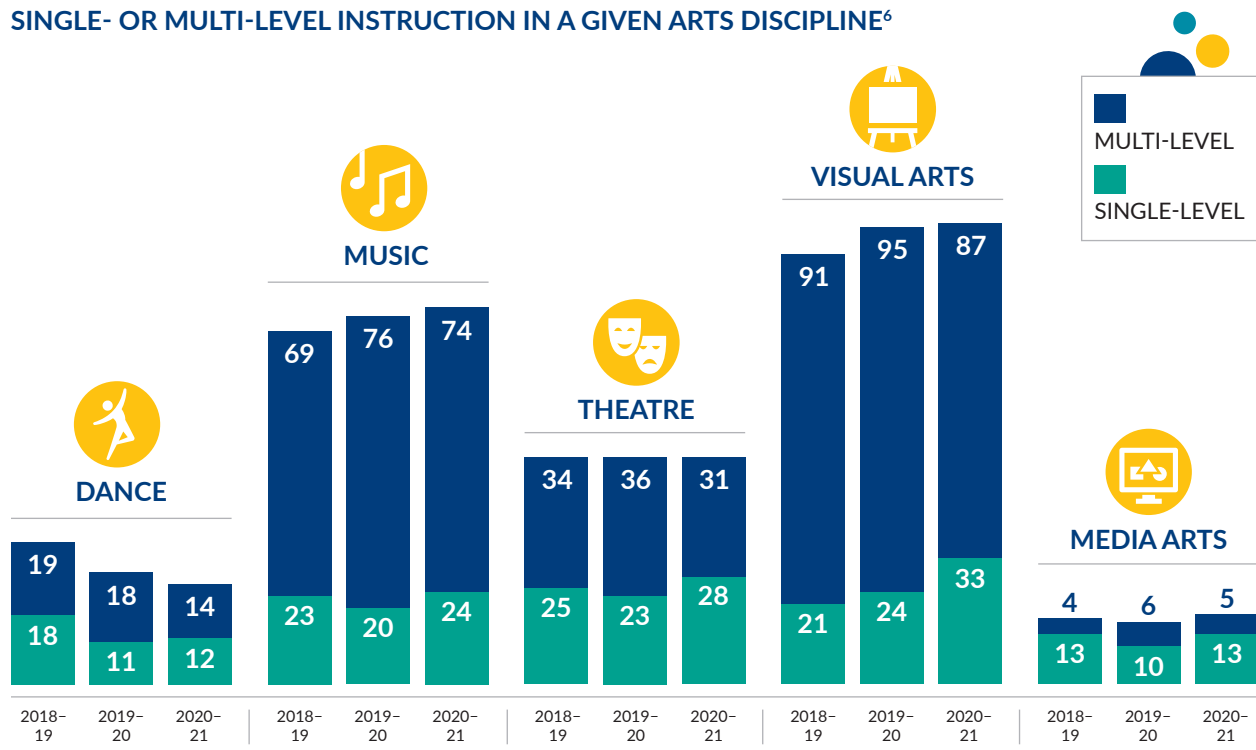
For high schools, Disciplines & Depth—the number of disciplines offered and the depth of coursework available—remains at the core of access to arts education. Both a range of offerings and sequential instruction in those offerings are key to a comprehensive and high-quality arts education.

Disciplines & Depth scores in 2020–21 looked very similar to what was reported in 2019–20. The most notable change was a reduction in the share of schools rated as Emerging, from 14% to 11%, and a corresponding increase from 18% to 21% in the share rated as Developing.

CSC DISCIPLINES & DEPTH RATINGS



SINGLE- OR MULTI-LEVEL INSTRUCTION IN A GIVEN ARTS DISCIPLINE⁶

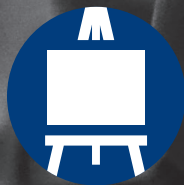


There was an increase in 2020-21 in the number of high schools offering courses in music and visual arts, which continue to be the disciplines most frequently offered. Dance courses, on the other hand, have fallen from being offered in 37 schools in 2018-19 to 26 schools in 2020-21.

Across all disciplines, there was a reduction in multi-level course offerings. In 2020-21, there were 214 multi-level disciplines across high schools in the District, down from 231 in 2019-20. Multi-level coursework is consistently more likely to be offered in music and visual arts than in other disciplines (e.g., 76% of schools offering any music courses have multi-level courses, but the same is true of only 53% of those offering dance).

⁶ Literary arts courses are not included in the visualization. Literary arts courses were included starting in the 2019-20 school year. In 2020-21, there were eight high schools that offered single-level literary arts courses and three high schools that offered multi-level courses. There were 158 high schools included in the above graphic for 2018-19, 144 high schools for 2019-20, and 138 high schools for 2020-21. Each bar shows the number of schools that offered single- or multi-level instruction in a given arts discipline in a given year.

QUALITY OF ARTS INSTRUCTION



QUALITY OF ARTS INSTRUCTION

The scoring elements that reflect the quality of arts instruction a school offers, when taken together, account for 36 out of 100 available points in the CSC. These Quality elements focus on ways a school can bring arts opportunities to its students that go beyond access to arts teachers and courses, including measures of:

- Arts learning standards alignment
- Representation of the arts in school governance structures
- School budget for the arts
- Partnerships with external arts organizations and teaching artists
- Participation in arts-specific professional development
- Opportunities for family and community engagement
- A thoughtful and planned approach to instruction in the arts



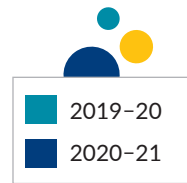
ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS

Arts learning standards are critical to a rigorous, high-quality arts education. They provide guidelines for schools and teachers as to what students should know and be able to do at each grade level and in each artistic discipline. While they don't prescribe exactly what teachers should do or the content they should teach, arts learning standards outline the age-appropriate conceptual goals that teachers should set for their students and strive to help them master. A new set of Illinois Arts Learnings Standards was approved by the Illinois State Board of Education and implemented starting with the 2018–19 school year.

