

State of the Arts in Chicago Public Schools 2021-22: An Overview

Photo: Lyric Opera of Chicago
Photo by Jaclyn Simpson

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As stakeholders in the arts education sector, we all have the same goal: ensuring that Chicago Public Schools students receive a high-quality arts education. The State of the Arts (SOTA) report exists to provide the whole sector with a crucial, big-picture view of arts education in Chicago Public Schools to push us, collectively, towards accomplishing our goal.

Our tenth SOTA, covering the 2021-22 school year, analyzes the first full year of in-person learning since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the arts and culture sector - one of the hardest-hit sectors of the COVID-19 pandemic - continues to recover, we see that it's still struggling to return to its pre-pandemic levels.

Some key findings:

We see that Creative Schools Certification (CSC) scores are now recovering and are approaching 2019-20 levels - the percentage of schools rated as Excelling or Strong increased by five percentage points in the 2021-22 school year, from 59% to 64%. However, on examining the relationship between race and ethnicity, school enrollment, school type, and a school's CSC rating, Black students were still significantly less likely than their peers to have access to high-quality arts programming.

Access: In 2021-22, a higher percentage of schools had 600 or fewer students per arts teacher, provided an average of 90 minutes or more of arts instruction, offered all students access to arts courses, and offered a larger breadth and depth of coursework. In fact, the share of elementary schools that offered arts instruction to all of their students was at its highest since 2019-20.

Notably, only 1% of high schools reported having no arts teacher in 2021-22.

Quality: While many Quality metrics improved from 2020-21 to 2021-22, there are still opportunities for growth. As an example, only 63% of elementary schools and 44% of high schools used the updated Illinois Arts Learning Standards.

More than 90% of schools reported some form of family and community engagement - a sharp increase from 2020-21, during which, for the first time since 2012-13, fewer than 70% of schools reported this type of engagement.

Partnerships: The number of arts partners working in one or more CPS schools has increased by 30% since 2020-21, but the 387 active arts partners in 2021-22 remains significantly lower than the 558 active arts partners recorded in 2018-19. Although more arts partners are working with CPS schools again, fewer schools had at least one arts partnership in 2021-22 compared to prior school years. The percentage of schools with at least one arts partnership has dropped every year since 2018-19.

SOTA 2021-22 data highlights the resiliency of schools and arts organizations, with many rebuilding their arts offerings. However, while we see hopeful improvement in many of these metrics, we still face challenges in continuing to ensure that all students across the District have access to high-quality arts learning.

[Click here to check out the 2021-22 State of the Arts report.](#)

About Us:

Ingenuity is a backbone arts education 501(c)(3) with core programs in data, advocacy, grant-making, and learning. The organization's collective-impact approach to arts advocacy drives partnerships, insights, and investments in the arts for 330,000 students in Chicago Public Schools.

Our mission is to ensure that every student, in every grade, in every school, has access to the arts as part of a well-rounded education. Learn more at ingenuity-inc.org.