

WILL THE ARTS COME MARCHING IN? ACCESS TO ARTS EDUCATION IN POST-KATRINA NEW ORLEANS



By Sarah Woodward, *Tulane University*

Overview

The arts are a vital element of culture and means of individual self-expression, and many families view the arts as a key component of a holistic education. This is especially true in New Orleans, a culturally rich city where artistic expression is an essential part of the community's identity and a critical pillar of the local economy.

However, after Hurricane Katrina, the New Orleans school system was reformed in a way that has raised concerns that the arts are being lost. All publicly funded schools are charters which may be shut down if they do not achieve adequate standardized test results. As a result, school leaders may feel pressured to focus class time on tested subjects at the expense of art. On the other hand, since families have a multitude of choices for schools around the city, schools may see robust arts programs as an enticement for families to enroll.

This study examines how students' access to arts education in New Orleans has evolved alongside the post-Katrina school reforms. I analyzed administrative data on arts course enrollments from 2010-2016, and interviewed 17 arts educators and 11 school administrators to understand their views on the state of arts education in New Orleans. I draw these main conclusions:

- New Orleans had lower rates of enrollment in arts and enrichment courses in K-8 grades than the comparison districts, but similar arts enrollment rates for high school students.
- Both teachers and administrators saw value in the arts, especially in the potential to help students academically (promoting critical thinking and increasing student engagement) and to support social and emotional transformation (encouraging self-expression and fighting conformity).

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- School administrators valued arts education as a way to recruit students and families. Some arts educators felt that this was merely “marketing” or “PR” and that leaders emphasized breadth over depth in arts course offerings.
 - Art teachers felt that intense testing pressure and a decentralized school system were barriers to arts education. They often felt undermined in scheduling and administrative decisions, saw fewer opportunities for professional development, and felt isolated from the rest of the school and the wider arts education community.
 - School leadership played a key role in supporting the arts. Arts offerings varied greatly depending on the school leader’s personal values and belief in the importance of arts education.

These results have important implications not only in Louisiana but across the country. The intense pressures that New Orleans’ schools face to raise test scores are not unique to the city. In fact, they have been a hallmark of the U.S. education system since the passage of No Child Left Behind. In addition, New Orleans is held up as a model for many urban school districts that are considering choice-based market reforms such as charter schools. By presenting the perspectives of New Orleans arts educators and school leaders, this study sheds light on both the challenges and the value of promoting arts education within a system of school choice and academic accountability.

Background

Accountability for student outcomes has been a major focus of education policy over the past two decades. Nation-wide, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) threatened schools with interventions if they did not make Adequate Yearly Progress toward a goal of 100% proficiency on standardized tests. Some charter school policies also reinforce the effects of test-based accountability. The government-designated agencies that hold charter schools accountable, called authorizers, have the power to close schools, based mainly on their test scores. In places where authorizers are strict, charter leaders may face even more pressure to raise test scores than traditional public schools.

On the other hand, the New Orleans charter school system was founded on the principle that all families can choose where to educate their children. Families should have influence over academic programs and services that schools provide, at least in theory. Schools must compete for enrollment, and since they have wide-ranging autonomy in areas such as hiring, budgeting, and curriculum, they have the power to change their programming according to what they think families want. Living in a city that is an epicenter of arts and cultural traditions, many families have reported in citywide surveys that they value robust art offerings for their children.

In this study, I address the following research questions:

- How do trends in arts education offerings in New Orleans compare to those in demographically similar districts?
- What arts courses are being offered in New Orleans, and how do offerings vary across schools?
- How do arts education offerings for artistically talented students vary across schools?
- What do school administrators and teachers see as the value of arts education?
- What challenges do arts education programs face?
- How does school leadership affect arts education offerings?

How Did I Carry Out This Study?

This study emerged from numerous conversations with arts educators and organizations about the lack of basic information available on arts education access and the need for reliable descriptive data. Therefore, I begin by analyzing data to get a foundational understanding of how many students are enrolled in arts courses, and what type of courses are offered. My analysis focuses on two main data sources: student course enrollment data and interviews with arts educators and administrators.

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Using the course enrollment data, I calculated the percent of students in each school enrolled in at least one arts course in a given year, including music, visual arts, dance, theater, and media arts, using Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) student course enrollment data from 2009-10, which is the first year that reliable data were available, up to 2015-16. (Here and throughout the brief, I refer to a school year by the spring year; e.g., 2016 refers to the 2015-16 school year.) I also calculated the percent of students in each school who are identified as talented, a subset of special education.