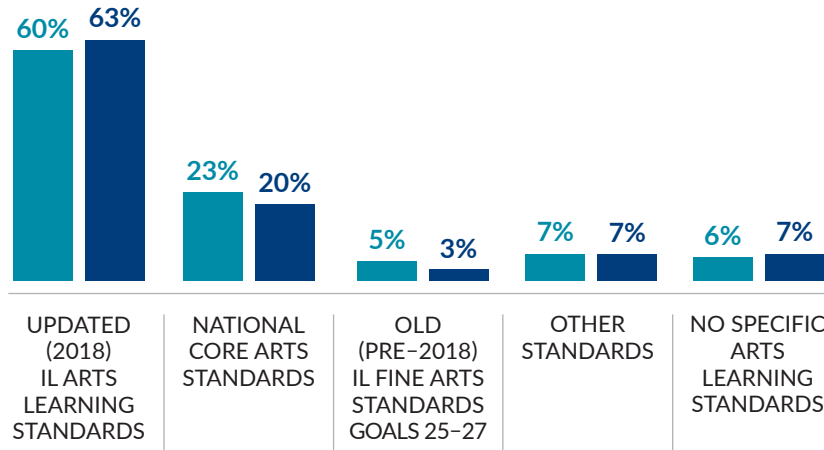
Slightly more elementary schools reported using the updated Illinois Arts Learning Standards in 2020–21 than in 2019–20; the opposite is true of high schools. In all, 93% of schools reported using some arts learning standards in 2020–21.



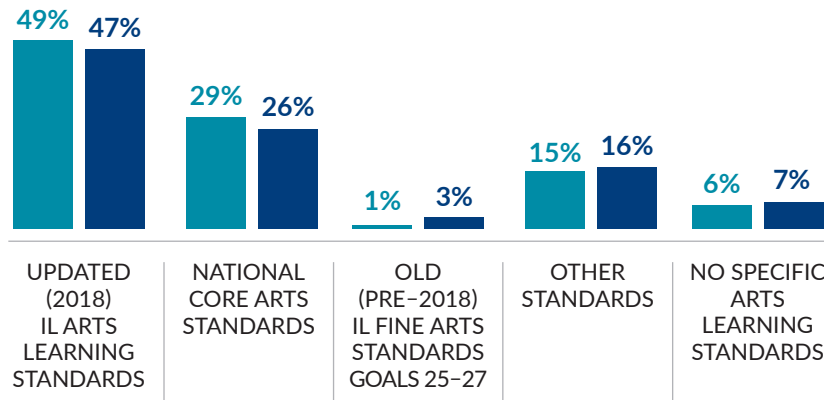
USE OF ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS UNDER CSC



ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



HIGH SCHOOLS





ARTS INCLUSION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

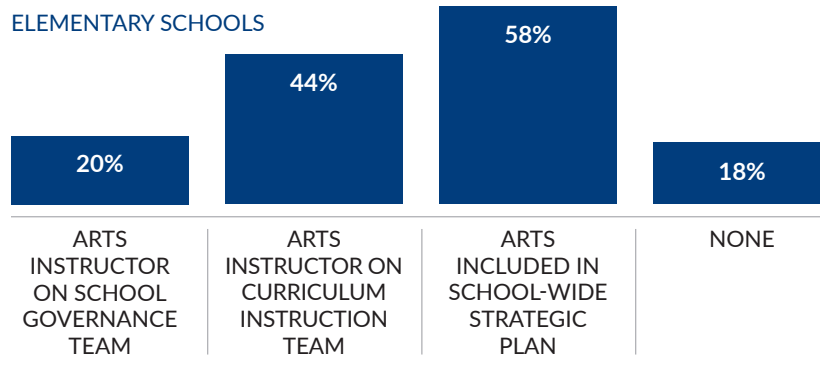
Strong representation of the arts in a school’s governance structure enhances the probability that the arts are a meaningful and integrated presence in a school. Whether this means an arts teacher participating in a Local School Council, an arts-specific goal in a school’s Continuous Improvement Work Plan, or an arts teacher on the school’s Instructional Leadership Team, this kind of arts representation ensures that there is both a platform and a voice that can help guide the school on making arts-positive decisions and policies.

High schools and elementary schools are almost equally likely to report that the arts are represented on the school governance team. They are also equally likely to report that the arts are not included in any school governance structures.

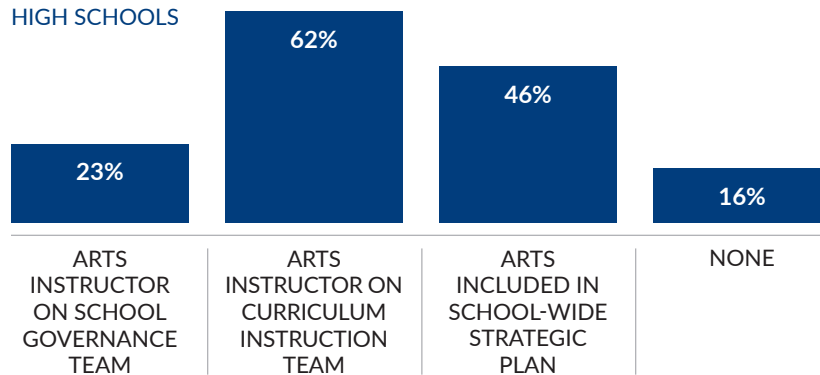
High schools, however, are more likely than elementary schools to report that the arts are represented on their school’s curriculum or instruction team, potentially because there are more arts teachers in most high schools. The opposite is true of the arts’ representation on a school’s strategic plan, which is more likely to be reported by elementary than high schools.

