



RESEARCH REPORT

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The Creative Advantage: Central Arts Pathway

EVALUATION REPORT – YEAR 1

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Executive Summary

The Creative Advantage initiative is a partnership between Seattle Public Schools (SPS), the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture (ARTS), The Seattle Foundation (TSF) and high-leverage community arts organizations, including the Seattle Art Museum, Arts Corps, and ArtsEd Washington. In 2011, a planning grant from the Wallace Foundation enabled the partnership to conduct a needs assessment around the state of arts education in Seattle Public Schools. This needs assessment found inconsistent access to arts education, especially for students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, students eligible for the transitional bilingual program, and students identifying as Black, Hispanic, or American Indian/Alaska Native. Some of the issues around access to arts education clearly stemmed from a 30-year history of school choice in SPS, which resulted in a district-wide culture of schools competing for enrollment and vast discrepancies in program offerings based on school resources. To address these concerns in light of a new neighborhood school policy for SPS, The Creative Advantage developed a Seattle K-12 arts plan that aims to provide equity in arts access throughout the district by the year 2020 and lays out specific benchmarks for the number of hours each grade band of students will receive in certificated arts instruction per week.

A key component of The Creative Advantage initiative is the creation of regional arts plans for each of the district's nine learning pathways. The Central District was chosen to pilot the process, which began in the spring of 2013. The purpose of this report is to evaluate the implementation of The Creative Advantage initiative in the Central District during Year 1 of the initiative.

Stakeholders described a broad vision for The Creative Advantage that emphasized the importance arts education had, not only for students and schools, but for Seattle as a whole. Most stakeholders emphasized the project's goal of eliminating the arts access gap and creating a more just school system. Stakeholders also described a shifting view of arts education that recognizes the arts as "integral to educating students." Under this view, the arts are valued for their own sake, but also for their role in teaching transferable 21st century skills necessary to thrive in today's economy, such as creative and critical thinking, communication and collaboration, and perseverance and growth mindset.

In 2012-13, stakeholders at eight elementary schools, one middle school and one high school created a regional vision, with facilitated support from ArtsEd Washington using their Principals Arts Leadership (PAL) program. Through the PAL process, stakeholders create vision and action plans in facilitated meetings that utilize individual and group brainstorming, and emphasize the importance of every voice being heard. In 2013-14, a similar process occurred at each of the Central Arts Pathway schools during visioning meetings, as school arts teams created vision and action plans for their schools. During focus groups at the participating schools, teachers who had been involved in the arts teams showed significantly greater awareness of the initiative and its vision than teachers who had not played a role in creating the vision and action statements. As schools were only in the planning phase this year, that is perhaps to be expected. However, as Central Arts Pathway schools begin implementing their Year 1 plans in 2014-15, arts teams will need to be diligent in communicating the plans and their purpose to the larger staffs.

One of the three broad strategies outlined in the Seattle K-12 arts plan is to "transform the District central office in support of schools and regional K-12 arts learning pathways." Facilitated regional planning to create sequential K-12 arts learning pathways was one tactic The Creative Advantage used to implement this strategy. In addition to regional planning, The Creative Advantage has

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supported changes at the district level through funding to support arts partnerships and principal arts training, school arts plans, and training and support for partnerships and evaluation.

At the school level, the arts plan emphasizes providing culturally relevant K-12 arts curricula and instruction that emphasizes development and assessment of 21st century skills. Several stakeholders identified the ArtsEd Washington-facilitated regional planning as a key support both at the regional level and at the school level in terms of helping to create “a robust, practical vision.” In support of their plans, schools will have access to prevetted community artists. The Creative Advantage also provides the Central Arts Pathway schools with data analysis and seed funding. Because of this initial funding, over 1,000 elementary students attended music classes in 2013-14 who would not have otherwise had the opportunity.

The third broad strategy outlined by the K-12 arts plan is to implement a coordinated citywide support structure for partnerships, governance, and evaluation. Much of this support structure exists in the form of staff members who lead and implement The Creative Advantage and who bridge the gap between SPS and ARTS. When describing the structure of program leadership, one stakeholder described Carri Campbell, the Director of School and Community Partnerships at SPS, and Randy Engstrom, the Director of Seattle Arts & Culture (ARTS) at the City of Seattle, as the leadership of The Creative Advantage. Audrey Querns, the implementation Project Manager at SPS, and Lara Davis, the Arts Education Manager at ARTS, carry out much of the implementation. The Creative Advantage staffing has changed somewhat this year. Campbell, who had previously served as Visual and Performing Arts Manager at SPS, transitioned to the role of Director of School and Community Partnerships, replacing Courtney Cameron, who left the district to take a role at the Seattle Housing Authority in the summer of 2014. With the move, the district reclassified the Director of School and Community Partnerships position as a fully funded director level position.

At the city level, ARTS has been an equal partner in the initiative, “supporting community partnerships and their work with the schools, tracking evaluation and outcomes, aligning institutional resources, and ensuring professional development and investment in the capacity of the private sector to support schools.” As fiscal sponsor for The Creative Advantage, The Seattle Foundation has been a key partner in securing individual support and advocacy for the work. Assistance from The Ostara Group has also generated foundation investment for the initiative. The district created data sharing agreements in order to support community partnerships with training and information sharing. At the community level, efforts have also been made to educate parents and community members. In order to deepen community partnerships, the Seattle Art Museum (SAM) has provided professional development and support for organizations working with the schools

When asked to identify contextual factors that influenced program implementation, stakeholders identified a number of themes, some positive and some negative. One of the most frequently mentioned positive contextual factors was a sense that arts learning had become a priority, not only for the district, but for the city and the community at large. Stakeholders at every level, from project leaders to teachers, were able to articulate the benefits of increasing opportunities for students to engage with the arts. Stakeholders also described the conversations occurring around issues of social justice as a benefit of the initiative. Still others spoke positively of the connections

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being formed between the district, the city, and the community organizations. Regional planning also emerged as a strength.

In terms of barriers to program implementation, sustainability of funding was the most commonly identified barrier. In addition, several stakeholders said that unclear communication around The Creative Advantage was a barrier. During focus groups and interviews at the schools and at the district level, researchers noted that respondents who were not directly involved with The Creative Advantage planning and implementation could often articulate only a vague description of the initiative or its goals. Community partners also raised concerns that the complexities of fundraising and communication around the project might mislead some funders to believe that, by financially supporting The Creative Advantage, they were also directly funding the community organizations listed as partners in the initiative. Frequent transitions in district and school leadership were another commonly mentioned barrier. Given the frequent transition of leadership at the district level, stakeholders raised a concern that The Creative Advantage did not yet have the structure in place to survive without certain key players. Transitions in leadership at the principal level also emerged as a concern for schools trying to implement the program.

Conflicting priorities at the classroom, school, and district level also emerged as a commonly identified barrier to implementation. Other initiatives, such as Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and curricula adoptions, also take a great deal of time and energy, and some stakeholders raised concerns that the arts might be lost in the shuffle or that teachers might become overwhelmed. Others spoke of the importance of highlighting the overlap between The Creative Advantage and other schoolwide priorities and the possibility for the arts to be used as a vehicle to deliver other CCSS content. As the district prepares to roll-out the initiative in other pathways, some stakeholders raised concerns that a lack of buy-in at the school level may hinder the work. Conversations about buy-in tended to highlight another concern — that despite growing momentum, the culture of education has not yet fully embraced the arts as a core subject in their own right. In addition to these big-picture concerns, stakeholders raised concerns about specific issues relating to implementation, such as the need for more alignment time between buildings and a need for evaluation materials to be used with fidelity.

To assess the collective impact of this initiative, researchers analyzed data specific to the arts, including minutes of instruction with an arts specialist in the elementary schools and number of credits taken at the secondary level, as well as data aligned with collective impact goals, such as student assessment results; graduation rates; attendance rates; discipline rates; course taking patterns; and college attendance, persistence, and graduation data. In addition, researchers assessed the extent to which 21st Century Skills are used in the classrooms. The majority of the data points are only available for Year 1 of the initiative and represent baseline results. When additional years become available, researchers will conduct analyses to assess the impact.

During 2013-14, 1,659 elementary students attended music classes that would not have been available without The Creative Advantage roll-out in the Central Arts Pathway. Baseline data show that in 2013-14 the minutes of arts instruction in the elementary schools increased from 2012-13, and is now similar to the minutes of arts instruction across other SPS schools. Similarly, students meeting standard in the arts significantly improved in Central Arts Pathway elementary schools. At the secondary level, there are large gaps in accessing the arts, particularly music, by race/ethnicity

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and by program enrollment. Typically, White and gifted students access the arts at greater rates than Black students and students enrolled in English Language Learner and Special Education programs. School leaders believe that by supporting access at the elementary school level, enrollment at the secondary level will be more equitable. This will continue to be analyzed in future years.

SPS identified a goal of students taking two or more credits of arts throughout middle school and throughout high school. An assessment of course-taking patterns show the number of arts credits the class of 2018 took through their middle school years. Approximately two-thirds of students from the class of 2018 took at least one credit in middle school in both the Central Arts Pathway and the remaining Seattle Public Schools, but only 45% of students in the Central Arts Pathway and 36% of students in the remaining Seattle Public Schools took two or more credits of arts throughout middle school. Black students were least likely to take an arts course compared to other groups. When students took multiple credits in the arts, they did so in music, rather than the visual arts. At the high school level, nearly all students within the district took at least one credit of art, but only 60% of students in the Central Arts Pathway and 38% of students in the remaining SPS high schools took two or more credits of Arts. Similar to the middle schools, very few students take two or more visual arts credits, and there are very few differences by race/ethnicity. For music, approximately 22% of Central Arts Pathway students and 13% of other SPS schools take two or more credits of music. Fewer Black students in both the Central Arts Pathway and across SPS take two or more credits of music.

During focus group interviews, stakeholders identified three emerging promising practices: robust partnerships, support structures for regional planning, and a shared vision of the arts as a core subject. Stakeholders identified the partnerships between the district, the city, and the community arts organizations as key to the work of The Creative Advantage. Similarly, the support structures in place for regional planning help schools to work together instead of in isolation. The third emerging promising practice is a shared commitment to the arts, both for their own sake and as a vehicle for other learning and community engagement.

For the most part, stakeholders agreed The Creative Advantage could be sustainable, given a common vision and a reliable source of funding. Stakeholders also spoke to the importance of creating a high-quality program that would garner support and buy-in. Recommendations centered around exploring sources of sustainable funding, prioritizing clear communication, creating program structures that are resilient to changes in leadership, and incentivizing program fidelity.

The Creative Advantage: Central Arts Pathway

A RESEARCH REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

In 2008, Seattle Public Schools (SPS) partnered with the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture (ARTS) and the Seattle Arts Commission with the goal of building “sustained capacity to make quality arts education accessible to every student, especially in less affluent communities and communities of color,” as stated on The Creative Advantage website (The Creative Advantage, n.d.). A planning grant from the Wallace Foundation in the summer of 2011 enabled the partnership to conduct a needs assessment around the state of arts education in SPS.

This study found inconsistent access to arts education for students throughout the district. At the elementary level, many students received limited access to arts education from certificated arts instructors. For instance, the majority (78%) of elementary schools throughout the district reported they had less than one full-time equivalent (FTE) certified arts teacher in the building. Over 40% of schools reported their K-3 students received no instruction from a certified arts teacher. When averaged over the school year, 73% of K-5 students received 30 minutes per week or less of music instruction, and over 6,000 students received none at all. Similarly, 71% of K-5 students received 30 minutes or less per week of visual arts instruction, and over 9,000 students received none at all (de Soto, 2012). The study found strong correlations between ethnicity and music offerings at the elementary level. This study also found that race/ethnicity was strongly correlated and predictive of arts access. At the elementary level, Black, Hispanic, and Asian students were overrepresented in schools with no music instruction (de Soto, 2012). Similarly, the study found an inverse relationship between music offerings and discipline rates, with schools offering the highest levels of music instruction reporting the lowest discipline rates, and vice versa (de Soto, 2012). The study also monitored course-taking patterns of secondary students over a six-year period from 2006-12, and found that students eligible for free and reduced lunch (FRL), students with high discipline counts, students qualifying for the transitional bilingual program, and students identifying as Black, Hispanic, or American Indian/Alaska Native were overrepresented in below-average enrollment in arts courses (de Soto, 2012).

Some of the issues around arts education access clearly stemmed from a 30-year history of school choice in SPS. Until the implementation of SPS’s School Assignment Plan in 2010, Seattle families could choose which schools in the district their children would attend. This, in turn, resulted in a district-wide climate of school competition, with schools able to draw on funding from parent-teacher organizations and booster clubs creating special programs in the arts, while schools without those resources often chose not to prioritize the arts in their staffing decisions. At the same time, the elimination of the SPS District Office for Arts Education in 2000 resulted in little centralized district awareness or oversight around arts education (ARTS & SPS, 2013). With the return to a neighborhood school system in 2010, the district recognized the importance of “the need for equity in arts programming (p. 8).”



Focus groups conducted with parents, students, and community members in the spring of 2012 revealed a pervasive desire for more consistent arts access throughout the district. Students spoke of wanting an early and broad arts education guided by professional instructors. As part of a broad arts education, students wanted exposure to a greater variety of arts disciplines, including music, dance, theater, and visual arts. Students also wanted increased opportunities to learn about arts careers and to showcase and share their learning. Parents and community stakeholders shared the belief that arts learning builds innovation and collaboration, and that arts education should be multicultural, relevant to students, broad in scope, and integrated with other content areas (Baker, Gratama, & Toledo, 2012).

In 2013, the partnership was renamed The Creative Advantage (The Creative Advantage, 2013). In addition to the district and the Office of Arts & Culture, the partnership includes several key community agencies, including Arts Corps, ArtsEd Washington, Arts Impact, and the Seattle Art Museum. This partnership developed a Seattle K-12 arts plan focused on increasing access to arts education for all Seattle students. The plan sets a goal of creating equity in arts access throughout the district by the year 2020, and lays out specific benchmarks for the number of hours each grade band of students will receive in certificated arts instruction per week. The plan also emphasizes the importance of 21st Century Skills, including creative and critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and perseverance. As the Comprehensive Plan states, “SPS needs to be preparing its students to graduate with the skills needed to thrive in Seattle’s strong creative economy as well as the many innovation driven companies of the region, such as Boeing, Microsoft, and Amazon.com (pg. 16).” Finally, the plan focuses on coordinating school-community arts partnerships to help them more effectively meet school and district goals.

A key component of The Creative Advantage plan is the creation of regional arts plans for each of the district’s nine learning pathways. The Central District was chosen to pilot the process, which began in the spring of 2013. The remaining eight pathways will begin planning on a staggered basis between 2015 and 2020 (ARTS and SPS, 2013). The purpose of this report is to evaluate the implementation of The Creative Advantage initiative in the Central Arts Pathway in Year 1.

RESEARCH AROUND ART IN SCHOOLS

Numerous studies have linked student participation in the arts to higher academic achievement. A research overview from the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) noted that studies revealed a connection between arts participation and overall academic participation at the elementary level, while studies conducted at the secondary level indicated students engaged in the arts performed better on standardized achievement tests, earned higher grades, and were less likely to drop-out than their peers (AEP, n.d.). A 2012 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) report, “The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies,” by Catterall, Dumais, and Hampden-Thompson found, “Teenagers and young adults of low socioeconomic status (SES) who have a history of in-depth arts involvement show better academic outcomes than do low-SES youth who have less arts involvement. They earn better grades and demonstrate higher rates of college enrollment and attainment (p. 12).”

Studies have also indicated a correlation between the study of the arts and achievement in core subjects, with participation in theater leading to increased and refined oral language skills and story understanding at the elementary level and increased use of complex language and expressive ability at the secondary level. (AEP, n.d.). Similarly, studies found correlations between the study of arts (especially music and dance) and mathematical achievement (AEP, n.d.). A longitudinal study indicated students from low socio-economic backgrounds, English language learners, and students with disabilities who participated in the arts showed the greatest relative improvement, and that English language learners from arts-rich high schools were more likely to pursue college degrees than their peers (Catterall, et al, 2012). As for cognitive outcomes, studies indicated that arts education led to improvements in creative and critical thinking skills, as well as in problem-solving and reasoning skills (AEP, n.d.). The NEA report found higher rates of competitive college enrollment, and four-year college enrollment in general, in arts-engaged high school students (Catterall, et al.). The report stated, “Even among high-SES individuals, college rates were higher if students had engaged in arts-rich experiences in high school (p. 15).”

In addition to increasing student academic achievement, arts education has been linked to positive personal and social/civil outcomes for students. Studies have indicated correlations between arts education and student engagement and persistence, with research indicating that elementary and middle school students who generally did not participate in class were more likely to participate in arts classes and arts-integrated learning (AEP, n.d.). Similarly, at the secondary level, arts education led to increased perseverance and motivation. Studies have also indicated a relationship between participation in music, drama, and visual arts and a positive change in student behavior (AEP, n.d.). The research also indicated connections between arts learning and students’ self-awareness, self-concept, and self-expression, as well as in self-efficacy and self-confidence. As for social/civil outcomes, longitudinal studies indicated students who participated in arts education were more likely to engage with arts as consumers, performers, or creators as adults (AEP, n.d.). Arts education was also linked to increased collaboration and communication including improved team work skills, improved understanding of cultural differences, and better understanding of other points of view (AEP, n.d.). Similarly, studies have indicated that arts education can create safe spaces or working environments that support arts learning and provide conditions for students to develop group connections. In addition, research shows ties between arts education and community civic engagement, with studies showing connections between arts learning as students and subsequent community involvement and volunteering as adults (AEP, n.d.).

METHODOLOGY

This evaluation utilized a multiple measures, mixed methodology approach. The collection of both quantitative and qualitative data adds scope and breadth to the study, in addition to providing the ability to triangulate findings (Cresswell, 1994). Descriptions of the evaluation questions and data sources are provided below.

Evaluation Questions

Evaluation efforts focused on evidence of implementation, evidence of impact, contextual factors, and sustainability, using the following guiding questions:



1. What is the vision of The Creative Advantage initiative?
2. What strategies and activities support the implementation of that vision?
3. What contextual factors influence program implementation?
4. To what extent does student participation in the arts change over time? (Number of Minutes ES, Courses at HS Level, Continuum of Courses, Course Catalogs)
 - a. Do elementary students receive more minutes of arts instruction each week?
 - b. Do middle and high school students take more arts courses?
 - c. Do students follow the recommended sequence of arts?
 - d. Do Central District schools offer more arts courses?
 - e. Does arts integration change over time?
5. To what extent does the use of 21st Century Skills instruction change over time? (Students and Teachers)
6. To what extent does student achievement change over time?
 - a. Percentage Meeting Arts Standards at ES
 - b. Passing Arts Classes at MS and HS
 - c. MSP/EOC
 - d. Absenteeism
 - e. Suspension Rates
 - f. Graduation
7. To what extent are students prepared for, attending, and persisting in college?
8. To what extent does parent and student satisfaction with SPS education change overtime?
9. To what extent did The Creative Advantage initiative contribute to changes in student outcomes?
10. What are the emerging promising practices?
11. To what extent is the program sustainable?

Participants

Program leaders identified the Central District – Washington Middle School Service Area as the pilot area for The Creative Advantage initiative. Table 1 includes the 13 schools in the Central District, identified as the Central Arts Pathway, that began the pilot in the 2013-14 school year.

Table 1.
Central Arts Pathway Schools

School Level	School
Elementary Schools	Bailey Gatzert Elementary School
	Leschi Elementary School
	Lowell Elementary School
	John Muir Elementary School
	Thurgood Marshall Elementary School
	McGilvra Elementary School
	Montlake Elementary School
	Stevens Elementary School
K – 8 School	Madrona K – 8 School
Middle School	Washington Middle School
High Schools	Garfield High School
	NOVA High School (Option)
	Seattle World School (Service)

Data Sources

Focus Groups and Interviews

Focus groups and interviews were conducted in the spring of the 2013-14 academic year with key stakeholders including: program leaders and staff at the district, city, and community arts organizations. Additionally, evaluators completed site visits to the Central Arts Pathway schools to conduct focus groups and interviews with teachers and administrators. The use of structured focus group/interview protocols will provide a qualitative perspective and the ability to triangulate findings from other quantitative measures.

STAR Classroom Observations®

In addition to focus groups and interviews during our site visitations, we conducted observations in all classrooms. The STAR Classroom Observation Protocol®¹ is designed as a research instrument to measure the degree to which constructivist teaching and learning ideals are being employed and/or are present during any given period of observation in a classroom. Through 12 Indicators, the STAR Protocol® efficiently assesses student learning in the areas of *Skills, Thinking, Application, and Relationships*. In addition, we modified the existing protocol to include 21st Century Skills: *Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Communication, and Persistence*. Finally, we also aggregated four indicators on the protocol to develop a *Culturally Responsive Component*. The protocol was piloted in Year 1 of the initiative. Classroom observation data will be compared to the Year 2 data.

Student Data

The BERC Group worked with SPS to obtain and analyze student level data, including achievement results, course taking patterns, absences, and disciplinary events. In addition, this information will be updated annually to provide a longitudinal perspective on the initiative.

Document Collection and Analysis

Evaluators collected and analyzed various documents related to the initiative, including the Seattle K-12 arts plan, previous research reports, and The Creative Advantage and partner websites.

¹ Researchers completed a validation study on the STAR Protocol in 2010. Report findings established content, concurrent, and construct validity. Good inter-rater reliability was also found using the Kappa reliability coefficient (.90) in addition to internal consistency (.92) using Cronbach's Alpha for the 15 indicators taken together. Furthermore, the STAR Protocol's single construct, Powerful Teaching and Learning (PTL), was found to show a positive contribution to student achievement beyond the effects of low income. Most notably, a unique contribution was found for PTL in predicting math achievement. About 7% of the variance in math achievement was explained by PTL (Baker, Gratama, Petersen, & Thompson, 2010).



EVIDENCE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Evaluation Question #1: What is the vision of The Creative Advantage initiative?

Stakeholders who were directly involved in project/program leadership and implementation described a broad vision for The Creative Advantage that emphasized the importance arts education had, not only for students and schools, but for Seattle as a whole. As one stakeholder shared, “This isn’t about finger-painting, but the future of our city.” Summarizing the vision, one stakeholder from the district said, “[The Creative Advantage] is a collaborative partnership between the city of Seattle, Seattle Public Schools, and a handful of high-leverage organizations. The vision is that all students will have access to high-quality arts education by 2020.”

When asked to describe the vision, most stakeholders emphasized the project’s goal of eliminating the arts access gap that was revealed by research funded by a grant from the Wallace Foundation. “If we can predict based on race, home language, or SES [social economic status] whether our students will have access to arts learning in Seattle, then we are not doing our job as a public institution,” one stakeholder from the district shared. A stakeholder from the city expanded further on the initiative’s vision for social justice:

I think at the root of that is the opportunity for equity; not just access for all, but what does each one need to be successful? How do we deconstruct systems that haven’t been working? And how do we involve young people’s communities and families in a way that is empowering for young people? It’s rooted in a framework of equity and access. It can be about social justice in a way that is meaningful.

In addition to emphasizing the initiative’s goal of providing equitable access to arts education, stakeholders described the benefits of arts education at the student, the school, and the city level. One stakeholder described a shifting view of arts education, saying, “For a long time, we cut away from arts and physical activity, and we replaced [them] with remedial classes. We have turned the corner, and we are seeing that arts are integral to educating students.” A district leader shared a similar view of the arts as an integral part of education:

Fundamentally, the arts are a core part of the child’s development in terms of their social, emotional, and cognitive development. The arts are a key part of building everything from civic participation to their civilization in terms of how to engage as a part of society. The way it is being taught now in schools, it’s a way for them to acquire mathematic and literacy skills. At the end of the day, more kids will be achieving and performing at higher levels. They will be more engaged and have a more complete experience. Families will feel that they will get a better education. Overall, it will be a tremendous win for the city and the district.

When outlining the benefits arts education would have for the city, stakeholders described the skills students would need in order to thrive in a 21st century economy. Several referenced Seattle’s role as a center of technology and innovation, pointing out that SPS students would need to be skilled in

critical and creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and perseverance in order to be successful in their home city. As one stakeholder described:

By providing Creative Advantage and ensuring fidelity of implementation, we are ensuring our kids can compete in a democracy, that they can compete and secure jobs that allow them to care for themselves and their families, and to get a job in the place where they grew up. A lot of industry in the Pacific Northwest, even if people don't think it's creative, it really is. Engineering and Microsoft, all of those jobs require a skill set that's developed naturally through artistic practice and through the specific cultivation of transferable 21st century skills through the arts.

A representative from ARTS shared a similar perspective, saying, "When I sell this, it is less about arts education, and more what this means for the city."

In terms of implementing The Creative Advantage in the Central Arts Pathway, one stakeholder shared, "I think the vision was equity of arts education for all students across the system, with a focus on launching it in one region so we could understand it so that it could be district wide." Several stakeholders spoke to the importance of launching the initiative in the Central Arts Pathway because students there have historically had less access to arts education than their peers in other areas of the city. A stakeholder from a community partnership shared, "I think it's important to prioritize with the Central Area schools because they are the ones that, up until now, have not had access to a lot of resources."

In 2012-13, stakeholders in the Central Arts Pathway created a regional vision, with facilitated support from ArtsEd Washington. The Principals Arts Leadership (PAL) program developed by ArtsEd Washington was integral to that process. As stated on the program's website, PAL "positions the principals as the instruction leaders in the arts, empowering them in a role to effectively guide the expectations for teachers" (ArtsEd Washington, 2010). Through the PAL process, stakeholders create vision and action plans in facilitated meetings that utilize individual and group brainstorming, and emphasize the importance of every voice being heard. Describing the process, one stakeholder shared:

I think one thing that was done really well was that the principals were convened. It elevated the conversation so the teachers felt it was bought in. The superintendent spoke to the importance of the arts. Principals looked at data to see equity of access. They were able to own a plan around creating more access and agree to that together. The teachers were engaged in conversations.

A similar process occurred at each of the Central Arts Pathway schools during visioning meetings. An analysis of the vision statements created at the school level revealed several key themes. Increased opportunities "to showcase, share, and celebrate arts engagement" through "displays, performances, and events" was the most commonly shared vision, with 11 of the 13 schools including some variation on that theme. Several of those schools highlighted student performances and displays as a vehicle for increased family and community engagement. Three themes tied for the second most common, with nine of the 13 schools including integrated arts learning/arts infused curricula, vibrant community partnerships, and school infrastructures that support arts



learning through dedicated scheduling, space, and funds. Seven of the 13 schools included professional development in their vision statements. Six schools spoke specifically to expanding the variety of arts offerings, with some visions referencing specific coursework (such as digital film or choir) that they wanted to see included. Some schools also referenced the student outcomes they envisioned as a result of increased arts education. One school's vision spoke of "creating an environment where students use artistic tools to express themselves, explore identity, and connect with the world," while another spoke of "empowered and inspired student artists."

During focus groups at the participating schools, teachers who had been involved in the arts teams showed significantly greater awareness of the initiative and its vision than teachers who had not played a role in creating the vision and action statements. Many teachers who had not been in these conversations showed little to no awareness of the project and its goals. When asked to describe the vision for The Creative Advantage Initiative as they understood it, one teacher replied:

No understanding, no vision! I suppose the only thing is that, as communicated by art and music teachers, they are trying to incorporate the arts into preparing skills for 21st century skills related to Common Core. But there's been no communication about how that is going to be implemented or what it's going to look like, aside from individual teachers already performing whatever tasks they can.

Teachers at other schools responded similarly. Though most teachers were able to articulate why it was important to increase the quality of and access to arts education, few teachers outside the planning teams seemed to have a solid understanding of their school's vision or action plans, and few could describe the vision of The Creative Advantage as a whole. As schools were only in the planning phase this year, that is perhaps to be expected. However, as Central Arts Pathway schools begin implementing their year one plans in 2014-15, arts teams will need to be diligent in communicating the plans and their purpose to the larger staffs.

Evaluation Question #2: What strategies and activities support the implementation of that vision?

District level

One of the three broad strategies outlined in the Seattle K-12 arts plan is to "transform the District central office in support of schools and regional K-12 arts learning pathways." Facilitated regional planning to create sequential K-12 arts learning pathways was one tactic The Creative Advantage used to implement this strategy. In support of this regional planning, ArtsEd Washington codified the PAL program into a user guide, which facilitators then helped SPS implement directly. In addition to providing written materials, ArtsEd Washington also provided training to coaches and to the project manager. As described in the previous section of this report, a group of principals, teachers, and family members from the Central Arts Pathway created a regional arts plan. Arts teams at each school went through a similar process to create individualized visions and action plans. One stakeholder shared:

Over a couple of years, if the district implements PALS the way they should implement it, the schools will revisit the plan annually for the year ahead. In service to those plans, which position the principal as an instructional leader for the arts like they are in every subject, [schools] are getting support from partners, extra FTE on a pathway level.

The Central Arts Pathway will begin implementing Year 1 arts plans in 2014-15. Meanwhile, The Creative Advantage leaders are working to identify the next pathway(s) to begin the planning process. A stakeholder explained that those decisions are occurring over the summer:

This summer we will meet with the Executive Directors and share data with them around access. They can make priorities around where there is the greatest need and readiness to benefit. Bringing Executive Directors together, giving them data around [arts] access, asking questions around prioritizing, and thinking strategically around the budget. We need to think about whether we will roll out to one or two partnerships. Do we partner with the regions with the greatest need and another region with a lot of stuff going on with it but where there are individual schools that might have a need?