My analysis covered 52 of the 64 publicly funded K-8 schools and 23 of the 25 publicly funded high schools in New Orleans. It is important to note that a New Orleans selective admissions arts high school where all students take arts courses is omitted from my data set. Some schools reported zero enrollment in arts courses to the state; in these cases, I called individual schools to confirm their enrollment rates. Some schools confirmed that they had zero enrollment, whereas others said they did offer art courses. I removed schools from my sample when my call to a school confirmed that their arts enrollment count was inaccurate.

In order to see whether trends in New Orleans are unique to the city or if they simply reflect statewide patterns, I conducted a similar analysis in East Baton Rouge Parish and Caddo Parish (which includes the city of Shreveport). Both school districts are similar to New Orleans in terms of student demographics and academic performance. East Baton Rouge Parish has some charter schools (21 out of 97 schools were charters in 2016), while Caddo is a more traditional school district with only a handful of charters.

The course enrollment data were limited in several ways. Data were only available for the 2010-2016 school years, which meant that I could not directly compare pre- and post-Katrina arts enrollment rates. Also, while the data indicated the percent of students enrolled in a course, I did not have additional information on the quality or breadth of those courses.

The data were also vague, particularly at the K-8 level. Many K-8 schools reported the arts as “enrichment” or “elective” courses, which typically include at least one art form, but sometimes can refer to non-arts courses such as gym. For this reason, I report K-8 arts enrollment data as the percent of students enrolled in at least one arts or enrichment course. Consequently, the K-8 data analysis may overestimate arts enrollment rates in schools where enrichment programs did not include the arts. Course enrollment data tended to be more reliable for high schools.

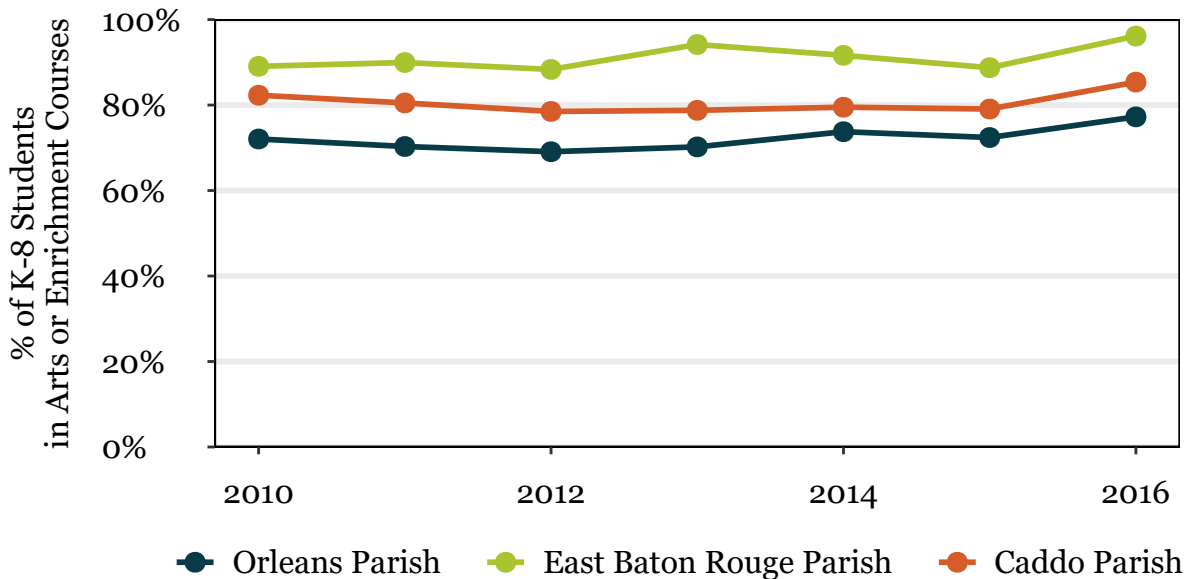
To help explain the quantitative data and uncover additional insights, I conducted 28 interviews with school administrators and arts educators at 12 publicly funded schools in New Orleans, half of them high schools and half K-8. I selected a diverse range of schools that were lower and higher performing according to student test scores and those that had lower and higher arts enrollment rates.

From June to October 2018, I interviewed nine visual arts teachers, five music teachers, two dance teachers, and one media arts teacher. I also interviewed 11 school administrators, e.g., school directors, principals, or assistant principals. One limitation is that I did not interview educators in the comparison districts, which would be helpful for understanding whether teachers in New Orleans view the arts differently.

