

# *Arts for All: The Vanguard Districts*

## CASE STUDIES FROM THE FIRST FIVE YEARS (2003-2008)

### INTRODUCTION

In 2002, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted *Arts for All*, an unprecedented strategic planning initiative aimed at assuring that “every public school student in Los Angeles County will receive a high-quality K-12 education in which the arts are an intrinsic part of the core curriculum”.<sup>1</sup> The mission of *Arts for All* is to engage school districts in developing and implementing arts education plans that will ultimately result in sequential learning opportunities in dance, music, theatre and visual arts for the 1.7 million students in Los Angeles County’s 81 school districts, including the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) classrooms. To date, 34 districts have joined the initiative, or 42 percent of all county districts. The initiative is managed by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission in partnership with more than 100 local agencies and foundations committed to restoring arts education to schools countywide.

*Arts for All* has played a key role in developing the infrastructure and capacity of school districts to create comprehensive arts education programs through technical assistance programs and targeted grants made possible through the *Arts for All* Pooled Fund. The Arts Commission *Arts for All* staff and strategic planning coaches (trained through the California Alliance of Arts Education’s (CAAE) *A Coach in Every Corner* program) have guided participating districts in the development of arts education plans. They also provided sustained support as the districts progressed in implementing those plans for adopting sequential curricula in each art discipline. This support included ongoing coaching, meeting facilitation, general advisement and professional development options.

The following report contains case studies on the progress of the first 11 districts to join *Arts for All*, starting in 2003 (see Appendix A). They include, in alphabetical order, Beverly Hills Unified School District, Burbank Unified School District, Castaic Union School District, Compton Unified School District, Culver City Unified School District, Hacienda La Puente School District, Los Angeles County Office of Education School District, Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District, Pasadena Unified School District, Rosemead School District and Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. These 11 districts are referred to as the Vanguard Districts, a term that denotes the willingness of these earliest participants to engage in a monumental and pioneer effort that has become a national model for arts education reform.

The case studies were undertaken to 1) document lessons learned in creating and implementing a strategic plan for building a comprehensive district arts education program and 2) document changes in student access to quality instruction in the arts as the *Arts for All* initiative matures. The findings are intended to inform the design of further technical

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<sup>1</sup> (July, 2002) *Arts for All: Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education*

assistance programs aimed at sustaining each district's implementation efforts and to guide the development of a longitudinal study on student access across Los Angeles County. It is important to note that these case studies describe the earliest experiences of districts that joined *Arts for All*. The initiative has continued to evolve in the years since 2003 based on lessons learned, and as a result, planning and implementation processes have also been modified.

## RESEARCH METHODS

A mixed methods research design was used to capture a three-dimensional perspective of progress made by each of the Vanguard Districts since they joined in either 2003 or 2004. The researcher reviewed hundreds of pages of related documentation and conducted focus group interviews with representatives from each district's Community Arts Team (CAT) (see Appendix B for the interview protocol). In addition, each team completed two surveys at the close of the interview. The first was the Arts Education Program Implementation Continuum Survey, a rubric-based measure developed through the California Department of Education (CDE) that allows districts to rate their progress in developing a quality, comprehensive arts education program (see Appendix C).<sup>2</sup> The second was a pilot instrument that documented where changes have occurred according to indicators associated with increased student access to an education in the arts (see Appendix D).

Transcripts from each recorded focus group were verified for accuracy, then coded and analyzed according to indicators associated with comprehensive arts education programs. The indicators reflect the components of the CDE Arts Education Program Implementation Continuum, which have since been refined through the CAAE's *A Coach in Every Corner* program. These components include standard-based curriculum, pedagogy, student assessment, professional development, program administration, arts personnel, facilities & equipment, partnership & collaborations, an arts education policy, funding, evaluation, communication and district leadership. The interview data were then crosschecked against district records of activities associated with the *Arts for All* initiative and later confirmed through conversations with district arts coordinators and Los Angeles County Arts Commission staff monitoring the districts' progress. The findings from the two surveys were charted and used to create a single program quality index for each district. Appendix E and F contain the data charts for each measure.

From the collective evidence, case studies were prepared on the 11 districts. These offer a brief account of their motivations for joining *Arts for All*, the strategic planning process, implementation activities, and a summation of results of their efforts relative to the indicators of program quality and increased student access to arts instruction. A draft of each case was then sent to the respective CAT team for further verification. Finally a cross-analysis of the 11 districts was conducted, the results of which are contained in the main body of the report that follows.

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<sup>2</sup> Excerpt from (2001) California Department of Education Press. *The Arts Education Program Toolkit, A Visual and Performing Arts Program Assessment Process*. Sacramento, California.

The first section provides a summary of evidence taken from across the case studies that expose patterns and differences in why districts chose to join the initiative, how they approached creating a strategic plan for arts education and what they have since accomplished through implementing their plans. This section also includes a description of dynamics identified in the districts' activities that either facilitated or challenged efforts to create sustained changes in their arts education programs. The second section contains an overview of outcomes achieved by the Vanguard Districts in terms of building comprehensive arts education programs and increasing student access to instruction in the four disciplines. The report concludes by offering possibilities for further technical assistance and recommendations for otherwise advancing the *Arts for All* initiative. Individual district case studies are contained in Appendix A, followed by the research instruments and survey data charts in Appendices B-F.

## SECTION I: WHY *ARTS FOR ALL*?

Each of the 11 Vanguard Districts had their own reasons for joining the *Arts for All* initiative. Though these districts comprise just 14 percent of all Los Angeles County school districts, they represent a cross-section of the region in how they vary in size, economic resources and level of arts education programming. Rosemead is the smallest Vanguard District with a 2007 student enrollment of 3,121 while Compton is the largest with 28,081 students (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. 2007-2008 Student Enrollment Data<sup>3</sup>

Compton	28,081
Norwalk-La Mirada	22,092
Hacienda La Puente	21,997
Pasadena	20,905
Burbank	16,640
Santa Monica-Malibu	11,688
LACOE	10,109
Culver City	6,656
Beverly Hills	5,305
Castaic	3,397
Rosemead	3,121

Prior to joining the *Arts for All* initiative, Castaic depended on its elementary classroom teachers to provide whatever arts instruction their training afforded them. In contrast, Beverly Hills, located in a wealthy urban community, was able to employ arts specialists for its elementary schools in choral, instrumental music and visual arts due to a fiscal partnership with the City. At Hacienda-La Puente, high school music specialists reported their programs were in danger of failing due to the lack of adequately prepared student musicians transitioning from middle schools, while Santa Monica-Malibu had a nationally recognized secondary music program. Even within districts, inequity existed as some school arts programs were funded by active parent teacher associations (PTAs) and booster

<sup>3</sup> California Department of Education website, accessed November 15, 2008.

clubs, while others were not. These considerable differences highlight the disparities in arts education programs across Los Angeles County.

There are many reasons districts chose to partner with *Arts for All*, as shown in Table 1.2. Several reported more than one reason, but the main one was in alignment with the mission of *Arts for All*: to restructure their existing approach to arts education so that every student had the opportunity to receive a sequential education in dance, music, theatre and visual arts. More than half of the districts had already begun the work of improving their arts education programs and the initiative dovetailed with their needs at the time. In addition, districts were attracted by the vision of providing equitable access to arts instruction for all students. Two Vanguard Districts abandoned previous plans to develop arts-focused schools when the initiative was announced.