ARTS INCLUSION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE UNDER CSC⁷

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



HIGH SCHOOLS



⁷ There was a survey coding error in 2019–20 that required all respondents to select at least one option and did not include the option to indicate that the arts were not represented in any governance structures. For this reason, only data from 2020–21 is reported here.



BUDGET

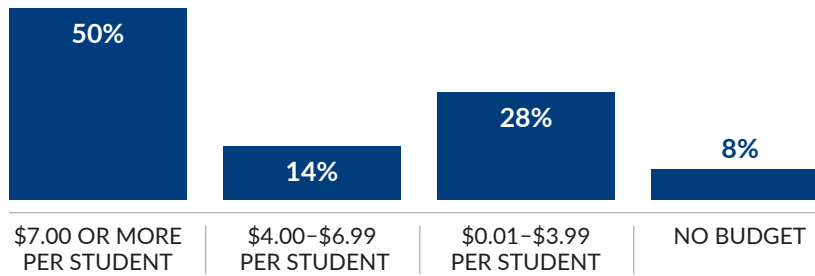
The CPS Arts Education Plan identifies the importance of schools setting a budget for the arts. Such funding can improve the quality of a program by expanding access to arts experiences and opportunities for students to create and learn. This element of the CSC measures school spending on a per-student basis.⁸

Notwithstanding the fact that they typically have a larger student body, high schools are 15 percentage points more likely than elementary schools to report budgeting more than \$7.00 per student on arts expenditures. Elementary schools, on the other hand, are more likely to spend \$3.99 per student or less.

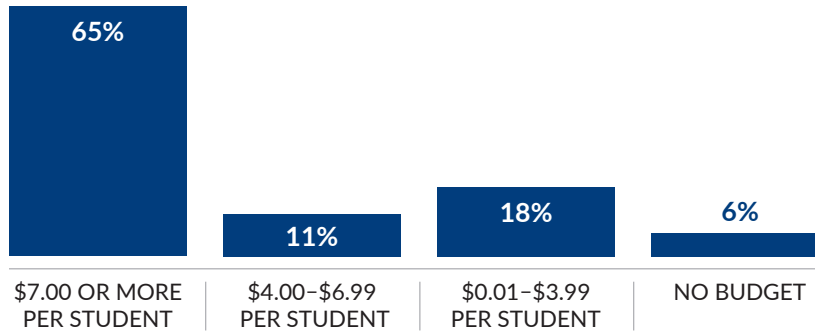
BUDGETING FOR ARTS EDUCATION UNDER CSC



ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



HIGH SCHOOLS



⁸ With the 2020-21 school survey, the budget question was modified to include funding from all sources. The prior 2019-20 survey asked respondents to report only on District funding. Due to this wording change, only 2020-21 data is reported here.

ARTS PARTNERSHIPS, PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, AND FAMILY/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There are three elements in the CSC for which schools either receive full points if the asset is present or receive no points if the asset is absent:



OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO ENGAGE WITH THE ARTS IN THE SCHOOL

Family and community engagement presents opportunities for other stakeholders to be involved in expanding students' arts education experiences. These include performances, school exhibits, volunteer opportunities, and other community events. They can support student learning by showcasing students' artistic abilities and involving the community at large in students' arts learning.



ARTS PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships with community arts organizations are important to sustain, complement, and enhance quality arts learning. Historically, the vast majority of schools in the District have at least one arts partner throughout the school year. An in-depth exploration of partnerships in CPS is provided in the next section of this report.



ARTS-SPECIFIC PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AVAILABLE TO SCHOOL INSTRUCTORS OR ADMINISTRATORS

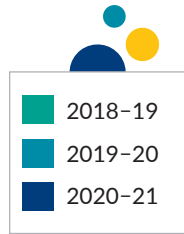
Arts-specific professional learning opportunities are available throughout the year through the CPS Department of Arts Education, Ingenuity, and other District-approved sources. Such opportunities can deepen instructor knowledge and help improve the quality of arts instruction in the classroom.

More than any other CSC measure, the impact of the pandemic on arts education in CPS is evident in the indicator for whether schools offered opportunities for family and community engagement in their students' arts activities. Never before have fewer than 90% of schools reported offering such opportunities. In 2020–21, only 69% of elementary and 60% of high schools reported offering family and community engagement opportunities. Arts-specific professional learning also fell, if not by quite as steep a margin.

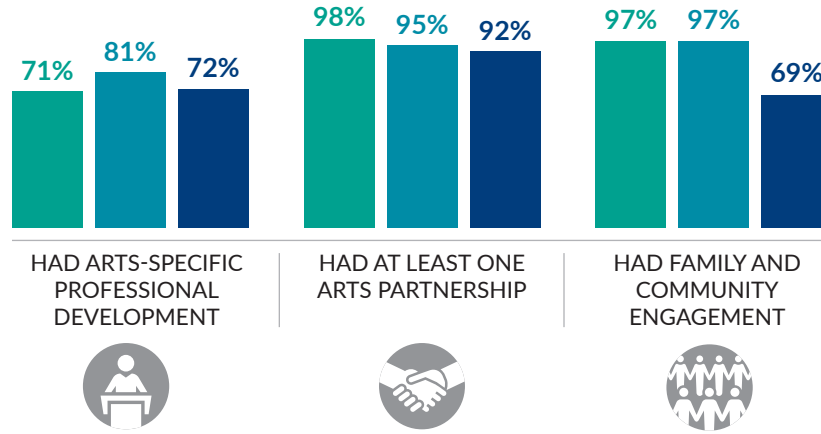
Perhaps surprisingly, there was little drop-off in the share of schools that participated in at least one arts partnership during the 2020–21 school year. However, this should not be taken as an indicator that the school or partner communities, much less the partnerships they rely upon, were unaffected by the pandemic. As discussed in more depth in the Partners and Partnerships section of this report, there were dramatic drops in 2020–21 in the number of partners actively working with CPS schools as well as in the number of partnerships per school across the District.