How Do Trends in Arts Education Offerings in New Orleans Compare to Those in Demographically Similar Districts?

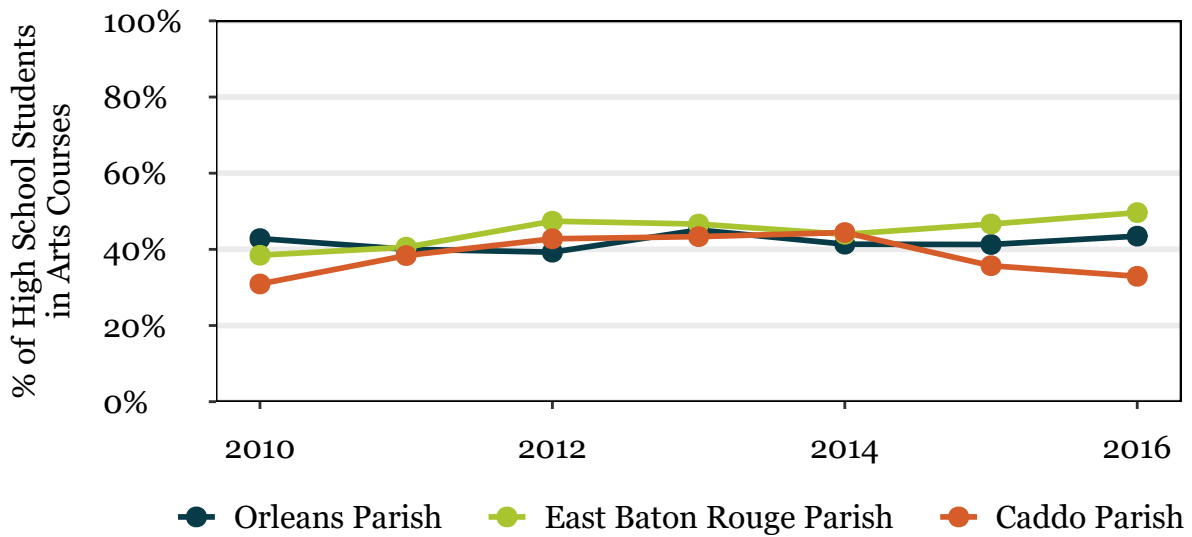
In the post-Katrina years, New Orleans consistently had fewer K-8 students enrolled in art or enrichment courses compared with two comparison districts in Louisiana, Caddo and East Baton Rouge Parishes (Figure 1). These districts are similar to Orleans Parish in terms of overall number of students, the percentage of students of color, the percentage of low-income students, and academic achievement levels. Figure 1 compares K-8 data from 52 schools in New Orleans, 79 in East Baton Rouge Parish, and 54 in Caddo Parish. While the lower arts and enrichment enrollment rate in New Orleans could be due to the prevalence of charter schools, East Baton Rouge Parish also has a high share of charter schools, and it had the *highest* rate of arts enrollment of the three districts.

Figure 1: Fewer K-8 students in New Orleans were enrolled in arts and enrichment courses than in Caddo or East Baton Rouge Parishes.



I next compared high school data from 23 schools in New Orleans, 18 in East Baton Rouge Parish, and 16 in Caddo Parish. At the high school level, enrollment in arts courses was far more similar across the three parishes (Figure 2). One reason for this trend is that the state requires all high school students to take one art course in order to graduate from high school. This graduation requirement applies to all high school students in the state and ensures that there is some level of minimum arts participation across all schools. Arts enrollment in high schools was lower than in K-8 schools. In 2016, for example, 77% of New Orleans K-8 students were enrolled in at least one arts or enrichment course, compared to only 43% of the city’s high school students.

Figure 2: For high school students, arts enrollment rates were similar across the three parishes.



Graduation requirements may affect high school students’ bandwidth to take arts classes. Another possible explanation for the lower share of arts enrollment at the high school level is that students have more choice over coursework in later grades, including more non-arts electives to choose from. Those who do not feel artistically inclined are unlikely to opt into more than the one required art course.

What Arts Courses Are Being Offered in New Orleans, and How Do Offerings Vary Across Schools?