Table 1.2. Primary Motivations for Joining *Arts for All*

	Districts	(%)
Replace patchwork approach with a comprehensive arts education program	9	82%
Good timing – the initiative aligned with existing goals for arts education	6	55%
Improve equitable access to arts instruction for all students	5	45%
Sustain and strengthen secondary arts programs	4	36%
Obtain funding or increase their ability to attract financial support	3	27%
Create a comprehensive, long-term, district-wide plan for arts education	2	18%
Improve the status of arts education as a core component of the curriculum	2	18%

N=11 Districts

Districts were also concerned about the status of high school arts programs, which in some cases were dwindling because incoming freshman had not been adequately prepared to participate during their elementary and middle school years. With the joint California State University/University of California A-G Admission Requirement of one year of study in a major art discipline, administrators were also concerned that students would be shut out of opportunities to attend a state college. On an operational level, districts welcomed assistance in creating strategic arts plans and hoped that the distinction of being an *Arts for All* Vanguard District would increase their ability to attract financial support for their goals.

***Stage One: District Planning for Arts Education***

All 11 Vanguard Districts participated in an extensive planning process that included working with an *Arts for All* planning coach. The planning process began with the formation of a CAT team composed of stakeholders from within a district and from the community served. The majority of CAT teams started with between 20-30 members. At least half of the teams paid teachers to attend the meetings, though this did not always ensure their attendance or sustained interest.

Most districts reduced the size of their CAT team once the arts plan was adopted and implementation began. They realized the make-up of the implementation team needed to be dictated by the strategic directions pursued. If a district was going to write curriculum, it added arts specialists to its team. If it was going to focus on fundraising, it invited community members with financial resources or business contacts. Notably, districts that had established arts partnerships in the school community prior to joining *Arts for All* tended to deepen and maximize those relationships through the planning process. Conversely, districts that had not developed strong partnerships beforehand evidenced little change in their ability—or perhaps, commitment—to do so since.

Creating a district arts plan took one or two years, depending on: 1) the social dynamics within a district; 2) the number of years the plan was designed to cover; 3) the amount of information that needed to be gathered and analyzed for informed decision-making; and 4) the frequency of planning meetings. Some groups met weekly or monthly, and later transitioned to bi-monthly or quarterly after the plan was completed and a coordinator was hired to take charge of the implementation process. Some of the larger districts spent weeks conducting an inventory of art supplies, equipment, facilities, staffing and instructional practices at each school while the smaller ones were able to gather this information more quickly. Each of the Vanguard District CAT teams also wrote arts education policies that were approved by their respective school boards, as were their completed arts plans.

All 11 district plans reflected key components of quality arts education programs that were presented to the CAT team by their *Arts for All* planning coach.<sup>4</sup> The components aligned with instrumentation used by the California Department of Education in the Arts Education Program Toolkit and were organized into three categories: instructional content, district infrastructure and arts program sustainability. Within these categories, elements of communication and advocacy were sometimes listed in arts plans as action steps, rather than as core program components. During the focus group interviews some CAT teams discussed social agendas such as multiculturalism or community improvement. These items were not specifically listed in their district arts plan, but nonetheless influenced their thinking and decision-making. Two of the districts talked about a lack of teacher accountability in arts education and suggested adding that to the list of core components.

During focus group interviews, CAT team members repeatedly acknowledged the importance of having a written plan to support their requests for funding and for securing permission to pursue specific strategic directions each year. In all but one case, the planning process and the final written plan brought district arts leaders, teachers and community advocates together to forge a collective vision of an arts education roadmap suitable for their particular context. The written plan provided leverage to attract funding, either from the district budget or from external sources. It also, importantly, provided a focal point for ongoing school board discussions about positioning arts education as a core curriculum subject and as a key element in every school's instructional plan.

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<sup>4</sup> The key components include standard-based curriculum, pedagogy, student assessment, professional development, program administration, arts personnel, facilities & equipment, partnership & collaborations, an arts education policy, funding, evaluation, communication and district leadership.

In one district, however, the CAT team found the *Arts for All* strategic planning process to be overly structured, somewhat redundant and off-target for their immediate needs. This district already had a functioning arts committee in place with a clear arts education agenda established prior to joining *Arts for All*. It had made significant strides to develop an arts education program on its own. In this instance, the usual planning process was eventually abandoned and instead, through a series of informal discussions, the district arts plan was reframed to better reflect the prior achievements of the arts committee while continuing to align with the *Arts for All* mission. This experience suggests that while the planning process may be highly effective in most cases, it is important to consider the unique history and context of a district at the onset and let that guide the endeavor, and to be open to eliminating steps as the situation warrants.

Another challenge mentioned by several CAT teams was that some of the objectives in their plans appeared unrealistic in terms of the timeframe set forth or available resources. Because the teams did not take the time to break down the specific action steps in advance, districts sometimes underestimated the true budget, the time, and the staffing needed to follow through. To some, the plan read more like a “pie in the sky” wish list. The more practical-minded team members had difficulty understanding the value of creating a plan the school district had no clear way to fund. Once the plans were in place, however, team members found that funding unexpectedly became available through a variety of sources—most significantly, through the California legislative arts education block grants. Because these districts had a plan in place, the CAT teams were better prepared to make use of the unanticipated funding in an organized manner. Over time, it became clear that the art plans were living documents that needed to be revisited and revised on a regular basis in order to respond quickly and effectively to unforeseen opportunities and changes in district context from year to year.

The participants in the various district focus groups offered some candid advice to future school districts CAT teams:

- Include people with a broad vision on the team, who can think beyond the parameters of their own circle of influence or self-interests.
- Whether drawing from within the district or from the community, select art advocates who will work well in a group, even as they represent different constituencies. Detractors can stall the process unnecessarily.
- Have a procedure spelled out in advance for reducing team size when the planning stage is over or when adding new members needed for the implementation stage.
- If you have a K-8 district, invite arts personnel from the neighboring district’s high school to be on the CAT team and work together sequencing the instructional transition from middle to high school.

## ***Stage Two: The Implementation Process***

A cross-case analysis of the activities undertaken by the Vanguard Districts in the first two to three years since completing their plans revealed that they had primarily focused on the central work of schooling: hiring personnel, buying materials, aligning curriculum, writing lesson plans and organizing staff development. These activities could be considered the fundamental building blocks of an arts education program, as a district cannot provide quality arts instruction without knowledgeable staff, rigorous guidelines and adequate materials. They are also the components that educators are best equipped to provide, according to their training.

Another reason districts may have focused on these particular elements speaks to the funding that paid for their activities, which was primarily derived from their district's general budget and the legislative arts education block grants. For the most part, the use of these funds was pre-determined. Historically, districts had been paying for arts personnel, curriculum, supplies—and in a few cases, professional development—from the general budget. This pattern continued after they joined *Arts for All*. State block grants were earmarked for the same list of expenditures. Since public education budgets are determined and typically spent on an annual basis, once the arts education block grants were funded in 2006-2007, the CAT teams began to spend their district allotments as quickly and as thoughtfully as possible. A few held funds over a year while waiting for individual schools to turn in spending plans.

In reviewing the implementation process of each district, several patterns were noticeable. For one, all the districts either hired or appointed an arts coordinator in compliance with the intentions of the *Arts for All* initiative. In many cases, they took advantage of the *Arts for All* Pooled Fund's matching two-year support grant. In terms of increasing arts personnel, approximately 15 specialists were hired across the districts to fill instructional gaps—two-thirds of which were music educators. All of the districts had engaged in some form of curriculum alignment or adoption process. Districts either wrote their own curricula, adopted textbooks as curricula, or wrote sample standards-based lesson plans for each grade level that were later published as a sequence of instruction. Most districts focused on visual arts and music adoptions through 2008, with the exceptions of Compton and Norwalk-La Mirada, which adopted all four. Dance units were added to the physical education curriculum in at least three districts, indicating a trend to release elementary classroom teachers from that responsibility. The majority of districts also determined that credentialed theatre specialists and/or English teachers would eventually provide drama instruction at the secondary level, while classroom teachers would integrate it with language arts studies at the elementary level. No district has fully achieved this objective to date.

