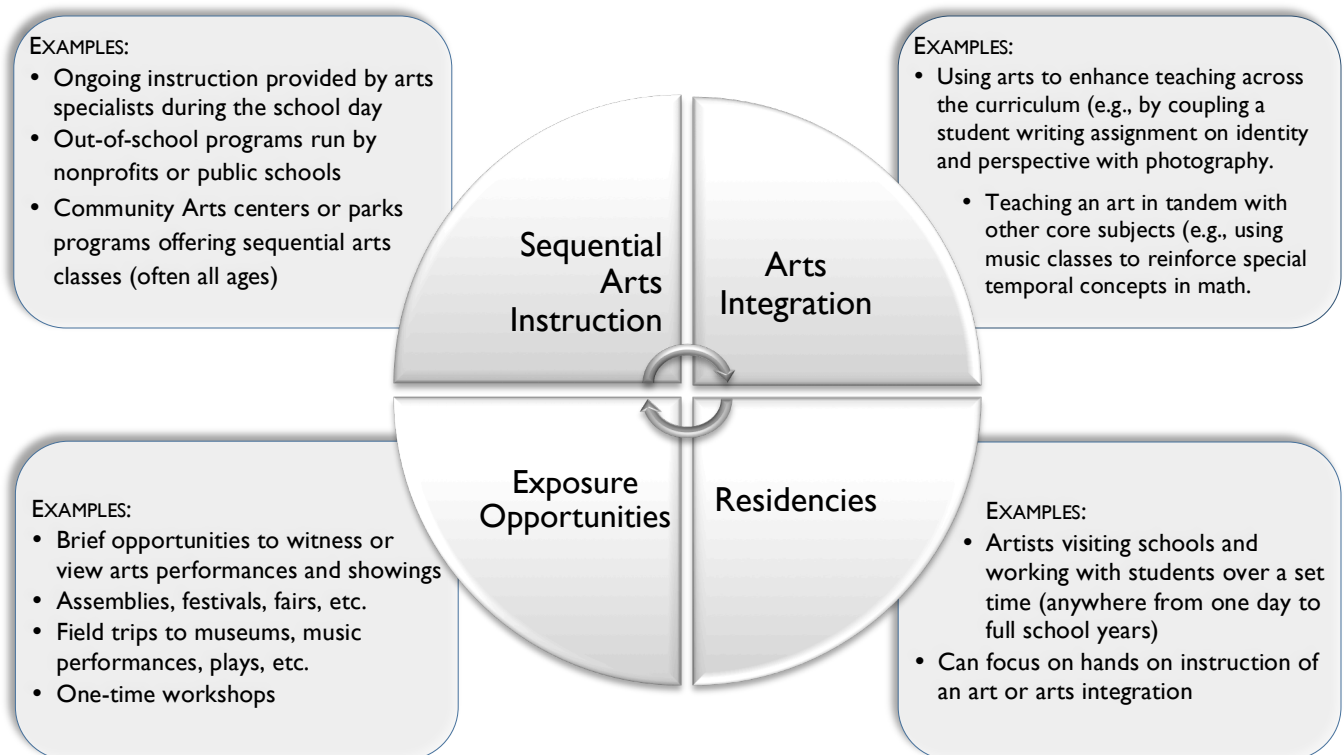


## Investing in Arts Education

Since the late 1990s, several rounds of budget cuts have drastically reduced or eliminated arts education for many Oregon schools. The Oregon Department of Education estimated that 1,546 FTEs on faculty covered arts-related classes statewide for the 2011-2012 school year. This means that the teacher-to-student ratios were 1 to 705 in music; 1 to 984 in visual arts; and 1 to 2,439 in drama or dance. In 2011, the Oregon Department of Education eliminated the 0.5 FTE position for arts learning from the budget, leaving no one working at the state level on arts instruction in the schools. Lack of arts education opportunities disproportionately affects students from low-income households, who usually cannot afford private lessons, summer camps, and other community arts opportunities.

Methods of delivering arts education include sequential arts instruction, residencies, exposure opportunities, and cross-curricular arts integration (see diagram below). Ideally, students should have access to all of these vehicles, each of which offers different but complementary benefits.



The Oregon Arts Commission and Cultural Trust estimates that more than 200 nonprofit organizations offer arts and culture educational opportunities to schools and communities in Oregon. However, few of these organizations offer sequential arts instruction outside of their own facilities. Similarly, some of the current efforts of funders in Oregon fall under the heading of arts integration, exposure or residencies, with little funding focused on sequential arts instruction or the coordination of these various disconnected arts experiences.

## Benefits of Arts Education

Despite the growing disinvestment in arts education, numerous studies published over the past decade link arts education — especially sequential arts instruction — to increased SAT and academic success. They also show a correlation between arts education and increased self-confidence; social and occupational skills; motivation; and engagement in school and community.<sup>i</sup>

The arts draw upon a range of learning styles. Experts believe that people do not possess a single intelligence, but several kinds: linguistic, musical, logical, mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. Traditional educational settings focus on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences. Narrowing the educational scope may result in underachievement for young learners. The arts provide a more holistic educational scope by regularly engaging multiple skills and abilities. Engaging in art — whether through dance, music, theater or the visual arts — supports the development of cognitive, social and personal competencies.<sup>ii</sup> The arts hone such nonverbal skills as creativity, perception and imagination, while also developing critical thinking skills, vocabulary and metaphorical language.<sup>iii</sup> Additionally, providing classroom teachers with the skills required to integrate the arts across content areas can help them to increase student engagement and to provide options for struggling students.

Arts integration efforts can help disconnected young people engage with their educational experience and may increase the probability of achieving the Governor’s 40-40-20 educational goal by linking conceptual learning with hands-on experience. At-risk students who have access to the arts, whether in or out of school, also tend to have better academic results, better workforce opportunities, and more civic engagement, according to a new National Endowment for the Arts report.<sup>iv</sup> A joint report from the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education observes that “the arts reach students who are disenfranchised by providing diverse routes to academic and personal achievement, enhancing self-discipline, teaching perseverance and hard work, and providing gateways to other learning.”<sup>v</sup>

Policymakers, educators, and civic and business leaders increasingly recognize the role of the arts in spurring innovation, providing teachers with more effective classroom strategies, engaging students in learning, and creating a climate of high performance in schools. Arts integration has been used in a number of very successful long-term programs to expand arts opportunities and engage students more deeply in learning content, and as an effective school reform strategy.

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<sup>i</sup> President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities. (2011, May). Reinvesting in arts education: Winning America’s future through creative schools. Retrieved from [http://www.pcah.gov/sites/default/files/PCAH\\_Reinvesting\\_4web\\_0.pdf](http://www.pcah.gov/sites/default/files/PCAH_Reinvesting_4web_0.pdf).

<sup>ii</sup> Fiske, E.B. (1999). Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning. Retrieved from <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/champions/pdfs/ChampsReport.pdf>.

<sup>iii</sup> President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities. (1994). Coming up taller. Retrieved from <http://www.nahyp.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Coming-Up-Taller-Report.pdf>.

<sup>iv</sup> Catterall, J.S., Dumais, S.A., and Hampden-Thompson, G. (2012, March). The arts and achievement in at-risk youth: Findings from four longitudinal studies. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.gov/research/arts-at-risk-youth.pdf>.

<sup>v</sup> Crawford, D. and Bodine, R. (1996, October). Conflict resolution education: A guide to implementing programs in schools, youth-serving organizations, and community and juvenile justice settings. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/conflic.pdf>.