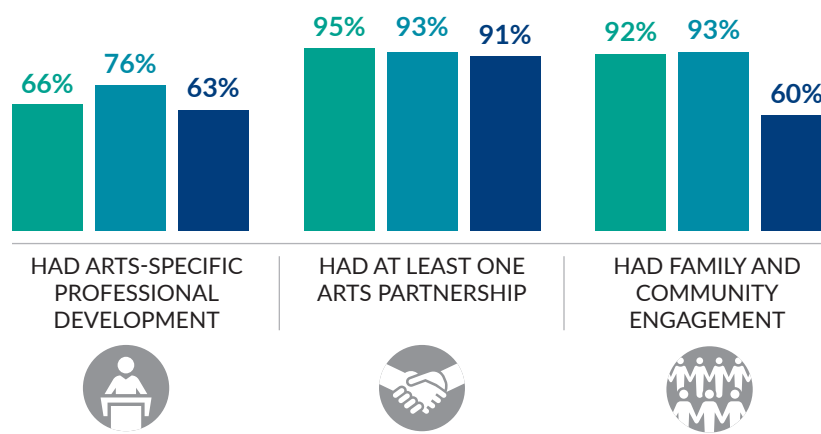
ARTS PARTNERSHIPS, PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, AND ENGAGEMENT BY YEAR



ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



HIGH SCHOOLS

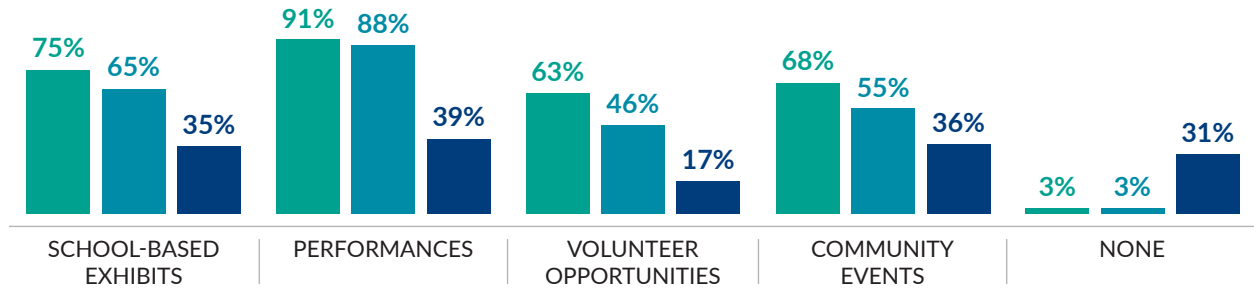




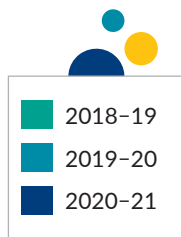
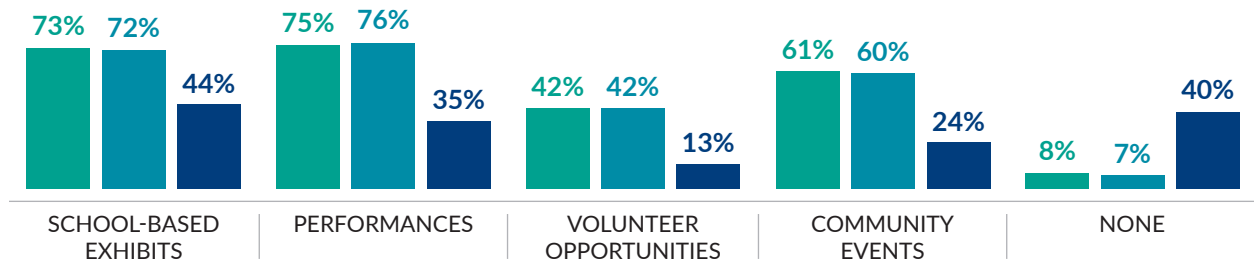
TYPES OF FAMILY/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY YEAR

A deeper dive into the data on family and community engagement shows large decreases across all forms of engagement. Among the most impacted areas were school-based exhibits, which fell by nearly 30 percentage points from 2019-20 in both elementary and high schools. The drop in school performances was even steeper, falling to 35% for high schools and 39% for elementary schools.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



HIGH SCHOOLS





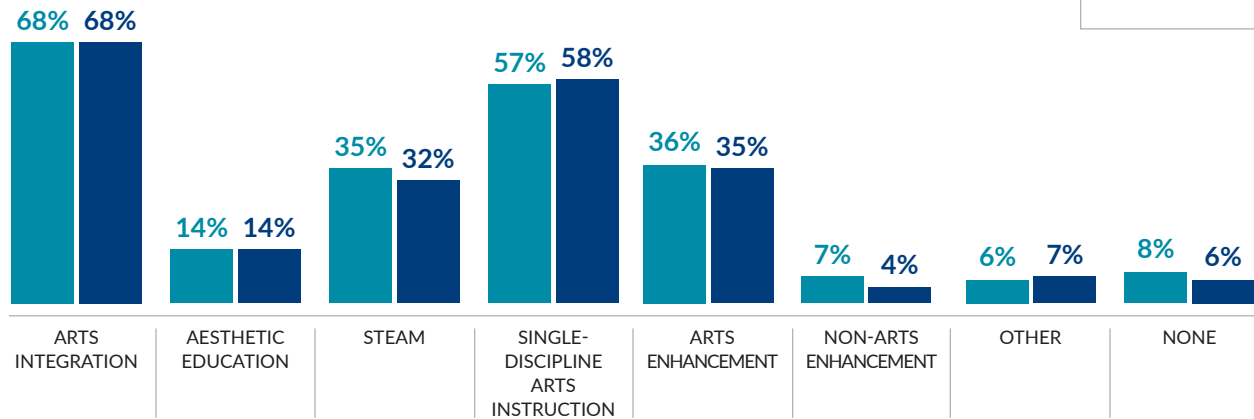
INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

The Instructional Approach element of the CSC focuses on the approach(es) a school takes to arts instruction. From arts integration to Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) to single-discipline arts instruction, schools use different (and sometimes multiple) methods of arts instruction for their students. This element is therefore focused less on which approach a school takes to instruction in the arts than it is on the idea that schools should intentionally identify and implement an approach.