All Vanguard Districts sponsored professional development workshops based on the adoption of new curriculum materials, which were reported to include standards-based instruction, integration, grade level sequencing, and student assessment. During district focus group interviews, the majority of arts coordinators expressed an interest in receiving further guidance on designing and delivering quality professional development sessions in

the arts. Districts continued to contract with community arts providers to bring teaching artists into the schools, but the focus had, in many cases, shifted from filling instructional gaps to modeling standards-based lessons for teachers. Unique among the Vanguard Districts, Norwalk-La Mirada organized a leadership academy for district and school administrators to build on their capacity to supervise arts education programs in their schools.

The components of quality arts education programs that did not receive as much attention during the first phase of implementation were leadership development, fundraising, advocacy and program evaluation. Historically these areas are not central to the work of educators and all point to possibilities for further technical assistance opportunities by *Arts for All* staff. However, progress has been made in developing infrastructure to support these activities across the Vanguard Districts. For example, all districts except LACOE have established or redirected existing education foundations to eventually provide sustaining support for arts education programs. In addition, parent organizations are increasingly being invited to send a representative to attend general planning meetings to ensure their fundraising efforts align with and support the objectives of the district arts plan.

***Dynamics of Change***

As CAT team members talked about implementing their arts plans during focus group interviews, they identified a number of factors that either facilitated progress or created challenges along the way. The underlying mechanisms that appeared to aid the planning and implementation process fell into two categories: factors that *drive* the process and those that *facilitate* the process. The “drivers” were initiatory in that they motivated district personnel to take action in implementing the plan. As shown in Table 1.3, these included policies and people.

Table 1.3. Factors that Drive the Implementation Process

POLICIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The California Department of Education’s expectation that all schools adopt and teach the state visual and performing arts content standards</li> <li>• The need to help students qualify for the California university entrance requirements</li> <li>• A superintendent’s mandate for weekly arts instruction</li> <li>• Joining <i>Arts for All</i>, with its stated goal of sequential K-12 instruction in the arts</li> </ul>
PRINCIPLE STAKEHOLDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pro-active school board members, superintendents or other senior administrators</li> <li>• Arts coordinators</li> <li>• Committed teachers</li> <li>• Parents who want their children to have an education in the arts</li> <li>• Community partners with a vision for civic and social reform</li> </ul>

The policies mentioned during the interviews were set forth by the California Department of Education, the state university systems and the district superintendents to encourage schools to provide systematic instruction in the arts. Many of the advocates on CAT teams likely stayed involved in the implementation process because they agree with these broad policies that were—and continued to be—in need of enforcement. For others, such as

classroom teachers with little experience in the arts, their willingness to go along with the changes brought on by the arts plan may be partly out of believing an education in the arts would benefit their students, or alternatively, out of peer pressure or fear of career consequences for students—or themselves—if they did not participate. At any rate, throughout all of the focus group interviews there was a sense of district personnel acquiescing to the policy tide, which, in the *Arts for All* districts, has turned in favor of the arts. Other drivers for plan implementation were identified as pro-active administrators and board members, energized arts coordinators, and parents and other community members who held specific educational and civic agendas relative to the arts.

Additional factors were identified as furthering the implementation process without actually driving it (see Table 1.4). These support mechanisms included an expanded list of stakeholders, internal district practices and financial resources. In this case, the stakeholders cooperated with or participated in the plans of the CAT team. They had been inspired by the collective vision created for their district through the *Arts for All* strategic planning process, and then took steps to uphold the effort to actualize that vision.

Table 1.4. Factors that Facilitate the Implementation Process

PRINCIPLE AND SECONDARY STAKEHOLDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School board members</li> <li>• Curriculum leaders</li> <li>• Parent organizations: PTA and booster clubs</li> <li>• Education foundation executives and board members</li> <li>• Community arts providers</li> <li>• Civic administrators</li> <li>• Corporate grantors</li> </ul>
PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board policy in arts education</li> <li>• District arts plan</li> <li>• Building on successes of existing arts programs</li> <li>• Aligning instruction in the arts with instruction in other subjects</li> <li>• Conducting regular needs assessments of schools to ensure the actions taken by the CAT team and coordinator are responsive and relevant</li> <li>• Cohesive staff development plan</li> </ul>
RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislative funding</li> <li>• External grants and donations</li> <li>• Adequate supplies curriculum materials</li> <li>• Adequate musical instruments</li> </ul>

The CAT teams also identified a number of implementation strategies that have been fundamental to their progress. Adopting a well-articulated school board policy that reflects core values in the district arts education agenda, writing and sharing the district arts plan, and creating a professional development plan were most often mentioned. Districts such as Santa Monica-Malibu and Castaic built on the successes of existing arts programs and honored the work of the past, rather than starting from scratch. Other districts are working to align their new arts curricula with existing systems of instruction (e.g., buying visual arts textbooks from their language arts textbook publisher), so as not to overwhelm teachers with entirely new teaching approaches. The state legislative block grants afforded all schools the opportunity to restock art rooms, stage equipment lockers and school band

closets and the *Arts for All* Pooled Fund grants enabled several districts to hire an arts coordinator. In addition, half of the Vanguard Districts have benefited from relationships with significant external donors that directly impacted what they could accomplish in implementing their arts plans.

### *Obstacles to Systemic Change*

There were also factors that created challenges for the CAT team as they moved from the planning to the implementation stage. Regardless of the level of funding that districts had received for implementing their plans, money remained at the top of the challenge list. Many districts were experiencing declining enrollment and a state economic crisis was threatening to further impact their arts education allotments. One suggestion was for *Arts for All* staff to provide help in organizing a financial plan for moving forward.

Other challenges described by the CAT teams generally fell into three categories: district level, school level and arts coordinator level (see Table 1.5). At the district level, challenges were related to policies and practices adhered to by the school board and/or superintendent. Decisions were commonly made in reaction to academic pressures to raise standardized test scores that inadvertently demonstrated a lower valuing of arts education in the curriculum and in the instructional schedule. Leadership training was recommended to help district and school administrators envision how arts instruction could help them meet overall education objectives and how local policies and practices impact learning opportunities in the arts.

Table 1.5. Obstacles to Implementation

DISTRICT LEVEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Child Left Behind pressures</li> <li>• Conflicting policies and practices tied to academic goals</li> <li>• Lower prioritizing of the arts in the curriculum</li> <li>• Lack of accountability for the quality of arts instruction</li> <li>• Inconsistent adoption of instructional practices across a district</li> </ul>
SCHOOL LEVEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistent support of school principals</li> <li>• Time constraints caused by academic watch status</li> <li>• Teachers’ lack of knowledge and confidence in teaching the arts</li> <li>• Teachers’ resistance to an overcrowded teaching schedule</li> <li>• Inadequate time for effective staff development</li> <li>• Inadequate funds to hire arts specialists at all three schools levels</li> </ul>
ARTS COORDINATOR LEVEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining membership on the CAT team</li> <li>• Reaching collective agreements</li> <li>• Setting achievable goals</li> <li>• Splitting up responsibilities</li> <li>• Finding time for communicating with teachers, parents and broader community</li> <li>• Staying on top of recordkeeping</li> </ul>

At the school level, the challenges revolved around the level of support and buy-in from both principals and districts. While the majority of principals were described by CAT

teams as being supportive of the *Arts for All* initiative, they were often focused on other schooling priorities. In some cases, their leadership decisions reflected a lack of awareness of how to equitably balance support for arts education with other issues. Schools on academic watch can also present a problem as students are required to spend the majority of instructional time on math and language arts. However, in two Vanguard Districts facing that situation, teachers fought to maintain the arts program as well.

Challenges associated with classroom instruction revolved around the elementary classroom teachers, who, alone among all district personnel, are expected to learn how to provide quality instruction in as many as four art disciplines in addition to their current workload. Arts coordinators have asked for assistance in helping them understand how to coordinate and deliver quality professional development, develop classroom scheduling solutions for ongoing arts instruction and guide teachers in effective arts integration practices.

