2015 progress report

arts education now.
innovative minds tomorrow.
dear colleagues & friends,

As a city and community we strongly believe in providing every student in every school with the education they need to thrive in today’s creative economy. When we began this journey to provide meaningful and equitable arts access to our students we knew that it would take a collective effort on the part of the district, the city and arts partners to achieve success.

Regardless of the neighborhood, every student in every school should have access to arts learning. At the district we are strategically laying the foundation for arts learning from elementary to middle to high school. We are working to realize our vision of providing high-quality, 21st century education and equitable arts access for every student and it takes a commitment from our teachers, parents, community arts partners and the city to make this vision a reality.

Access to equitable arts education is a citywide effort. For Seattle to continue to thrive and compete in today’s global economy we need our students to be able to think critically, creatively and collaboratively. That is why the city and the district are working in tandem with our entire community to provide our students with the wealth of resources our city has to offer.

We are transforming the practices of schools, arts organizations, funders and the community at large. The Creative Advantage has made tremendous progress to provide access to high-quality arts education to our students in the Central Area and it continues to expand to more regions.

We want to thank everyone who has made The Creative Advantage possible, the 23 arts teams at Seattle Public Schools and the district staff who support them, the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, the Seattle Foundation and our incredible arts community. We would not be moving forward and making a difference without them.

Sincerely,

Dr. Larry Nyland, Seattle Public Schools Superintendent and Mayor Ed Murray
21st century arts learning

In Seattle, arts education includes dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts. All disciplines are taught as a means of expression, culture, identity, and ideas, and intentionally foster the 21st century skills of creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, growth mindset, and perseverance.

Students engage in 21st century arts learning through arts classes taught by certified arts teachers, through integrated arts instruction taught by classroom teachers and teaching artists, and through learning experiences facilitated by community arts organizations in and out of the school day.

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what is the creative advantage?

The Creative Advantage is a city-wide initiative to establish equitable access to arts education for each and every student in Seattle Public Schools. The Creative Advantage is made possible through a public-private partnership with Seattle Public Schools, the City of Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, the Seattle Foundation, and community arts organizations.

Seattle Public Schools
Expands students’ access to arts teachers and classes, transforms arts curriculum to incorporate 21st century skills, and helps schools develop arts-rich communities.

Seattle Office of Arts & Culture
Increases students’ access to professional artists and arts organizations and provides training for teaching artists and teachers.

Community Arts Partners
Engage students and teachers in learning that integrates arts into other subject areas and in cultural arts experiences.

Seattle Foundation
Act as the fiscal sponsor of The Creative Advantage.

Creative Advantage Advisory Group
Makes recommendations and provides key information to The Creative Advantage by engaging and advocating in the community, especially with youth.
Seattle Public Schools 2014-2015 at-a-glance

Mission
Seattle Public Schools is committed to ensuring equitable access, eliminating opportunity gaps, and excellence in education for every student.

Vision
Every Seattle Public Schools’ student receives a high-quality, 21st century education and graduates prepared for college, career and life.

Total enrollment: 51,988
Schools: 97
Languages/dialects: 128
Graduation rate: 76.3%
Teachers: 3,122
Budget: $689.4 M

Schools with dance: 3
Schools with multi-arts: 10
Schools with music: 57
Schools with theatre: 19
Schools with visual arts: 58
Arts teachers at SPS: 190

Student demographics 2014-2015
- White: 45.6%
- Asian: 15.9%
- American Indian: 0.7%
- Hispanic/Latino: 12.5%
- Black/African-American: 16.4%
- Multi-racial: 8.4%
- Pacific Islander: 0.5%

Arts opportunity gaps
The inequities in access to the arts galvanized the creation of The Creative Advantage

% of K-5 students who received visual arts instruction in 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>District average</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black</th>
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% of K-5 students who received music instruction in 2012

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<th>Group</th>
<th>District average</th>
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<td>77%</td>
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<td>70%</td>
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how seattle got its (arts) groove back

By Robyn Jordan, Visual Arts Teacher at Lowell Elementary School

[Comic panels discussing the initiative and its impact on arts education]

Excerpt printed with permission from the artist.
Equitable access to arts instruction is a guiding pillar in The Creative Advantage. Arts instruction is an essential component of educating the whole child and preparing students for college, career and life in the 21st century. The foundation for The Creative Advantage was set in 2009 with a generous grant from the Wallace Foundation to develop a plan for Seattle Public Schools to provide high quality arts education equitably across the district. The grant allowed the district to accelerate its efforts to address systemic barriers to students’ access to arts, and increased its capacity to expand its goals.

The Creative Advantage utilizes the resources of the district, city and arts organizations to provide a K-12 continuum of arts learning in schools. Comprehensive research conducted throughout the district showed that arts access gaps were the greatest for students of color, low-income and English Language Learner (ELL) students. The Creative Advantage is dedicated to eliminating these access gaps and in 2013 began with the Central Arts Pathway where arts access was the most inequitable.

