



Press Release

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## **The Science Behind Art and Learning:**

### **New initiative uses big data from major school districts to improve equitable access to quality arts education**

#### **Pilot school districts are Baltimore, Houston, Jacksonville, New Orleans, Portland, and Sacramento**

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts has launched a three-year initiative to improve equitable access to arts education for students using data drawn from six cities nationally. [Numerous studies](#) point to the value of arts education in improving student outcomes, yet the absence of comprehensive data is a challenge, and access to the arts remains an issue for many students nationally. The project goal is to help cities close the gaps for students with little to no arts access.

Called the **artlook® Project**, the initiative is undertaken in partnership with the Chicago-based cultural data organization Ingenuity, and will first study the communities of Baltimore, MD; Houston, TX; Jacksonville, FL; New Orleans, LA; Portland, OR; and Sacramento, CA.

The artlook® Project endeavors to 1) build a data and fact-based case for arts education by using detailed information and rigorous measurement to understand the drivers of arts education and 2) assist communities with a clear roadmap through data-driven decision-making to uplift and prioritize arts learning for all students as a critical part of a well-rounded education.

The artlook® Project collects and analyzes information on school-by-school offerings—including availability of diverse art forms, number of courses, and minutes of instruction. Data on funding resources and services provided by community partners is also tracked. The result is a comprehensive, interactive map that offers an easily understandable blueprint of arts education services currently available within the pilot school districts. These new insights can then be translated by districts and community stakeholders to set strategy, fill gaps, measure progress,

and better assess and enhance their curricular programs, along with being able to better tell their community's arts education story.

“Through our nationwide network of partners and programs, we have the opportunity to see first-hand the direct and positive impact of arts education at multiple levels of a community,” said Mario Rossero, Senior Vice President of Education at the Kennedy Center. “As the nation's cultural center, it is part of our role to look at the national scope of arts access. Arts education should not be an added luxury as part of the school day for only some students. Rather, it should be an inherent right for *every* student to learn through and participate in to thrive on their educational journey. Every student in America deserves access to those opportunities. Partnering with Ingenuity on this initiative was the ideal melding of minds as the Center was exploring taking a deeper dive into data mapping and helping communities to better tell their story of arts impact. We fiercely believe that the power of arts education can create change and this work will take us one step closer to ensuring every child has equitable access to the arts.”

Launched in 2012, artlook® has been used to expand student access to the arts with extraordinary success in Chicago Public Schools, the nation's third-largest school system. Successes include 100,000 more Chicago students annually receiving weekly access to arts instruction and \$35 million more in annual, coordinated District investments in the arts.

“Using data for the purpose of expanding access to arts and culture is a profoundly important undertaking for the creative sector,” said Paul Sznewajs, Executive Director of Ingenuity. “The artlook® Project has the ability to help mayors and superintendents make better decisions, find solutions to problems, get the results they want, and most importantly improve the lives of the students in meaningful ways. We are excited to Partner with the Kennedy Center to potentially transform learning for hundreds of thousands of students across the nation through the arts.”

This one-of-a-kind partnership through the Kennedy Center creates a nationwide arts education data platform. The six communities will build a network of learning and share comparative assessments with one another about the arts in their schools. The project is supported by funding from the Center's U.S. Department of Education Arts in Education National Program Grant.

The six pilot sites are drawn from the Kennedy Center's *Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child* program, a collective impact program that works with communities over the long term to build sustainable arts education programs. Leveraging the power of strategic, coordinated arts education, the program improves student outcomes and creates community change. In its 10th

year, *Any Given Child* has 26 sites in 20 states and Puerto Rico and has impacted more than 977,000 students in grades K-8.

Data will be collected from the six cities over a three-year period, and be analyzed and disseminated annually. By early winter 2020, each city's interactive artlook® map is expected to be available for public use.

#### **ABOUT EDUCATION AT THE KENNEDY CENTER**

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts sets a national standard for arts learning. Working through model programs and a nationwide network of partners, the nation's cultural center harnesses the power of the arts to address education challenges, accelerate best practices, and uplift citizen artists. Across all its programs, the Kennedy Center is committed to increasing accessible, inclusive opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to participate in, learn about, and learn through the arts. New York Times best-selling author and illustrator Mo Willems serves as the Center's first-ever Education Artist-in-Residence. Throughout his two-year residency, Willems will invite kids and former kids into the creative process with original productions and hands-on, interactive moments. On September 7, 2019, the Kennedy Center will open the REACH, an immersive arts and learning center with significant space and programming for arts education.

As an essential component of the living memorial to President Kennedy, the Center's Education programs utilize the arts to embrace President Kennedy's ideals of service, justice, freedom, courage, and gratitude. By cultivating the citizen artist in everyone, the Kennedy Center brings the arts and creativity to the center of our lives. For more information, please visit [kennedy-center.org/education/](http://kennedy-center.org/education/).

#### **ABOUT INGENUITY**

Based in Chicago, Ingenuity is a leading hub for data, strategy, advocacy and partnerships related to arts education. Ingenuity works with city and schools leaders, cultural institutions and arts organizations, as well as higher education and philanthropic leaders toward the goal of ensuring a quality arts education for all students.

Ingenuity is a national leader in arts [data collection](#) and [mapping](#), a [leading strategy partner](#) to cities and their district leadership, and an advocate for the arts in public schools. As a chief thought partner on arts education, Ingenuity takes a consultative approach to integrating arts education into schools, and focuses on four primary strategies: data and research, school leadership and professional development, advocacy and systems building, and grant making.

Ingenuity was founded in 2011 to increase arts education access, equity, and quality in Chicago Public Schools, a mission it still pursues.

#### **FUNDING CREDITS**

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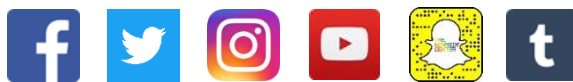
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