Specific challenges faced by the arts coordinators involved maintaining a constructive work dynamic with an evolving CAT team, keeping up with paperwork and consistently communicating with teachers, administrators and parents. Several of the coordinators saw these as important factors in determining how quickly and effectively a district's arts education infrastructure could grow. While coaching in project management may be a partial solution for these issues, clerical assistance and Internet technology support were more often named. As was previously mentioned, available funding streams did not appear to be good sources for covering such expenses.

## SECTION II: INITIATIVE OUTCOMES

As the case studies in Appendix A will show, the effects of the *Arts for All* initiative on the Vanguard District's arts programs have been considerable. In at least five of the districts, the implementation of the strategic plan has caused a sea change in how districts think about and respond to possibilities for expanding arts instruction. Across all 11 districts, participation has strengthened the overall quality of arts education programs, as defined by the scaled items measured in the CDE's Arts Education Program Implementation Continuum Survey (see Appendix C). In the following pages, the results of the districts' planning and implementation efforts are presented. They are grouped according to the three principal elements of a quality arts education program: instructional content, district infrastructure and program sustainability. These findings are followed by evidence of change in student access to arts education.

### ***Instructional content***

As a group, districts focused most of their energy in the area of improving instructional content. An analysis of the evidence collected through document review and CAT team group interviews indicate they selected key standards for each grade level, bought instructional texts and other materials, wrote curricula and lesson plans, hired personnel,

reconfigured teaching assignments and provided staff development for teachers as art disciplines were adopted. As indicated in Table 2.1, six of the districts now have sequential, standards-based curricula for all grade levels in music and visual arts—in the form of textbooks, vetted lesson plans or a framework containing state standards, lesson ideas, resources and assessment options.

Table 2.1. District-level Adoption of Standards-based Arts Curricula

K-12	Districts (n)	(%)
Visual Arts	6	55%
Music	6	55%
Theatre	2	18%
Dance	1	9%
N=11 Districts		

The other five districts are in the midst of researching and piloting materials or adopting an art form in a few grades at a time. Two of the six districts have sequential curricula written for theatre and one for dance. These figures confirm that the majority of districts are adopting the art disciplines one at a time and have elected to focus on music and visual arts first. They also triangulate the finding that *Arts for All* districts are working to strengthen the entire K-12 sequence of arts instruction through identifying and filling gaps, although as previously stated, most efforts have been focused on the elementary level to date.

Vanguard Districts varied in their employment of credentialed arts instructors to teach the major arts disciplines in each school, as shown in Table 2.2. In this case, credentialed arts instructor may include arts specialist, a generalist teacher with an arts endorsement or a professional with an alternative teaching credential.<sup>5</sup>

With rare exceptions, credentialed arts instructors provide all arts instruction at the middle and high school level. Where no funding is available to hire credentialed arts instructors, courses simply are not offered. At the middle school level, some English teachers are teaching theatre while some physical education teachers are teaching dance, although it is not necessarily true for all schools within a given district.

Table 2.2. School Level Percentages of Districts That Employ Credentialed Arts Instructors to Teach the Major Disciplines

	Elementary	Middle School	High School
Visual Arts	9%	64%	100%
Music	27%	73%	89%
Theatre	0%	67%	67%
Dance (PE)	18%	36%	30%
N=11 Districts			

<sup>5</sup> Alternative route certification (credentialing) is specifically for individuals who have not completed a traditional 4-year certification program through an accredited university, but seek an alternative way to attain a teaching certificate. Many are career changers, or have special skills, life or industry experience that would make them effective teachers. In almost every case, candidates have achieved their bachelor's degree, just not in the field of education. Quoted from <http://www.teacherssupportnetwork.com/corporate/TeacherToolsAdviceArticle.do?id=16>.

Perhaps the most notable finding is the high percentage of districts that are currently designating the generalist elementary teacher as the primary instructor for all four art forms, as shown in Table 2.3. Yet CAT teams reported that too few teachers currently have the knowledge or time to shoulder the responsibility. This situation has created a bottleneck in implementation plans and will require solutions that are customized to the goals and context of each district—and perhaps—of each school.

Table 2.3. Percentage of Districts Where Elementary Classroom Teachers Are Expected to Provide Arts Instruction

	Elementary
Visual Arts	91%
Music	73%
Theatre	100%
Dance (PE)	82%
N=11 Districts	

Deciding whether to teach an art form as a discrete subject or through integration with other subjects depended primarily on whether the designated instructor was an arts specialist or generalist classroom teacher. Districts reported that the specialists tend to teach the arts as discrete subjects, which effects all secondary level arts instruction. None of the districts reported sustained efforts to link high school arts instruction with other subjects. In a few cases, districts asked their middle school arts specialists to collaborate with other teachers in the interest of integration, especially when designing and/or modeling new lesson ideas. Otherwise, arts integration was linked with elementary level instruction and primarily referred to as a time saving device, in that two subjects could—at least hypothetically—be taught at the same time.

The figures in Table 2.4 indicate that most districts identified integration as the preferred approach to arts instruction in their elementary schools. However, the focus group interview data suggested that teachers are likely using distinct subject instruction as well, depending on the goal of specific lessons. The extent to which teachers have followed through on these intentions reported by the CAT teams has not yet been documented.

Arts assessment is currently being introduced to elementary teachers through curriculum materials and through staff development sessions where ways to check for student learning are discussed. At the elementary level, teachers are not generally held accountable for rigorously assessing student artwork or performances as of yet, though some exceptions stand out. For example, Beverly Hills is making a concerted effort to treat the arts like any other subject area, which includes developing ways to measure student progress on a regular basis. Santa Monica-Malibu has been the first to develop and pilot a district-wide on-line exam in general music knowledge, administered annually to every fifth grader transitioning from elementary school. Otherwise, most elementary teachers are currently required to assign a simple rating for visual and performing arts on student report cards, and it is not typically broken down by discipline. As a general rule, secondary arts specialists assess student coursework based on their demonstration of learning objectives

(e.g., using performance rubrics or project criteria based on state content standards), level of effort, and attendance in class and at student exhibitions and performances.

Table 2.4. Arts Instruction as Discrete Disciplines versus Integrated

	Elementary		
	Discrete	Integrated	Not Taught
Visual Arts	36%	64%	---
Music	18%	73%	9%
Theatre	9%	55%	36%
Dance (PE)	18%	36%	45%

N=11 Districts

### ***District Infrastructure***

According to the CAAE’s map of principle arts program components in *The Insider’s Guide to Arts Education Planning* the infrastructure of a quality district program consists of the following: 1) arts administration/coordination; 2) teaching personnel; 3) facilities and equipment; and 4) community partnerships and collaborations.<sup>6</sup> The Vanguard Districts made constructive changes in all four areas, with the most important change being the hiring or designation of an arts coordinator to act as a district-level driver for arts education.

As of 2008, five of the largest districts have hired salaried, full-time coordinators; two have part-time coordinators, three have contracted with external, part-time consultants, and in one case, an assistant principal fills the role of point person for the arts. The CAT teams that invested in full-time coordinators all recognized the maximum benefit of having one person focused solely on implementing the plan. Four of the districts also acknowledged the advantage of having hired an arts coordinator in an administrative capacity rather than as a Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), due to the authority the position carried and their ability to more easily communicate with and win the assistance or support of other district-level administrators. In addition, coordinators with administrative credentials were perceived as having a broader management skill set to bring to the work.