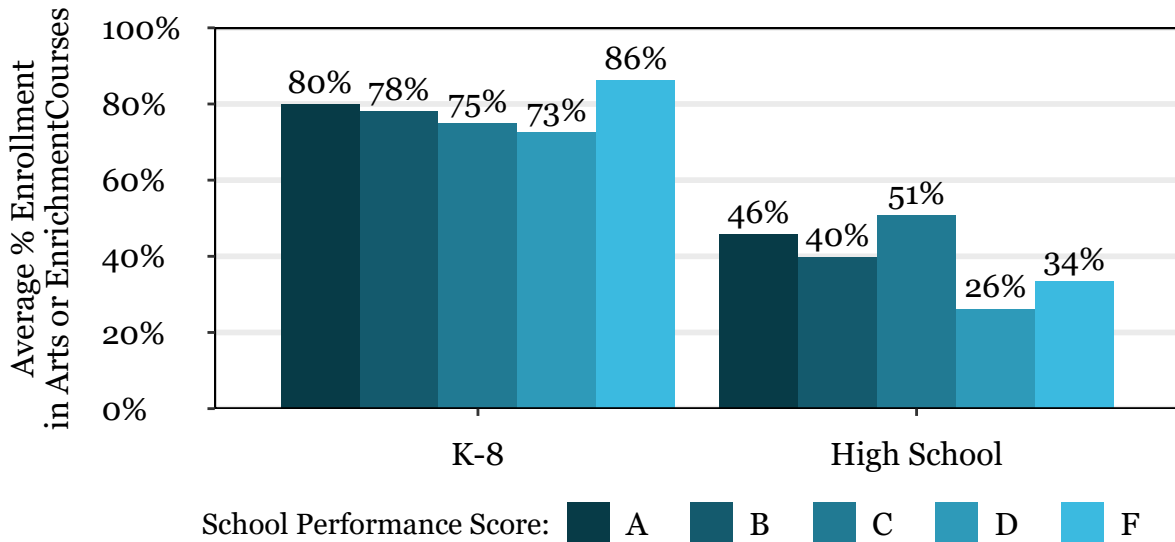
It was difficult to tell what types of courses students took in K-8 schools, because 42% of enrollments in 2016 were in “enrichment” courses without the subject specified. However, it was still clear that music was immensely popular – it made up 51% of all course enrollments where the subject was known. Visual arts followed a close second, with 42% of enrollments where the subject was specified. Other subjects like theater and dance were far less popular – only 5% of enrollments were in theater and 3% in dance.

There was a greater diversity of course offerings in high school, with more students enrolled in courses such as theater (10%) and media arts (9%), but music and visual arts were still by far the most-enrolled courses (32% and 30%, respectively).

In addition to looking at how arts course offerings varied across the city, I also analyzed how arts enrollment rates varied across schools. Overall, I did not find large differences in 2016 arts enrollment based on school performance scores, which are A through F letter grades given to each school largely based on students' standardized test scores. In fact, Figure 3 shows that F-rated schools had the highest average enrollment in arts or enrichment courses for K-8 (86%), while A-rated schools had the second-highest average (80%). In high school, C-rated schools had the highest average arts enrollment.

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Figure 3: There is little correlation between school letter grades and enrollment in arts and enrichment.