In addition to regional planning, The Creative Advantage has supported changes at the district level in other ways. "The district receives support in terms of some funding that's been raised through the Office of Arts & Culture to support arts partnerships and principal arts training, school arts plans, and training and support for effective partnerships and evaluation," one stakeholder explained. The district has also worked to create structures and procedures that lead to more common arts experiences throughout the district. One district spokesperson explained, "We've systematized a lot of things. Before, we didn't have a common inventory, or a way to support schools when they're opening."

School Level

At the school level, the arts plan emphasizes providing culturally relevant K-12 arts curricula and instruction that emphasizes development and assessment of 21st century skills. Several stakeholders identified the ArtsEd Washington-facilitated regional planning as a key support both at the regional level and at the school level in terms of helping to create "a robust, practical vision." One project leader said, "They received facilitated school-based planning to connect the school goals with the regional vision and the overall district plan." A facilitator trained in the PAL process helped each school's art team to develop a vision and action plan through a series of scheduled meetings. As one partner described, the vision and action planning process "creates something tangible for the schools, a framework for how they can utilize the arts to support student growth and learning." A project leader explained,

As a partnership with the district and the city and the lead arts partners, we support with regional and school based planning so they can make their own decisions how they want to get to the required minutes, who their arts partners should be, and what classes they want arts integration available to their students.

After forming their visions, the arts teams at each school developed strategic plans for year one with the help of a facilitator. An analysis of these action plans revealed several commonalities across the Central Arts Pathway. Leveraging relationships with community partners emerged as a top priority, appearing in eight of the 13 action plans. Three schools focused specifically on bringing in artists in residence to "create and offer broad opportunities for exposure in the arts," as one school phrased it. Three other schools amongst the 8 focused on increasing opportunities for students to



participate in field trips. Professional development was the second most prioritized area in the action plans, with seven of the 13 schools planning professional development that would increase the capacity of classroom teachers to integrate art across content areas. After professional development, improved infrastructure and events to highlight student learning and school arts programs tied for the third-most-prioritized theme, appearing in five of the 13 action plans. In terms of increasing infrastructure, action plans varied widely depending on the needs of the schools. At one school that is planning new construction, the action plan emphasized supporting and promoting art in the physical structure of the building. Other schools emphasized the need to increase collaboration and to develop shared resources. Another school's plan included increasing the infrastructure to showcase student learning, overlapping with another shared priority across several schools. The action plans spoke of leveraging these showcases to empower students, create visibility and support for the schools and their arts programs, and increase participation in community events. Finally, four of the 13 schools prioritized communication, both in terms of creating awareness of and buy-in for the arts plan and The Creative Advantage within the staff, and within the larger school community.

In support of their plans, schools will have access to pre-vetted community artists. One of these community artist explained, “[Schools] receive the support of not having to necessarily design and create their own programs, which is a huge amount of resources and time and energy. Other organizations have successfully implemented them.” Another stakeholder explained the benefits of having a vetted list of teaching artists:

A lot of times, when we're in a community organization or in a school, so much of [the partnerships are] through referrals. There may be some awesome teachers we might not know about because nobody in the school knows them personally . . . And for us teaching artists, it's the same thing. It gives me the opportunity to be on the radar of all these different schools that I may not otherwise be able to connect with.

During focus group interviews, numerous stakeholders also spoke of community artists as a way to bring a wider range of cultures into SPS classrooms. As one stakeholder described:

Community artists involved in the governance strategy long term will bring a better long-term impact. I think we have work to do around improving that. It's an opportunity that is right in front of us. I think we have an opportunity to push culturally relevant and responsive curriculum through the arts, not just as an aside, but for all students. We need to ingrain that from the beginning.

The Creative Advantage provides the Central Arts Pathway schools with an analysis of programmatic and student access gaps from a regional K-12 perspective. The initiative also includes district wide goals around hours of arts integration from certificated teachers at each grade band, as well as some funding to support this increased staffing. “The biggest piece is the funding and staffing,” one stakeholder shared. “Having central office support and having one person coordinating the openings in the schools and coordinating the hiring process, where we have part-time employees, and making those matches.” A project leader at the district further described the seed funding schools received:

As a region, the K – 12 pathway is supplied with seed money for staffing and materials for new arts programs once they go through their arts planning. In the first year, 2013-2014, schools received almost \$200,000 for staffing, about \$150,000 for materials. This was primarily used for the elementary general music programs. Schools that already had this were given money for instrumental music. Washington Middle School was given money to create a drum line class. Six schools received money for general music, and they received \$28,710. They each got a .3 [FTE] this year and .5 [FTE] next year.

Because of this initial funding, 1,659 elementary students attended music classes in 2013-14 that would not have been available otherwise, according to SPS personnel. In addition, each school is receiving money for the arts plans, non-consumables, and professional development. Furthermore, the city provides funding for community partnerships. A representative from ARTS explained, “We are funding the community partnerships in the pilot central pathway. Long-term we are aligning this work with the Family and Community Partnership Levy. Our work is to use the evaluation and the collective impact model to access those funds.”

Overall, stakeholders are positive about the baseline year of implementation. “I have heard nothing but positive feedback about having arts teams from partners and parents,” one project leader shared. Another stakeholder agreed, saying, “As I go into schools, the excitement and the things I see, that piece is something that can’t be measured. When you have a program that is successful, the excitement and enthusiasm you see is phenomenal.”

Partnerships

The third broad strategy outlined by the K-12 arts plan is to implement a coordinated citywide support structure for partnerships, governance, and evaluation. Much of this support structure exists in the form of staff members who lead and implement The Creative Advantage and who bridge the gap between SPS and ARTS. When describing the structure of program leadership, one stakeholder described Carri Campbell, the Director of School and Community Partnerships at SPS, and Randy Engstrom, the Director of Seattle Arts and Cultural at ARTS, as the leadership of The Creative Advantage. Audrey Querns, the implementation Project Manager at SPS, and Lara Davis, the Arts Education Manager at ARTS, carry out much of the implementation. A project leader explained:

In a lot of collective impact sort of frameworks, there is the notion of the backbone organization. I feel like we have created a different format for that because we don’t have a specific organization holding it together. [Davis and Querns] ... are bridging the gaps. Our office is [acting as] more of the backbone organization that holds some of those pieces. Being able to invest the level of dollars and being able to hold contracts with evaluators and community partners. Being able to think through nuts and bolts. Being able to elevate the roles of arts education beyond the walls of the school district and getting it out to city leadership and the community through advocacy and communications.

The Creative Advantage staffing has changed somewhat this year. Campbell, who had previously served as Visual and Performing Arts Manager at SPS, transitioned to the role of Director of School



and Community Partnerships, replacing Courtney Cameron, who left the district to take a role at the Seattle Housing Authority in the summer of 2014. With the move, the district reclassified the Director of School and Community Partnerships position as a fully funded director level position. Previously, the role had been grant funded. Cameron explained, “There are decisions made at the cabinet level that I wasn’t able to participate in because I was at the manager level. [Campbell] will be able to help with more systems-level work. It was more difficult to advocate at the manager level.”

In her previous role, Campbell had overseen the development of the visual and performing arts curricula to include 21st century skills, the creation of arts assessments, and the initial roll-out and development of integrated arts models. She explained that the visual and performing arts department will continue to oversee professional development, curriculum, instruction, and assessment, facility development, inventory provisions and procurement, and some of the integrated arts professional development. However, Campbell explained that project management and implementation of The Creative Advantage moved to the new office with her, along with the fundraising aspects of plan implementation. “In moving, I’m taking the larger infrastructure, strategy, and communication funding work, and leaving behind the curriculum, instruction, and assessment work and professional development,” Campbell explained.

At the city level, ARTS has been an equal partner in the initiative, “supporting community partnerships and their work with the schools, tracking evaluation and outcomes, aligning institutional resources, and ensuring professional development and investment in the capacity of the private sector to support schools — not just [with] funding, but investing in their ability to track outcomes,” a representative from the city explained. “We are aggregating, aligning, and leveraging all the community investments. There are 200 [arts] organizations that partner with the district, and we are holding the position of being the arbitrator between schools and the organizations for collective impact.”

In order to support community partnerships with training and information sharing, the district created data sharing agreements. As one stakeholder described:

It took about a year and a half of deep work with our data, legal, and community partners to nail down concrete work products. With the funding from Creative Advantage, we developed a website for community partnerships. A big part of the site was data sharing. We had to crack open appropriate data sharing. The products we developed were template data sharing and memorandum of agreements, process for accessing data with the institutional service exemption within FERPA, and then Arts Corps was one of the institutions that met the bar to get an exemption. It was the first time that an arts institution had been elevated to that level . . . We were very selective about the projects we picked to ensure the correct use of funds, and [that we were] doing something with a system focus.

The Ostara Group assisted and advised in fundraising efforts for 14 months, alongside SPS, ARTS, and The Seattle Foundation (TSF). In its final report, The Ostara Group outlined its work around The Creative Advantage, which consisted of “strategic positioning and communication efforts,”

“individual giving and relationship efforts,” and “institutional giving efforts” (The Ostara Group, 2014). These efforts secured \$197,358 of funding for The Creative Advantage from individual donors, corporations, and private foundations. As of September 2014, a \$90,000 grant request to the National Endowment of the Arts remained pending.

At the community level, efforts have been made to educate parents and community members. “We have galvanized the political will,” one stakeholder shared. Part of this is because of intentional public outreach. One stakeholder explained, “At Bumbershoot and [the] Capital Hill Block party, we have a booth. We are showing videos, having panel discussions, and showing the work of our students to this target population and showing the evidence of this work.” Another stakeholder shared:

I think if we can work out what our governance strategy is and have that be guided by the racial equity tool, we are going to really set ourselves up for long term success. We are trying to build the public will. The ways in which arts become real and long term is because parents and families want it. We know parents and families don’t necessarily get the benefits of arts education. Who are the stakeholders? How are you doing authentic outreach and having authentic partnerships? We need a strategy for doing this work long term that engages the community to input and inform the vision.

In order to deepen community partnerships, the Seattle Art Museum (SAM) had provided professional development and support for organizations working with the schools. A stakeholder from SAM explained, “That manifests itself in two ways. The summer institute is a one-day event for organizations on the roster, and ongoing PD (professional development) through the year. The goal is to offer support and training to raise the tide that all organizations working with the schools are better informed by best practices and that their role aligns with the school.”

Along with the work that has already occurred to create a coordinated citywide support structure for partnerships, governance, and evaluation, stakeholders shared that brainstorming is occurring around even deeper partnerships.

Creative Advantage started from a place of looking at what we need in arts during the school day to meet requirements to have engaging experiences that support youth development. There is a broader notion of creative youth development which allows us think about learning during the school day, after school, and into the summer. Creativity is the linchpin. How are we thinking of what we are doing not just in the school day and expand further into high quality engaging experiences that support healthy development of young people to meet their full potential? I think that is what is going to take The Creative Advantage to the place of having partnerships that are really vast – with libraries, housing, YMCA, and jobs. All types of things that can position the arts as a catalyst for forming healthy communities . . . We are already starting to talk about it as a team.



Evaluation Question #3: What contextual factors influence program implementation?

When asked to identify contextual factors that influenced program implementation, stakeholders identified a number of themes, some positive and some negative. One of the most frequently mentioned positive contextual factors was a sense that arts learning had become a priority, not only for the district, but for the city and the community at large. One stakeholder shared:

The office of education is supportive of this initiative, and that wasn't true two years ago. The mayor is supportive, and supportive of funding. This has survived four superintendents, three mayors, and I'm still in this job. That says something about the strength of this work.

Stakeholders at every level, from project leaders to teachers, were able to articulate the benefits of increasing opportunities for students to engage with the arts. As described in the vision section of this report, several stakeholders emphasized the importance of 21st century skills in helping to create graduates with the skills to find jobs in Seattle's economy. Others touched on research indicating that students who participated in the arts were more likely than their peers to engage with the arts as adults as creators or consumers:

The biggest benefit is to bring more arts into the schools, and students will become more savvy consumers and participants of arts and culture in the city. It helps to raise the conversation about the current status of arts education in the community. That will help to leverage more financial support and policy support.

When describing the benefits of arts education, stakeholders also spoke of the academic benefits of arts-integrated curricula. One stakeholder said, "We know that not every child reads and writes the same as everyone else, and providing opportunities for them to show their knowledge in various ways is wonderful. I think embedding the arts in everything we do makes sense. We don't live in a silo." Multiple teachers said that integrating art throughout the curricula would increase student engagement. As one said, "I'm a big believer in [art] just for the connections . . . Whatever that art thing is, it typically does engage kids more. But we struggle with the resources and the time to make it happen." Yet another stakeholder shared:

There is a real willingness among teachers, and there is a desire to have arts in SPS. Over the last 10 years, it was left behind. With the CCSS, they are narrowing the curriculum and the experience of kids. The principals and the teachers realize that it is having an effect on them and their students. Everyone wants more arts for their students, but finding the resources and being given the permission to put in arts is something they haven't had. The goals of The Creative Advantage are adopted into the district's strategic plan to help communicate the priority for everyone — not just those already involved in the arts.

Stakeholders also described the conversations occurring around issues of social justice as a benefit of the initiative. As one stakeholder explained:

I would say it was a focused way to have a conversation around race and equity. There were concrete data to talk about race and equity, and distribution of resources, and the ability of those in power to make changes. That's a huge shift. This component, while not totally race-based, it's kind of about what every kid should have. You could really see that the arts weren't there in early grades, and you can see how it led to gaps in high school. The narrative that can be shared in the arts was concrete, data driven, and experienced by students, staff, and families. It made a really powerful place to have a robust conversation.

Still others spoke positively of the connections being formed between the district, the city, and the community organizations. One stakeholder said, "It really taps into what people are doing outside of the school system in Seattle, and that is a really smart move. We have so much going on, and the school doesn't necessarily need to sit outside of it."

The regional planning also emerged as a strength. Teachers who had gone through the PAL process with arts teams described it as "really helpful," and other stakeholders emphasized the importance of the support structures around the regional planning. "I think the addition of having the principals/coaches support the principals adds some accountability and support," one stakeholder shared. Another community stakeholder explained how visioning process creates buy-in:

You can provide resources to a school, but if they don't see it as part of their vision of what they're trying to achieve, it might just be a one-off thing . . . [The plan] is really designed so that everybody in the room is contributing to it. They see their voice. They own it. Then they bring it to the staff at large, the community at large, and implement it the best they can according to their circumstances.

In terms of barriers to program implementation, sustainability of funding was the most commonly mentioned challenge. The final report from The Ostara Group in September of 2014 identified several challenges throughout the fundraising process. The Ostara Group identified bandwidth and time allocation as one of the greatest challenges in regards to fundraising, noting, "The partnership and shared responsibility model of the initiative meant that no single entity in the partnership – ARTS, TSF, SPS, or Team Ostara – was entirely dedicated to it (pg. 5)." Some community partners, especially, discussed the impact of the Patrons of Northwest Civics Cultural and Charitable Organizations (PONCHO) closing in the spring of 2013. "PONCHO folded and we had difficulty with fundraising. The funds are going to come through the city. That was a huge barrier, and we were able to work through it," one stakeholder shared. Another stakeholder raised concerns about the initiative's fundraising model, saying, "The Creative Advantage is so far largely pursuing local arts education funding. It's not really expanding the pool at the moment, and it's also a very limited pool . . . I don't think there's a very effective fundraising mechanism."

However, another stakeholder explained:

We aren't going to fundraise in perpetuity for something that should be a necessary and everyday part of education. We have strategies for getting in on the levy. This office is pushing toward getting 100% of the ad tax. The biggest issue has been figuring out how to



bring in the money to support the early implementation efforts and to strategically figure out how to bring in resources for the long term.

In addition, several stakeholders said that unclear communication around The Creative Advantage was a barrier. “We need to find out how we are updating people, the work everyone is doing, the school plans. I feel we don’t have everyone knowing what is going on,” one stakeholder shared. Another offered a similar sentiment, saying, “I feel out of the loop . . . It used to feel inclusive during the planning process, but as resources are tighter and it’s moved into implementation, it’s held within a small group making decisions. There’s not a lot of sharing.” Another stakeholder expressed similar concerns:

Being a key partner, I think we need more clarity in communication. I know funding is an issue, and I’m not certain where we are. It is hard for me to know, since I’m on the inside, but I don’t know how much the PR has spread through the public. I think this is less than we think, and I think the parents need to know more. We need more grass roots outreach.

During focus group interviews at the schools and at the district level, researchers noted that respondents who were not directly involved with The Creative Advantage planning and implementation could often articulate only a vague description of the initiative or its goals. One stakeholder explained that the initiative’s complexity made it difficult to describe, saying, “The city and the district are bureaucracies, and it is hard to build enthusiasm for systems change work that is very didactic. It is very complicated work, distilling the 280-page document into sound bites.” Another stakeholder said, “There is confusion when we say, ‘Creative Advantage’ what that means. It means different things to different people, and other people don’t always see how the parts fit together. Our challenge is to make communication precise.” Another stakeholder reflected:

I want to over share and over communicate. I think we need to be talking with families and low income communities, not just the shiny festival communities. Part of the narrative why this is important is economic disparity and social justice and how we give equal standing to both. I don’t want to drift too much from one to the other.

Community partners also raised concerns that the complexities of fundraising and communication around the project might mislead some funders to believe that, by financially supporting The Creative Advantage, they were also directly funding the community organizations listed as partners in the initiative.

The funding dynamic is also complicated . . . It has been difficult for funders to distinguish whether they’re funding [our organization] because [we are] a partner. I feel [our] name is a little over used to build on our good reputation to gain standing as a strategy, when the funding we get as a consulting fee [for Creative Advantage] doesn’t pay for our core work. One funder changed to funding us through Creative Advantage . . . It’s how I’ve heard it, [that] they are fundraising for SAM, Arts Corps, ArtsEd Washington.

Frequent transitions in district and school leadership was another commonly mentioned barrier In June of 2014, SPS Superintendent Jose Banda announced his decision to accept a post in

Sacramento. At the project level, Courtney Cameron's transition away from the role of Director of School and Community Partnerships was discussed earlier in this report. One stakeholder at the SPS central office shared:

I have been here for seven years, and have had two superintendents, an interim superintendent, and seven direct supervisors. Transition at the leadership level is very high. It's not unusual for an urban district, but sustaining momentum beyond leadership change is always going to be a challenge and something this initiative is going to have to mitigate through specific strategies.

Given the frequent transition of leadership at the district level, another stakeholder raised a concern that The Creative Advantage did not yet have the structure in place to survive without certain key players.

I think much of this lies with Carri [Campbell] and Randy [Engstrom], and I think if either one of them leave, there will be a big blow. It is dangerous to pin this to a person. . . . I think in Carri's new position, she will be able to support this with a new platform. In an ideal world, she would have another year to work on this project.

Transitions in leadership also emerged as a concern at the school level. One stakeholder shared:

I hope SPS develops better support structures. Four of the principals who went through the program this year are changing. So suddenly you have a team without a captain, then you have a new principal who comes in and thinks, 'this isn't my initiative, I'll chuck it out the window.' . . . It's really up to the district . . . how to put in place robust PD for principals to keep that momentum and keep them involved as peer and peer leaders.

Conflicting priorities at the classroom, school, and district level also emerged as a commonly-identified barrier to implementation. "There are many large initiatives such as Common Core [State] Standards [CCSS], and the new math adoption is taking a lot of time and energy for teachers," one stakeholder shared. Some stakeholders raised concerns that the arts might be lost in the shuffle, or that teachers might become too overwhelmed. "Too many different things come along at the same time," one teacher said, a sentiment that was echoed in other buildings. One stakeholder pointed out, "Our short school day compared to neighboring districts is a challenge. We're 30 minutes shorter than most of the neighboring districts." Some teachers raised concerns that integrating arts into their lessons would take valuable class time away from students who needed more help to become proficient in language arts and mathematics:

In [my content area] there is so much of a focus on reading because that's where their test scores have been the lowest. I don't like giving up class time for arts. I know there is value in doing arts activities, but it's not visible to me or admin.

Others spoke of the importance of highlighting the overlap between The Creative Advantage and other schoolwide priorities, and the possibility for the arts to be used as a vehicle to deliver other CCSS content. One stakeholder described the challenge of "just trying to instill in people that they



can still fulfill [other] priorities through The Creative Advantage . . . We're trying to get people trained into how to integrate the arts in a thoughtful way into their content areas."

As the district prepares to roll-out the initiative in other pathways, some stakeholders raised concerns that a lack of buy-in at the school level may hinder the work. "I would grow concerned for schools that are not ready to take on the work being forced into it, creating an air of resentment towards the process. That can damage the work," one program leader said. Another stakeholder shared a similar perspective:

We have always implemented PAL as an opt-in program. It's built on a concept we termed called Catalytic Spark, a belief in the arts and their importance in being provided to students. A lot of principals have that spark, so it can be ignited or re-ignited. Moving to a non-optional approach, I'm not sure how it's going to pan out.

Conversations about buy-in tended to highlight another concern — that despite growing momentum, the culture of education has not yet fully embraced the arts as a core subject in their own right. As one community partner shared, "We really need to justify the importance and impact of the work. Until we have more data about how arts integration moves the needle on test scores and measurable areas, that will be a big barrier." Another stakeholder wondered if changing the structure of the regional planning to include other disciplines might increase buy-in:

I don't know if [the initiative] can be scaled the way it is currently structured. I wondered if there is a way we can take regional planning and make it more cross-content including the arts, so arts becomes a component of a regional plan, not the driver of the regional plan. It [art] becomes more collectively owned, and it's no longer seen as other, but as part of how we do business.

Another stakeholder raised concerns that The Creative Advantage was overstating the academic benefits of arts learning:

It's not I don't think those things [academic impact] can happen from arts learning, but they're hard to measure and evaluate well. I don't think arts are some magic salve that will erase the achievement gap . . . I worry we're overselling ourselves on some of the wrong things. If it does achieve those things, it will take time, and I worry it will lose momentum if the results don't come in, or if the results are unclear, which I think is more likely. I wonder if there are things that we could be promising that are more important that we are more likely to achieve.

In addition to these big-picture concerns, stakeholders raised a few concerns about specific issues relating to implementation. "There are detail challenges around implementation. You have a plan and timeline, things become real, and you see the detail it actually takes," one stakeholder shared. Another stakeholder shared, "We have learned a lot this year about how to calendar the work. We asked schools to do things when they were so busy with other things." Yet another stakeholder found the regional planning to be positive overall, but said, "I think we could increase the

intentionality and go a little deeper on the plans, and align these from the elementary school to middle school and high school . . . they need more time for alignment across buildings.”

Concerns also emerged about whether the evaluation tools, such as the monthly five-minute surveys, were completed with fidelity and in a timely manner. Stakeholders explained that some issues, such as a school arts committee that was too small, could have been fixed in a timely manner if the evaluation tools had been used the way they were intended. One stakeholder explained, “Participation was a big challenge on the evaluation side. They need to work out a way to incentivize that.”

At the community level, a stakeholder raised concerns that the application process for becoming a teaching artist might be discouraging for artists who were not familiar with navigating the bureaucracy of the district. “I think there may have been a lot of experienced teaching artists who were intimidated or for some reason decided not to go through with it because of the different layers and multiple steps involved.” Other stakeholders suggested teaching artists may need more training in how to work effectively with schools. “There’s a lot of classroom management skills and things to being a teacher that would really be helpful for supplementing artists’ education,” one community artist suggested. Similarly, a classroom teacher suggested, “I think they need training through the CCSS. If our work was more visible to them, then when they [teaching artists] are there, they would be more support. It would be easier to explain what we are doing.”

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Evaluation Question #4: To what extent does student participation in the arts change over time? (Number of Minutes ES, Courses at HS Level, Continuum of Courses, Course Catalogs)

Do elementary students receive more minutes of arts instruction each week?

During 2013-14, 1,659 elementary students attended music classes that would not have been available without The Creative Advantage roll-out in the Central Arts Pathway. Six elementary schools began new music programs this year: Bailey-Gatzert Elementary School (212 K-2 students), Montlake Elementary School (250 K-5 students), John Muir Elementary School (357 K-5 students), Stevens Elementary School (243 K-5 students), Leschi Elementary School (301 K-5 students), and McGilvra Elementary School (296 K-5 students). The funding for the additional music staff came from the district. The three elementary schools that already had music teachers received funding to enhance their instrumental music programs, which are available to fourth and fifth graders at all schools.

Figure 1 shows the change in the total number of minutes of arts instruction at Seattle Public Schools for elementary school students from the 2012-13 school year to 2013-14. We estimated the number of minutes of instruction received per week by dividing the total number of minutes received each year by 36 (the number of weeks in the school year). Figure 1 shows the total number of minutes of specialist arts instruction received in the Central Arts Pathway and in the other SPS schools in 2012-13 and 2013-14. During the 2012-13 school year, the average Central Arts Pathway student received approximately 181 fewer minutes of arts specialist instruction per year than their counterparts in the rest of SPS (see Figure 1). In other words, Central Arts Pathway



students received an average of five fewer minutes of specialist instruction per week than students in the rests of SPS (see Figure 2). By the next school year, students in the Central Arts Pathway received more minutes of specialist instruction on average compared to other students in SPS. A linear mixed model showed that the total number of specialist minutes grew at a faster rate in the Central Arts Pathway than in the rest of SPS, $\pi_{21} = 11.83 (3.50)$, $p < .001$ (see Table 2).