Several of the districts promoted an arts specialist to the coordinator position. Districts that hired from existing school staff remarked on the benefit of having the trust and support of fellow teachers from the beginning, although it was sometimes difficult to find an arts specialist who had the skills needed to handle the diverse responsibilities of a district-wide coordinator. Those hired from outside the district were challenged with building new collegial relationships while also getting acquainted with an arts plan they had not participated in writing. However, by hiring outside the district, CAT teams had more freedom to locate coordinators who had the diverse skill set needed to develop a complex and comprehensive arts program. On a more cautionary note, the evidence clearly showed that in cases where arts coordinators were hired as external consultants on contract, they

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<sup>6</sup> Components of an Arts Education Program Triangle Image (.pdf link). California Alliance of Arts Education <http://www.artsed411.org/insidersguide/chapter5.aspx>. Accessed December 1, 2008.

held the least authority or power to implement the activities listed in the district arts plan. In two of the three cases, the external coordinators reported their recommendations were often set aside in favor of other district plans and priorities. Arts coordinators that used the services of an *Arts for All* coach as a mentor during their first year on the job—as in Burbank, Culver City and Compton—noted the importance of that assistance in successfully launching the implementation process.

The hiring of additional arts specialists was a lesser priority for the majority of districts in the early stage of implementation, although six, or 55 percent, did hire music specialists to fill gaps in the K-12 instructional sequence. In addition, Pasadena created a part-time music coordinator position. Teacher salaries are primarily funded through a school district's general funds and with many of the districts currently facing declining enrollment and constricting budgets, hiring more staff was not an option. An exception was Beverly Hills, which has a unique arrangement in which the district allows community access to its school facilities for cultural, educational and recreational purposes in exchange for substantial operational funding from the City. This revenue stream made it possible for the district to hire additional art specialists at the elementary level.

Some of the districts alternatively chose to use portions of the ongoing legislative arts block grant to fund new music positions, which could make those specialists vulnerable to job loss should the grant be retracted. In addition, funding through the Los Angeles County Office of Education's Regional Occupation Program paid for new high school courses in theatre, photography and graphics design in at least two districts. Another way districts increased arts delivery was by having physical education teachers receive training and offer dance instruction at the middle school and elementary level.

In terms of facilities and equipment, all of the districts spent state legislative block grants on equipment, supplies and musical instruments. These expenditures were occasionally supplemented by district funds or corporate and foundation grants. In addition, designated arts rooms were created with the conversion of regular classrooms in one district, a dance space was remodeled in another, and visual arts and music rooms were constructed at a third. Other districts upgraded music and visual arts rooms or bought curtains and sound systems for their multipurpose rooms.

Several districts identified the lack of adequate performance facilities as an inhibiting factor in the development of theatre education programs and were unclear as to how to resolve the challenge. A facilities bond measure was mentioned as a possible solution, although the timing was considered poor, and such a measure faced competition from other district spending priorities. Santa Monica was successful in this regard, aided by having a written arts plan in place; the arts coordinator had recently secured school bond funding for new elementary-level arts facilities.

Across the Vanguard Districts, professional development in the arts has shifted from being a primarily school-directed activity to being more of a district-directed activity since joining *Arts for All*. This is partly because the districts now have arts coordinators to organize training opportunities, but also because the CAT teams recognized the need to provide all teachers with training when new instructional materials were introduced across schools. In

addition, teachers have requested training in effective integration practices. To help meet these needs, five of 11 districts reported contracting with community-based teaching artists to assist with instruction and staff development in the past year. This was possible, in part, due to a grant available through the *Arts for All* Pooled Fund. In two cases where districts did not have the resources to provide training for all elementary staff, select lead teachers attended California Arts Project (TCAP) workshops and then returned to their respective schools to share new insights and ideas with colleagues.

In terms of content, ten of the 11 districts have provided staff development in visual arts instruction for elementary teachers and at least 40 percent have offered music workshops during the past three years. Less than 20 percent of the districts have offered dance or drama education training on a systematic basis. In general, districts are finding that one round of workshops is not enough to train teachers unfamiliar with an art discipline. Accordingly, this has slowed the planned adoption process. Districts have begun to recognize that similar to other subject areas, offering instruction in the arts will require a sustained commitment to staff development.

All of the CAT teams identified community partners that have either supported or provided student learning opportunities since joining *Arts for All*. These external partners included local and national arts providers, regional arts institutions (e.g., art museums and performance halls), corporate donors, and local municipal agencies. In some cases, they provided instructional and/or professional development opportunities; in other cases, financial support. Their multipurpose role substantiates the district-community collaborative model as key to restoring comprehensive arts education to all schools. More specifically, their reported contributions included the following:

- Funding for access to performances, workshops and residencies with professional artists
- Funding for supplies, equipment and musical instruments
- Staff development workshops
- Access to visual and performance teaching artists
- Access to creative industry teaching professionals
- Afterschool instructional programming
- Field trip destinations
- Space and financial support for student exhibitions and performances

### ***Program Sustainability***

Of the three principle elements of quality arts programs—instructional content, district infrastructure, and program sustainability—the latter has received the least attention to date. Even so, some of the more significant outcomes from the *Arts for All* initiative fall under this category. Sustainability is also the area where CAT teams were most interested in receiving technical assistance in the near future. The indicators of program sustainability

include an arts education board policy, funding, program evaluation, communication, and district leadership.

All 11 Vanguard District CAT teams wrote or revised school board policies for arts education and ushered them through the steps to approval. The policy statements were based on examples furnished by the *Arts for All* coaches. Although there were similarities across them, each board policy contained elements that were specific to the aims of the individual CAT teams and their district arts plans. Most of the policies emphasized the need for K-12 sequential instruction in the four major art disciplines during the school day. Others included a commitment to the arts plan and to the ongoing review and development of the district arts programs. Some mentioned the need for ongoing staff development opportunities in the arts. In the case of Culver City, the policy clearly spelled out the range of individuals qualified as providers, giving a nod to long-standing relationships with the community. At least three of the district policies included a school board commitment to putting arts education on equal footing with other subject areas, particularly in terms of making equitable funding reductions in low budget years rather than eliminating arts programs altogether. Several policies mentioned evaluation and a commitment to accountability, a process that many arts education programs have lacked for years. Each of these factors was included to ensure that the effort to build a comprehensive arts program would be sustained.

During district focus group interviews, CAT teams provided examples of how the approved board policies had provided leverage in overcoming obstacles to implementing district arts plans. In two cases, it was used to prevent administrators from using money earmarked for arts instruction for other purposes. In another, the arts coordinator used the arts policy to convince the superintendent to mandate one hour of weekly K-5 instruction in the arts. In another, teachers used the policy as the basis for maintaining arts classes, even as the district was put on academic watch and forced to increase its focus on improving standardized math and reading scores. All CAT teams agreed that the written policy and the written arts plan were fundamental to the successes achieved to date in maintaining and expanding their arts education programs.

Several trends in arts education funding emerged from the Vanguard Districts documentation and interview data. While the goal for district spending in the arts is five percent of the overall budget, at least as set by *Arts for All* guidelines, it remains unclear how many districts are actually investing that amount on an annual basis, due in part to the inconsistent ways that financial data were reported. Santa Monica may be the closest at 3.9 percent.<sup>7</sup> One finding that stood out was the rigid guidance attached to funding allotted for school arts programs. For example, district budgets paid for teaching salaries, supplies and, in some cases, staff development, but they did not always include the salary of the arts coordinator. As was previously stated, the state block grants were also designated for curriculum materials and supplies, staff development and the hiring of arts personnel.

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<sup>7</sup> Compton reported a five percent district budget for arts education in 2005 but that was not verified in the case study research.

