

Enriching Lives



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L.A. COUNTY'S ARTS EDUCATION INITIATIVE SERVES SCHOOL DISTRICTS REPRESENTING 510,000 STUDENTS

Case studies report of school districts from the initiative's first five years yields new insights on how to make arts education plans a reality in the classroom

LOS ANGELES — *Arts for All*, L.A. County's arts education initiative, has passed a milestone. With four new school districts joining the initiative for the 2009-10 school year, *Arts for All* is now working in 38 County school districts representing 510,000 students. This number represents over half — 53% — of the County public school population minus Los Angeles Unified School District, which has a separate initiative. A list of participating districts is at the end of this release.

Seven years ago, in September 2002, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted *Arts for All: Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education*. This strategic plan to restore arts education — in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts — to all students in the County has made great strides in that time.

"It is most gratifying that *Arts for All* continues to move forward despite challenges of declining enrollment and California's budget crisis," said Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. "The initiative is a massive effort to effect long-term change and I salute the school districts that have made the commitment to make arts education available to all their students."

The *Arts for All* 7th Year Review, released today, provides a summary of all aspects of the initiative to date. It can be found at http://lacountyarts.org/artsed/docs/ArtsforAll7thYr_textonly.pdf. The initiative is helmed by the *Arts for All* Executive Committee, managed by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and includes more than 100 private and public partners.

The most recent evidence of progress and the challenges and needs that remain is in the report on case studies of the first 11 districts to join the initiative, also released today, by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission. The case studies and cross-case analyses in *Arts for All: The Vanguard Districts — Case Studies from the First Five Years* offer new insights about the differences between planning to restore arts education and making that plan a reality. While there is much research on the impact of arts education on learners, there is little on effective strategies for translating blueprints into action in the classroom. There is much to learn from the experiences of **Beverly Hills, Burbank, Castaic, Compton, Culver City, Hacienda La Puente, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Norwalk-La Mirada, Pasadena, Rosemead and Santa Monica-Malibu school districts.**

Key findings include:

- 82% of the school districts joined the initiative to replace a patchwork approach to the delivery of arts education with sequential instruction that builds from one level of understanding or experience to the next.

- 100% of the school districts hired or assigned someone to coordinate the arts education reform effort at the district level. This coordinating function proved to be critical to the success of the effort.
- The most visible change across all districts and all school levels were increases in resources available to support instruction such as musical instruments, arts supplies and performance-related equipment; the number of arts classes being offered, the number of students enrolled in arts classes and the number of hours of overall instruction; and the number of student performances and exhibitions. This last increase was attributed to more classes being offered and more teachers honing their ability to produce quality student learning results
- 92% of the school districts were able to bring together district arts leaders, teachers, and community advocates to leverage and attract funding for arts education. With the exception of the Los Angeles County of Education educational divisions, each Vanguard District has established an education foundation to supplement the district arts budget.

Key challenges and needs identified from the report include:

- Superintendents and/or school boards, in response to academic pressures to raise test scores, inadvertently demonstrated a lower valuing of arts education in the curriculum and instructional schedule.
- Elementary classroom teachers, who are expected to learn how to provide quality instruction in as many as four arts disciplines in addition to their regular workload, need professional development training from the district arts coordinators.
- Regardless of the level of funding districts received for implementing their plans, school district' perception is that money remained the dominant challenge.

As a result of the report's findings and with the help of a \$1.2 million grant from The Wallace Foundation and a group of regional arts education funders, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, in coordination with the Los Angeles County Office of Education and Arts for LA, is providing new services starting with the current school year:

- Leadership Fellows Program to raise the understanding of quality, access and equity in arts education among school district leaders and administrators and increase their ability to overcome obstacles to implementation.
- Professional Development for Arts Coordinators in program evaluation, student assessment, funding diversification and advocacy strategies to better equip them to address local barriers to moving forward and improve implementation of plans.
- Advocacy Team Training for local stakeholders to advocate for and monitor the implementation of long range arts education plans and hold education decision makers accountable.
- A philanthropic liaison to assist school districts in identifying funding sources for arts education both internally, within the school system, and from external private and public sources.

The full report and various sections of it, including the individual school district case studies, can be downloaded at <http://lacountyarts.org/artsed/casestudies.html>. Principal investigator for the case studies was Lynn Waldorf, PhD, of the Griffin Center for Inspired Instruction.

The Los Angeles County Arts Commission, Laura Zucker, Executive Director, provides leadership in cultural services of all disciplines for the largest county in the United States, encompassing 88 municipalities. In addition providing leadership and staffing to support the regional blueprint for arts education, *Arts for All*, the Arts Commission administers a grants program that funds more than 300 nonprofit arts organizations annually, oversees the County's Civic Art Program for capital projects, funds the largest arts internship program in the country in conjunction with the Getty Foundation, programs the John Anson Ford Theatres and supports the Los Angeles County Cultural Calendar on ExperienceLA.com. The Arts Commission also produces free community programs, including the L.A. Holiday Celebration broadcast nationally, and a year-round music program that funds more than 40 free concerts each year in public sites. The 2009-10 President of the Arts Commission is Araceli Ruano. For more information please consult the Arts Commission online press kit:

http://www.lacountyarts.org/communications/docs/lacac_onlinepresskit_0908.pdf

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9/24/09

ARTS FOR ALL SCHOOL DISTRICTS as of September 2009

(alphabetical)

ABC USD	Manhattan Beach USD
Alhambra USD	Montebello USD
Basset USD	Mountain View ESD
Beverly Hills USD	Norwalk La Mirada USD
Burbank USD	Palmdale ESD
Castaic Union ESD	Palos Verdes Peninsula USD
Compton USD	Paramount USD
Culver City USD	Pasadena USD
East Whittier City ESD	Pomona USD
Glendale USD	Redondo Beach USD
Hacienda La Puente USD	Rosemead ESD
Hermosa Beach City ESD	San Marino USD
Inglewood USD	Santa Monica-Malibu USD
LACOE	Saugus Union ESD
Lancaster ESD	South Pasadena USD
Las Virgenes USD	Temple City USD
Lawndale ESD	Whittier City ESD
Little Lake City ESD	Whittier Union HSD
Lynwood USD	Wiseburn ESD

(by year of joining Arts for All)

2003–04 Culver City, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Norwalk-La Mirada, Pasadena, Rosemead and Santa Monica-Malibu

2004–05 Beverly Hills, Burbank, Castaic, Compton and Hacienda La Puente

2005–06 ABC*, Alhambra, Little Lake City and Palos Verdes Peninsula

2006–07 Inglewood, Mountain View, Paramount and Wiseburn

2007–08 Bassett, East Whittier City, Lancaster, Montebello, Palmdale, Pomona, Redondo Beach, Saugus Union and South Pasadena

2008-09 Glendale, Lawndale, Lynwood, Manhattan Beach, San Marino and Temple City

2009-10 Hermosa Beach, Las Virgenes, Whittier City Elementary and Whittier Union High School

*serves the cities of Artesia, Cerritos, Hawaiian Gardens, as well as portions of Lakewood, Long Beach and Norwalk.