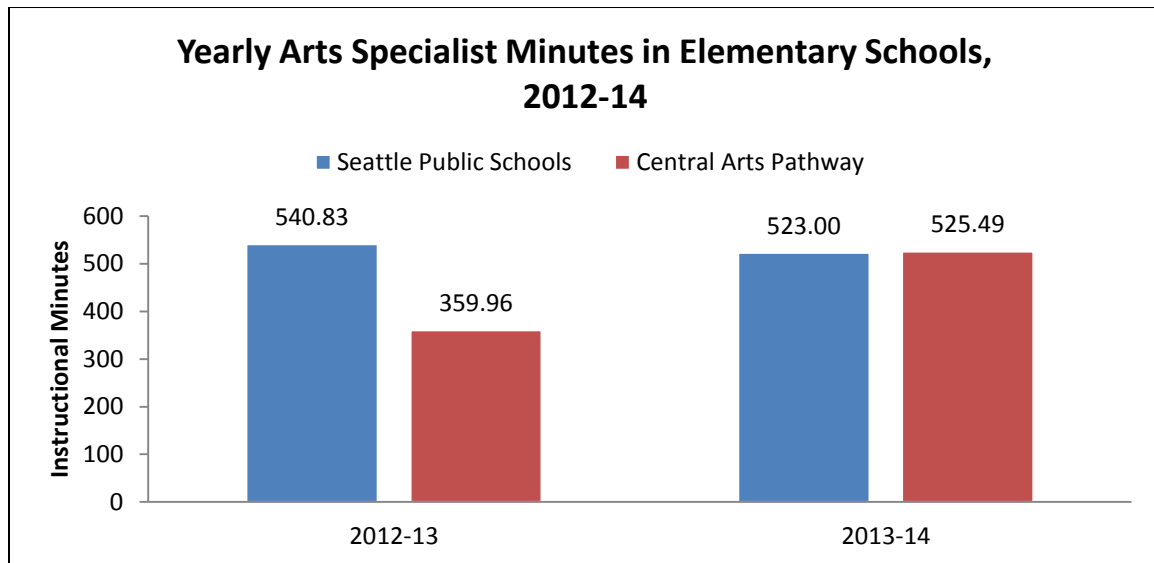


Figure 1. Yearly arts specialist minutes in elementary schools, 2012-14

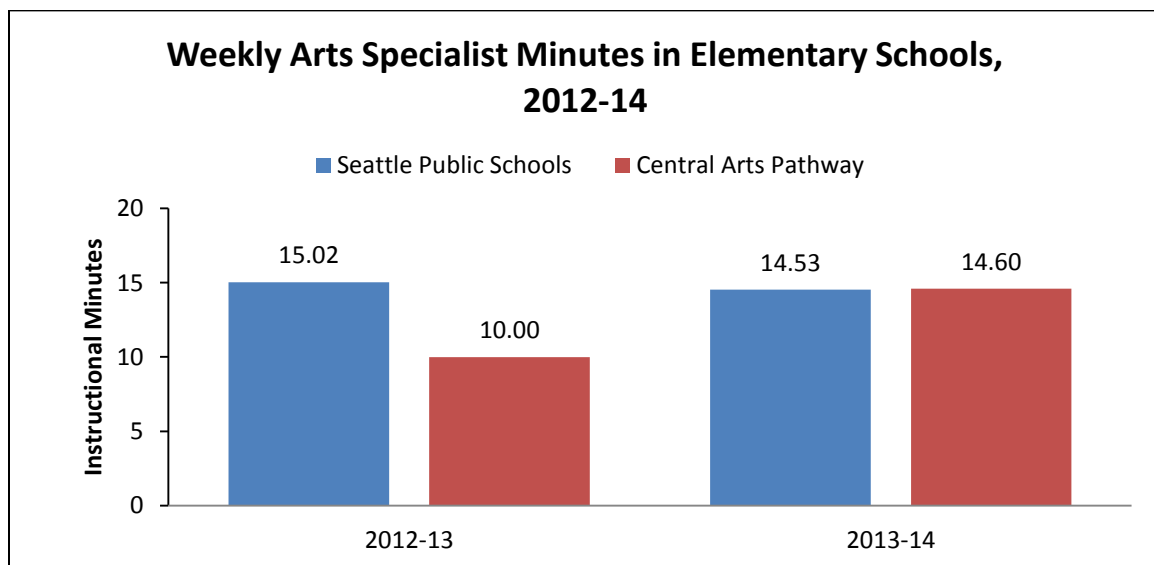


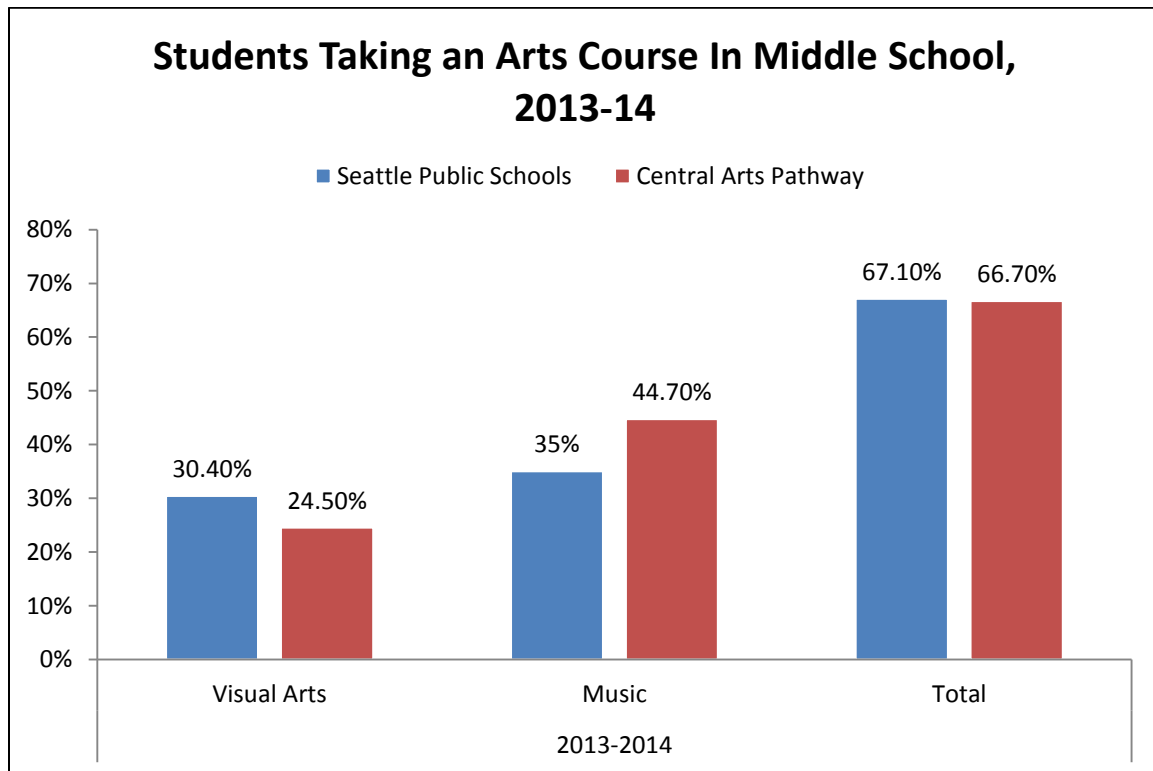
Figure 2. Weekly arts specialist minutes, 2012-14

Table 2.***Fixed Effects for Linear Mixed Model for Total Art Specialist Minutes***

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Pr(> t)</i>
(Intercept), π_{00}	351.98	1.33	859	265.65	<.001
Central Arts Pathway, π_{10}	-62.29	3.35	2524	-18.58	<.001
Year, π_{20}	254.67	1.31	53641	193.77	<.001
Year X Washington, π_{21}	11.83	3.50	88926	3.38	<.001

Do middle and high school students take more arts courses?

Figure 3 shows the percentage of students taking an arts course in middle school during the 2013-14 school year. A similar percentage of students in the Central Arts Pathway took an arts course compared to the remaining SPS schools. However, middle school students in the Central Arts Pathway took music at higher rates compared to SPS and took visual arts at lower rates compared to SPS.

**Figure 3. Students taking an arts course in middle school, 2013-14**

Disaggregated results by race/ethnicity and special programs for middle school students show an interesting pattern. In both Central Arts Pathway and Seattle Public Schools, more White students and more gifted students enrolled in an art class in the 2013-14 school year compared to other



groups. Furthermore, Black students and fewer students enrolled in the English Language Learner (ELL) or Special Education programs enrolled in an art class in 2013-14 (see Figure 4).

In both the Central Arts Pathway and SPS, gifted students tend to enroll in visual arts courses less often less often in music (see Figure 5). There is more variation within the Central Arts Pathway, with students who are White, two or more races, or Asian enrolling in visual arts less often, and students who are ELL enrolling at a greater rate.

In music, nearly every group within the Central Arts Pathway enroll in music at higher rates compared to other schools within SPS. However, the variation between groups is quite large. For example, 72% and 74% of White and gifted middle school students, respectively, enroll in music. In contrast, only 22% of Black students, 18% of ELL students, and 16% of Special Education students enroll in music (see Figure 6). While a similar pattern occurs across the other SPS schools, the differences are not as pronounced.

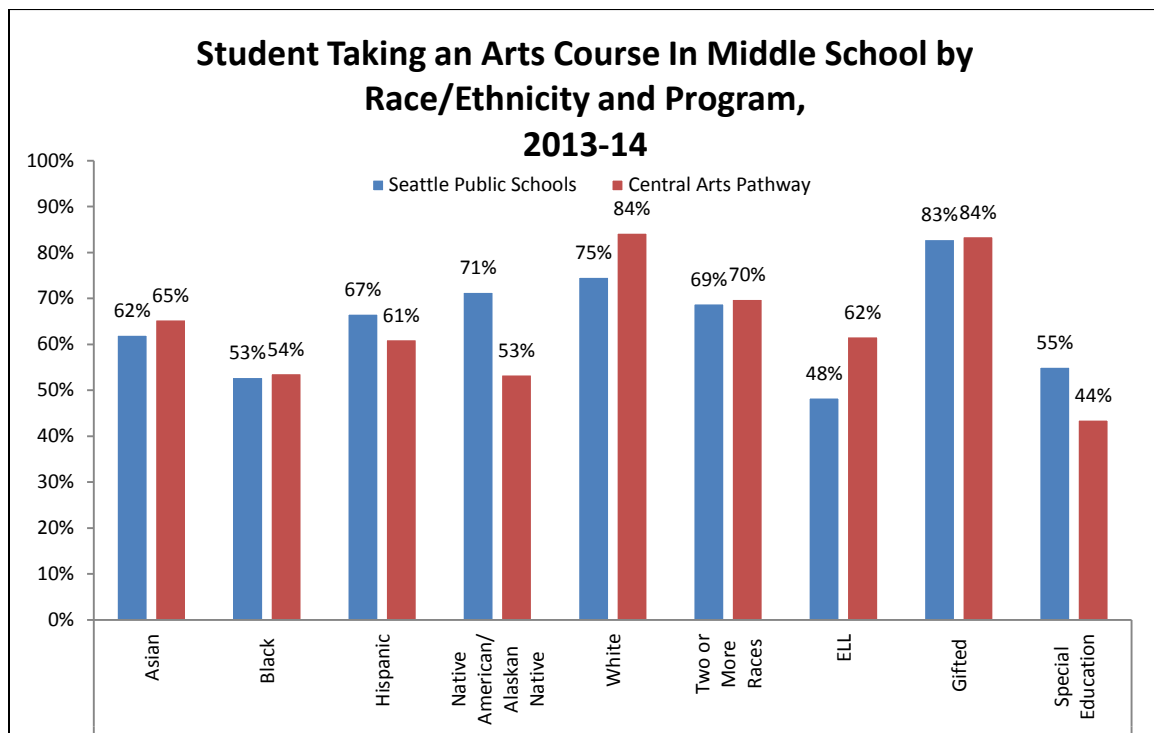


Figure 4. Students taking an arts course in middle school by race/ethnicity and program, 2013-14

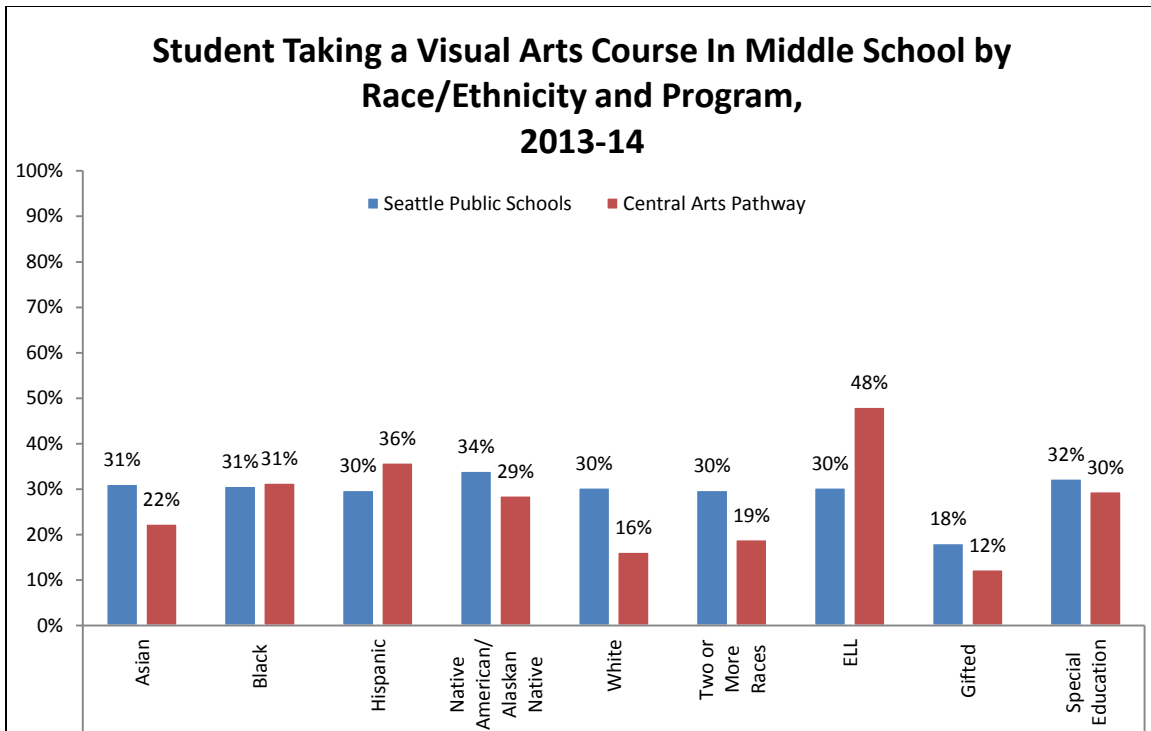


Figure 5. Students taking a visual arts course in middle school by race/ethnicity and program, 2013-14

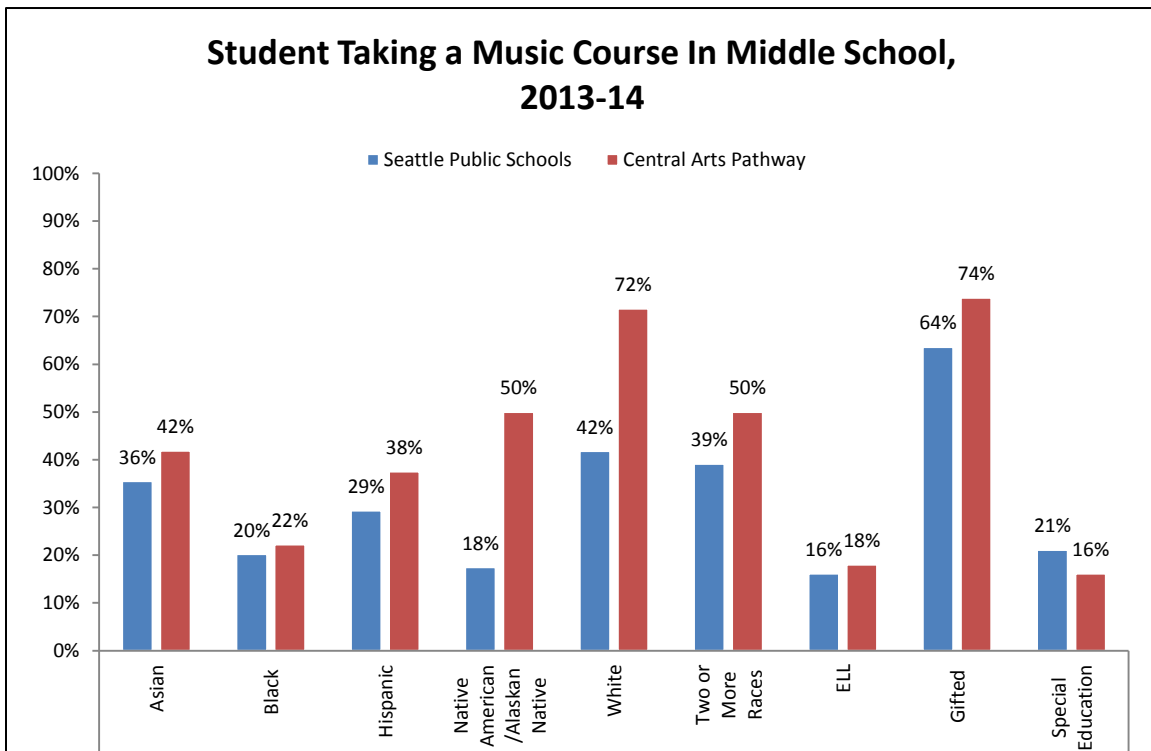


Figure 6. Students taking a music course in middle school by race/ethnicity and program, 2013-14



Table 3 shows the average number of credits middle school students attempted in the 2013-14 school year. The pattern is similar within the Central Arts Pathway and within other SPS schools. Generally, when students enroll in arts courses, they attempt .5 Credits of visual arts or 1.00 credits of music over the course of the year. There is very little difference among students of different races/ethnicities or students enrolled in special program. This patterns suggests that differences among the groups occur in enrollment in the courses rather than the number of credits attempted.

Table 3.
Total Number of Credits Taken in Middle School, 2013-14

Group	Pathway	Discipline		
		Visual Arts	Music	Total Arts
All Students	Central Arts Pathway	0.52	1.00	0.869
	SPS	0.473	0.934	0.807
Asian	Central Arts Pathway	0.524	0.972	0.844
	SPS	0.468	0.92	0.78
Black	Central Arts Pathway	0.522	0.8994	0.701
	SPS	0.438	0.846	0.69
Hispanic	Central Arts Pathway	0.493	0.9886	0.827
	SPS	0.463	0.903	0.751
American Indian/Alaskan Native	Central Arts Pathway	0.417	0.875	0.812
	SPS	0.5	0.75	0.67
White	Central Arts Pathway	0.516	1.0412	0.983
	SPS	0.4883	0.96	0.852
Two or More Races	Central Arts Pathway	0.571	1.076	0.935
	SPS	0.48	0.949	0.824
ELL	Central Arts Pathway	0.528	0.684	0.644
	SPS	0.452	0.826	0.6158
Gifted	Central Arts Pathway	0.5	1.047	1
	SPS	0.4917	0.9755	0.9192
Special Education	Central Arts Pathway	0.5128	0.9773	0.7155
	SPS	0.4973	0.8461	0.7192

Figure 7 shows the percentage of students taking an arts course in high school during the 2013-14 school year. Overall, a greater percentage of students in the Central Arts Pathway enroll in arts courses compared to the remaining SPS schools. Generally, a greater proportion of students enroll in visual arts compared to music. This is the reverse pattern from middle school.

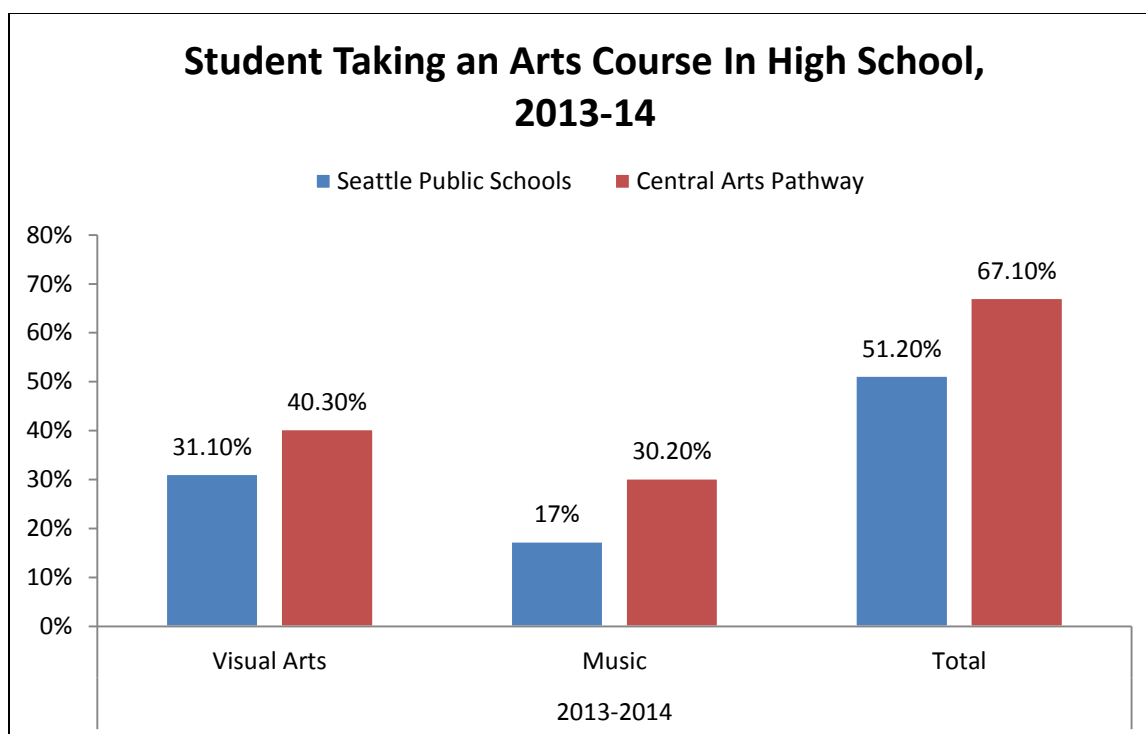


Figure 7. Students taking an arts course in high school, 2013-14

Disaggregated results by race/ethnicity and special programs for high school students show that all groups took an arts course in the 2013-14 school year at greater rates in the Central Arts Pathway compared to the remaining SPS schools (see Figure 8). There tends to be less fluctuation among groups, with one exception. Generally, a greater proportion of gifted students enroll in arts in the Central Arts Pathway compared to SPS. In addition, a greater proportion of Native American/Alaskan Native students enroll in the arts. However, the number of Native American/Alaskan Native students is rather small, so there will likely be large fluctuations in the results for this group.

A similar pattern emerges in visual arts, with more high school students enrolling in visual arts courses during the 2013-14 school year from the Central Arts Pathway compared to the remaining SPS schools (see Figure 9). In addition, there is less fluctuation among the groups with one exception. Gifted students in the SPS schools tend to enroll in visual arts less often.

In music, all groups within the Central Arts Pathway enroll in music at higher rates compared to other schools within SPS. However, the variation between groups is quite large. For example, 56% of gifted high school students enroll in music. In contrast, only 17% of students enrolled in the ELL program and 22% enrolled in special education take music. Similarly, only 23% of Black students enroll in a music course (see Figure 10). There are fewer differences among the remaining SPS schools.

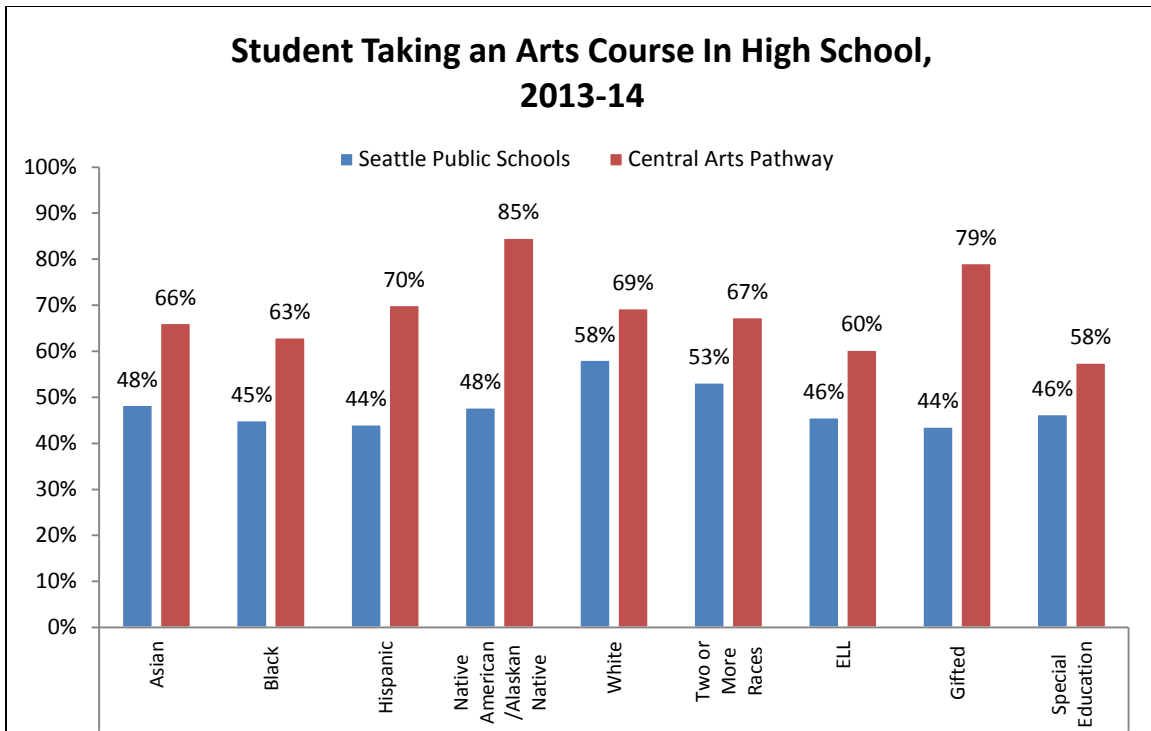


Figure 8. Students taking an arts course in high school by race/ethnicity and program, 2013-14

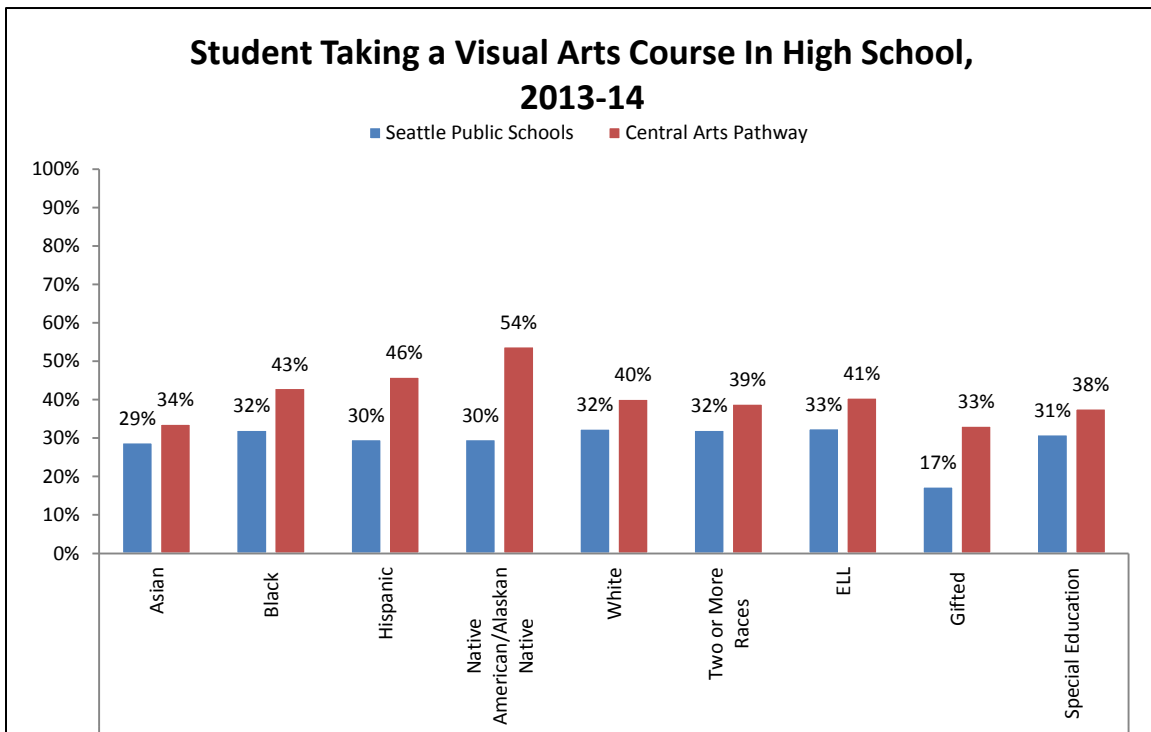


Figure 9. Students taking a visual arts course in high school by race/ethnicity and program, 2013-14

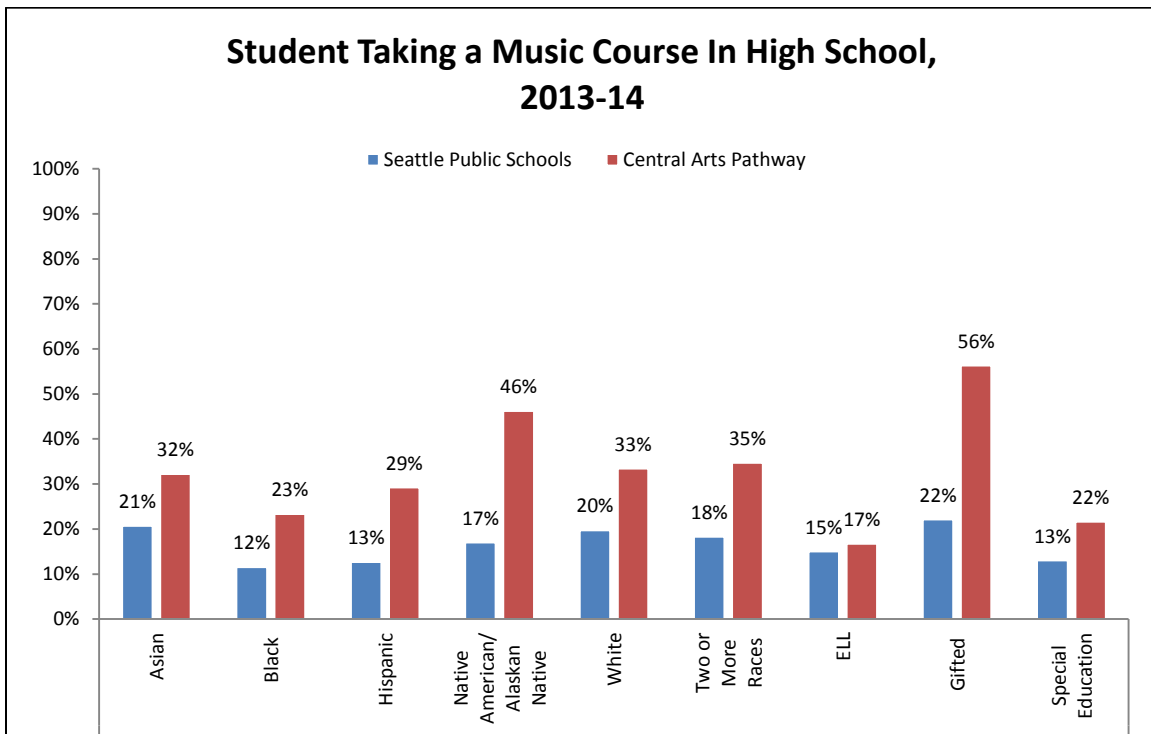


Figure 10. Students taking a music course in high school by race/ethnicity and program, 2013-14

Table 4 shows the average number of credits high school students attempted in the 2013-14 school year. The pattern is similar within the Central Arts Pathway and within other SPS schools. Generally, students enroll in more music courses than visual arts courses within the year. There is very little difference among students of different races/ethnicities or students enrolled in special program. This pattern suggests that differences among the groups occur in enrollment in the courses rather than the number of credits attempted.

Table 4.

Total Number of Credits Taken in Middle School, 2013-14

Group	Pathway	Discipline		
		Visual Arts	Music	Total Arts
All Students	Central Arts Pathway	0.6557	0.8551	0.8792
	SPS	0.6304	0.8529	0.079
Asian	Central Arts Pathway	0.6447	0.813	0.831
	SPS	0.6341	0.7914	0.7806
Black	Central Arts Pathway	0.6231	0.6643	0.7778
	SPS	0.6069	0.7087	0.6855
Hispanic	Central Arts Pathway	0.613	0.7841	0.8558
	SPS	0.5977	0.777	0.7051
American Indian/Alaskan Native	Central Arts Pathway	0.5214	0.7917	0.8091
	SPS	0.5613	0.775	0.7
White	Central Arts Pathway	0.697	0.9812	0.9669
	SPS	0.6539	0.9376	0.8554
Two or More Races	Central Arts Pathway	0.6944	0.8828	0.9336
	SPS	0.6189	0.9086	0.8072
ELL	Central Arts Pathway	0.5387	0.5458	0.6502
	SPS	0.5736	0.6012	0.6373
Gifted	Central Arts Pathway	0.7441	1.0511	1.105
	SPS	0.6833	1.092	0.92
Special Education	Central Arts Pathway	0.6415	0.7545	0.8242
	SPS	0.6153	0.7553	0.733

Do students follow the recommended sequence of arts?