With the exception of LACOE, the Vanguard Districts have each established an education foundation that is either currently supporting or planning to support arts education programs in the near future. In Compton and Santa Monica, arts education is the sole focus of their districts' foundation. Many of these foundations have directors or board members who play active roles in advocating for the district arts plan and they work in collaboration with the arts coordinators to attract external resources to further implementation, including sponsoring fundraising events. Monies received from foundations and other grants were typically used to pay for specific types of student learning opportunities (e.g., artist residences, field trips, assemblies, student exhibits) plus the materials and supplies needed for these supplemental programs. Half of the districts have benefited from sustained support and/or significant contributions provided through private or corporate donors and federal grants. These districts have moved furthest in the development of their arts program. The concerted efforts of individual arts coordinators were viewed as a major factor in these districts' ability to attract large donations, although sometimes they were awarded supplemental support simply because a funder heard about the arts education plan and wished to support it.

While the districts have used available funds within approved categories of spending, other needs expressed by the CAT teams have gone unfunded. For example, districts requested help with technology training and web design, clerical assistance, developing fund raising campaigns, public relations communication and program evaluation—none of which technically fall under the traditional categories of arts education spending. Rather, these could be considered operational expenses that, without a designated budget, have the potential to create stumbling blocks to implementation goals.

Program evaluation was an initial component in every district arts plan except Culver City, and has since been added to its list of planned activities. Each district has taken a slightly different approach to evaluating the status of its arts education program. To date, six have initiated some form of program evaluation, although none had findings to share at the writing of this report. Each of the districts reportedly completed an inventory of school resources and instructional time in the arts to inform planning when they joined *Arts for All*, but few retained the documentation of that effort as a baseline measure of later progress.

Beverly Hills and Pasadena did assess the quality of their school arts programs early on using the CDE Arts Education Program Toolkit and planned to use the data for comparative purposes when they conduct future program reviews. Rosemead conducted a second inventory to help decide how to spend legislative block grant monies. Norwalk La-Mirada's school-level arts plans now include an accountability section. Their schools will be asked for a progress report each year. Three other districts have tied evaluation to staff development to help ensure the relevance and effectiveness of training sessions. Evaluation was listed as a strategic direction in three additional district arts plans beginning in fall 2008. The majority of the arts coordinators said they were interested in tracking program outcomes and remarked that they would welcome assistance with evaluation design and instrumentation.

Communicating effectively with district teachers was considered an area of challenge for the larger districts; nonetheless, all of the CAT teams were engaged in activities intended

to get the word out on art events and opportunities for both students and teachers. At least half of the districts had established a communication liaison at each school. Other common ways of communicating were through emails, flyers and word of mouth. LACOE started a quarterly e-newsletter for teachers and site administrators that is colorful, friendly and effective in gaining feedback. Three districts have launched visual and performing arts websites, although keeping them up-to-date requires time the arts coordinators do not always have. Districts without websites requested assistance in developing them but also acknowledged that without clerical help, it would be difficult to maintain them, especially for coordinators in part-time positions. The larger districts reported that it was difficult to keep track of the arts events happening at each school because of the time involved in contacting people and gathering relevant information.

District administrators are generally kept in the arts information loop at administrative meetings, school board meetings, through email announcements and by organizing exhibitions where students' accomplishments can be acknowledged. Parents are kept informed of arts activities through district websites, flyers, press releases of student events sent to local newspapers and a community magazine and school board presentations—which, in at least two cases, were televised to the local community. District-wide events, including student exhibitions and performances, have been well attended and are considered the best form of advocacy with administrators, teachers and parents alike.

All of the Vanguard Districts reported benefiting from the support of senior administrators and school board members, many of whom had initially urged their districts to join the *Arts for All* initiative. While district leadership has often changed over the course of five years, the written arts education policies and district arts plans have proven effective in maintaining support for implementation.

Some ways that superintendents have shown their support are by approving teacher pay to attend planning meetings, mandating weekly instruction in the arts, advocating for the arts plan, increasing the district budget for the arts, upholding the board policy and holding teachers accountable for arts instruction to the same degree as other subjects. In the case of Norwalk-La Mirada, the superintendent demonstrated effective support by attending the leadership training sessions for district and school leaders. The solid endorsement of the school board is also considered crucial to the success of the district arts programs because the board plays an important role in approving funding for the activities of the CAT team.

### ***Arts Program Quality***

An analysis of the Arts Education Program Implementation Continuum Survey (see Appendix C) provided an initial look at the progress the CAT teams have made in each of the fundamental components of an effective district arts program. As previously stated, these included standards-based curriculum, instruction and methodology, student assessment, professional development, program administration and teaching staff, partnerships/collaborations, funding, resources and facilities, and evaluation tools. Using the survey, the CAT teams rated their progress on aspects of each component using a four-point scale with descriptors that identified the level of development as being either in a

Foundational phase, a Building phase or a Progressive phase. The scale was later converted to a 12-point scale for purposes of calculating a performance index based on the total points achieved by each district.

The comparative table in Appendix E provides detailed results of how the districts rated themselves on each topic. The results show that after four or five years of pursuing the *Arts for All* initiative, four districts are emerging from the Foundational phase of program development, six have reached the intermediate Building phase and one, Compton, has entered a Progressive phase. One of the main differences between districts still emerging from the foundational phase and those in more advance phases of implementation is the amount of external funding they had to work with. As might be anticipated, districts with access to more resources have progressed further.

***Program Quality Index***

Based on self-ratings of the nine components of a comprehensive arts program (see data table in Appendix E), a program quality index number was calculated for each Vanguard District that provides a way to quickly assess their progress in relation to the other districts. A list of the 11 district indexes can be found in Table 2.5. On a 12-point scale, an index rating of 12.0 would signify that K-12 sequential instruction in all four art disciplines is accessible to all students and a comprehensive support system is in place to sustain the arts program. Currently, all of the Vanguard Districts have self-rated between 4.1 and 9.3. These figures must be interpreted with caution, however, as they do not capture all of the progress made by districts. For example, this index could be expanded to include performance indicators associated with increased equity in arts education access.

Table 2.5. Program Quality Index (12-pt. scale)

Compton	9.3
Castaic	7.8
Beverly Hills	6.8
Pasadena	6.8
Burbank	6.7
Santa Monica-Malibu	6.6
Culver City	5.7
Rosemead	4.6
Hacienda La Puente	4.5
LACOE	4.2
Norwalk-La Mirada	4.1

While this analysis was primarily an effort to determine the utility of a research measure previously developed by CDE for a district self-assessment process, the results indicate that the Vanguard Districts are well underway toward meeting the goals of their respective arts plans. However, as the range in indices is currently well below the 12.0 goal, the data suggests that with most elementary teachers currently lacking the training or time to offer instruction in the four art disciplines and nearly all districts lacking the resources to pay for sufficient numbers of arts specialists at that level, it will take much longer than five years of

planning and implementation to bring self-sustaining, comprehensive arts programs to each Los Angeles County school district.

***Student Access***

As the Vanguard Districts have progressed through the planning stage and the first phase of implementation in improving their arts programs, evidence suggests that the amount of arts instruction that students have received has also increased. An objective of this study was to identify where these increases have occurred as a precursor to developing a set of *Arts for All* indicators for student access that can be tracked as the initiative progresses. As displayed in Table 2.6, a list of pilot indicators was assembled based on initial conversations with *Arts for All* staff. These student-centered outcomes are linked to the nine elements of a quality arts program and have been verified by the researcher’s experience in observing arts education programs around the country during the past decade. For purposes of this study, these indicators of student access were designed to document increased exposure to arts instruction, instructional resources and learning experiences that denote rich arts programs.