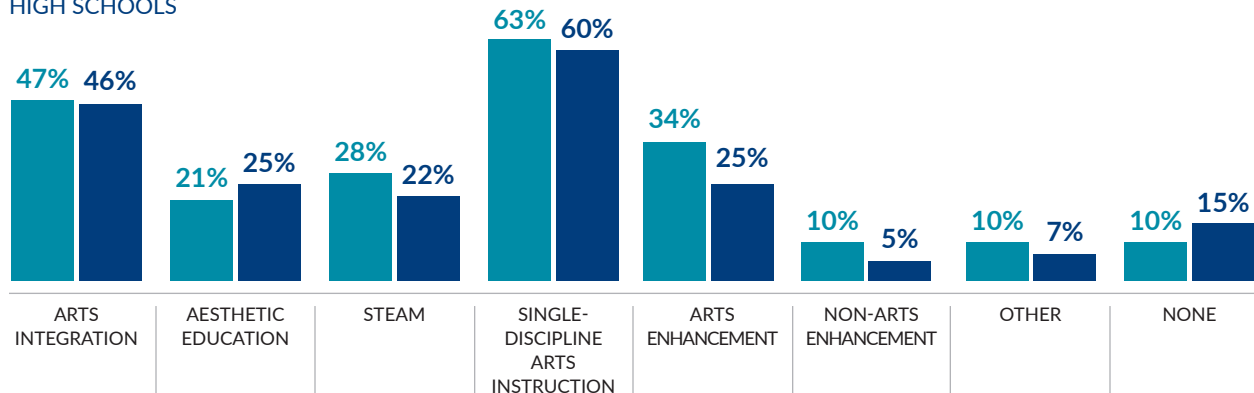
As in the past, Arts Integration and Single-Discipline Arts Instruction were the most commonly reported instructional approaches in both elementary and high schools. There was little change from 2019–20 to 2020–21 in the instructional approach reported by elementary schools. In high schools, however, there was a six percentage point drop in schools that reported using STEAM and a nine percentage point drop in schools reporting Arts Enhancement, possibly due to the challenges of coordinating instruction across curricular areas during remote instruction.

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES USED BY SCHOOLS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



HIGH SCHOOLS



PARTNERS AND PARTNERSHIPS



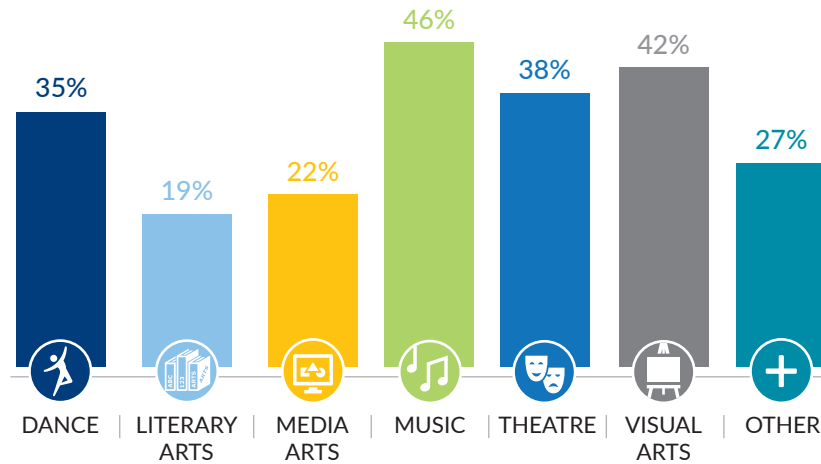
PARTNERS AND PARTNERSHIPS

For many years, arts organizations from Chicago’s vibrant artistic and cultural community have been partnering with CPS schools to provide innovative, sustainable arts programming. Large cultural institutions, traveling performance organizations, independent teaching artists, and other types of arts partners help create diverse opportunities for tailored, hands-on arts learning in CPS schools. These partnerships augment existing classroom learning experiences, deepen connections between schools and communities, and enhance arts education in CPS schools.

ARTS PARTNERS

The arts partners serving CPS schools work in all arts disciplines, and the distribution of their disciplines of focus has not changed much in the nine years Ingenuity has been tracking this information. While the pandemic has taken a heavy toll on the partner community as a whole, no one particular discipline has been affected more heavily than others.