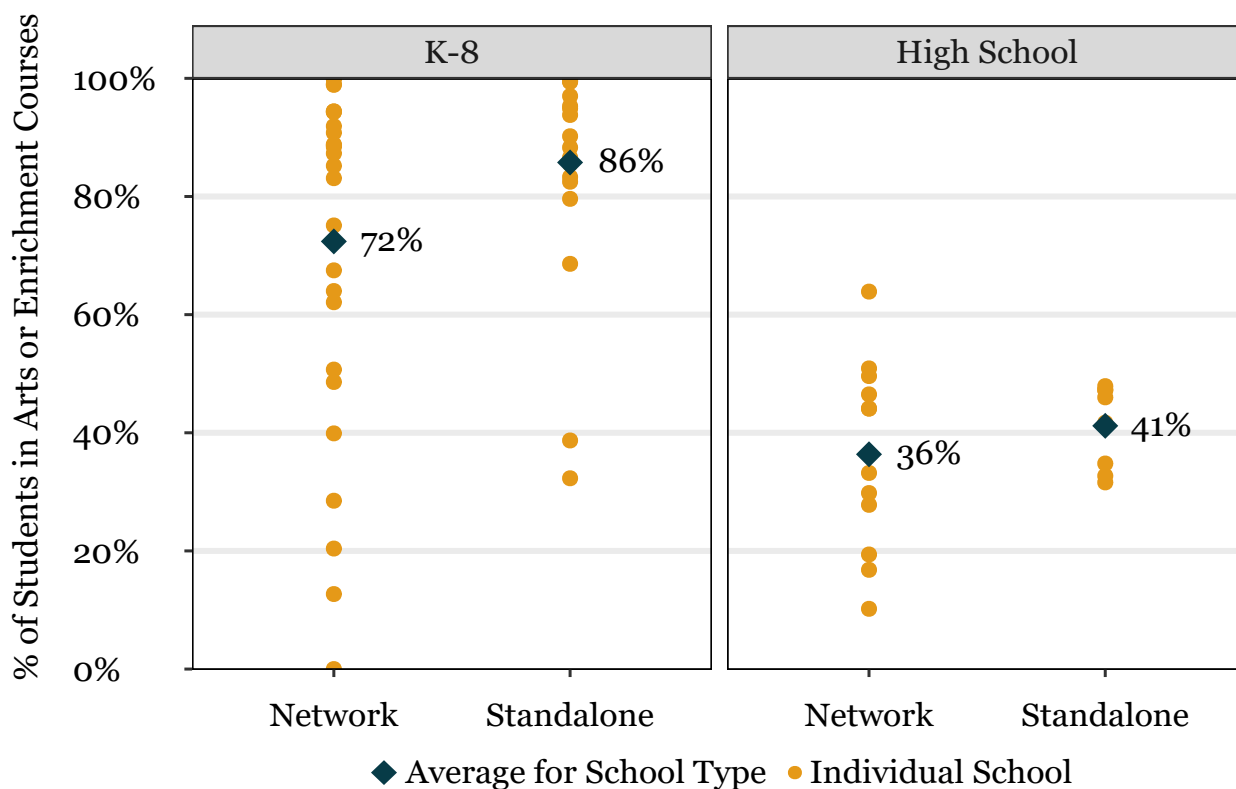


Note: The data are from the 2016 school year.

I also examined how the share of students enrolled in arts courses varies between standalone charter schools and schools that are part of a larger charter network. Overall, there was wide variation between the types of schools (Figure 4, next page). Some K-8 schools had every single child enrolled in an arts or enrichment course, and others had zero enrollment at all. As I will discuss later in the brief, my interviews with arts educators across the city indicate that this enormous range of participation rates in the arts had much to do with whether the school's leadership supported the arts.

I found that standalone charter schools did have a higher share of students enrolled in the arts compared to schools in charter networks, at both the K-8 and high school levels. On average, 86% of K-8 students in standalone charter schools were enrolled in an arts or enrichment course in 2016, compared to 72% of K-8 students in network charter schools. There was a similar pattern across high schools, where the ratio was 41% to 36%.

Figure 4: Arts enrollment rates vary widely across schools, but standalone charter schools had higher rates than network charters.



Note: The data are from the 2016 school year. ‘Average for School Type’ is not weighted by school enrollment.

There were also six non-charter schools at the time that were operated by the Orleans Parish School District (four K-8 and two high schools), but the sample size is so small that I did not include them in Figure 4 to avoid identifying them.

Interviewees gave varied explanations for why they believed charter schools in larger networks had somewhat lower arts enrollment rates, including high levels of turnover and instability within the network administration, a narrow emphasis on “college preparatory” programming that excluded the arts, standardized curriculum across the network, and “top heavy” network administrative budgets. Only one interviewee said the CEO of their network was a driving force for the arts.

During interviews, I found that some of the most robust arts programming was occurring within standalone charter schools. They scheduled academic intervention periods so that students did not have to be pulled out of art courses for tutoring, and they also offered professional development opportunities for arts educators. At one school, the majority of students actually took art twice during the school day.