Figures 11 through 13 show the number of arts credits the class of 2018 took through their middle school years. Approximately two-thirds of students from the class of 2018 took at least one credit in middle school in both the Central Arts Pathway and the remaining Seattle Public Schools (see Figure 11). Only 45% of students in the Central Arts Pathway and 36% of students in the remaining Seattle Public Schools took two or more credits of arts throughout middle school. Black students were least likely to take an arts course compared to other groups. Overall, very few students take two or more visual arts credits, and there are very few differences by race/ethnicity (see Figure 12). For music, approximately 43% of Central Arts Pathway students and 26% of other SPS schools take two or more credits. Fewer Black students in both the Central Arts Pathway and across SPS take two or more credits of performing arts (see Figure 13).

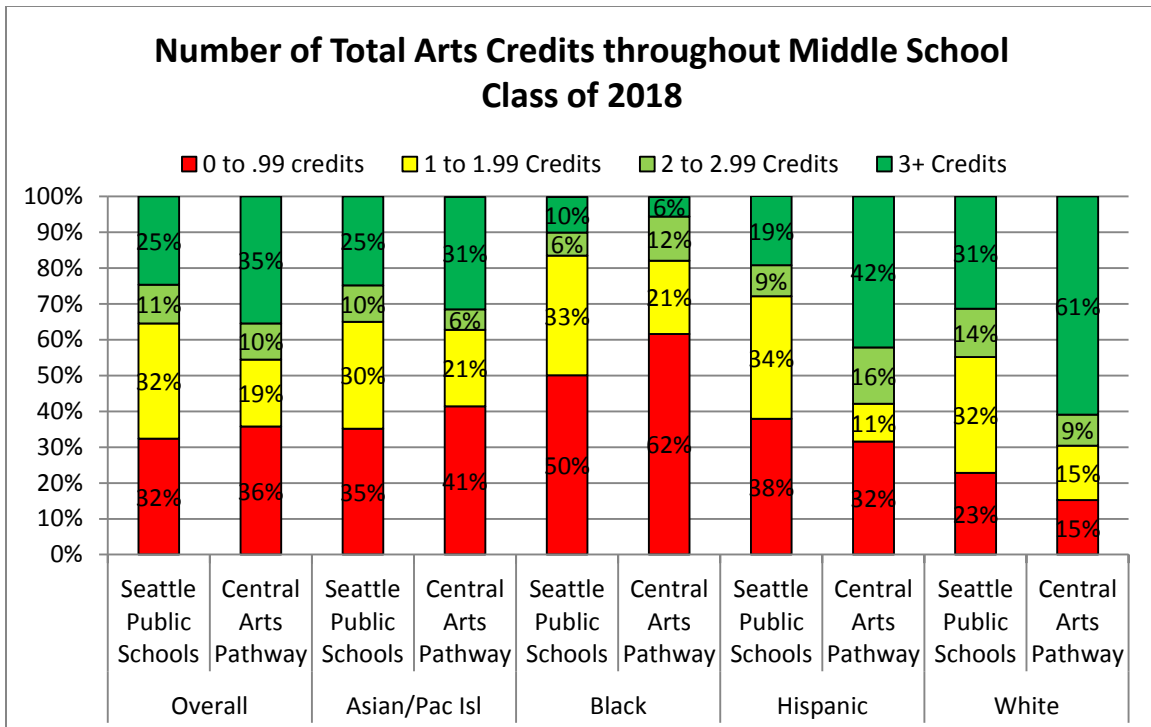


Figure 11. Number of total credits of arts taken, SPS vs. Central Arts Pathway, class of 2018

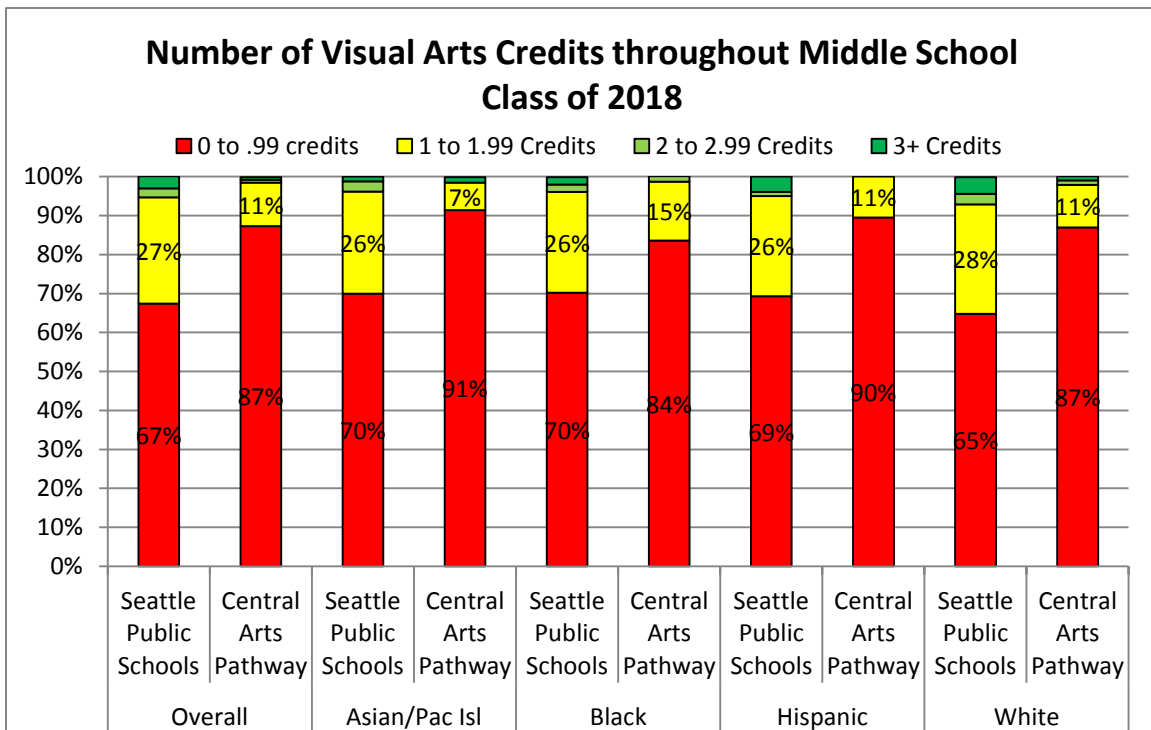


Figure 12. Number of total credits of visual arts taken, SPS vs. Central Arts Pathway Area, class of 2018

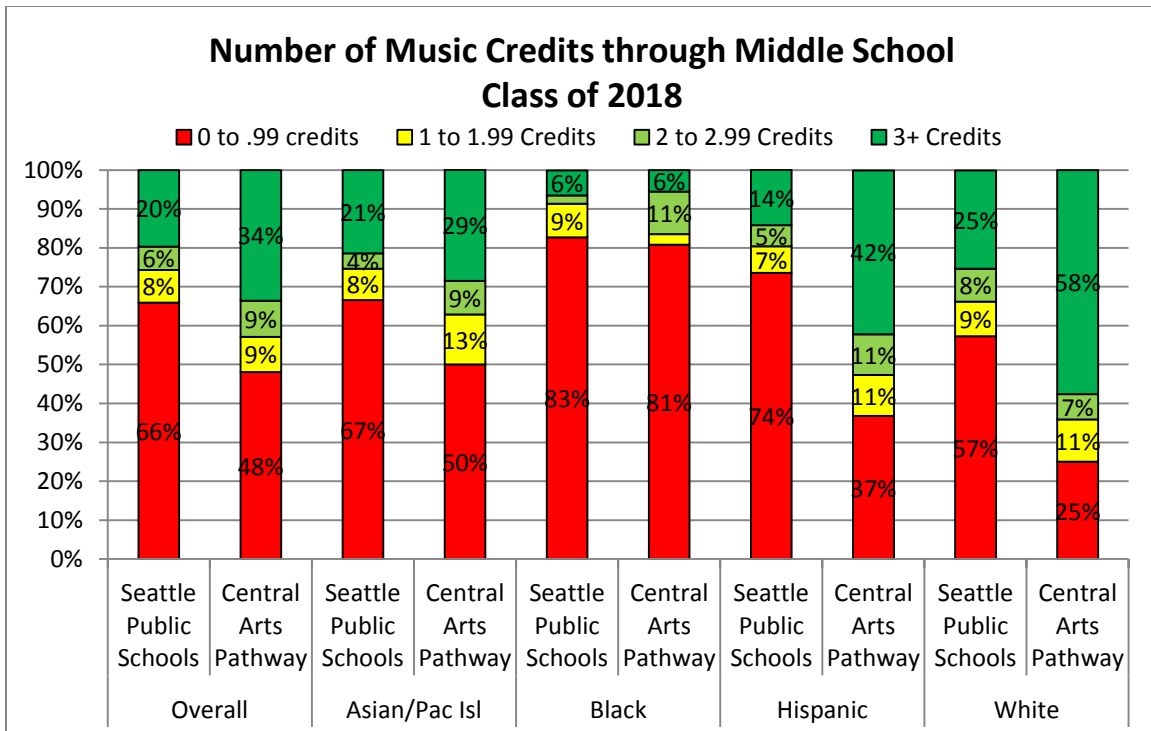


Figure 13. Number of total credits music taken, SPS vs. Central Arts Pathway, class of 2018

Figures 14 through 66 show the number of arts credits the 2014 graduates took through their high school career. While nearly all students within the district took at least one credit of art, only 60% of students in the Central Arts Pathway and 38% of students in the remaining SPS high schools took two or more credits of Arts, which is a goal for the initiative. Overall, very few students take two or more visual arts credits, and there are very few differences by race/ethnicity (see Figure 5). For music, approximately 22% of Central Arts Pathway students and 13% of other SPS schools take two or more credits of music. Fewer Black students in both the Central Arts Pathway and across SPS take two or more credits of music (see Figure 6).

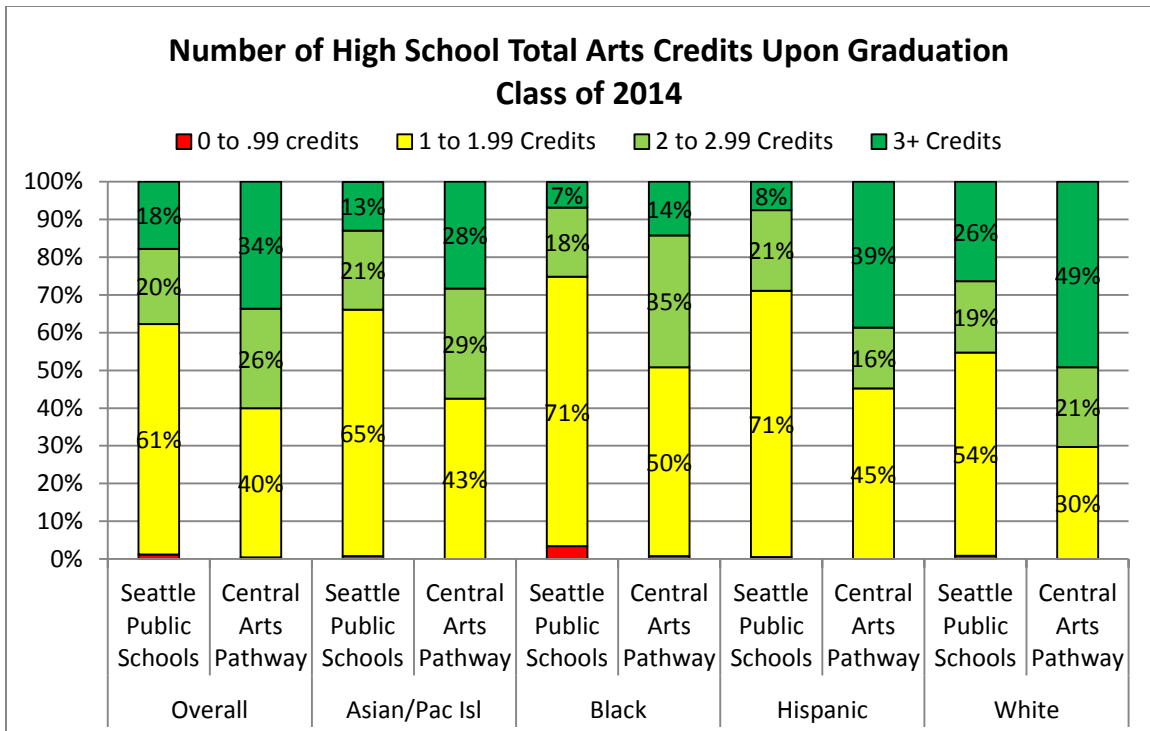


Figure 14. Number of total credits of arts taken, SPS vs. Central Arts Pathway, graduating class of 2014

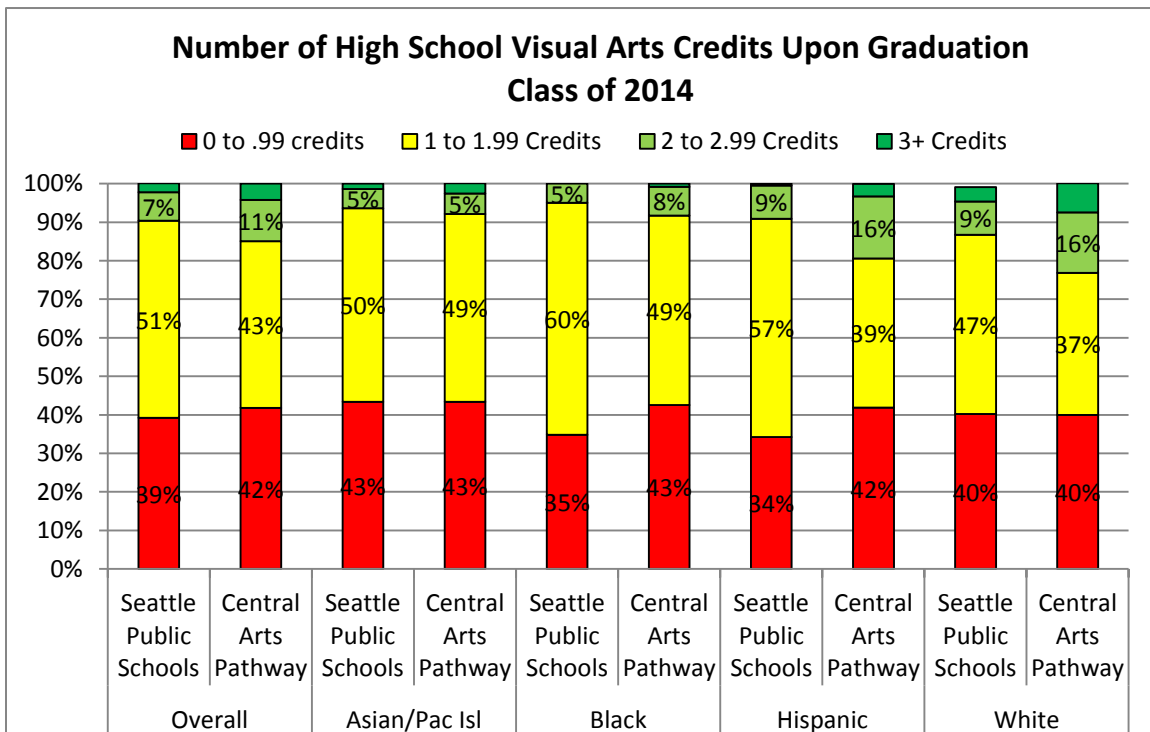


Figure 15. Number of total credits of visual arts taken, SPS vs. Central Arts Pathway, graduating class of 2014

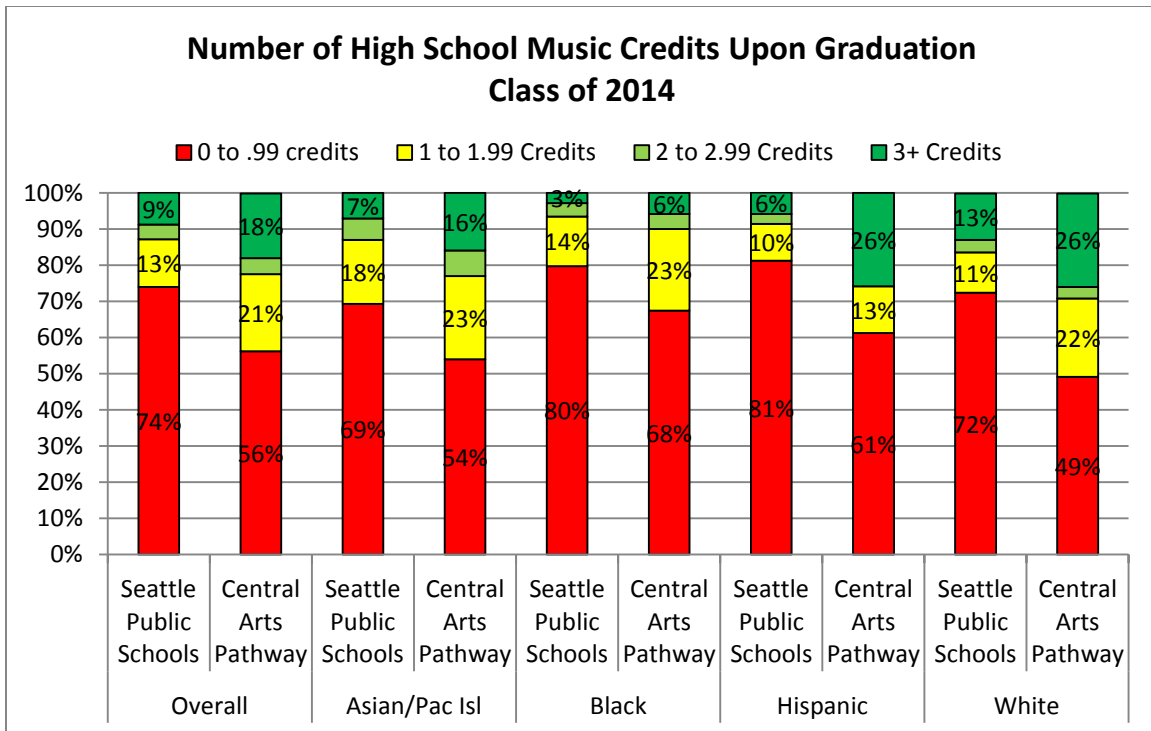


Figure 16. Number of total credits of visual arts taken, SPS vs. Central Arts Pathway, graduating class of 2014

Do Central District Schools offer more arts courses

An examination of high school student course taking patterns showed that Central Arts Pathway schools offered a greater variety of arts courses than schools in the rest of SPS. In fact, Central Arts Pathway schools offered 72 different arts courses. Schools in the rest of SPS offered 58 different courses (see Figure 17).

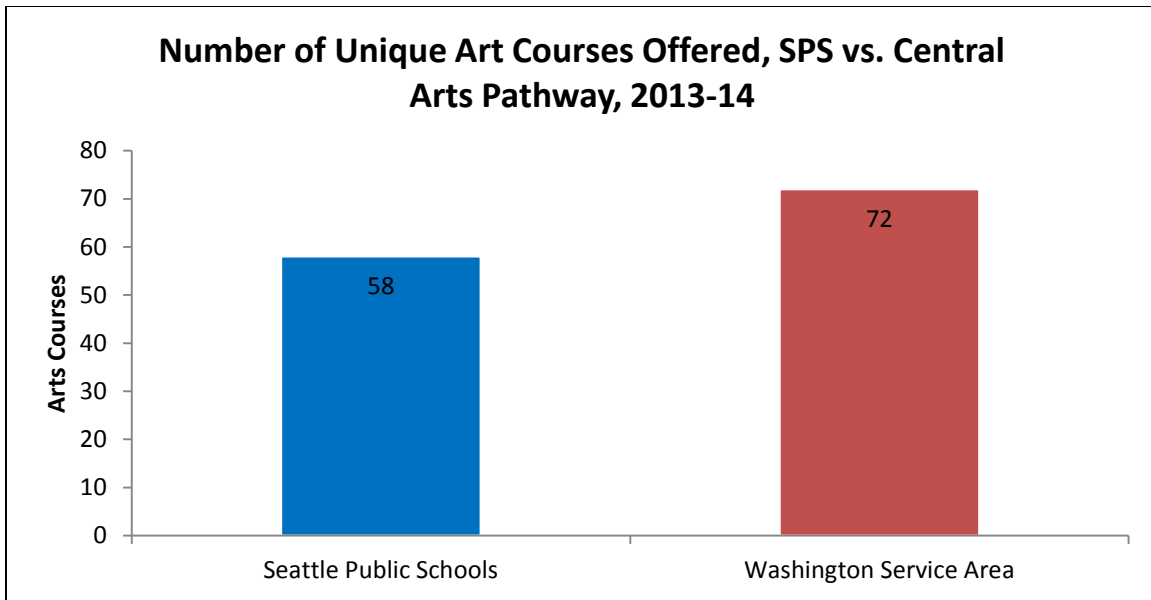


Figure 17. Number of unique art courses offered, SPS vs. Central Arts Pathway, 2013-14

Does arts integration change over time

Data on arts integration were collected through the School Arts Inventory, which was administered by ArtsEd Washington. The data are difficult to interpret because only 10 of the 13 schools within the Central Arts Pathway completed the survey at the end of Year 1, while all schools took the survey during baseline. Because of the incomplete data at the end of Year 1, baseline data are reported and will be used for future comparisons.

Overall, seven out of 13 schools (54%) at baseline reported having a definition for arts integration. Arts integration strategies varied across the Central Arts Pathway, with five schools using arts to enhance other subject area, four schools not doing arts integration, two schools using parallel instruction, one school using cross disciplinary instruction, and one school using infusion.

Evaluation Question #5: To what extent does the use of 21st Century Skills instruction change over time? (Students and Teachers)

The 21st Century Skills, as defined by SPS, are skills and learning dispositions critical to success in school, career, and life. These include *Creative Thinking*, *Critical Thinking*, *Communication Skills*, *Collaboration Skills*, and *Perseverance Skills*. An additional 21st Century Skill used by SPS, *Growth Mindset*, is not included in the Protocol due to the difficulty inherent in measuring it through classroom observations, instead of surveys or other means. *Creative Thinking* is manifested as the teacher provides students an opportunity to generate and develop novel ideas and solutions, and to make their own choices about how to approach learning tasks, instead of using scripted lessons and assignments. *Critical Thinking* is manifested as the teacher provides opportunities for students to elaborate, refine, analyze, and/or evaluate ideas, instead of just recalling information. *Communication Skills* are manifested as teachers provide students the opportunity to articulate their thoughts and emotions effectively using oral, written, and nonverbal skills, instead of just stating



correct or incorrect answers. *Collaboration Skills* are manifested when teachers provide students with opportunities to work effectively and respectfully in diverse teams, instead of simply completing assignments individually. *Perseverance Skills* are manifested when teachers support students to persist in completing tasks and goals in the face of obstacles, instead of allowing them to give up.

How are the 21st Century Skills measured?

The 21st Century Skills section of the Protocol includes relevant strategies from the STAR Protocol as well as additional strategies developed through research into 21st Century Skills. One half of the Indicators (n=“5”) are designed to measure the extent to which the teacher initiates effective opportunities for students to demonstrate the 21st Century Skills. The other half of the Indicators (n=“5”) are designed to measure the extent to which students are effectively engaged in using these skills. The 21st Century Skills section of the Protocol is scored on all 10 Indicators, all five 21st Century Skills Components, and Overall. The scores from the original STAR Protocol are not included in scoring; however, because several observables exist in both the STAR Protocol and the 21st Century Skills section, there is often some overlap. The 4-point scoring scale represents the extent to which 21st Century Skills are evident during an observation period. The Indicator and Component scales range from 1-Not Observable to 4-Clearly Observable. The Overall score represents the extent to which the overall teaching and learning practices observed were aligned with Powerful Teaching and Learning. The 4-point scale ranges from 1-Not at All, 2-Very Little, 3-Somewhat, and 4-Very.

Overall, researchers found clear evidence of 21st Century Skills in 23% of the classrooms they visited (see Figure 18). All of the skills scored in the low or low-to-moderate ranges. Communication was the highest-scoring skills, with 36% of classrooms scoring a 3 or 4. An analysis of individual indicators (see Table 4) revealed that researchers observed 38% of teachers providing opportunities for students to engage with dialogue, debate, or written/oral assignments. Perseverance was the lowest-scoring skill, with 15% of classrooms scoring a 3 or 4 (see Figure 23). An analysis of the individual indicators reveals that researchers observed students reflecting on growth, connecting learning tasks to long-term goals, and/or practicing strategies for taking responsibility and dealing with challenges in only 14% of the classrooms.