Table 2.6. Student Access Indicators

Area of Increase	Indicator
INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts personnel (specialists)</li> <li>• Generalists teaching art</li> <li>• Equipment, instruments and supplies</li> <li>• Arts facilities (new space)</li> </ul>
LEARNING EXPERIENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting artist residencies</li> <li>• Student productions and exhibitions</li> <li>• Assemblies and field trips</li> <li>• Afterschool programs</li> <li>• Integration of technology with the arts</li> </ul>
EXPOSURE TO INSTRUCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts classes offered</li> <li>• Student enrollment in arts classes</li> <li>• Hours of instruction offered</li> <li>• Access for students with special needs</li> </ul>

During the focus group interviews, CAT team members were asked to discuss and record where changes had occurred in student access as a result of their implementation efforts since 2003. They also discussed whether the changes occurred district-wide or on a more limited basis (see Appendix D). The data were compared with anecdotal evidence presented in the focus groups, activity reports provided by each CAT team and follow-up conversations with each arts coordinator. The table in Appendix F displays data from ten of the districts. Norwalk-La Mirada opted out of reporting changes in student access as the activities of the CAT team had not been perceived as affecting change at the classroom level yet.

The evidence from the district documentation and the focus group interview data indicated that the areas where the districts focused on improving access to arts education correlated with categories of available funding and the areas of greatest accomplishment noted in the program quality survey data. The most visible change across all districts and all school levels was the increase in resources available to support instruction, such as musical instruments, arts supplies and performance-related equipment purchased with earmarked funding through the state legislative block grants, district budgets and private donations. The most notable changes in facilities were the addition of a music room and an art room—which provided creative spaces for all middle school students in Rosemead—and the passage of the school bond in Santa Monica earmarked, in part, for new arts facilities for elementary students. Beyond minor improvements made to dedicated art and music rooms in a handful of schools, adding new instructional facilities was not a priority during the early phase of implementation. Three districts reported that a lack of adequate performance space continues to adversely impact their theatre education programs.

In terms of exposure to arts instruction, all of the districts reported an increase in the number of arts classes being offered, the number of students enrolled in arts classes and the number of hours of overall instruction.<sup>8</sup> These changes were attributed to the hiring of more arts specialists—particularly in music—and to the CAT teams’ assumption that classroom teachers were putting to use the new curriculum materials and arts training they had received. For example, Burbank, Beverly Hills, Compton and Castaic filled gaps in their music programs by hiring additional specialists. All four districts have K-12 music programs as a result.

Nine of the 11 districts reported an observable increase in arts instruction among generalist teachers, although the evidence was not clearly documented. In some cases, the reported increase was slight, and in others it was significant, but the evidence from the combination of data sources indicated that all districts had progressed toward providing sequential instruction in the four major arts disciplines. As of May 2008, Beverly Hills’s arts program was the most advanced in this regard, primarily due to its ability to hire art specialists at all three school levels. At this point, all high school students have access to classes in the four art disciplines taught by credentialed specialists. K-8 students also receive sequential instruction in dance (through physical education), music and visual arts and from specialists. The one curriculum area this district has yet to address is K-8 theatre education, which is intended to be taught by generalist teachers through integration with other subjects—mainly language arts. The data indicated that seven of the Vanguard Districts have made significant progress in adopting two art disciplines K-12, and two districts have adopted one discipline.

Another area of significant increase was in the number of student performances and exhibitions organized at both the district and school level. This was primarily attributed to opportunities presented by community advocates on the CAT teams, increased efforts by the music and visual arts specialists to locate opportunities for showcasing student work, and most importantly, to the presence of an arts coordinator who sought out and responded to opportunities and organized the events. An added benefit was that district-

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<sup>8</sup> LACOE did not report on this indicator.

wide events doubled as opportunities to advocate for arts programs with district leaders, community leaders and parents, which in the cases of Compton, Pasadena and Santa Monica has attracted hundreds of supporters. The increase in exhibitions and performances at the school level was attributed to more arts classes being offered and more teachers honing their abilities to produce quality student learning results.

To a lesser extent, districts also reported an increase in instructional opportunities related to assemblies, field trips and digital applications. In addition, all of the districts offer some form of afterschool instruction in the arts, although few reported a notable increase in classes or clubs since joining *Arts for All*. The exception is Culver City, which has a vibrant afterschool arts academy program that recently strengthened instructional and financial ties with two community colleges. The academy serves approximately 10 percent of the student body (about 200 students) and has been in operation for 14 years.

Ten of the Vanguard districts have made a concerted effort towards equalizing access to arts instruction by improving the sequencing of K-12 instruction, though obstacles remain. Districts with schools on academic watch have been challenged in needing to schedule some students for remedial courses in math or language arts while others receive arts instruction. Equity in access may even decrease—at least temporarily—in districts where individual schools decide which of the four art disciplines they want to adopt, such as in Norwalk-La Mirada and Hacienda La Puente. The arts coordinators have been working to find solutions to improving equitable access across all of the districts, including possibly extending the school day or offering more professional development to raise teachers' confidence in providing arts instruction in the elementary classroom. In one example, Burbank, music specialists received training in providing meaningful instruction for students with hearing loss.

While the identification of student access indicators clarifies ways in which Vanguard Districts have improved equitable access, the extent of change has not been fully documented. A survey that tracks available resources, learning opportunities and exposure to instruction at each grade level will be needed for a clearer understanding of how these changes align with success indicators for the overall *Arts for All* initiative.

## SECTION III: CONCLUSIONS

The case studies of the Vanguard Districts provide an in-depth look at the processes and results of the *Arts for All* initiative after five years. This section offers a review of the findings as they pertain to advancing the quality and quantity of arts instruction in Los Angeles County schools. The majority of districts joined with the intent to repair a patchwork approach to arts education. All have made significant progress in developing standards-based, sequential programs. The strategic planning process proved highly effective in helping CAT teams create a cohesive vision for a quality arts program that was adaptable to their unique contexts. Under the advisement of *Arts for All* coaches, all 11 districts completed multi-year arts plans and wrote arts education policies that required a long-term commitment to the key elements of their vision. All plans and policies were passed by their

respective school boards and in most cases, have resulted in arts education being elevated to a core curriculum subject. As one arts coordinator put it, the *Arts for All* districts have awakened to the arts. The plan and the policy have together created a structural force that drives the districts toward their ultimate goal of providing equitable access to K-12 instruction in all four major art disciplines, thus advancing the *Arts for All* mission. In addition, the existence of the arts education policy and plan has brought both credence and stability to the effort of expanding each district's arts program. This is exemplified by the fact that all of the Vanguard Districts have continued with implementation activities even when key personnel - such as a district superintendent, supportive school board member or arts coordinator – have changed jobs.

The analysis of plan implementation revealed that the activities of the CAT teams were guided in part by their arts plans and in part by the spending parameters of funding made available through the California legislature, the districts' budgets, the *Arts for All* Pooled Fund and other grantors. During the early stages of plan implementation, the CAT teams focused on hiring an arts coordinator, curriculum adoption, staff development and/or hiring art specialists, and on stocking up on needed supplies, equipment and musical instruments. Despite the considerable resources available to the Vanguard Districts as they began implementing their arts plans, CAT teams reported that their most pressing challenge was a lack of sufficient funding to implement the entire plan on the initial timeline, which was typically five years. In particular, there appeared to be a lack of funding that could be spent on categories other than instructional content and student learning opportunities. For example, arts coordinators reported difficulties related to the lack of operational resources for clerical assistance or website technical support. In addition, few had the time or resources to be involved in external advocacy efforts beyond organizing district-wide student art events or speaking at occasional regional meetings.

In general, districts focused on increasing the quality and frequency of arts instruction in elementary schools first, although some changes were also made at the secondary level. Nine of the districts chose to fully adopt one art discipline at a time, complete with a written K-12 or K-8 curriculum and related professional development opportunities. All of the nine started with music and visual arts adoptions. Compton designed a unique system in which students would alternatively receive visual arts, music and theatre instruction on an annual rotational schedule during elementary school. Norwalk-La Mirada has allowed each elementary school to decide which art disciplines they preferred to adopt and was therefore preparing to offer district-wide teacher training in all four disciplines. On the whole, districts discovered that teachers need multiple and ongoing opportunities for training in unfamiliar art disciplines. This issue has affected the content of community artist residencies, which increasingly double as an opportunity for artists to model arts instruction for teachers as well as fill instructional gaps for students. In another staff development model that is worth further study, Norwalk-La Mirada offered a leadership academy in supervising arts instruction that was attended by district and school level administrators. The District's arts coordinator was preparing to request school accountability reports on arts education each year.