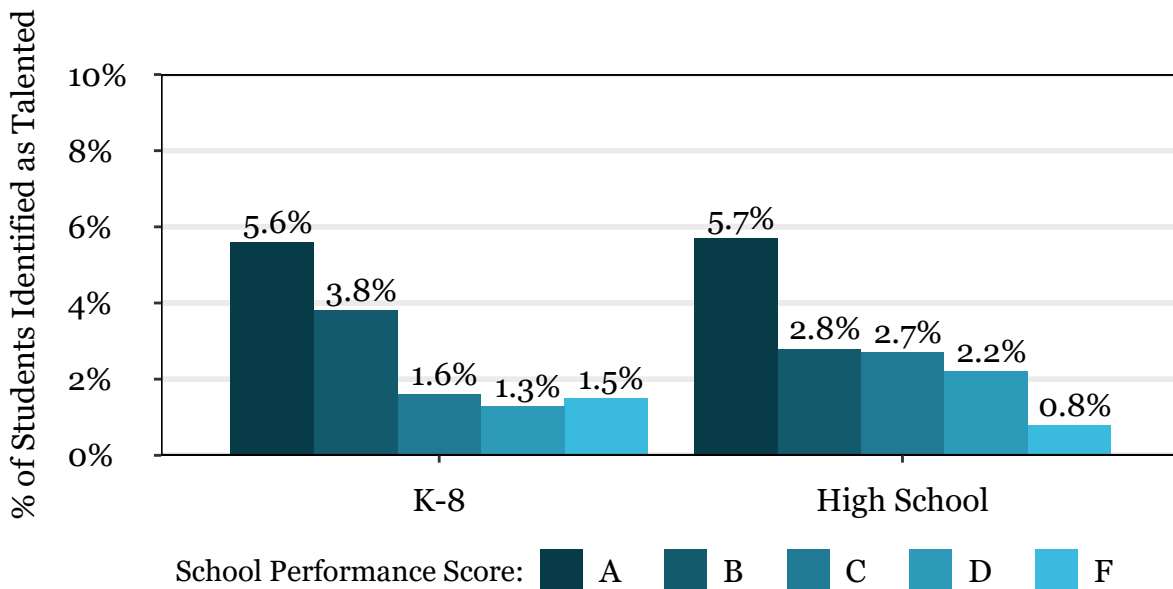
“*I found that some of the most robust arts programming was occurring within standalone charter schools.*”

How Do Arts Education Offerings for Artistically Talented Students Vary Across Schools?

Louisiana law requires traditional public schools (but not charter schools) to identify students who excel in visual arts, music, or theater. These students are classified as “talented” and are entitled to receive special services, such as advanced arts classes, to promote their gifts and help them work towards their artistic goals.

While a school’s performance rating had little correlation with its arts enrollment, there were notable disparities in the identification of talented students. Almost 6% of all students in A-rated high schools were identified as talented, compared to fewer than 1% of students in F-rated high schools (Figure 5). Results were similar for K-8 schools. It is important to note that a student identified as talented may not always receive services. Again, charter schools are not legally required to provide talented services to their students.

Figure 5: A-rated schools had a far higher percentage of students identified as artistically talented.



Note: The data are from the 2016 school year.

One potential reason for this discrepancy is that A and B schools may have a greater infrastructure in place to identify talented students, as well as resources necessary to provide these services. For example, I found that in many A and B schools there were entire arts classes set aside for talented students. These classes were rare to nonexistent in C, D and F schools, which may be due to an increased focus on academic subjects for schools in danger of closing.

Interviewees reported that talented services in C, D, and F schools were often structured as a “pull out” from lunch time or from other classes. Arts educators criticized the practice of “pull outs,” believing that they made other teachers and the students themselves less likely to take their services seriously. Interviewees perceived that there was no effort by a majority of charter schools to identify and evaluate creative students. The diminished time and value placed on the

talented program at some schools also meant that students couldn't complete longer-term projects or put together art portfolios. The inability to put together a portfolio, in turn, could impact a student's chances at attending an advanced high school or college program.

What Do School Administrators and Teachers See as the Value of Arts Education?

The data reported above provide descriptive statistics that allow us to understand the terrain of the arts education landscape in New Orleans. But a deeper qualitative analysis is necessary to gain more insight into how arts education functions within and responds to the context of an accountability- and choice-based system.

I began this qualitative analysis by asking interviewees about what they saw as the value of arts education for their students. Their answers generally fell into three categories: academic benefits, social and emotional transformation, and career opportunities for students.

Academic benefits. Twenty out of 28 interviewees talked about how the arts help students in academic subjects, pointing out the connection between the arts and higher order thinking skills like problem solving, creativity, and visual analysis.

There was near-universal agreement that the arts increased student engagement. School administrators described how art classes motivated many students to come to school each day, helping students feel a sense of belonging and connection to school. Taking time away from tested academic courses could be risky for a school on the brink of closure, but some schools saw that ignoring the arts brought its own consequences.

“The pressure is tremendous, so we're taking an enormous risk even taking our eyes off the prize and looking at the arts,” one K-8 administrator admitted. However, “if we don't have the kid's motivation or we don't have the kid's passion, they will never get the test scores.”

Social and emotional transformation. Thirteen out of 28 interviewees also discussed the socio-emotional benefits at length, emphasizing creative expression, open-mindedness, and the idea that there are no right or wrong answers in art. A K-8 dance teacher explained, “Often times we want 'em to be quiet so we can teach them...[if] we just always have them bound, then when can they be free and actually express themselves?” Interviewees described the importance of grounding the learning process in students' voices, interests, and cultural backgrounds.