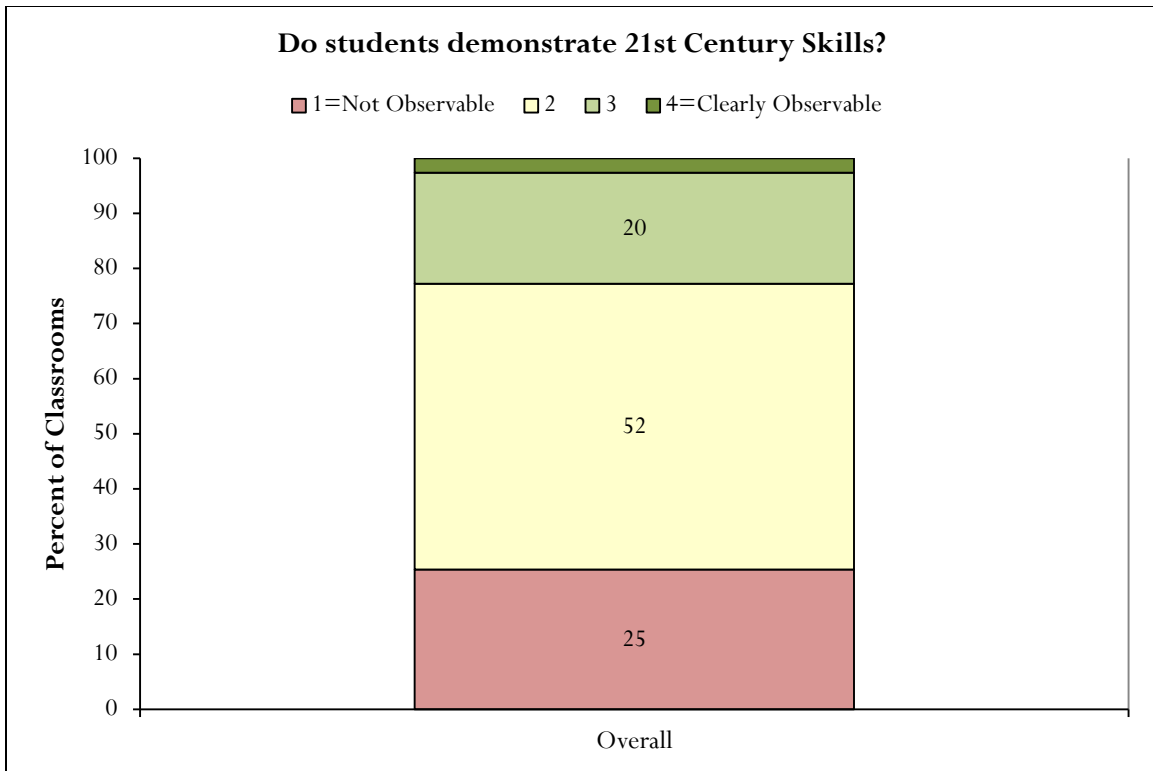


Figure 18. Classroom observation data – overall 21st Century Skills

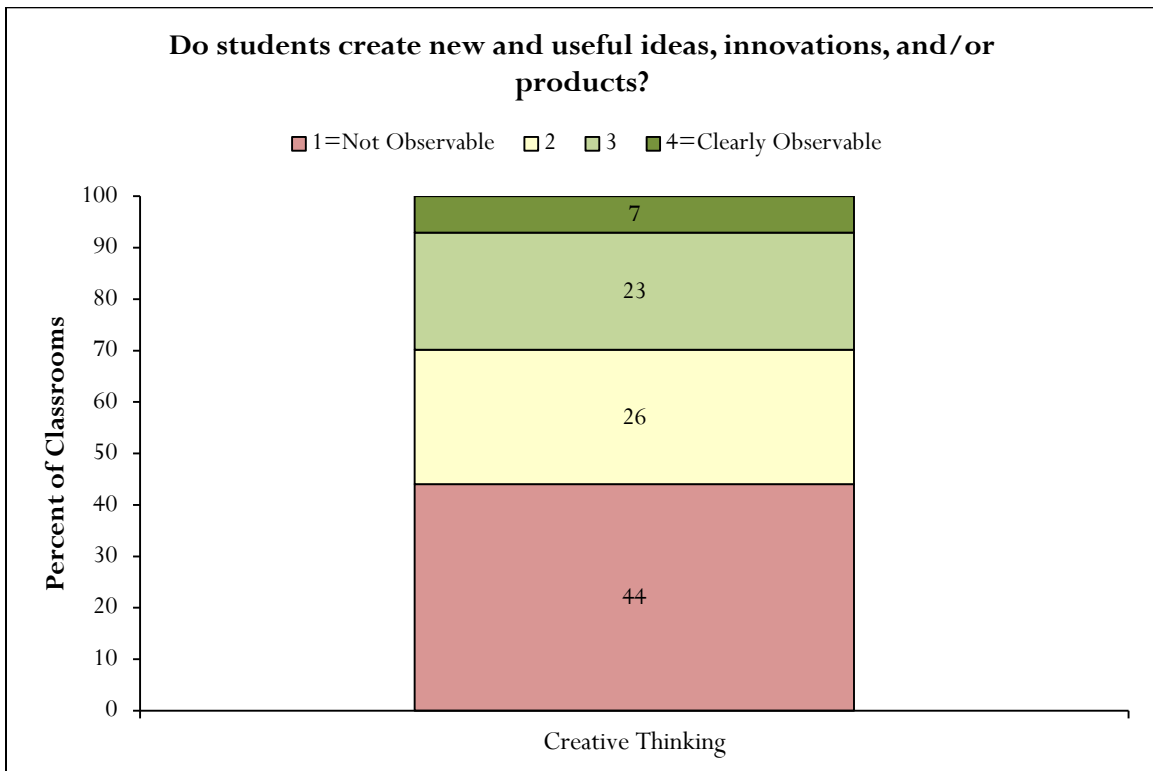


Figure 19. Classroom observation data - Creative Thinking

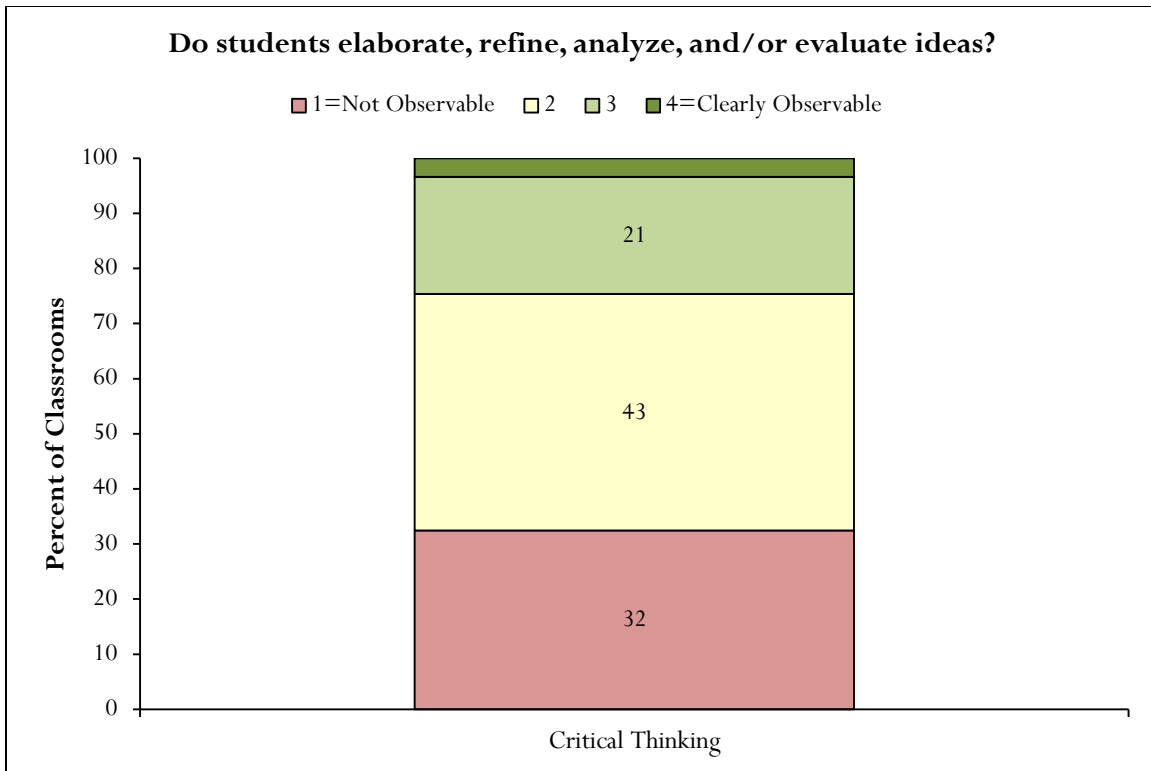


Figure 20. Classroom observation data - Critical Thinking

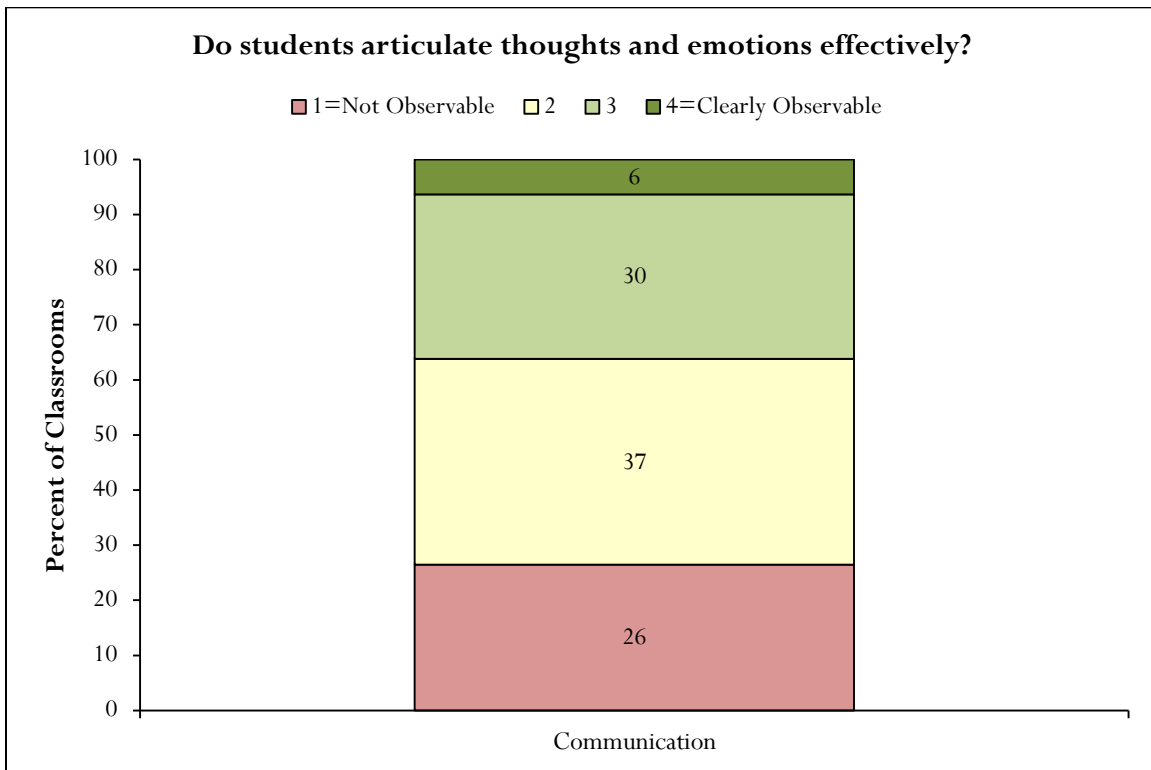


Figure 21. Classroom observation data - Communication

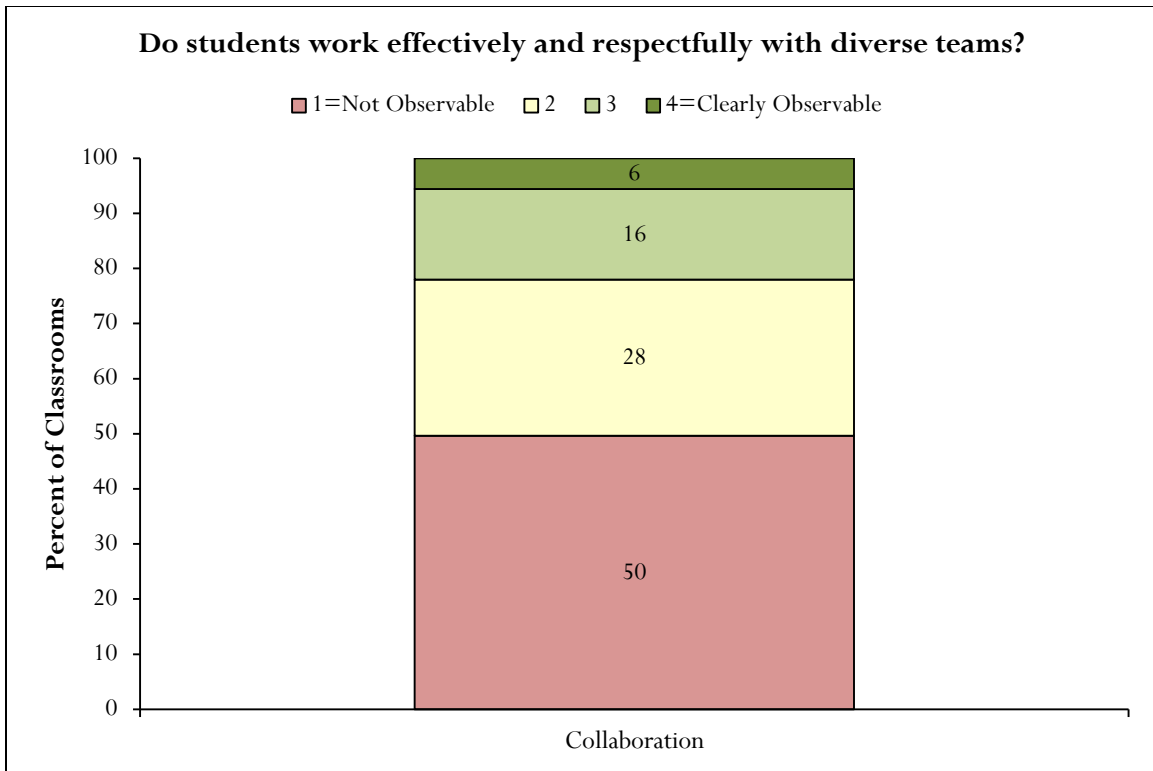


Figure 22. Classroom observation data - Collaboration

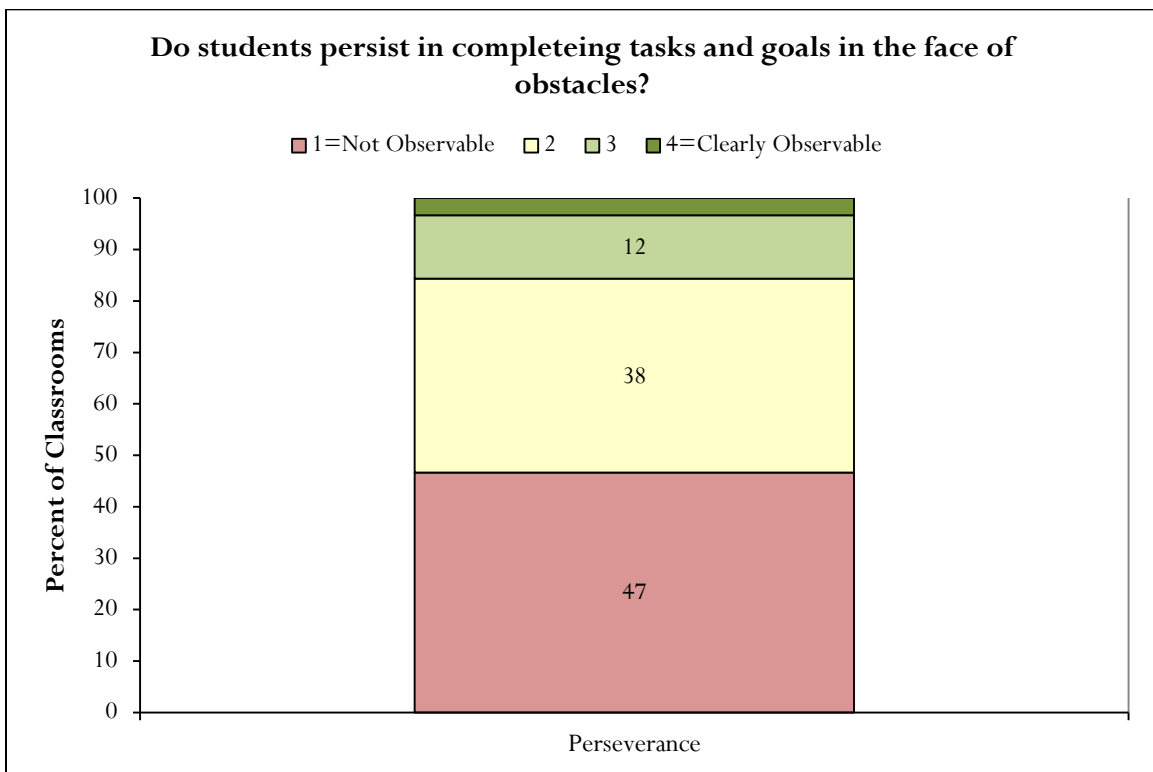


Figure 23. Classroom observation data – Perseverance

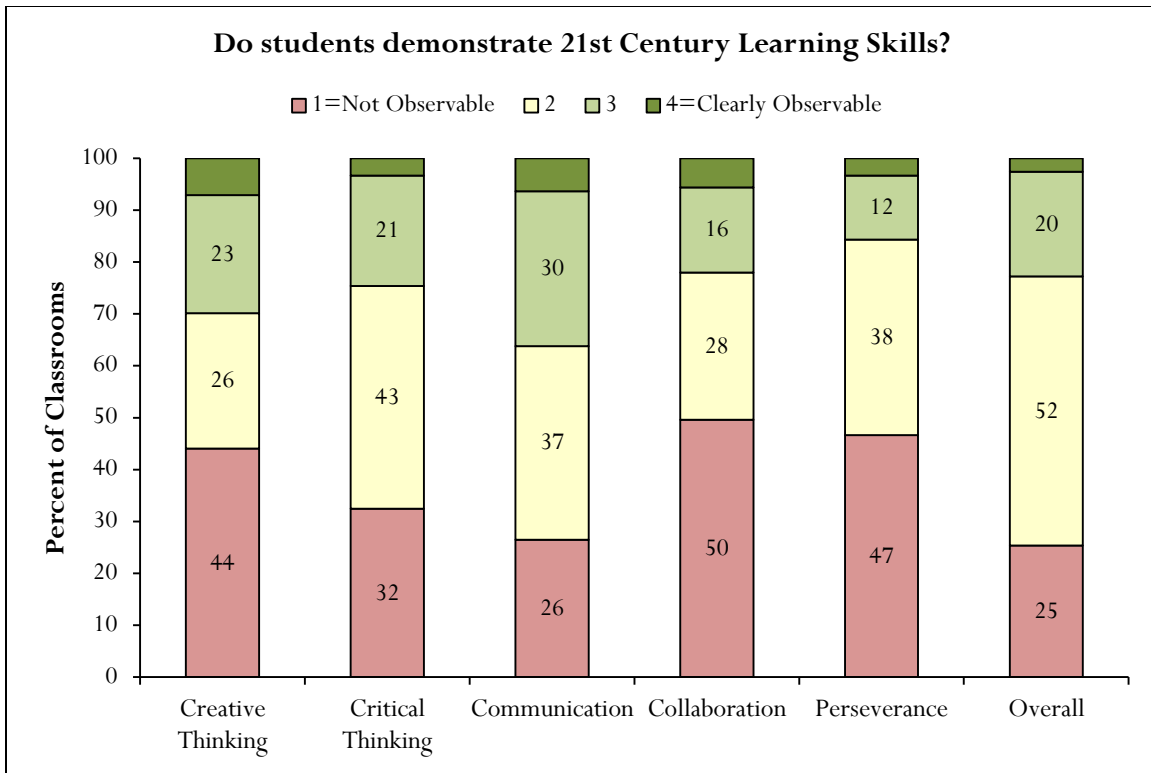


Figure 24. Classroom observation data – overall 21st Century Skills

Table 4.

21st Century Skills Indicators

<i>Creative Thinking</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
13. Teacher provides students an opportunity to generate and develop novel ideas/solutions and make their own choices about how to approach learning tasks.	38%	27%	28%	7%
			35%	
14. Students create new and useful ideas, innovations, and/or products.	50%	24%	19%	7%
			27%	
<i>Critical Thinking</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
15. Teacher provides opportunities for students to engage with skills/concepts in multiple ways.	33%	45%	19%	4%
			22%	
16. Students elaborate, refine, analyze, and/or evaluate ideas.	37%	40%	20%	3%
			23%	
<i>Communication</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
17. Teacher provides students an opportunity to engage in dialogue, debate, and written/oral assignments.	23%	38%	29%	10%
			39%	
18. Students articulate thoughts and emotions.	33%	37%	24%	6%
			30%	
<i>Collaboration</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
19. Teacher provides opportunities for student collaboration.	47%	29%	15%	8%
			23%	
20. Students work effectively and respectfully in teams.	52%	26%	16%	6%
			22%	
<i>Perseverance</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
21. Teacher provides encouragement and problem-solving strategies.	37%	37%	22%	4%
			25%	
22. Students reflect on growth, connect learning tasks to long-term goals, and/or practice strategies for taking responsibility and dealing with challenges.	62%	24%	12%	1%
			14%	

Cultural Competency. In conjunction with personnel from SPS, researchers at The BERC Group identified four Indicators from the STAR Protocol to measure the extent to which the classrooms observed exhibited *Culturally Responsive* teaching and learning. Half of the Indicators ($n=2$) focused on teachers assuring the purpose of the lesson was clear and relevant to all students and assuring the classroom was a positive and challenging environment. The other half ($n=2$) focused on students demonstrating a meaningful personal connection to the lesson and experiencing learning activities that were adapted to meet the needs of diverse learners. The 4-point scoring scale represents the extent to which *Culturally Responsive* teaching and learning is evident during an observation period. The Indicator and Component scales range from 1-Not Observable to 4-Clearly Observable. The Overall score represents the extent to which the overall teaching and learning practices observed



were aligned with cultural competency. The 4-point scale ranges from 1-Not at All, 2-Very Little, 3-Somewhat, and 4-Very

Researchers observed evidence of *Culturally Responsive* in 53% of the classrooms they visited (see Figure 25). This is 25 percentage-points higher than the STAR average. An analysis of the individual Indicators (see Table 5) showed that the vast majority (90%) of teachers who were observed assured the classroom was a positive academic environment. The other Indicators scored in the low and moderate ranges. The lowest of these was Indicator 8: researchers observed students demonstrating a meaningful personal connection to the lesson in only 28% of the classrooms.

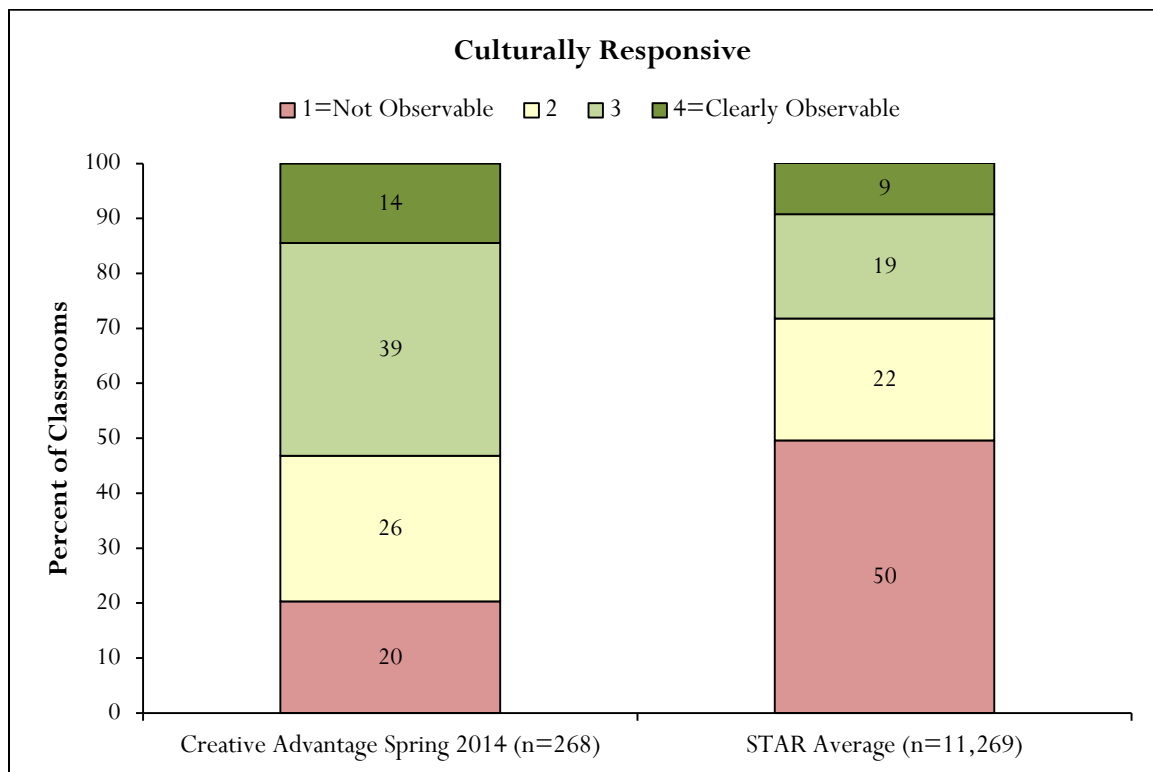


Figure 25. Classroom Observation Data – Culturally Responsive

Table 5.

Culturally Responsive Indicators

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE	1	2	3	4
7. Teacher assures that the purpose of the lesson is clear and relevant to all students.	23%	37%	32%	9%
			41%	
8. Students demonstrate a meaningful personal connection to the lesson.	46%	26%	21%	7%
			28%	
10. Teacher assures the classroom is a positive and challenging academic environment.	0%	10%	64%	26%
			90%	
12. Students experiencing learning activities that are adapted to meet needs of diverse learners.	13%	34%	38%	16%
			54%	

Evaluation Question #6: To what extent does student achievement change over time?

Percent of Students Meeting Arts Standards at Elementary School

To assess changes in the percent of students meeting arts standards in elementary schools, we examined three school years of data from SPS (see Figure 26). For students enrolled in the Central Arts Pathway, the percentage rose from 78% to 92%. For students enrolled in the other SPS service areas, the percentage rose from 80% to 87%. We used a generalized mixed model to analyze the change in the percent of students meeting arts standards in SPS. The model showed that the rate of increase over the three-year period was higher for students in the Central Arts Pathway than for students in other service areas within SPS, $\pi_{21} = 0.37$ (0.03), $p < .001$ (see Table 6).

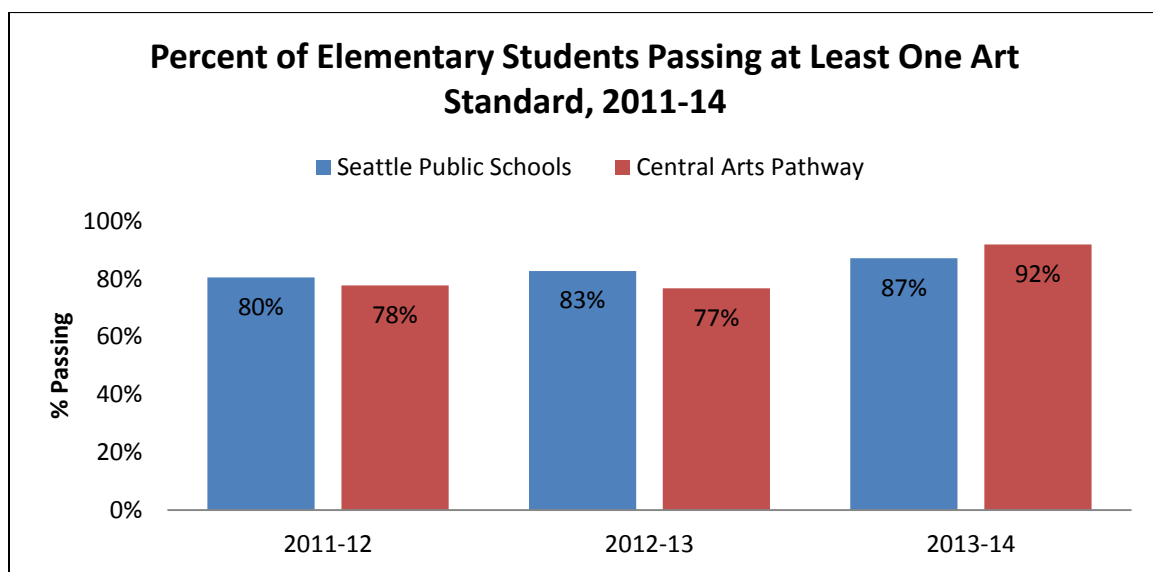


Figure 26. Percent of elementary students passing at least one art standard, 2011-14

Table 4.

Fixed Effects for Generalized Linear Model for Percent of Students Passing Arts Standard

Variable	B	exp(B)	1/exp(B)	SE	Z	Pr(> z)
(Intercept), π_{00}	2.19	8.93	0.11	0.25	8.66	<.001
Central Arts Pathway, π_{10}	-0.10	0.91	1.10	0.69	-0.14	0.89
Year, π_{20}	0.39	1.48	0.68	0.01	40.45	<.001
Year X Washington, π_{21}	0.37	1.45	0.69	0.03	14.42	<.001



Passing Arts Classes at MS and HS

We examined middle and high school students' course-taking data to assess the percentage of arts courses in which students received at least a C- or a passing grade. The data showed that the percentage of students who reached this benchmark was similar in SPS and the Central Arts Pathway (see Figure 27).

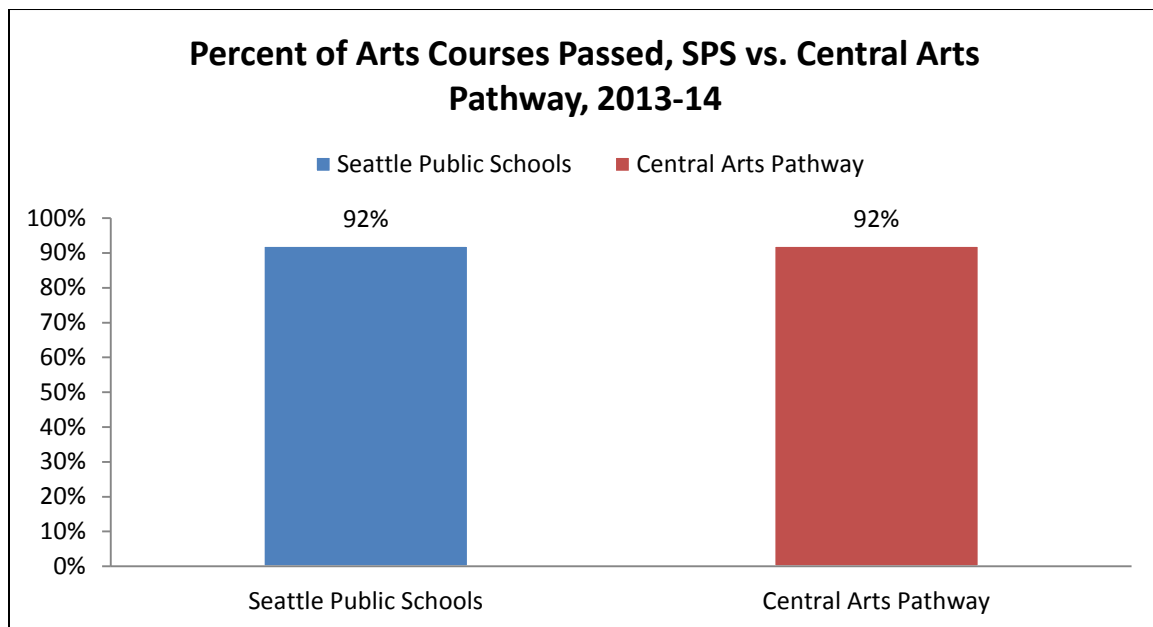


Figure 27. Percent of arts courses passed, 2013-14

Assessment Results

We also examined standardized test scores to test whether the instructional and programmatic changes initiated by The Creative Advantage were associated with increases in student achievement. We looked at Measurement of Student Progress (MSP) results in reading, writing, mathematics, and science from the past three school years. We also examined End of Course (EOC) assessments in algebra, geometry, and biology. We used generalized non-linear mixed models to determine whether Central Arts Pathway schools' scores on this year's assessments differed from the rest of SPS. The models controlled for school characteristics, including the percentage of non-White, male, transitional bilingual, and free or reduced lunch students enrolled at each school. All of the models also controlled for personal characteristics, including grade, gender, and ethnicity. The models also controlled for advanced, English Language Learner, and Special Education status.