**Timeline of arts education at Seattle Public Schools**

- **1960s**
  - SPS is a nationally recognized leader in music education, employing 30 Elementary Instrumental Music (EIM) teachers in District.

- **1974**
  - Recession leads to a double school-levy failure. All elementary arts specialists are cut.

- **1960**
  - SPS changes from a neighborhood school model to school choice to promote desegregation.

- **2000**
  - SPS District Office of Arts Education is eliminated.

- **2008**
  - An arts education Partnership between the City and SPS is launched. Music Instructional Coach hired.

- **2010-12**
  - The School Board adopts new music curriculum and allocates over $400,000 for new instruments.

- **2012**
  - Washington Supreme Court rules that the state must fully fund K-12 education by 2018.

- **2013**
  - The Creative Advantage is launched in the Central Arts Pathway.

- **2017**
  - South-Southeast Arts Pathway will be launched.

- **2015**
  - South-Southwest Arts Pathway is launched.

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“"The most outstanding benefit for me and my community right now is that it’s given us something to come together around in a very diverse community. Through the arts, we celebrate our cultures. It brings out the best in our different cultures and has created an opportunity for community building. That was an unanticipated pay-off.” — SPS principal
goals
every student in every school receives...

1. High quality arts instruction that teaches sequential arts skills and techniques, develops students’ 21st century skills and is culturally responsive

   Why: It has been shown that arts instruction helps develop students 21st century skills such as creativity, critical thinking, communications, collaboration, growth mindset, and perseverance.

   Progress: In the 13 Creative Advantage schools, there was a 34% increase in students demonstrating 21st century skills—especially creativity, critical thinking, communication, and perseverance.

   Next Steps: In 2016–17, all Seattle arts teachers will use the 21st Century Arts Common Assessments that intentionally teach and assess 21st century skills.

   ![Increase in 21st century skills in Creative Advantage Schools](chart1.png)

   ![200% growth in music in the Central Arts Pathway](chart2.png)

2. Instruction from certified arts teachers

   Why: Research has found that students who had instruction from arts teachers were more likely to meet state arts standards than those who received instruction from a non-arts teacher.

   Progress: Before The Creative Advantage, only three elementary and K–8 schools in the Central Arts Pathway had music programs taught by certified teachers. We eliminated the gap and the number of elementary instructional minutes increased by 200%.

   Next steps: In 2015–16, music programs are now at all seven elementary and K–8 schools in the South–Southwest Arts Pathway of Seattle.
Leschi Elementary students learning song-writing and sound production at Jack Straw Productions.

“I like choir because I learn a lot of words and their pronunciations. It helps with my English, like understanding words in math class or understanding the meaning of a song.” — Seattle World School choir student

3. Integrated arts instruction

Why: Integrated arts learning is an approach to teaching and learning in which students engage in a creative process that connects an art form with another subject to promote deeper learning in both.

Progress: In 2014-15, students at all 13 Central Arts Pathway schools had more chances to learn through integrated arts with teaching artists and arts organizations. In addition, integrated arts trainings at five schools allowed more teachers to integrate arts teaching into their practice.

Next steps: In 2015-16, all 10 South-Southwest Arts Pathway schools now have the same opportunity for residencies and professional development in arts integration. Additionally, 70 K-12 teachers will get training and mentorships to integrate theatre into their classrooms.
4. Arts partnerships with community-based organizations and teaching artists

**Why:** Partnerships increase student engagement in the arts, build bridges between schools and the arts community, and broaden students’ experiences in the arts.

**Progress:** In 2014-15, 27 teaching artists and arts organizations partnered with 13 schools in the Central Arts Pathway in topics as diverse as writing poetry, creative dance and podcasting.

**Next Steps:** In 2015-16, all 23 schools—Central and South-Southwest Arts Pathway schools now have opportunities for arts partnerships.

5. Opportunities to connect arts to careers in high school.

**Why:** Research shows that arts related jobs in industries such as film, graphic design, and digital gaming are created in Seattle every year.

**Progress:** In 2014-15, all high school students had the chance to attend City of Music Career Day, connecting students the diverse opportunities and career pathways available in the music industry. Produced in partnership with SPS, Seattle Music Commission, Office of Film + Music, Seattle Arts Commission and Office of Arts & Culture.

**Next steps:** Opening Media Arts Skills Center programs that will be available to all juniors and seniors in high growth careers such as music production, film production, and graphic design.