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Many also brought up the importance of the arts for promoting emotional wellbeing, particularly for young people who have experienced trauma. “Art heals and I think that coming from a city that's as tough in its own weird ways as New Orleans is, those skill sets I think help people survive,” said one high school visual art teacher.

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In a few cases, educators also discussed how the arts could help young people understand and address social justice and oppression. The same teacher as above noted, “[if] you’re not necessarily being challenged by literature or you know, anything that actually questions the world in a deeper way, the way the arts should, you have a pretty dumbed down society [that’s] easy to control and manipulate.”

Creating career opportunities for students. Only a handful of interviewees brought up possible professional opportunities in the arts for their students in the future, but they spoke passionately about the under-realized potential of talented New Orleans youth. These interviewees believed in enhancing the rigor and quality of arts education to prepare students to enter competitive college programs and ultimately make a living as professional artists. There was a burgeoning interest in more schools to invest in professional pathways towards creative careers, particularly in the area of digital media.

The above ideas demonstrate the value of arts for students, but there were also additional benefits for the schools themselves. Interviewees often noted that offering a good arts curriculum, especially band, impacted marketing and student recruitment. Being able to stand out from other schools increased student enrollment rates, thus helping to secure the school’s budget for the year. As one high school administrator said, “Put a good band on the streets for Mardi Gras... that raises your profile as a school in New Orleans.”

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However, the marketing benefits to the school came with a drawback. Arts educators in some schools expressed frustration that promoting the arts in high-visibility events like Mardi Gras parades was not matched with commensurate support for the “nuts and bolts.” “The big thing is marketing, PR, and that’s it,” said one music teacher. “No one is saying, hey, these kids haven’t learned these scales, and they’re in your advanced music class.”

On a larger level, the arts also increased family engagement. Arts can connect families to the school in ways that academic programs cannot – because the arts are themselves connected to local culture, history, and pride. One administrator initially did not see the importance of having a school band, but said “there wasn’t one PTA meeting” where parents didn’t ask “when are you gonna bring the band back?” The administrator said, “I realized how much it meant to the community. And it brought a lot of pride for the children and the students.”

What Challenges Do Arts Education Programs Face?

Nearly all interviewees reported that a major challenge facing arts education programs was the enormous pressure on schools to raise test scores. Teachers frequently felt undermined in scheduling and administrative decisions at the school. For example, they described students being pulled out of their art classes to do make up work and remediation or as punishment for poor behavior in tested subjects; at one school these were called “enrichment detentions.” As one music teacher said: “Truly giving kids a well-rounded education and educating the whole child and not just the math and ELA [English Language Arts] is not a high priority at our school all the time.”

Some schools that outwardly stated a commitment to the arts – in either the school’s name or its mission and vision statement – would prioritize academics when their charter was up for renewal. One K-8 administrator described the pressure to get a good school performance score this way: “Especially when you’re in charter schools in New Orleans in the renewal phase, that [school performance] number matters. The building does not open if you don’t hit that number.”

Arts educators also indicated that the pressure to perform on tested subjects took away from professional support for arts educators. Arts educators and school administrators often felt their arts programs were siloed, invisible, or did not receive the acknowledgement they deserved. One visual art teacher at a K-8 school said, “To have a good program, you really have to be willing to do a lot of the work yourself... and not really ask for your school leader or anybody to help you with that.”

Around half of the arts educators I interviewed felt that professional development and growth opportunities were lacking in their charter schools and in the New Orleans school system as a whole. If arts educators received coaching and professional development at all, it was frequently related to other school subjects or led by individuals that had no arts expertise. One administrator noted that before Hurricane Katrina, the district had several arts supervisors; now, professional development and management of arts educators are often “volleyballed” from one administrator to the next.

Decentralization created a sense of fragmentation, making it especially challenging for arts educators to learn what is happening within other schools. Interviewees reported that schools rarely communicate with one another about their arts education programming. “Everybody’s an island in this city,” said a music teacher. Although this teacher’s school had a strong arts program, the school administrator believed that very few other school leaders knew about it.

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The emphasis on tested subjects in charter schools did have one positive benefit – since art wasn’t tested, arts educators enjoyed the freedom to teach how they liked. Interviewees reported “one hundred percent autonomy,” a “vast amount of independence,” “total control,” and “full reign” over their classrooms, in comparison with teachers in tested subjects whose curricula were “rigid,” “dictated,” and “scripted.” Overall, educators enjoyed and valued their autonomy even though they wanted more support.