ARTS DISCIPLINES REPRESENTED BY PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



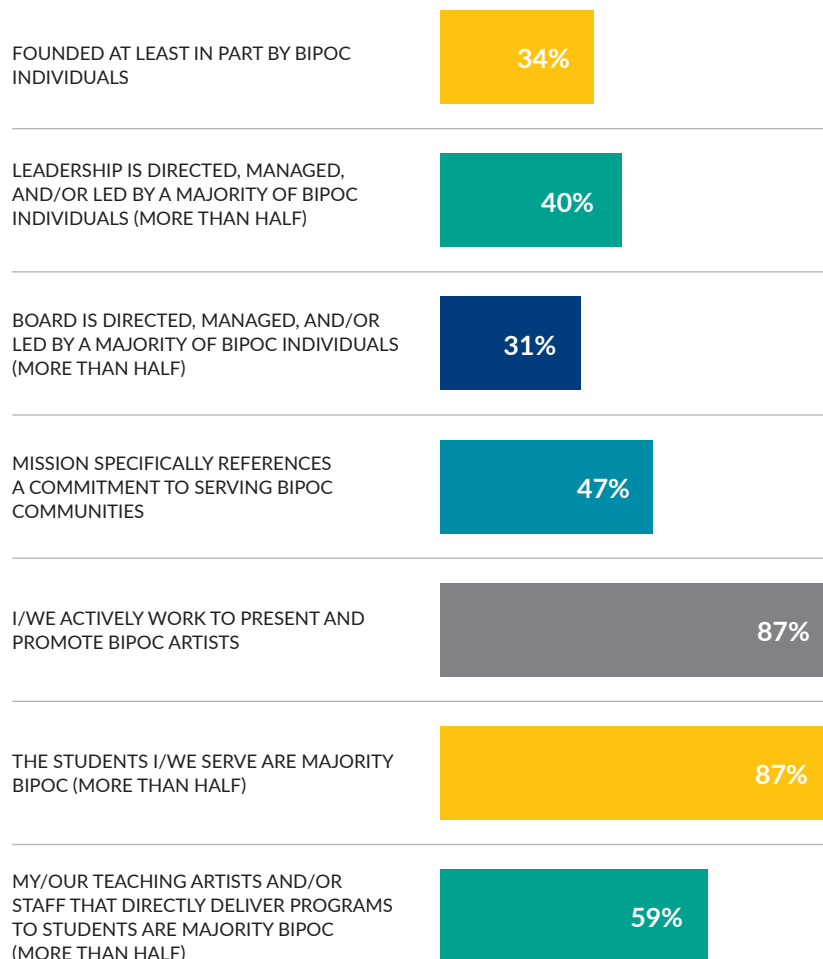


Following the 2019–20 school year, with the help of Enrich Chicago, Ingenuity developed and began collecting information from arts partners on how well Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color (BIPOC) are represented in their leadership structures and student-facing personnel, organizational mission, and programming. We share the preliminary findings from this new information here in full recognition that we have not yet received enough responses from the arts partner community (83 organizations to date) to consider this a full representation of that community. With that said, it is worth noting that this very preliminary evidence suggests that the large majority of responding organizations actively work to present and promote BIPOC artists, while fewer than a third of the responding organizations report that the majority of their board are BIPOC individuals. We will continue to encourage arts partners to update their organizational profiles so that we can report this information with greater confidence that it represents the full arts partner community in the coming years.

BIPOC REPRESENTATION IN ORGANIZATIONS

(BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color)

2020–21
83 ORGANIZATIONS



PARTNERSHIP REACH

The starkest reflection of the disruption to in-person instruction in March of the 2019–20 school year is seen in the steep drop-off in the number of partner organizations working in CPS. Where 559 organizations were reported as partnering with CPS schools in the 2018–19 school year (a fairly typical number for pre-pandemic reports), the count of partner organizations reported working in CPS dropped to 437 in 2019–20 and 295 in 2020–21, a 47% drop over the past three years.

| 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | |
|---------|---------|---------|---|
| 559 | 437 | 295 | Partner organizations |
| 616 | 573 | 544 | Schools with at least one partner |
| 5 | 3 | 3 | Median number of organizations working with each school |
| 2 | 2 | 1 | Median number of schools served by each organization |

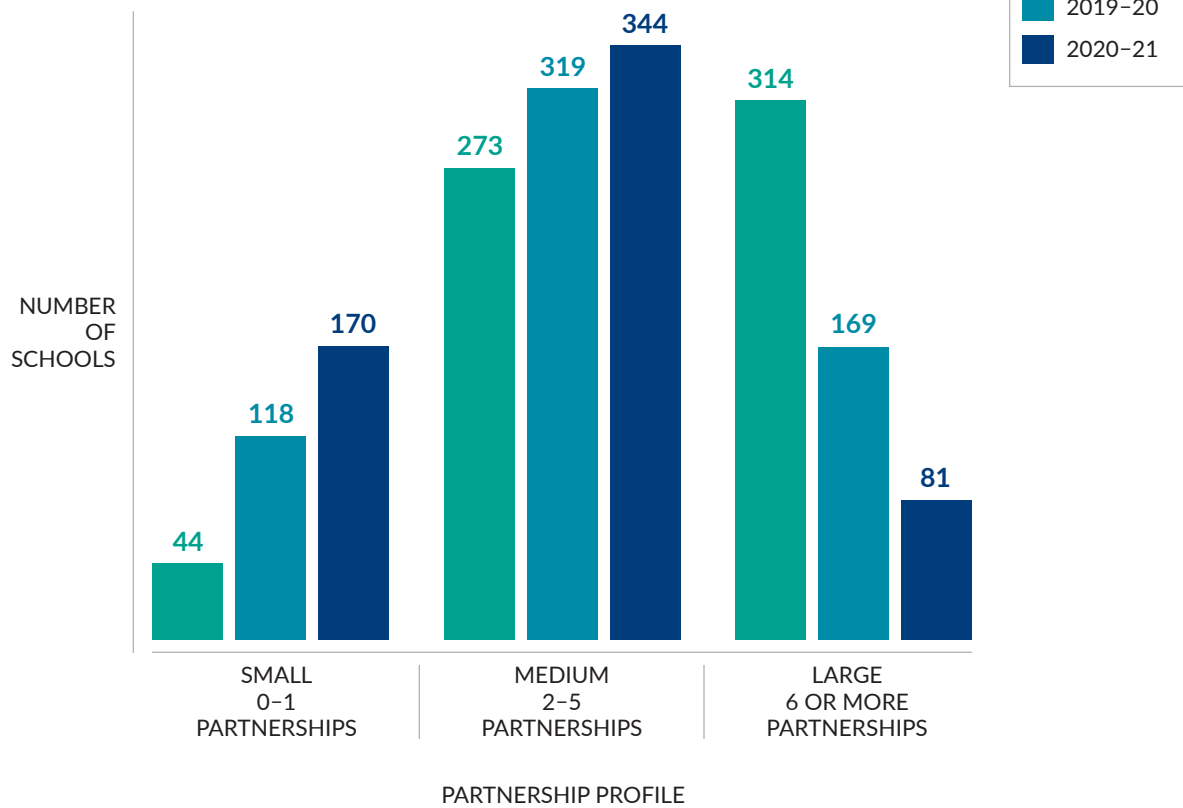
A closer look at the way partnerships were distributed across the District shows how these steep drops in partner activity can be reconciled with the fact that more than 90% of schools reported having at least one partnership. Schools still had partnerships; they just had far fewer of them.