The results for MSP reading results are displayed in Figure 28. The reading scores for Central Arts Pathway increased by nine percentage points from 64% in 2012 to 73% in 2014. The scores for the other service areas in Seattle Public Schools rose three percentage points over three years. We used a generalized non-linear mixed model to examine differences in reading achievement. Table 7 shows the results of the statistical model. The model showed no significant differences between students enrolled in the Central Arts Pathway and those in the rest of SPS for the 2013-14 school year, $b = -.10$ (.23), $p = n.s.$

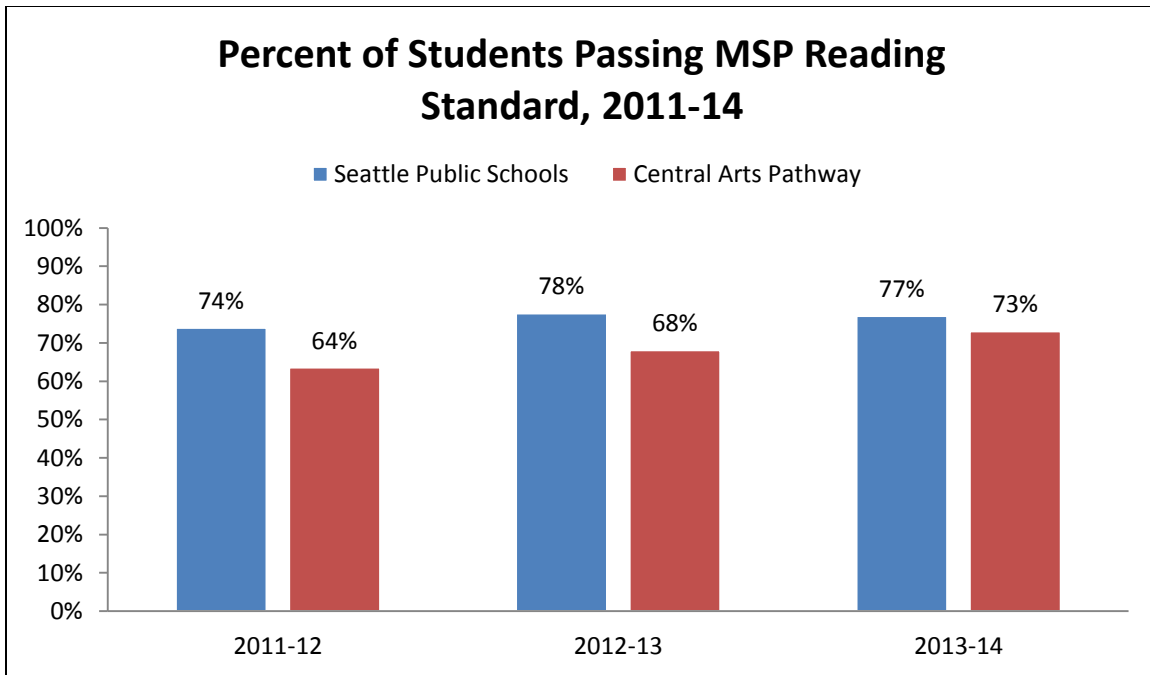


Figure 28. Percent of students passing MSP reading standard, 2011-14

Table 7.

Generalized Non-Linear Mixed Model for Reading Scores

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>exp(b)</i>	<i>1/exp(b)</i>	<i>Se</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>Pr(> z)</i>
Intercept	5.82	337.69	0.00	1.43	4.07	<.001
Percent Non-White	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.01	0.05	0.96
Percent Males	-0.06	0.95	1.06	0.02	-2.55	0.01
Percent Transitional Bilingual	-0.02	0.98	1.02	0.01	-2.04	0.04
Percent FRL	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.01	-0.29	0.77
Central District	-0.10	0.90	1.11	0.23	-0.44	0.66
Grade	-0.04	0.96	1.04	0.02	-2.45	0.01
Male	-0.42	0.66	1.52	0.04	-11.51	<.001
Native American	-1.44	0.24	4.22	0.15	-9.41	<.001
Black	-1.34	0.26	3.83	0.05	-24.61	<.001
Asian	-0.19	0.83	1.21	0.06	-3.08	<.001
Hispanic	-0.80	0.45	2.22	0.06	-13.47	<.001
Pacific Islander	-1.23	0.29	3.42	0.21	-5.99	<.001
Multiracial	-0.56	0.57	1.75	0.08	-7.43	<.001
Advanced	2.36	10.55	0.09	0.14	16.94	<.001
ELL	-2.00	0.14	7.40	0.06	-33.38	<.001
SPED	-1.22	0.30	3.37	0.04	-28.17	<.001

We next examined differences in math scores. Figure 19 shows the math scores for both the Central Arts Pathway and other service areas. The Central Arts Pathway's math scores increased by six percentage points from 2012 to 2014, while SPS' scores rose from 67% in 2012 to 72% in

2014. Table 7 shows the results of the statistical model. The model showed no significant differences in math scores between students enrolled in the Central Arts Pathway and those enrolled in other SPS schools, $b = -.19$ (.24), $p = n.s.$

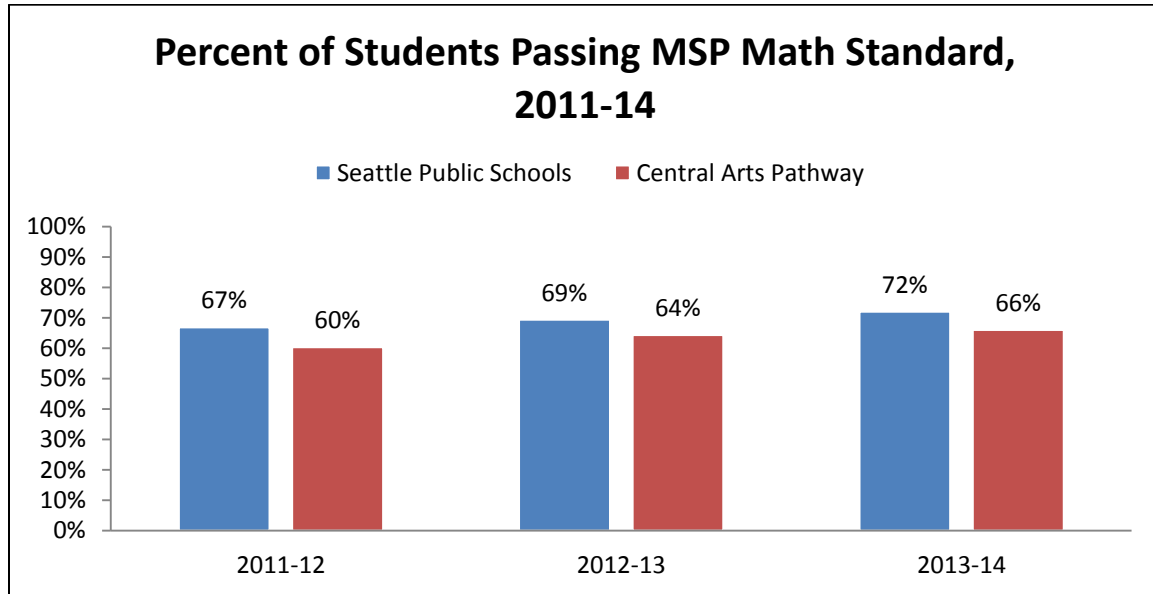


Figure 29. Percent of students passing MSP math standard, 2011-14

Table 7.

Generalized non-linear mixed model for math scores

Variable	b	$\exp(b)$	$1 / \exp(b)$	Se	z	$Pr(> z)$
Intercept	3.67	39.13	0.03	1.44	2.55	0.01
Percent Non-White	0.01	1.01	0.99	0.01	0.60	0.55
Percent Males	-0.02	0.98	1.02	0.02	-0.84	0.40
Percent Transitional Bilingual	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.01	0.12	0.91
Percent FRL	-0.02	0.98	1.02	0.01	-1.36	0.17
Central District	-0.19	0.82	1.21	0.24	-0.80	0.42
Grade	-0.01	0.99	1.01	0.01	-0.59	0.55
Male	0.09	1.10	0.91	0.03	2.91	<.001
Native American	-1.43	0.24	4.20	0.15	-9.84	<.001
Black	-1.46	0.23	4.32	0.05	-29.73	<.001
Asian	0.12	1.12	0.89	0.06	2.03	0.04
Hispanic	-0.96	0.38	2.61	0.05	-18.36	<.001
Pacific Islander	-1.35	0.26	3.85	0.18	-7.31	0.00
Multiracial	-0.52	0.59	1.68	0.07	-7.73	0.00
Advanced	3.26	25.92	0.04	0.17	19.16	<.001
ELL	-1.30	0.27	3.68	0.06	-23.13	<.001
SPED	-1.51	0.22	4.51	0.04	-36.66	<.001

We also examined writing scores. Scores rose in both SPS and in the Central Arts Pathway across the last three years (see Figure 30). Scores rose by six percentage points in SPS and by seven percentage points in the Central Arts Pathway. The statistical model showed that the writing scores for Central Arts Pathway students were significantly lower than the scores for students enrolled at other schools within SPS, $b = -.54 (.19)$, $p = .01$ (see Table 8). Central Arts Pathway students' odds of passing the writing standard were 71% lower than the odds for a student enrolled at other schools in SPS.

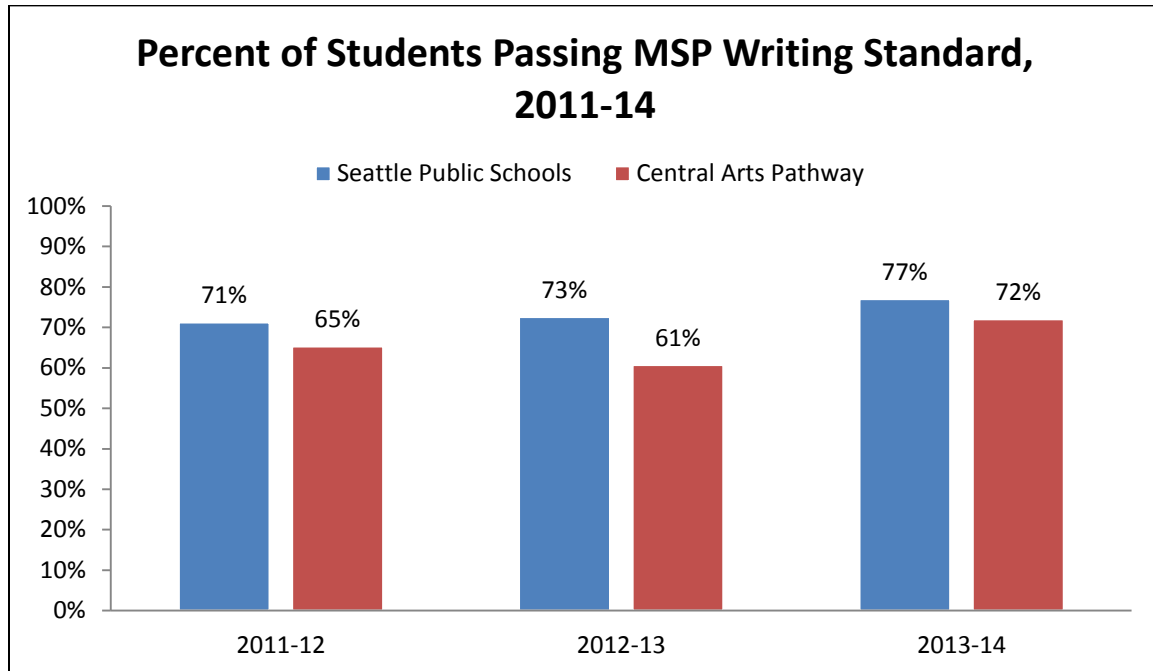


Figure 30. Percent of students passing MSP writing standard, 2011-14.



Table 8.

Generalized Non-Linear Mixed Model for Writing Scores

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>exp(b)</i>	<i>1 / exp(b)</i>	<i>Se</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>Pr(> z)</i>
Intercept	6.48	653.99	0.00	1.23	5.28	<.001
Percent Non-White	0.02	1.02	0.98	0.01	2.53	0.01
Percent Males	-0.06	0.95	1.06	0.02	-3.05	<.001
Percent Transitional Bilingual	0.01	1.01	0.99	0.01	1.10	0.27
Percent FRL	-0.03	0.97	1.03	0.01	-3.14	<.001
Central District	-0.54	0.58	1.71	0.19	-2.77	0.01
Grade	0.13	1.13	0.88	0.02	5.67	<.001
Male	-0.79	0.45	2.20	0.05	-14.70	<.001
Native American	-1.33	0.26	3.80	0.22	-6.01	<.001
Black	-0.88	0.42	2.41	0.08	-11.00	<.001
Asian	0.17	1.18	0.85	0.09	1.85	0.06
Hispanic	-0.43	0.65	1.53	0.09	-4.87	<.001
Pacific Islander	-0.08	0.93	1.08	0.38	-0.21	0.84
Multiracial	-0.34	0.71	1.41	0.11	-3.10	<.001
Advanced	1.50	4.47	0.22	0.15	9.90	<.001
ELL	-1.79	0.17	6.00	0.08	-21.13	<.001
SPED	-0.98	0.37	2.67	0.06	-15.60	<.001

Figure 31 shows increasing science scores throughout Seattle Public Schools over this three-year period. Central Arts Pathway schools' scores increased by 10 percentage points, whereas other SPS schools' scores increased by five percentage points. The statistical model showed that Central Arts Pathway students' science scores were lower than scores for students in the rest of SPS (see Figure 9). These students' odds of passing the science standard were 58% lower than the odds for students in the rest of SPS.

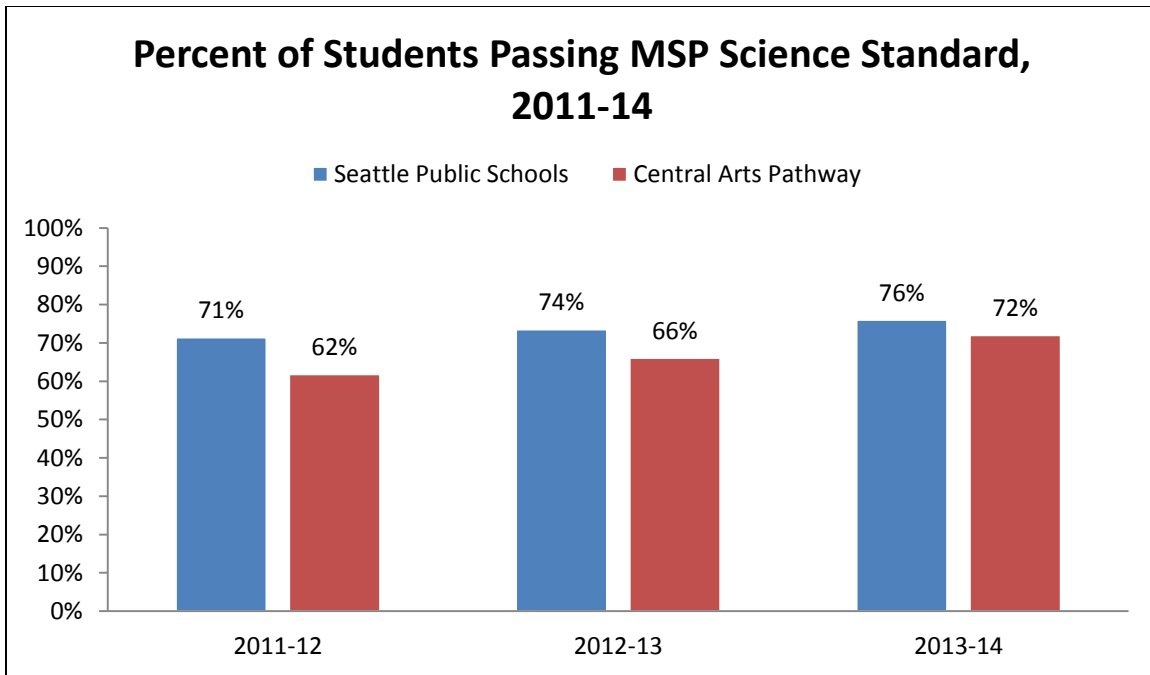


Figure 31. Percent of students passing MSP science standard, 2011-14

Table 9.

Generalized Non-Linear Mixed Model for Writing Scores

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>exp(b)</i>	<i>1/exp(b)</i>	<i>Se</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>Pr(> z)</i>
Intercept	5.02	151.33	0.01	1.32	3.79	<.001
Percent Non-White	0.02	1.02	0.98	0.01	1.82	0.07
Percent Males	-0.01	0.99	1.01	0.02	-0.38	0.71
Percent Transitional Bilingual	0.01	1.01	0.99	0.01	1.90	0.06
Percent FRL	-0.04	0.96	1.04	0.01	-3.54	<.001
Central District	-0.46	0.63	1.58	0.21	-2.18	0.03
Grade	-0.01	0.99	1.01	0.03	-0.52	0.60
Male	0.04	1.04	0.96	0.05	0.77	0.44
Native American	-1.20	0.30	3.33	0.23	-5.19	<.001
Black	-1.87	0.15	6.50	0.08	-22.88	<.001
Asian	-0.52	0.59	1.69	0.09	-5.77	0.00
Hispanic	-1.22	0.30	3.38	0.09	-13.91	<.001
Pacific Islander	-2.38	0.09	10.84	0.26	-9.03	<.001
Multiracial	-0.53	0.59	1.70	0.12	-4.32	<.001
Advanced	2.63	13.93	0.07	0.26	10.30	<.001
ELL	-1.91	0.15	6.76	0.10	-19.76	<.001
SPED	-1.02	0.36	2.76	0.07	-14.98	<.001



Figure 32 shows a steady increase of EOC Algebra 1 scores in SPS. The scores fell in the Central Arts Pathway. Although there was a large difference in the raw percentage of students passing the test, the statistical model showed that the difference in algebra scores was non-significant, $b = -.78$ (.62) $p = \text{n.s.}$ (see Table 10) The lack of statistical significance is likely due to the relatively small number of Central Arts Pathway students who took the test during the 2013-14 school year.

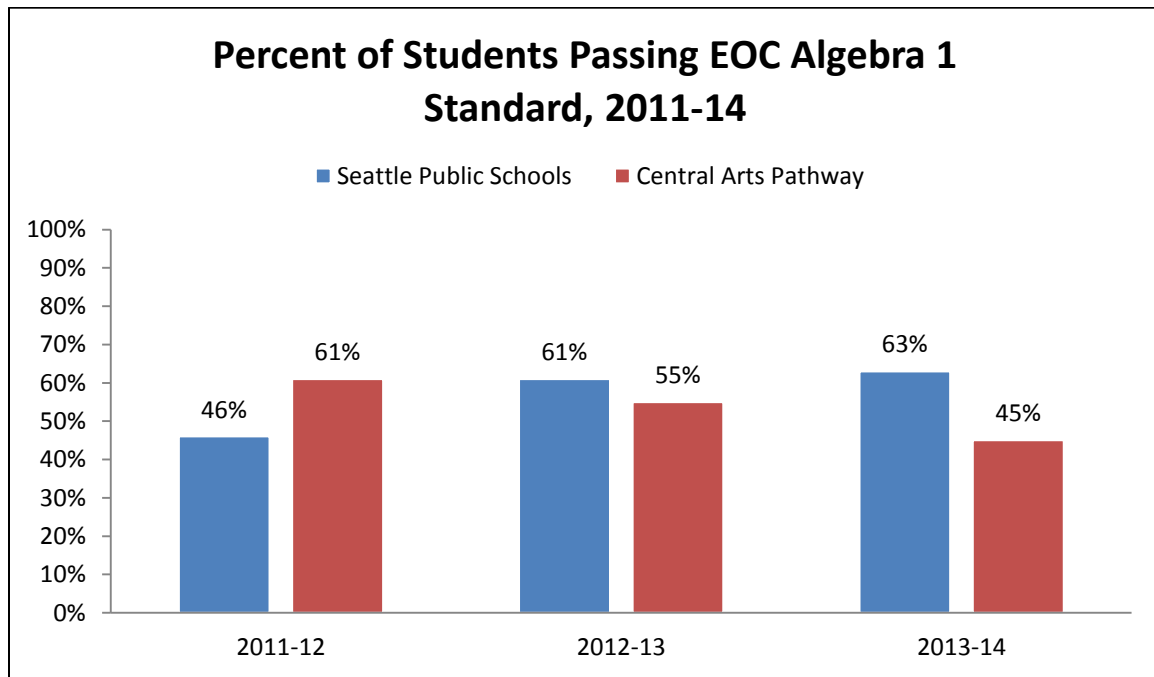


Figure 32. Percent of students passing EOC Algebra 1 standard, 2011-14

Table 10.***Generalized Non-Linear Mixed Model for EOC Algebra Scores***

Variable	b	exp(b)	1/exp(b)	Se	z	Pr(> z)
Intercept	3.76	42.97	0.02	3.38	1.11	0.27
Percent Non-White	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.03	-0.05	0.96
Percent Males	-0.02	0.98	1.02	0.04	-0.48	0.63
Percent Transitional Bilingual	0.01	1.01	0.99	0.02	0.79	0.43
Percent FRL	-0.01	0.99	1.01	0.04	-0.35	0.73
Central District	-0.78	0.46	2.17	0.62	-1.25	0.21
Grade	-0.01	0.99	1.01	0.04	-0.12	0.90
Male	0.11	1.12	0.90	0.07	1.55	0.12
Native American	-1.16	0.31	3.19	0.30	-3.84	<.001
Black	-1.43	0.24	4.17	0.11	-13.24	<.001
Asian	0.21	1.23	0.81	0.13	1.60	0.11
Hispanic	-0.99	0.37	2.68	0.11	-8.61	<.001
Pacific Islander	-1.44	0.24	4.21	0.36	-3.99	<.001
Multiracial	-0.52	0.60	1.68	0.17	-2.98	<.001
Advanced	2.73	15.32	0.07	0.47	5.77	<.001
ELL	-1.28	0.28	3.60	0.12	-10.90	<.001
SPED	-1.59	0.20	4.91	0.09	-16.88	<.001

Figure 33 shows an inconsistent pattern for geometry scores across the past three school years. The scores fell from 2012-13 to the 2013-14 school years in the Central Arts Pathway. It is important to note that relatively few students took the geometry test. The statistical model (see Table 11) showed that the difference in geometry scores was statistically significant, $b = -.57$ (.26) $p < .05$. The odds of passing the geometry test were 77% lower for students enrolled in the Central Arts Pathway as opposed to students enrolled in the rest of SPS.

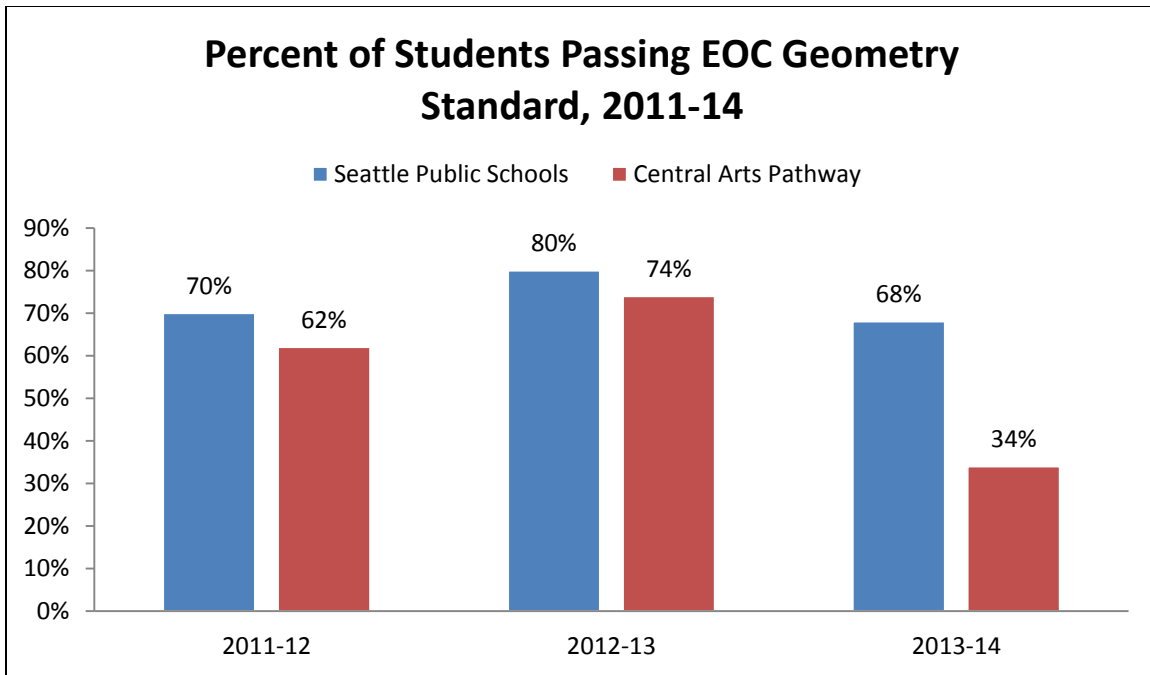


Figure 33. Percent of students passing EOC Geometry standard, 2011-14

Table 11.

Generalized Non-Linear Mixed Model for EOC Geometry scores

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>exp(b)</i>	<i>1/exp(b)</i>	<i>Se</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>Pr(> z)</i>
Intercept	6.83	927.97	0.00	2.88	2.37	0.02
Percent Non-White	0.04	1.04	0.96	0.02	2.54	0.01
Percent Males	0.06	1.06	0.94	0.03	1.74	0.08
Percent Transitional Bilingual	0.01	1.01	0.99	0.01	0.56	0.57
Percent FRL	-0.06	0.94	1.06	0.02	-2.90	<.001
Central District	-0.57	0.56	1.77	0.26	-2.22	0.03
Grade	-0.33	0.72	1.40	0.07	-4.69	<.001
Male	0.05	1.05	0.95	0.10	0.47	0.64
Native American	-1.39	0.25	4.01	0.49	-2.86	<.001
Black	-1.75	0.17	5.73	0.16	-10.83	<.001
Asian	-0.02	0.98	1.02	0.18	-0.09	0.93
Hispanic	-1.37	0.25	3.93	0.17	-8.07	<.001
Pacific Islander	-1.65	0.19	5.22	0.44	-3.75	<.001
Multiracial	-0.57	0.57	1.77	0.26	-2.16	0.03
Advanced	19.58	318776248.73	0.00	3370.00	0.01	1.00
ELL	-1.07	0.34	2.93	0.18	-5.96	<.001
SPED	-1.19	0.31	3.28	0.20	-6.07	<.001

Figure 34 shows the scores for the biology end of course exam. Scores rose slightly for all of SPS over the three years. There was a slight decline in scores in the Central Arts Pathway. The statistical model (see Table 12) showed that there was no difference in EOC biology scores between the Central Arts Pathway and the rest of SPS, $b = -.37 (.22)$ $p = n.s.$

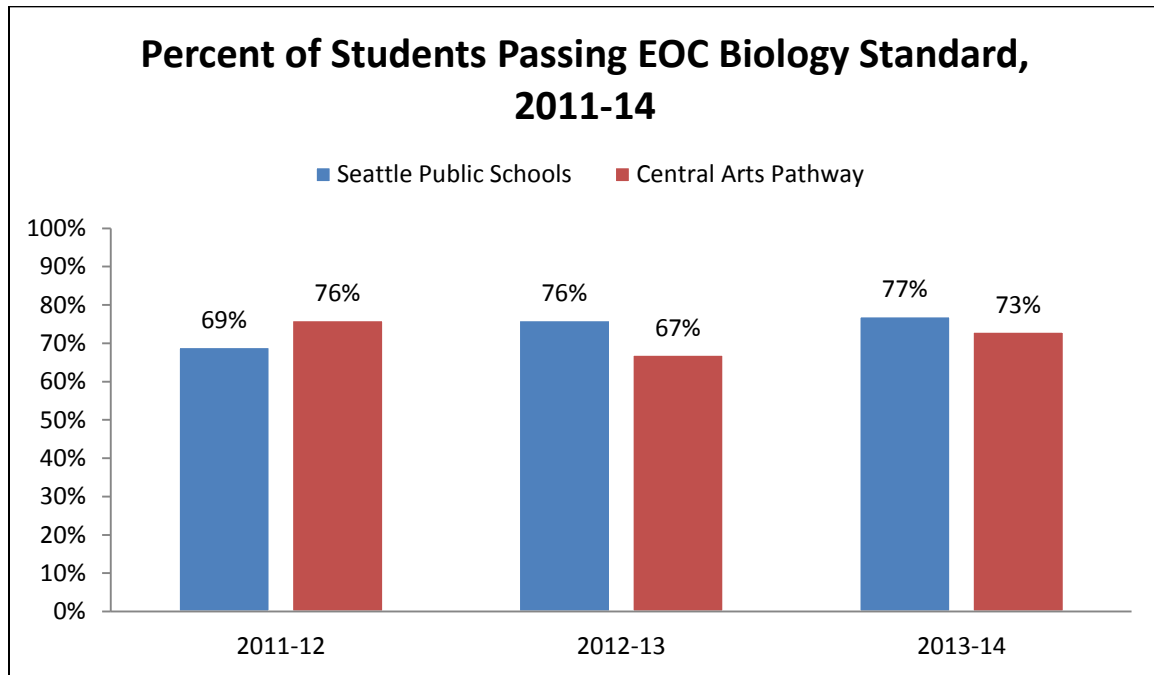


Figure 34. Percent of students passing biology standard, 2011-14



Table 12.