In terms of instructional delivery, secondary courses are generally taught by credentialed instructors—whether arts specialists, classroom teachers with an art endorsement, or

professional artists and artisans with an alternative teaching credential. At the elementary level, the classroom teacher is currently expected to provide instruction in all four art disciplines in the majority of the districts, typically without holding any art endorsements. This finding reveals the extraordinary pressure placed on the elementary classroom teacher as districts attempt to fulfill their vision for comprehensive arts programs. While districts tend to rely on integrated instruction as a solution at the elementary level, some arts coordinators have pointed out that it is not adequate. Beverly Hills's solution of employing specialists in music and visual arts and assigning dance to the physical education specialists relieves classroom teachers of all but theatre instruction, which can be well integrated with language arts. This example may be the most realistic model—and most expensive—to date, however other plausible models may emerge as districts tackle the challenge of adopting additional art disciplines.

As their arts programs continue to mature, a new set of challenges may lie ahead for the Vanguard Districts. Because the arts coordinator has been confirmed to be essential to the implementation process, it will be critical to ensure this position is secure in the face of across-the-board budget cuts. All coordinators welcomed the idea of further training to raise their capacity to be more effective in their position. High on their list of priorities were staff development guidance, student assessment in the arts, fundraising, technology applications, resolving classroom teachers' sense of overload, general administration skills and recordkeeping. All were interested in program evaluation as a way to track their progress as well as hold others accountable for their roles in implementing the district arts plan. As the schools adopt more arts curricula, professional development will be an ongoing need—and expense—along with refurbishment of supplies, equipment and musical instruments. While a few districts reported minor upgrades to their arts facilities, three others could only report the negative impact that inadequate performance space had on their theatre program—an area all districts are struggling to improve. This facility issue will likely become a critical program component as more students receive sequential instruction at the elementary level, because the secondary arts programs will attract increasing numbers of students with adequate skills to advance and new facilities will be needed to accommodate them.

With the exception of LACOE, each of the Vanguard Districts has established education foundations to help raise money for arts education, though some support other programs as well. Half have already benefited from large supplemental donations or grants. Even so, most of the education foundations are fledgling organizations and are as yet unable to provide substantial support for the schools. What emerges from these findings is the understanding that districts must rely on a variety of funding resources to develop their arts programs fully. It follows that those districts with the financial savvy and time to pursue external funding are in a stronger position to create both a comprehensive and sustainable arts education program. Helping the CAT teams find new funding solutions that will meet their current and future needs will be paramount to the continued success of their arts plans. The Beverly Hills civic partnership, which allows community use of school facilities after the regular school day, is an effective model in need of closer examination.

After five years, the commitment and enthusiasm of the CAT teams remain strong. Buy-in from teachers and the school communities is growing as districts begin to understand that

*Arts for All* is not a passing initiative, but represents a fundamental and permanent change in the way their arts education programs are organized and conducted. The Vanguard Districts have demonstrated their ability to create and implement effective arts plans. They have made admirable progress in developing program infrastructure that carries the potential to be self-sustaining in time. Adequate funding, relevant technical assistance and on-going revisions to the district arts plans remain essential for the districts to achieve their goal of comprehensive, sequential arts programs. However, it is the people involved in the process who are at the heart of the endeavor and ultimately hold the keys to success. Therefore, fostering supportive relationships both within and across the districts is essential to progress and to maintaining a collective vision for high quality arts education for all Los Angeles County schools. As long as arts coordinators are in place to keep the implementation process moving forward and the districts hold themselves accountable for achieving their annual goals, the *Arts for All* initiative will continue to realize progress.

### ***Continuing Technical Assistance***

Table 3.1 provides a list of areas where the Vanguard Districts could potentially benefit from continued technical assistance provided by *Arts for All* staff and consultants. The topics align with the three principal components of quality arts programs: instructional content, district infrastructure and program sustainability. The greatest emphasis is on the areas of developing program infrastructure and sustainability. Most topics are tied to providing coaching for the arts coordinators, who could then pass on information and guidance to their CAT teams and other district personnel.

Table 3.1 Technical Assistance Opportunities

<b>Arts Program Component</b>	<b>Identified Need</b>
INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff development options, particularly in dance and arts integration ideas</li> <li>• Guidance on student assessment in the arts</li> </ul>
DISTRICT INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for arts coordinators in the following areas:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. General planning, administration and program coordination</li> <li>b. Access to research that can be used for advocacy</li> <li>c. Developing arts partnerships in funding and instruction</li> <li>d. Creating a financial plan for improving arts facilities</li> <li>e. Professional development coaching and guidelines</li> <li>f. Helping teachers balance arts instruction with other duties</li> <li>g. Documentation, record keeping, website construction</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance with improving two-way communication with teachers through website design and other digital solutions.</li> <li>• Ideas for pursuing grants and other sources of fiscal support</li> <li>• Designing a relevant evaluation plan with appropriate tools</li> <li>• District leadership training</li> <li>• School board advocacy</li> </ul>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations reflect suggestions offered by CAT team members as well as conclusions reached through an analysis of cross-site data:

- Conduct leadership academies for district and school administrators, referencing Norwalk-La Mirada's program as a development model. Arts coordinators could potentially be trained to organize these academies. Topics to be covered might include budgeting for the arts, parent advocating, instructional leadership, experiences in the arts, curriculum models for sequential instruction, equitable access, balancing arts education with other priorities, scheduling for arts instruction and utilizing available resources. It could also address how instruction in the arts can support learning in other areas of the curriculum and how specific policies and practices at the school or district level inhibit arts education reform.
- Continue efforts to support and strengthen advocacy groups in each district by empowering them to obtain and provide district and school board leaders with the latest information on state policies in arts education and on research that supports arts education as a core academic subject.
- Provide arts coordinators with guidance on designing high quality professional development experiences, particularly on the topic of arts integration. Another topic is training them to help elementary teachers understand how arts instruction can fit into their teaching schedule through curriculum mapping.
- Provide coaching for arts coordinators in areas of program development that fall outside typical training for educators, such as fundraising, communication and advocacy, program administration and program evaluation.
- Due to the centrality of the district arts coordinator in the success of the *Arts for All* initiative, consider taking steps to elevate the coordinator's role within each district so they are seen as indispensable. This might include helping them take charge of tracking and reporting on arts education indicators in their districts before the task is assigned to someone else with less interest in the topic.
- Provide a year of coaching for newly hired arts coordinators to help orient them to the process of effectively implementing an arts education plan they may not have helped create.
- Advise CAT teams on developing concrete financial plans for funding their continued efforts to sequence arts instruction. A preliminary analysis of where districts are accessing—and not accessing—resources, and of the spending parameters placed on those funds, could reveal areas for targeted development efforts that are relevant to current needs as the implementation of their arts plans continues.

- Encourage districts to create a strategic plan for improving and expanding existing arts facilities in response to the anticipated level of need, once full implementation of the arts plan is realized.
- Create a grant program for operational expenses such as clerical staff, the development of advocacy materials, website design and program evaluation.
- Consider creating a grant program with matching funds for professional development, using credentialed arts specialists or sanctioned community arts providers as instructors.
- Fund a study that investigates the various models districts are using to adopt all four art disciplines at every school level. The findings will provide a set of solutions for districts across the County, state and nation that currently struggle with this issue.
- Deploy a school-level survey that captures changes in student access the arts instruction as the districts continue to implement their plan. Categories might include, but are not limited to, exposure to instruction, types of learning opportunities and quality of resources, including instructors.