The impact on schools of decreases in partner activity is reflected in the profile of schools' partnership activity. The median number of organizations working with each school has decreased from five to three since 2018-19. In that same timeframe, there has been an increase in the number of schools that reported a small (0-1) or medium (2-5) number of partnerships, but also a dramatic decrease in the number of schools that reported a large (6 or more) number of partnerships. In 2018-19, 314 schools reported six or more partnerships; in 2020-21, that number dropped to 81 schools.

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROFILES

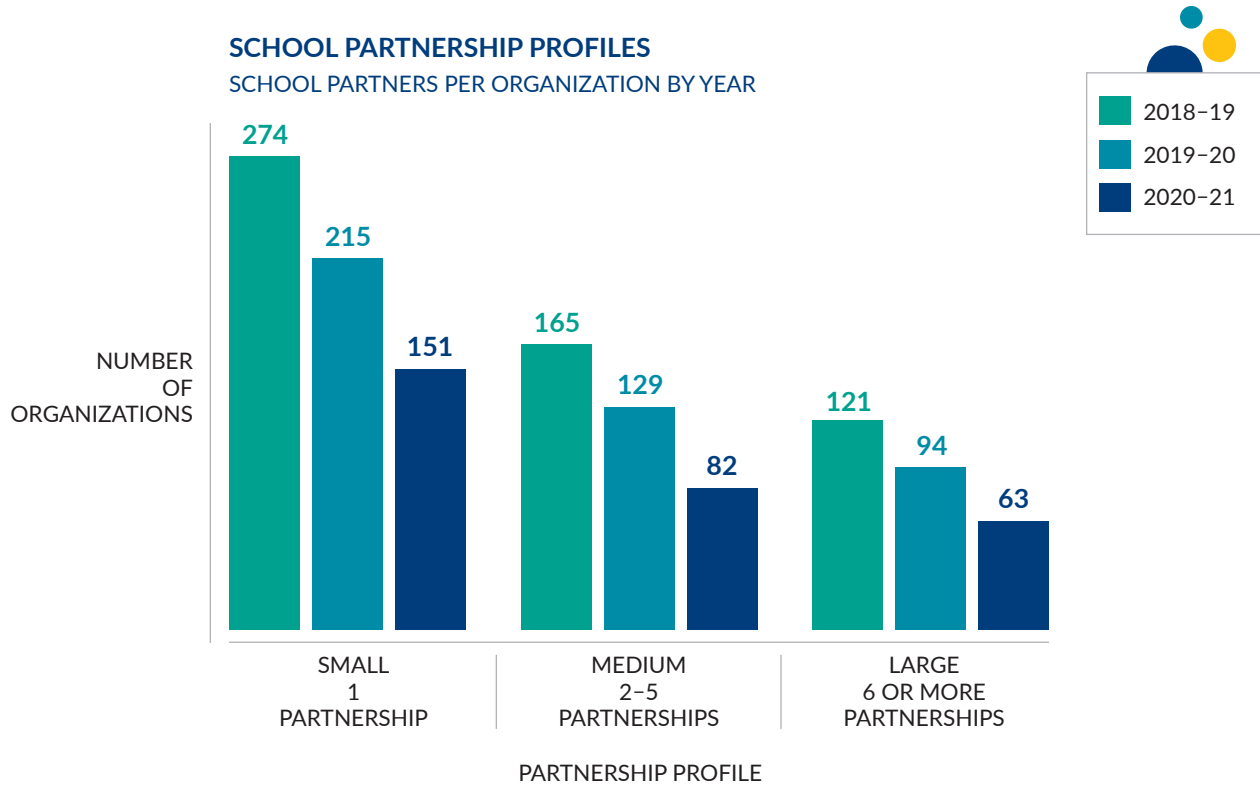
ORGANIZATION PARTNERS PER SCHOOL BY YEAR



Not surprisingly, the profile of organizations' partnership activity also reflects major decreases over the past two years. The median number of schools served by each organization fell from two to one. The decrease occurred across the board; there were large decreases in the number of organizations that reported a small (1), medium (2-5), or large (6 or more) number of school partners. In the large category, 121 organizations reported working with six or more schools in 2018-19; only 63 reported doing so in 2020-21.