Generalized Non-Linear Mixed Model for EOC Biology Scores

Variable	<i>b</i>	<i>exp(b)</i>	<i>1 / exp(b)</i>	<i>Se</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>Pr(> z)</i>
Intercept	10.60	40300.13	0.00	2.39	4.44	<.001
Percent Non-White	0.05	1.05	0.95	0.02	2.88	<.001
Percent Males	-0.02	0.98	1.02	0.02	-1.02	0.31
Percent Transitional Bilingual	0.03	1.03	0.97	0.01	3.19	<.001
Percent FRL	-0.09	0.92	1.09	0.02	-4.02	<.001
Central District	-0.37	0.69	1.44	0.30	-1.23	0.22
Grade	-0.14	0.87	1.15	0.07	-1.94	0.05
Male	-0.03	0.97	1.03	0.09	-0.32	0.75
Native American	-1.40	0.25	4.07	0.35	-4.03	<.001
Black	-1.64	0.19	5.13	0.13	-12.21	<.001
Asian	-0.56	0.57	1.76	0.15	-3.85	<.001
Hispanic	-1.22	0.30	3.38	0.14	-8.41	<.001
Pacific Islander	-2.46	0.09	11.70	0.39	-6.32	<.001
Multiracial	-0.43	0.65	1.54	0.23	-1.87	0.06
Advanced	2.02	7.51	0.13	0.50	4.04	<.001
ELL	-2.09	0.12	8.09	0.15	-14.17	<.001
SPED	-0.64	0.53	1.90	0.11	-5.60	<.001

Absenteeism

We also examined the number of absences at SPS schools. Our analysis showed that students enrolled at Central Arts Pathway schools had fewer absences, on average, than their counterparts in the rest of SPS. Figure 35 shows the average number of absences in SPS and the Central Arts Pathway.

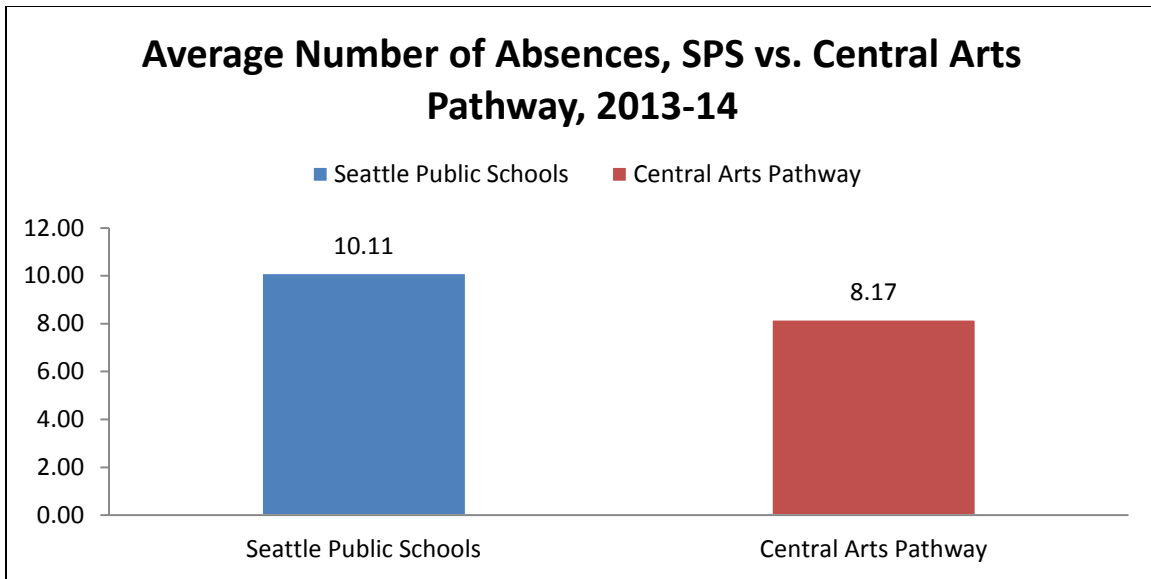


Figure 35. Average number of absences, SPS vs. Central Arts Pathway, 2013-14

Suspension Rates

We also examined SPS discipline files from the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years. The files included information on a variety of discipline incidents, including office referrals, school-based actions, emergency exclusions, expulsions from school and the district, and suspensions (in-house, short-term, and long-term). The present analysis includes students that received expulsions and suspensions. More specifically, we counted the number of students who received these consequences. We divided the number of expelled and suspended students by the total number of students enrolled at a particular school to calculate the percentage of the total student population suspended or expelled. Figure 36 shows the percentage expelled or suspended in SPS or the Central Arts Pathway. The percentage of students receiving these disciplinary consequences increased from the 2012-13 to the 2013-14 school year in the Central Arts Pathway and decreases in other SPS schools. Overall, very few students are suspended or expelled in both groups.

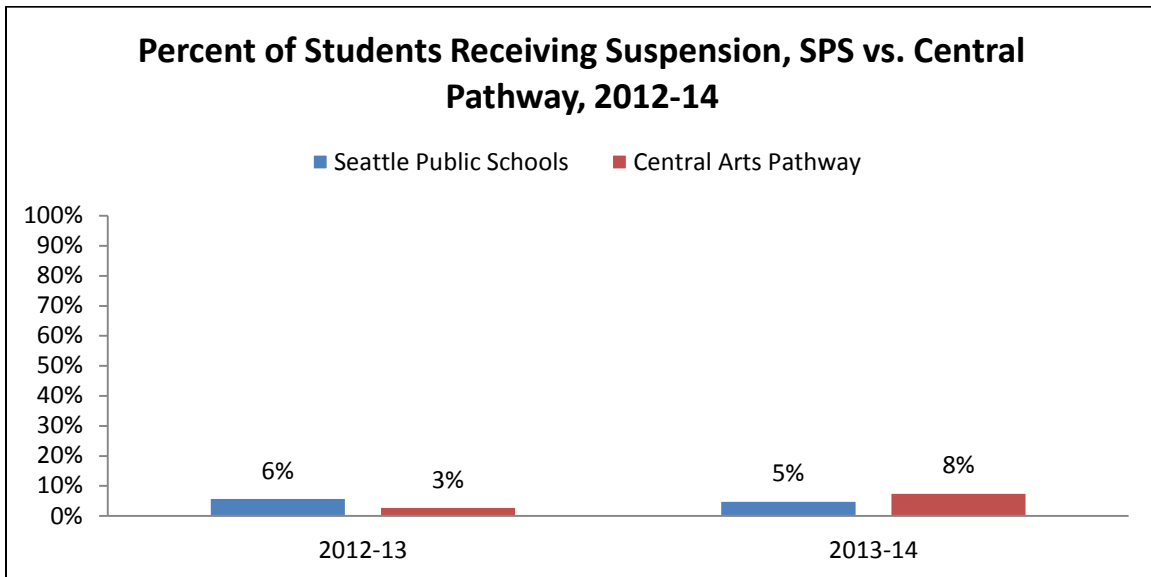


Figure 36. Percent of students receiving suspension/expulsion, SPS vs. Central Arts Pathway, 2013-14

Graduation Rates

Figure 27 shows the adjusted 5-year graduation rates for Seattle Public Schools. The graduation rate for Central Arts Pathway high schools peaked at 90% in 2012 and fell slightly to 85% in each of the next two school years. The rate at the other schools in SPS stayed between 76% and 77%. A linear mixed model (see Table 13) indicated no significant growth in graduation rate over time, $\pi_{91} = -.63$ (1.43), $p = \text{n.s.}$

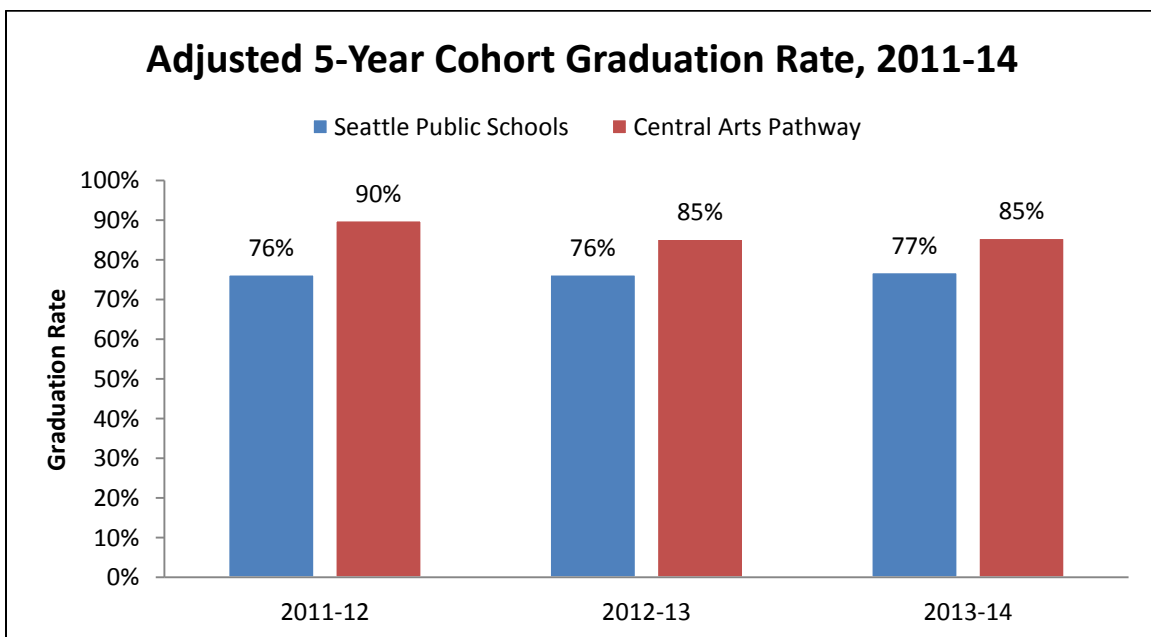


Figure 37. Adjusted 5-Year cohort graduation rate

Table 13.***Fixed Effects for Linear Mixed Model for Adjusted 5-Year Graduation Rate***

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Pr(> t)</i>
(Intercept), π_{00}	139.38	37.64	35.73	3.70	<.001
Percent Non-White, π_{10}	0.18	0.40	37.52	0.46	0.65
Percent Male, π_{20}	-0.86	0.48	35.47	-1.80	0.08
Percent Transitional Bilingual, π_{30}	0.11	0.13	33.07	0.84	0.41
Percent Special Education, π_{40}	0.85	0.60	38.01	1.41	0.17
Percent Free/Reduced Lunch, π_{50}	-0.60	0.44	37.08	-1.36	0.18
Student-Teacher Ratio, π_{60}	1.10	0.73	38.10	1.52	0.14
Percent Teachers with Master's, π_{70}	-0.32	0.14	37.78	-2.41	0.02
Central Arts Pathway, π_{80}	3.94	7.56	36.88	0.52	0.61
Year, π_{90}	-0.63	1.43	27.88	-0.44	0.66
Year X Central Arts Pathway, π_{91}	-1.90	2.75	24.57	-0.69	0.50

Evaluation Question #7: To what extent are students prepared for, attending, and persisting in college?***College ready transcripts***

To assess the extent to which students are prepared for college, researchers collected transcripts for all graduating students from the class of 2014. Researchers analyzed the transcripts to determine if the courses taken met the College Admission Distribution Requirements (CADRs) as defined by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC). The requirements include:

- 4 years of English, which must include three years of literature
- 3 years of mathematics, which must include an introduction to trigonometry
- 3 years of social studies
- 2 years of science, which must include two years of laboratory science, one of which must be algebra based (Biology, Chemistry, or Physics).
- 2 years of the same foreign language
- 1 year of fine arts

Of the 2014 high school graduates in the Central Arts Pathway and across the remaining SPS schools, 68.3% and 64.8% of the graduates, respectively, took the requisite courses for admission to a Washington four-year college (see Figure 38). This shows that a majority of students graduating from these schools cannot be admitted to college because of course deficiencies. Asian and White students typically met college eligibility requirements at a greater rate than Black and Hispanic students (see Figure 39). The results are similar for students in the Central Arts Pathway and for students in the other SPS schools.

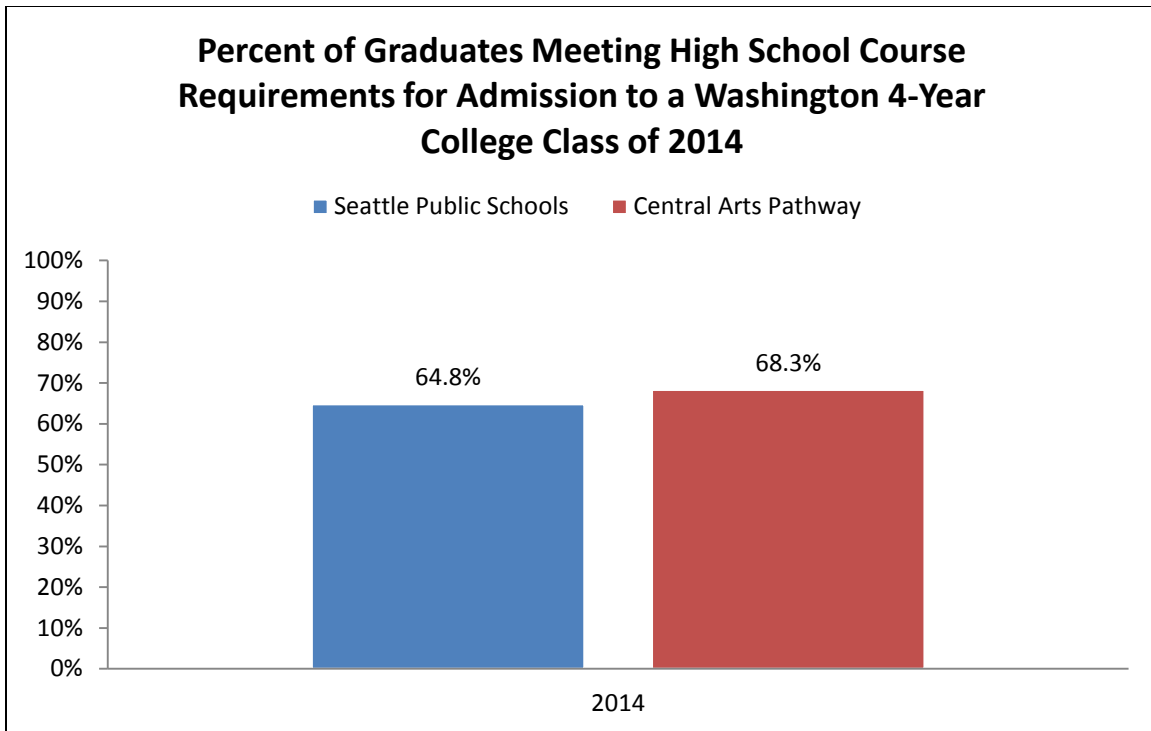


Figure 38. Percent of 2014 graduates meeting high school course requirements for admissions to a Washington four-year college

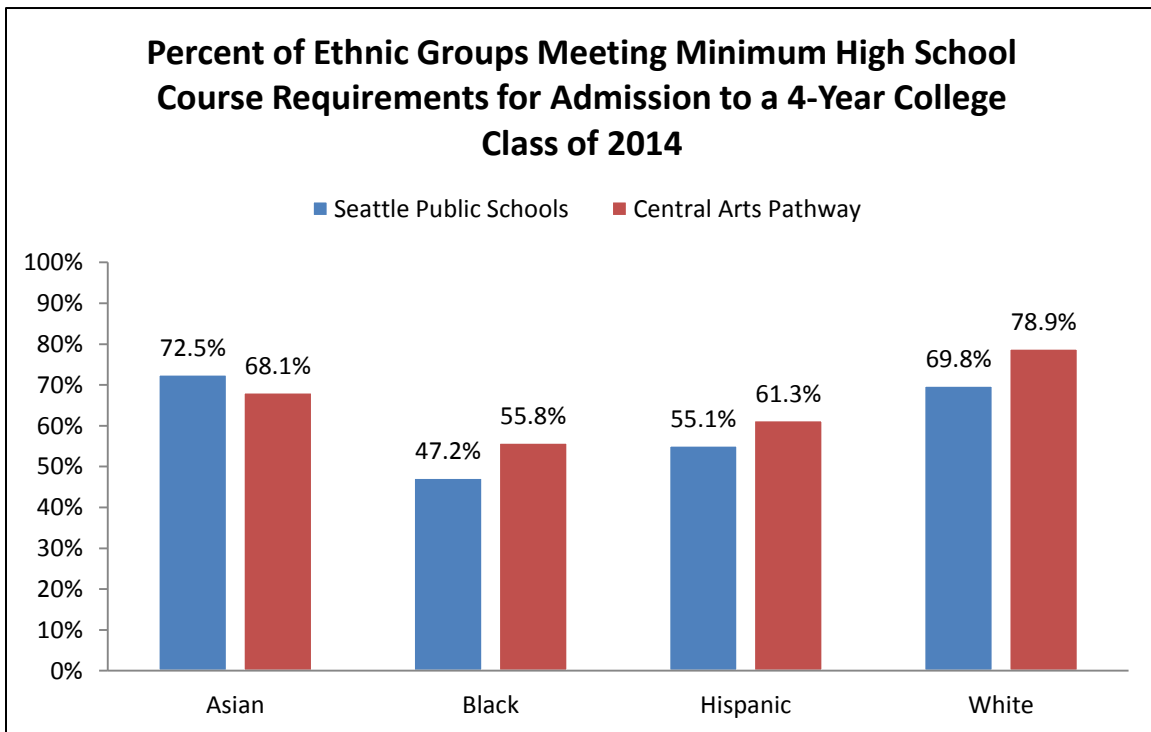


Figure 39. Percent meeting four-year college course requirements by ethnicity

The data also show that students who failed to meet college admission requirements were most likely to lack the English and/or foreign language requisites (see Figure 40). An analysis of graduation requirements show that students are required to take only three credits of English and no credits in foreign language. This pattern is consistent within the Central Arts Pathway and other SPS schools. The result shows that the graduation requirements at these schools, while meeting the state's minimum requirements for a high school diploma, are not aligned with colleges' admission expectations.

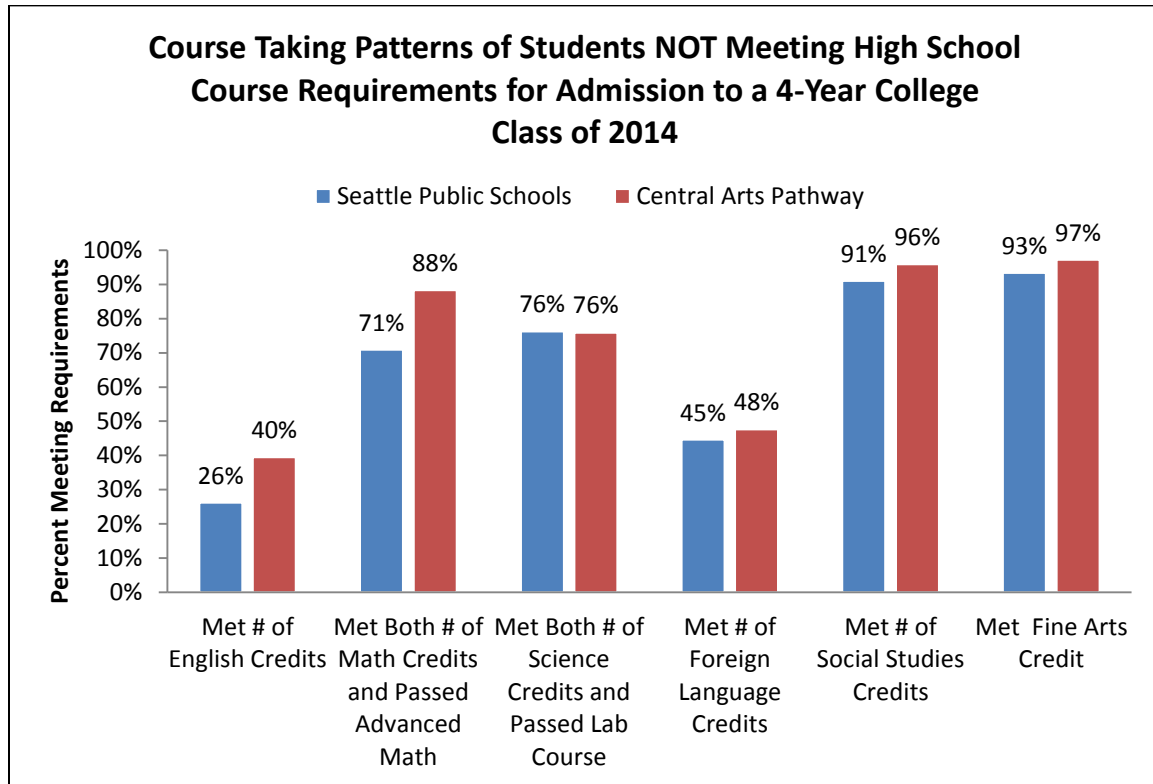


Figure 40. Course taking patterns of students NOT meeting four-year college eligibility requirements

College Attendance, Persistence, and Graduation Rates

The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) was established in 1993 by colleges and universities to serve as a national repository for comprehensive enrollment, degree, and certificate records. Since its beginnings, it has grown to contain more than 65 million student records from over 3,300 colleges and universities in the United States. As of 2012, these institutions enrolled approximately 96% of all students in public and private U.S. higher education institutions.

To assess college attendance, persistence, and graduation rates, researchers obtained college enrollment and persistence data from the National Student Clearinghouse for students attending Navigation 101 schools and all of Washington State. Researchers collected information for the graduating classes of 2010 through 2013. These classes graduated prior to The Creative Advantage initiative, and these data serve as baseline prior to the initiative. Researchers submitted lists of the names, birth dates, and year of graduation, among other data, to NSC to be matched with the



college reported enrollments. We then compiled and analyzed these yearly enrollment records to determine college enrollment persistence and college graduation rates.

“College direct” students are defined as high school graduates who attended college any time in the academic year immediately following their high school graduation. The college direct rates for the high school graduates from the Central Arts Pathway schools and SPS for 2010 through 2013 graduates are presented in Figure 41. The percentage of college direct students in the Central Arts Pathway schools decreased from 2010 to 2013, while the SPS schools demonstrated a slight improvement. For the 2010 to 2012 graduates, the Central Arts Pathway schools has higher college direct rates compared to SPS. These rates were nearly identical for the 2013 graduates.

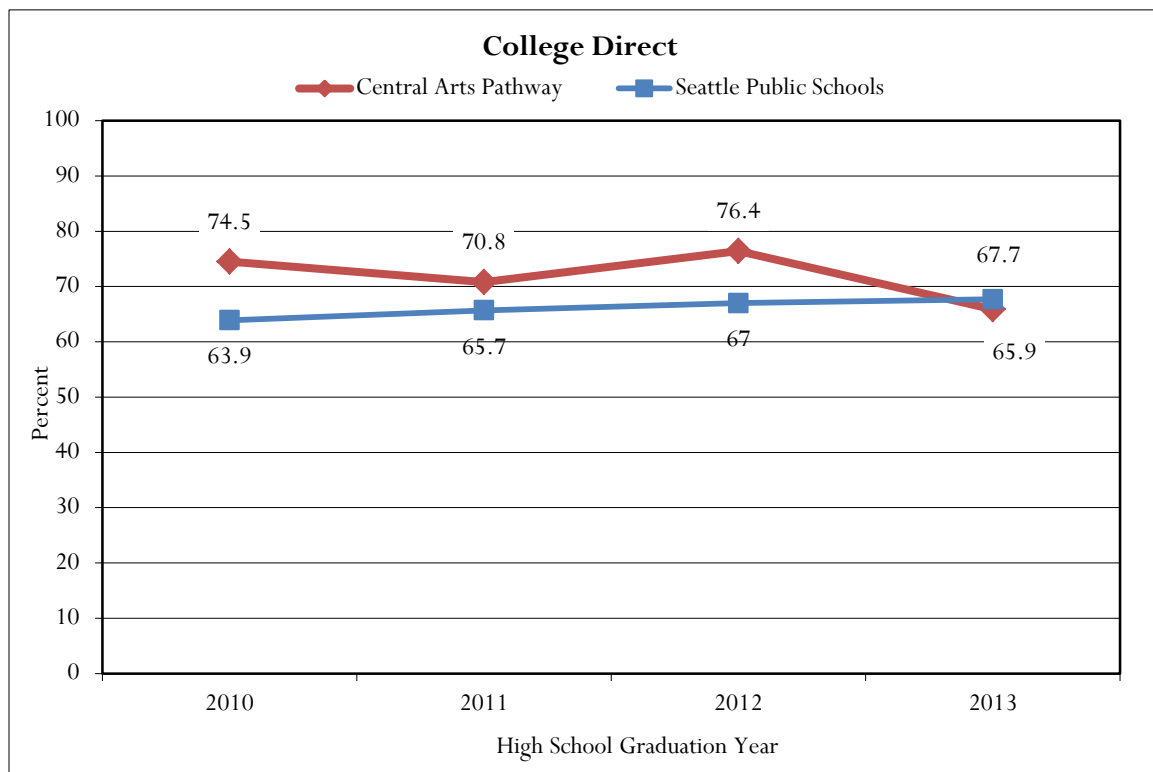


Figure 41. Percent “college direct” – 2010-13

The 2010 through 2013 college direct rates disaggregated by ethnicity for Central Arts Pathway and SPS schools are presented in Figures 42 through 43, respectively. There is variation across the groups, but generally, Hispanic students attend college at lower rates compared to other ethnic/racial groups in both the Central Arts Pathway and SPS.

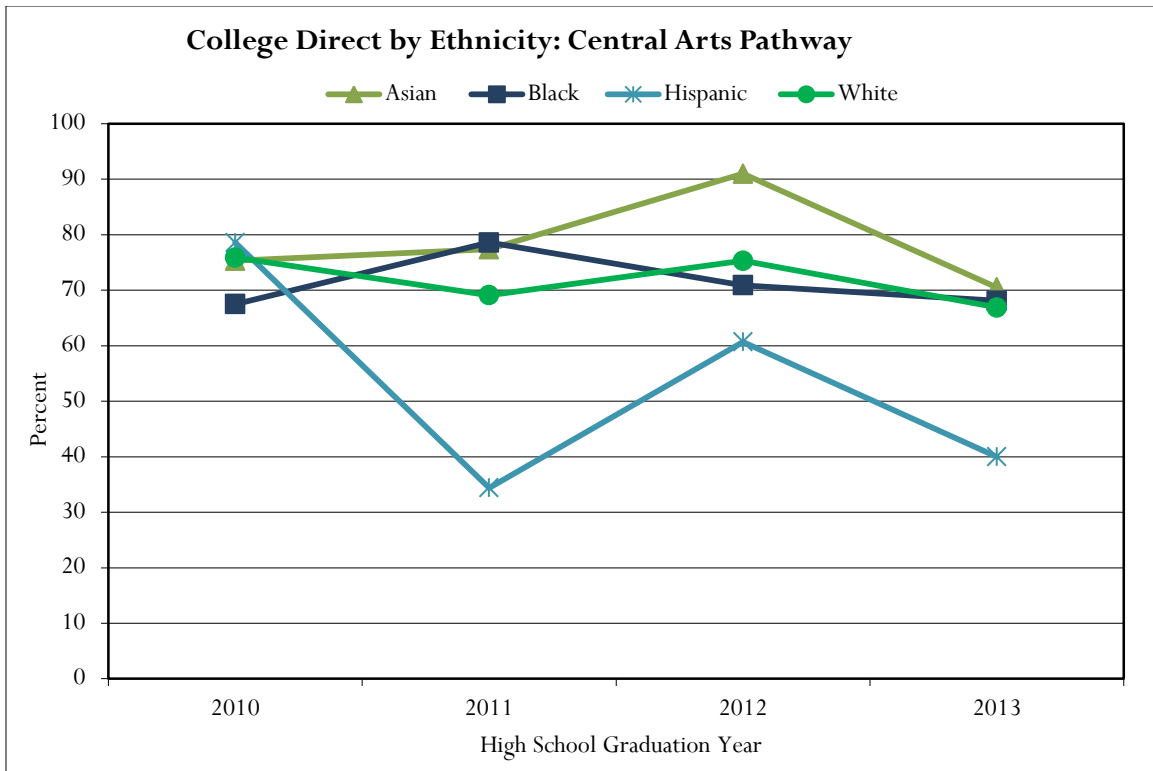


Figure 42. Percent “college direct” by ethnicity – 2010-13, Central Arts Pathway

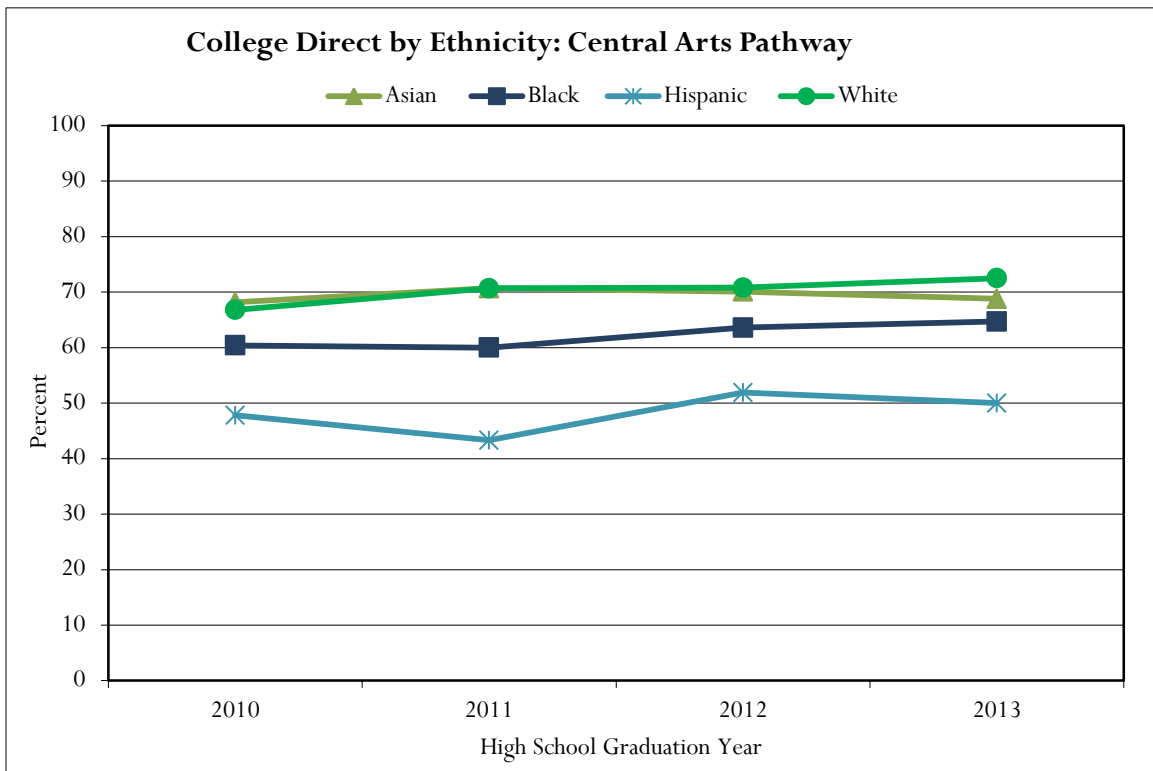


Figure 43. Percent “college direct” by ethnicity – 2010-13, SPS



Figures 44 and 45 show the percentages of graduates attending two- and four-year colleges the first year after graduating high school.² These data indicate more students attend four-year colleges compared to two-year colleges across both the Central Arts Pathway and SPS.