“When I saw the smiles of success and confidence on the ELL students faces last night at their Family Night performance, it was clear: The Creative Advantage has made it possible to reach these students, and these arts opportunities are making all the difference in their lives.” — Bonnie Showers, Curator, Education + Interpretive Services, Experience Music Project
**Approach: how we do what we do...**

**Arts Instruction in Schools**
SPS invests in hiring new arts teachers, developing district guidelines to meet Washington State Basic Education laws, and providing resources like instruments, art supplies, and text books to ensure that every student has a well-rounded education and access to high quality arts instruction taught by certified arts teachers.

**Regional and School Arts Planning within K-12 Pathways**
The Creative Advantage is implementing in regional pathways to ensure sequential arts learning from kindergarten through high school. A regional pathway is defined by a neighborhood’s elementary, middle and high schools. Each pathway’s principal cohort creates a long-term regional arts vision that articulates their goals for arts instruction, integrated arts instruction, arts partnerships, and community arts events. Then, each school forms their own arts team made up of school staff, parents, youth, and community artists to develop school arts plans that honor their unique school community.

**Community Arts Partnerships**
The Creative Advantage provides funding and support for schools to collaborate with teaching artist and arts organizations. Schools select from The Creative Advantage Community Arts Partner Roster—a vetted list of teaching artists and community arts and culture organizations who provide integrated and cultural arts learning for students and teachers, and exposure to different methods of expression and viewing the world.

**Professional Development**
The Creative Advantage partners with Seattle Art Museum to provide a professional development series. Examples of trainings include race and social justice, trauma informed practice, social and emotional learning, arts integration, and 21st century skills. Professional development is also provided to teachers by local arts organizations in topics such as integrating dance into physical education, media-arts integration and theatre integration.

**Evaluation**
The BERC Group, a local evaluator, annually tracks students’ access to arts learning across the district; the quality of arts teaching; student demonstration of 21st century skills and the impact of arts learning for students both while they are in school and after graduation.

“Creative youth development is recognizing that arts programs and other out of school time programs, engage creativity to connect with young people and support healthy development.”
— Program leader
teacher success story

Julie Trout, Visual Arts Teacher, John Muir Elementary, Central Arts Pathway

John Muir Elementary is a culturally rich school with very limited resources that has benefited greatly from The Creative Advantage initiative. Previously there was an established visual arts program, random opportunities with Powerful Schools, and no established consistent music program. We felt as a team that we wanted to strengthen and build upon what we had and with great excitement, add a music program. As an arts team we have three main goals, increase intentionality and participation in community events through the arts; increase collaboration and share learning between classes; and increase practice, knowledge and skills for shared ownership of arts integration and collaboration.

We used our funding to make sure all students have equal access to visual arts instruction with a goal of building upon each one as the students move up in grade. In addition, the arts team organized arts infused professional development for the past three years as a kick-off to build community and foster collaboration. One of the most powerful transformations has been the blending of our race equity work –led by our music teacher with the arts team.

Our goals continue to be a work in progress and transform as we grow to become more aware of our students needs. One thing is very clear, that using the arts and creative expression through visual arts, music, and movement we are witnesses and motivated to create social change and show our students anything is possible.
look ahead

The Creative Advantage continues to deepen arts education experiences in schools that have experienced the greatest gap in arts access. The Central Arts Pathway will continue to expand arts instruction and the South–Southwest Arts Pathway will begin offering new programs to students based on their regional arts plan. Implementation of The Creative Advantage in additional pathways will begin in the 2016–17 school year.

funding

Integrating arts back into SPS requires an investment from the city, district, individual schools, parents, students, community arts partners, and private donors. The investments below reflect staff and program investments from 2013 to 2015—the first two years of The Creative Advantage implementation.

Over $1.4 million invested by SPS provides funds for certified arts teachers, professional development, materials, and arts assessments.

$925,000 from ARTS, supports arts partnerships and helps build district capacity to increase arts access to all students.

$234,108 from private sources including the National Endowment for the Arts, the Clowes Fund, the Laird Norton Family Foundation, the Seattle Foundation and The Wallace Foundation, supported regional and school arts planning, professional development, curriculum, and partnership tools.

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** 2015 Budgets for Arts and Donor/Grant are at 50% to account for monies applied to the 2014-2015 school year.

The Creative Advantage leadership team

James Bush, Director of School & Community Partnerships, Seattle Public Schools
Carri Campbell, Chief Engagement Officer, Seattle Public Schools
Lara Davis, Arts Education Manager, Seattle Office of Arts & Culture
Randy Engstrom, Director, Seattle Office of Arts & Culture
Dan Gallagher, Director of Career and College Readiness, Seattle Public Schools
Dr. Brent Jones, Chief Strategy & Partnerships Officer, Seattle Public Schools
Audrey Querns, Creative Advantage Project Manager, Seattle Public Schools
Gail Sehlhorst, Visual & Performing Arts Manager, Seattle Public Schools
Cashel Toner, Executive Director of Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction, Seattle Public Schools