The California Arts Education Data Project

The California Department of Education has committed to participate in the National Arts ED Data Project making California one of four states in the 2015-16 cohort. The vision of the NAEDP is to gather, analyze, report and disseminate school level data on the status and condition of arts education in every state covering every student in the nation. In addition, Create CA, California’s Statewide Arts Education Coalition, is committed to supporting the launch of the project through communications and advocacy.

Rationale

Access to, and equity of, arts education instruction has been mentioned as a priority by policy makers, national organizations, educators, business leaders, parents and teachers for more than two decades – dating back to the National Governors Association announcement of the 1989 “National Education Goals.” Policy makers in particular have been quick to talk about the importance of an arts education for every child. Yet, twenty five years after these conversations began, the original fundamental question remains unanswered.

It is our belief in order to expand access to arts education in our schools and communities we absolutely have to know where we stand. In order to impact arts participation in our schools, organizations require the ability to direct resources to the specific areas of need and to learn from schools where programs are robust. Currently, with no road map to identify where these specific schools are, organizations have been left to fend for themselves based on anecdotal information or localized survey data with a wide range of quality and no comparability within a state.

The Time is Now

Converging events are creating the opportunity to gather, analyze and report on arts education data. These events include the development of State Longitudinal Data Systems, the passage and reauthorization of the American Competes Act, the established expectation that all “core courses” are included in the data collection, the availability of federal funding to support the data systems, and the development and revision of arts education course codes. This combination of events has created the proper environment to enable the Project Team to gather, analyze and report arts education data for individual states.
A Dynamic Partnership

SEADAE (State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education) and Quadrant Research have been working together for about 6 years to create the conditions where arts education data can be collected from the State Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS). That data will then be displayed on a visual web platform that allows the user to create a variety of reports and comparisons.

New Jersey was the first state to pilot the platform and the impact has exceeded expectations. Now the first cohort of participating states is underway and includes: California, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Ohio. The team from each state includes the SEADAE member as the lead and the data representative to strategize the work flow and timeline in order to deliver the data to Quadrant Research and then coordinate a National launch.

These two organizations have also been working to build the parameters about the core courses, definitions for this work, revisions to the course code catalog, assisting in the shaping of the secondary course codes and establishing a common language to map what is happening in arts education. Guidelines for SLDS has also been a part of this work.

The California Team

California has identified Jack Mitchell, Mary Rice and Randy Bonnell from the California Department of Education (CDE) to work on this project. They have participated in phone conferences and webinars since February, 2015 to discuss the project and establish guidelines for the work.

Data expected from each state includes course enrollment by school with teacher assignments and arts education courses for each state. Currently, CDE is focused on delivering the data that has been collected as part of an annual submission by schools to Quadrant Research. Once Quadrant has received the data from all four states in the cohort, a National Launch will be planned.

To see an example for the state of Ohio, go to http://www.artseddata.org/ohio-example

The Role of Create CA

The Leadership Council of Create CA views the Arts Ed Data Project as an important and transformative opportunity. Plans are underway to work closely with California Dept. of Ed along with the other organizational partners in particular to plan appropriate training for Arts Ed Advocates that encourage school districts to improve their data results. In addition, resources will be dedicated to build a communications campaign for the public.