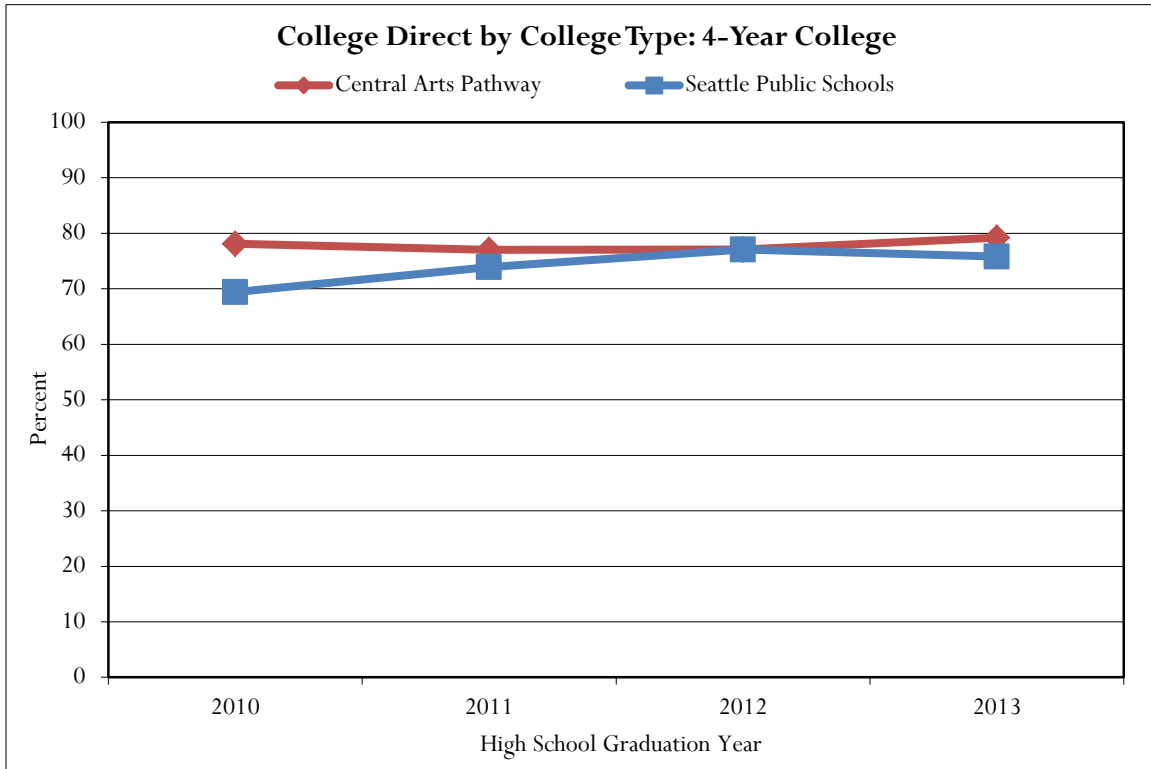


Figure 44. Percentage of “college direct” graduates attending four-year colleges after graduating high school – 2010-13

² The percentages may total more than 100% due to dual enrollments of some students.

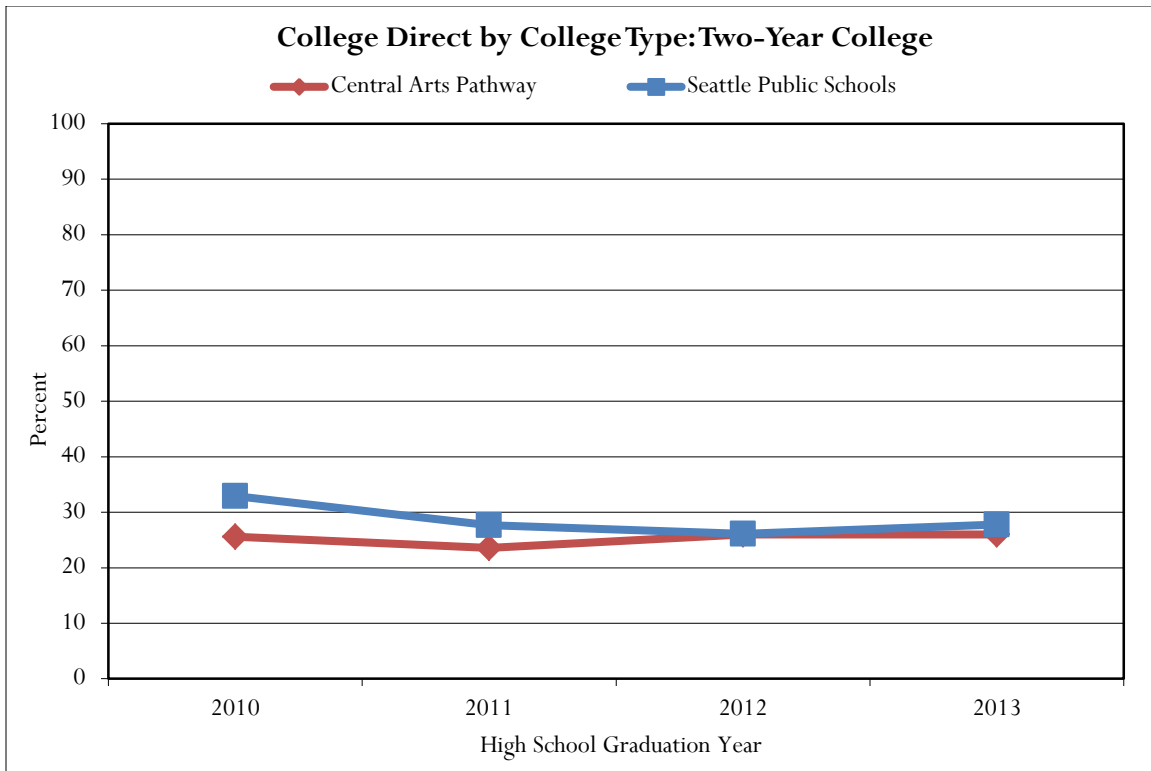


Figure 45. Percentage of “college direct” graduates attending two-year colleges after graduating high school – 2010-13



The college persistence rates of college direct students from Central Arts Pathway and SPS are presented in Figures 46 and 47, respectively. We defined “persisting in college” for college direct students as being enrolled anytime in a given year following high school graduation or having received a four-year college degree. Figure 46 illustrates the percent of 2010, 2011, and 2012 high school graduates that were college direct and persisting into a second, third, fourth, and fifth year of college.³ For example, for 2010 high school graduates, approximately 75% were enrolled in college during the 2010-2011 academic year, the first year after graduation. In the second year after graduation, approximately 68% of the high school graduates were still enrolled in college. In the fifth year after graduation, about 52% of the high school graduates had attended college the first year after graduating high school and were still enrolled in college or had received their degree. Generally, persistence rates are similar across the two groups.

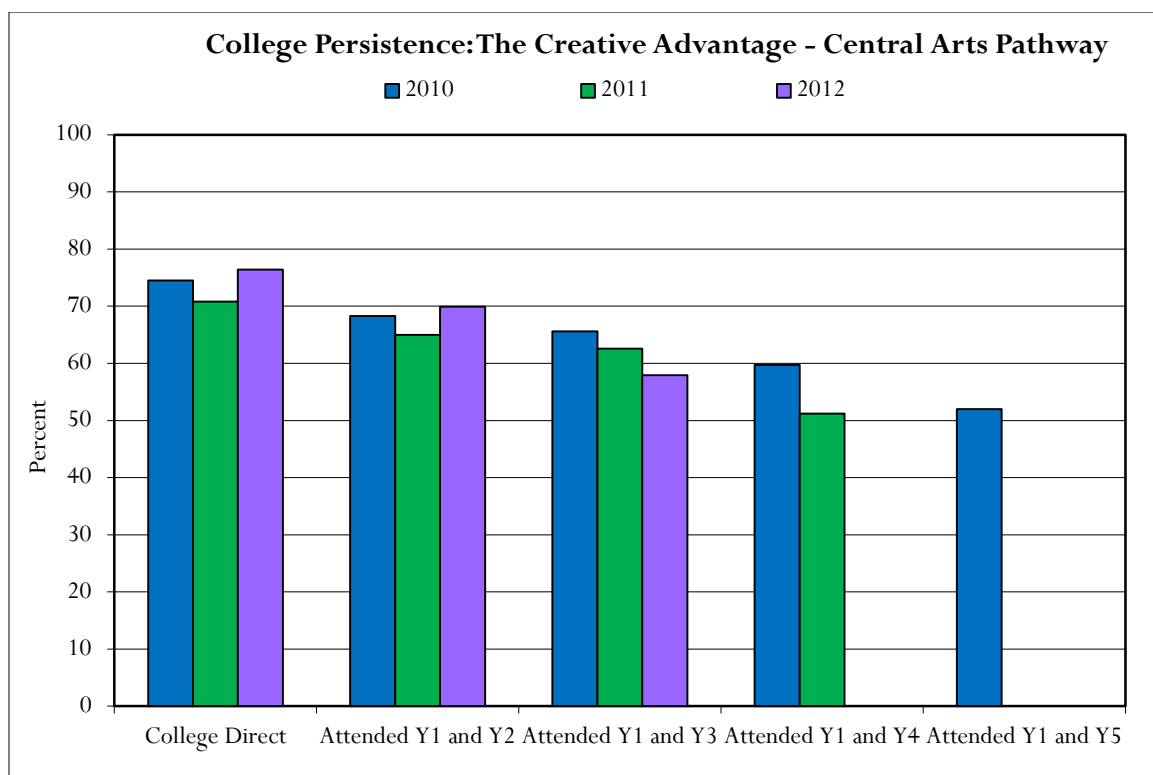


Figure 46. Percentage of “college direct” students persisting in college, Central Arts Pathway

Note. “College direct”=% of students enrolled first year after graduating high school.

“Attended Y1 and Y2”=% of students attending college first year and have graduated from a four-year college or are still attending college second year after graduating high school.

³ Our definition of “persistence” also includes students who had graduated from a four-year college.

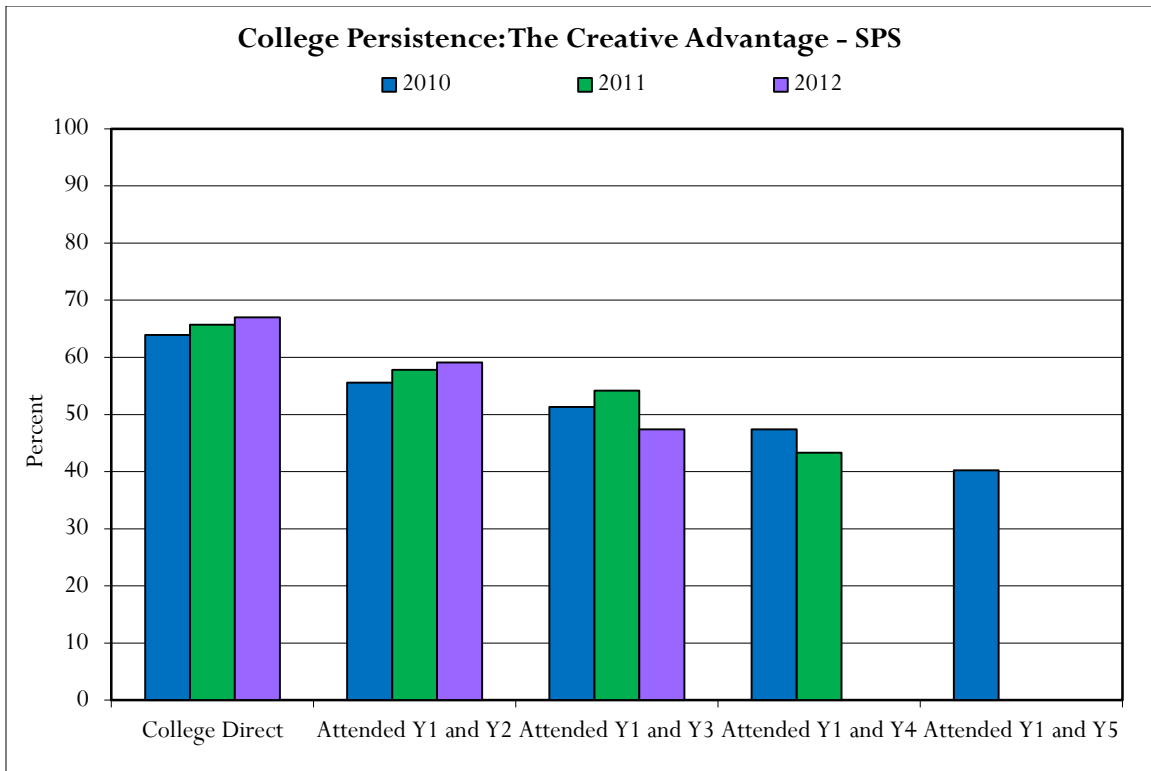


Figure 47. Percentage of “college direct” students persisting in college, SPS

The percentage of students attending college any time after graduating from high school is depicted in Figure 48. For example, within the 2010 graduating class from Central Arts Pathway, approximately 69% attended college sometime after graduating from high school. This is an eight percentage-point increase from the college direct rates shown in Figure 41.

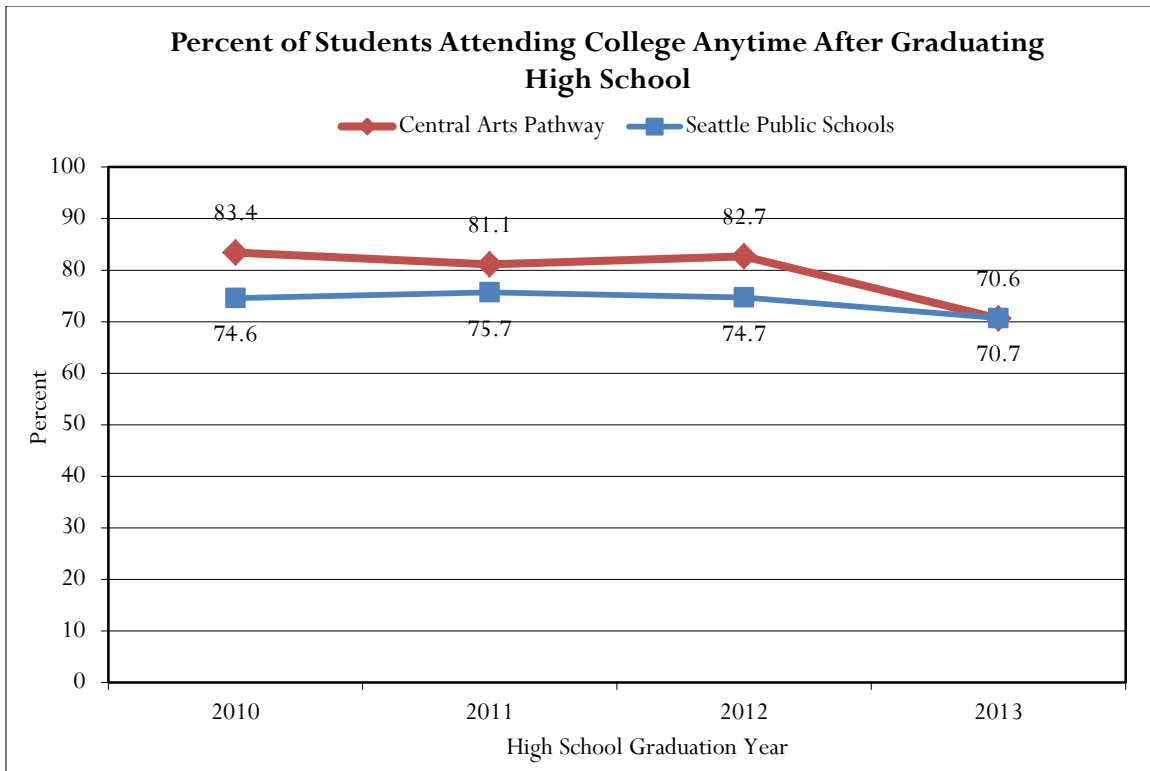


Figure 48. Percent of students who attend college any time after graduating from high school

Table 14 shows the two- and four-year college graduation rates. This details the percent of students from the class of 2010 who received a college degree.

Table 14.

Percent of Students Receiving and Two or Four-Year Degree

Graduating Class	Percent Receiving a Two-Year Degree	Percent Receiving a Four-Year Degree
2010 – Central Arts Pathway	4.2%	34.9%
2010 – SPS	4.9%	22.9%

Evaluation Question #8: To what extent does parent and student satisfaction with SPS education change overtime?

Surveys

Survey data were not available at the time of the report. These results will be included in the Year 2 report.

Evaluation Question #9: To what extent did The Creative Advantage initiative contribute to changes in student outcomes?

Because this report represents baseline information, this evaluation question cannot be answered in Year 1. Evaluators will continue to develop a longitudinal database to answer this question in future reports.

Evaluation Question #10: What are the emerging promising practices?

During focus group interviews, stakeholders identified three emerging promising practices: robust partnerships, support structures for regional planning, and a shared vision of the arts as a core subject. It is too early in the initiative to determine if these are promising practice, but these practices initially appear strong.

Robust Partnerships

The district, the city, and the community arts organizations all have a key interest in SPS producing graduates who have exposure to the arts and the skills necessary to thrive in a 21st century economy. The Creative Advantage partnership relieves the district of the sole burden of meeting that objective, allowing the schools to draw on the resources and expertise of a city with a thriving arts scene. “I would say that community arts organizations have been included in district conversations in a new way,” one stakeholder shared, adding, “We worked closely with key community partners including SAM, ARTS, and Arts Corps. The external pressure they exert politically is really important. It has helped us build a bridge with the city’s office for education.” As one stakeholder said, “I think the partnership between the city and the artists with the school district is a huge advantage. I think when you try to do this without the partnership it wouldn’t work.” Another stakeholder shared:

For SPS themselves, the alignment of community partners behind the school arts plan is something I have wanted to achieve for the longest time. It makes so much sense and there are so many projects . . . the problem [is that] when a school doesn’t have a plan, these partnerships turn into random acts of improvement. I think [a] sequential, intentional K-12 pathway that is cohesive literally gives me chills!

Supported Regional Planning

The regional planning is another promising practice. Much like the partnership as a whole, it recognizes that individual schools exist as part of a larger, nested system. The support structures in place for regional planning help these schools to work together instead of in isolation. As one stakeholder described:

This plan is really built off the notion of regional transformation. The regional transformation should extend to district-wide transformation. What does it mean when a kids goes into fifth grade to middle school? [It’s about] principals in a region coming together and thinking about the vision, thinking about social justice, thinking about things that are inaccessible to some students, thinking about how their goals support both school and regional needs. When they were doing the regional planning, the high school principal



said we need to invest in music at the elementary level. We need to put the dollars down there so that students are prepared for high school. They were able to see the context of it all.

Another stakeholder shared how the initiative was beginning to shift the culture of the district:

I think [Creative Advantage] allows us to start addressing some of the promises we made to families when we went back to neighborhood schools. It incentivizes schools to think about their relationship to each other in a different way, and to see themselves as a network of support for schools, and no longer working in competition with each other to enroll students. This is a massive cultural shift, and one we haven't done a good job as a system of articulating with our leaders, not just in arts, but in any areas.

Other stakeholders said that, with the regional planning and partnerships, SPS was setting an example for other districts. Describing the regional planning, and the PAL process in particular, one stakeholder shared:

It's important for us to see the biggest district [in the state] taking this step. I would love to see ways that what they're doing and learning can be dissected into best practices . . . I'm hoping there is a way to take best practices and make them accessible in a way to be scaled down for smaller districts."

Shared Vision for Arts as a Core Subject

The third emerging promising practice is a shared commitment to the arts, both for their own sake and as a vehicle for other learning and community engagement. This appeared both at the district level and at the school level. One stakeholder explained, "[Arts] is included in the five-year strategic plan as a priority. And it's included as part of the academic assurances; part of the definition of what we want to provide for each student." Another stakeholder shared:

Looking at the arts visions and plans, I can see people on the arts teams are savvy about starting new initiatives that increase interest in the arts. At the secondary level, there is an understanding of the need to start with building support and buy-in with the entire staff. For example, Garfield is using the money to have a full day arts PD day in August, and they will hire teaching artists with the entire staff to integrate arts. They will have a lesson plan created and the supplies to implement those lesson plans.

Stakeholders also described how schools were planning to use the arts to increase school and community engagement. One stakeholder shared, "A number of schools talk about the arts as a way to unify schools, through an all-schools arts project, having art walks and art nights that bring the community into the school, or having artists coming in to create art installations."

Evaluation Question #11: To what extent is the program sustainable?

For the most part, stakeholders agreed The Creative Advantage could be sustainable, although several warned that sustainability depended on finding a reliable source of funding. "I think

ultimately [it is sustainable] only if you can leverage public dollars behind it,” one stakeholder said. Another stakeholder expressed a similar perspective, saying, “I think the way to make this sustainable is by attaching it to basic education and attach it to levy funds. If it doesn’t get attached, this work could go away.” A third stakeholder shared:

I think we have to get real with people about what the big dollar cost is and figure out how to connect it with other initiatives. Right now, it’s sitting outside, isolated . . . Somehow we have to strategize how to further integrate it into larger system changes that may be coming down the road for SPS.

Though most stakeholders linked sustainability to funding, it wasn’t the only factor they mentioned. Other stakeholders emphasized the importance of having a strong vision as well as sustainable funding:

I think it can be sustainable if the funding is in place and there is a long-term vision for how that funding will be maintained. I do think the ultimate idea of having people educated to create and design lessons integrated in the arts is sustainable. It’s the outside partnerships that won’t be sustainable without funding.

Other stakeholders spoke to the quality of the program itself. One emphasized the importance of “partnerships on the ground level that provide training for arts specialists. Partnerships that provide professional [development] for all teachers,” questioning, “What are the ongoing mechanisms to support those big partnerships?” Another stakeholder cautioned that quality staffing was necessary to build a quality program that would garner support:

I think that it is sustainable, but the key is the quality of the program and the benefit for students. A strong program will push the need at the building level to find funding to continue an arts program. I think it is sustainable but dependent upon the experience. Thus, I think staffing is a critical piece. We need to be focused and deliberate on hiring. We need to have quality program, and say that it is important.

However, other stakeholders were more optimistic. A stakeholder from the city explained:

I believe it is sustainable because there is money dedicated to this and we have to align with the levy. I have the questions with the district, and how they function. We have Carri [Campbell] now in the position of Family and Community Partnerships, but we have to get away from Carri. I think in two years, the model will be sustainable. In eight years, the funding will be universal. I don’t know how pre-K works for this, and how the competing priorities work, but I think it is sustainable.

Another stakeholder shared, “It’s really hard to change a public school system, and I think we did it. I think it’s going to stick.”



SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

If implemented with fidelity and given sustainable funding, The Creative Advantage initiative has potential to effect long-lasting change in the district and the city at large. The partnership between the district, the city, and the community arts organizations are mutually beneficial on a number of levels. The schools are able to draw on the resources of the city and the expertise of community artists who are eager to share their knowledge with students. The city will benefit from having SPS graduates who are better prepared to work in Seattle's innovative and technology-driven economic landscape. Finally, research suggests the community arts organizations will benefit from increased exposure and from students who will be more likely to participate in the arts as adults, both as creators and consumers.

Stakeholders identified multiple barriers to program implementation. If The Creative Advantage is going to be sustainable, it will need to be tied to reliable funding. The initiative's breadth and complexity, along with the layers of bureaucracy at both the district and the city, have made it difficult to effectively communicate program goals and progress. Frequent changes in leadership at the district level have also been a barrier for the initiative. As implementation continues, the program will have to compete with other priorities. Finally, it is battling an educational culture that has often considered the arts to be extra, not essential. However, The Creative Advantage has some unique strengths that can help it to surmount some of these difficulties.

During 2013-14, 1,659 elementary students attended music classes that would not have been available without The Creative Advantage roll-out in the Central Arts Pathway. Baseline data show that in 2013-14 the minutes of arts instruction in the elementary schools increased from 2012-13, and is now similar to the minutes of arts instruction across other SPS schools. Similarly, students meeting standard in the arts significantly improved in Central Arts Pathway elementary schools. At the secondary level, there are large gaps in accessing the arts, particularly music, by race/ethnicity and by program enrollment. School leaders believe that by supporting access at the elementary school level, enrollment at the secondary level will be more equitable. This will continue to be analyzed in future years.

The initiative is distinguished by three emerging promising practices: robust partnerships, support structures for regional planning, and a shared vision of the arts as a core subject. The collaboration between the district, the city, and the community arts partners allows all of the stakeholders to coordinate their efforts around arts learning. This same spirit of collaboration has influenced the regional planning, which has potential to continue shifting the district away from the culture of competition between schools. Perhaps most importantly, program leaders demonstrate a shared commitment to providing equity of arts access and improving the quality of arts education for Seattle students.

In order to build upon these strengths, we suggest The Creative Advantage Initiative consider the following recommendations:

Continue to Explore Sources of Sustainable Funding

City and district staff should continue to make every effort to find a sustainable source of funding for the initiative. The majority of stakeholders identified funding as crucial to ensuring a sustainable program.

Prioritize Clear Communication

Although stakeholders who led and implemented The Creative Advantage shared a clear understanding of the initiative's goals and strategies, this awareness was less evident among district personnel who were not directly involved in the program. Additionally, stakeholders spoke of feeling "out of the loop." Initiative leaders should develop a communications plan that includes strategies for updating stakeholders on implementation progress, and educating district staff and the community at large about The Creative Advantage's vision.

Focus on Creating Program Structures that are Resilient to Changes in Leadership

High turnover at the district leadership level leaves the program vulnerable to personnel changes. It may be beneficial to create an advisory group to oversee the initiative, whose members commit to a staggered three-year cycle. This would help to ensure program consistency. Such an advisory group should consist of stakeholders from all partner organizations as well as community artists from a diverse variety of backgrounds.

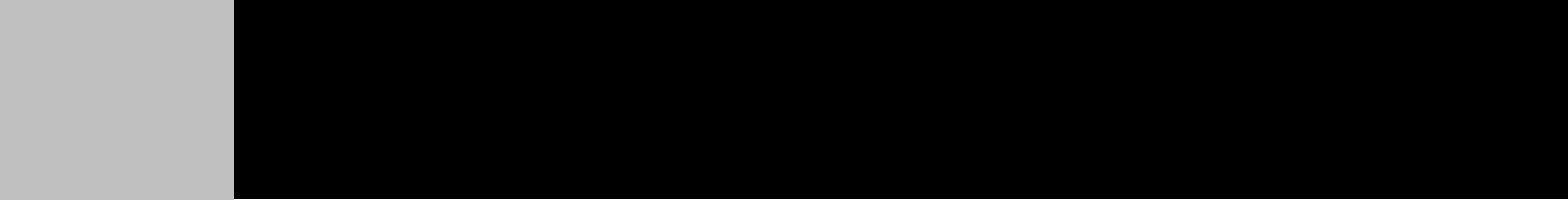
Incentivize Program Fidelity

During focus group interviews, stakeholders raised concerns that some of the initiative's evaluation tools, such as the monthly five-minute surveys, were not being completed with fidelity or in a timely manner. As implementation continues, the district should take steps to hold schools accountable for completing these steps, which are critical in order for program leaders to identify strengths and barriers of implementation. In return, the program leaders should make every effort to ensure that any evaluation steps required of the school do not seriously conflict with other calendar obligations and are simple and straightforward to carry out.



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