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROFILES

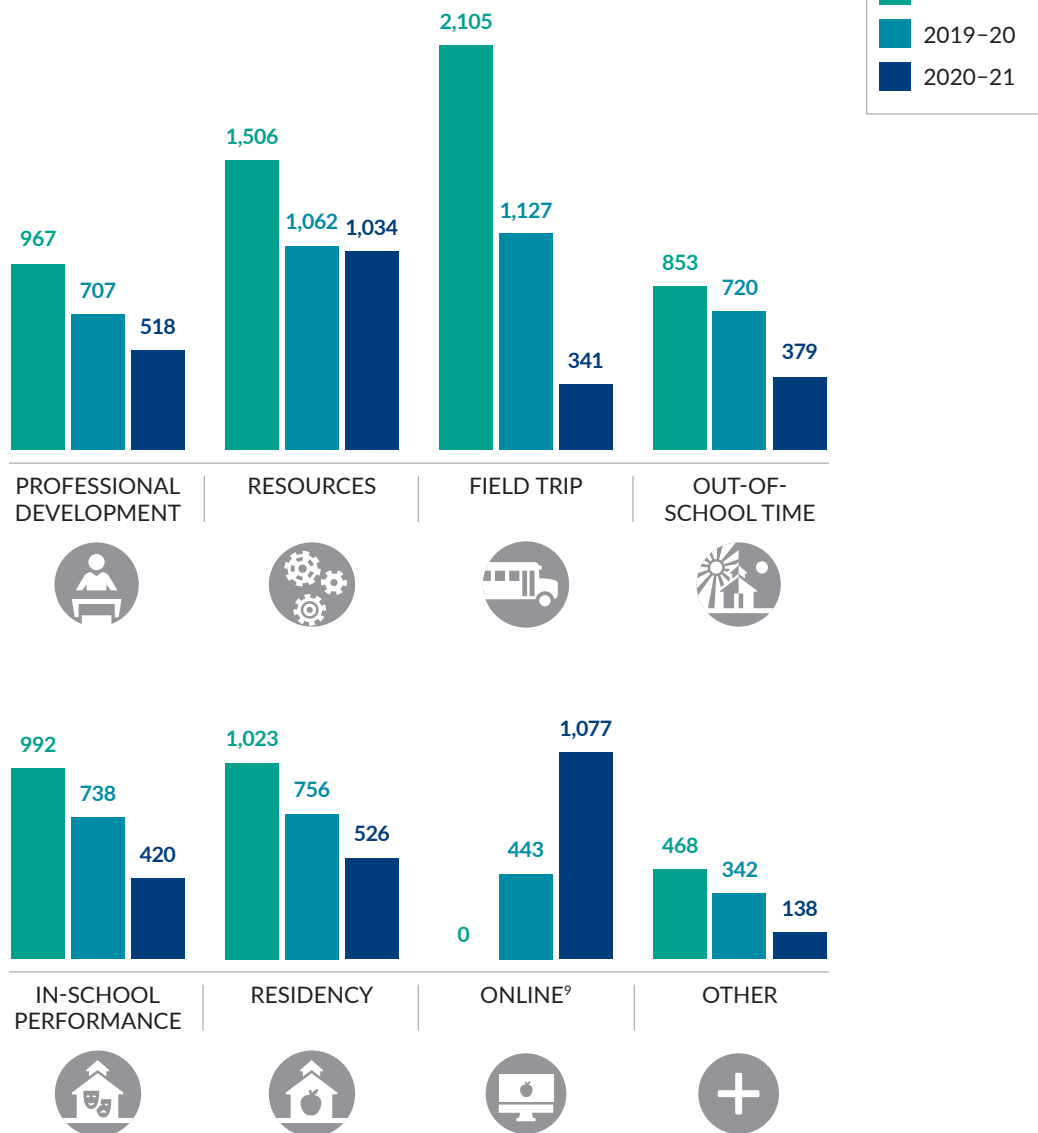
SCHOOL PARTNERS PER ORGANIZATION BY YEAR



PARTNERSHIP TYPES

Each partnership between a school and an arts organization can be characterized as providing schools and students with one or more types of support. While nearly all program types have decreased over the past several years, field trips were by far the most impacted program type. From 2,105 partnerships that included field trips in 2018–19, the pandemic has led to an 84% decrease to only 341 in 2020–21. Partnerships that include online programs have increased while those that provide schools with resources remained fairly constant from 2019–20 to 2020–21.

COUNT OF PARTNERSHIP TYPES BY YEAR



⁹ Data on Online/Virtual programs was first collected in 2019–20.

CONCLUSION

The 2020–21 school year was largely defined by the pandemic and the myriad challenges it presented. Arts access and quality in CPS were certainly not spared from these impacts.

School success on the CSC Access elements, which focus on whether schools provide access to arts instruction, decreased in most respects, albeit not sharply, in 2020–21. The resilience and creativity of the District’s administrators and arts instructors certainly helped to mitigate the pandemic’s impact on these measures and provide a reason for optimism that, when the pandemic has finally receded, schools will be able to once again grow their arts programs.

The CSC Quality elements, which focus on how schools provide arts opportunities to their students, also reflect important impacts of the pandemic. Schools were far less likely than ever before to report opportunities for families and school communities to engage with the school through the arts. Although the share of schools that reported at least one partnership remained high, it was lower than it has ever been and does not reflect the fact that there were far fewer partnerships per school. The findings on the Quality measures also point toward opportunities for continued District-led supports, such as encouraging schools to tap into existing professional learning opportunities and to use the most up-to-date arts learning standards.

Even more than CPS student access to the arts, the pandemic has led to steep losses across the board for partners and partnerships. Both the number of active partners and the number of engagements they had with CPS schools have decreased dramatically since the last pre-pandemic school year. The 2019–20 State of the Arts report chronicled the impact of the pandemic on arts partners of all types, with the trend escalating for the 2020–21 school year.

While none of us can know with certainty the path the pandemic will take, the overall return to in-person learning in 2021–22 provides a reason for the hope that some of the setbacks reflected in this and last year’s State of the Arts reports may be reversed. We hope that arts education stakeholders can leverage the overview and insights provided here and in our other data publications to develop and deploy collective strategies that will close the gaps in arts access and push us all further toward a future in which every CPS student has access to a high-quality arts education.



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