How Does School Leadership Affect Arts Education Offerings?

Interviewees reported that the school leader’s personal beliefs and values were key factors in determining whether arts education would thrive at the school. If a school leader believed in the value of arts education – or came to believe it after moving to New Orleans and understanding the city’s culture – it could make all the difference.

For example, at one school, the art teacher who provided talented services frequently fought against school staff to protect their time with students. But at another school where the arts were a priority, the school had designated staff for identifying talented students, screening them, and then providing talented education services, which resulted in full talented art classes every year.

At one school with a D letter grade, the school administrator acknowledged the omnipresent threat of school closure, saying that, “the test has really been the buggabear for so long. It’s really a part of our backdrop.” Nevertheless, the school administrator continued to say that staff recognized that they just needed to “work harder” to provide a holistic education that included the arts and that they were “up for the task” because they believed that arts education was “equally as important.”

School instability also affects arts offerings. “The enemy of any program like this, like any other program in a school, is turnover,” said one administrator. For arts education to flourish, interviewees believed that schools needed to have a consistent, stable leadership team. Otherwise, support for arts education could vary drastically from one school leader to the next.

Discussion

In New Orleans’ all-charter district, school leaders have the autonomy to make choices about which courses to offer and how to allocate resources. While low test scores could result in their school closing, low enrollment may also lead to closure. These two competing pressures – test-based and market-based accountability – affect whether and how schools offer arts courses. As the descriptive data shows, these competing pressures, along with the autonomy allowed to schools, lead to wide variation in course offerings across New Orleans.

This study finds that the pressure on schools to perform well on tested subjects was nearly universal among interviewees. As a result, arts educators often felt devalued. The pressure impacted instructional time for the arts, especially during charter renewal years or in grade levels that were important for testing, and led to limited professional development for teachers. On the other hand, there was a positive tradeoff for the lack of support and attention: arts educators had vast autonomy and enjoyed the freedom of crafting exciting lessons for arts students.

In response to the market pressures of a choice-based system, school leaders clearly valued the arts as a way to attract New Orleans families and engage students in the school. But arts educators sometimes experienced this as mere “marketing” and “PR.” Using the arts as a marketing tool did not always translate into year-round support and resources for a high-quality arts program, particularly when it came to development of higher level arts skills.

Students are undoubtedly being impacted by the uncertainty, anxiety, and loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. After extensive school closures, it may be tempting to further narrow the curriculum in an effort to catch kids up on tested subject areas. But now more than ever, arts education is essential. School administrators and arts educators view arts education as a key contributor to social and emotional wellbeing, allowing students to express themselves and to process trauma in ways that foster resilience and growth. If policymakers want to support arts education in schools, they may consider the following policy options:

- *City-Wide Nonprofit Support for the Arts Education Community.* Many teachers I interviewed felt they were working in a silo. Traditional school districts typically house an arts department or district arts coordinator that provides professional development and curricular support for arts educators. Without these centralized resources, nonprofits and individual arts educators themselves must fill in the gaps. Organizations like the New Orleans Arts Education Alliance, Artist Corps New Orleans, and KID smART are already doing important work to provide resources to arts educators and teaching artists across the city, and collaborative efforts such as the New Orleans ArtLook Map and Mapping Music have made strides

towards unifying and bringing visibility to arts education. This study reinforces the importance of supporting nonprofits that are connecting, celebrating, and strengthening the arts education professional community.

- *Reforming the Accountability System.* Several interview participants believed that the test-driven focus of the accountability system was a limitation and desired ways to bring holistic educational approaches back to the forefront. There are two potential policy directions that could capture the impact of arts education in schools within the context of an accountability system. First, policymakers might consider incorporating school climate measures, such as social and emotional safety, into school accountability systems. Arts education’s benefits are more likely to be evident in school climate assessments than test scores. The second potential policy direction is to bring in external evaluators to determine school effectiveness through school inspections, which have been used in England, the Netherlands, and New Zealand. School inspections allow greater flexibility in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of a school including those that are not easily quantifiable.
- *Better Arts Education Data.* It is still difficult to see whether the arts courses that students are enrolled in offer true breadth and depth, due to the lack of clarity in the data. Encouragingly, starting in the 2020 school year, five percent of a school’s performance score will be based on a measure of enrichment offerings known as the Interests and Opportunities indicator. Schools will be required to report more specific arts enrollment data to the state. Policymakers may also want to consider asking schools to report the number of instructional minutes per art form. Districts could survey schools to collect more nuanced data about art programs during and after school, including arts education resources and professional development opportunities for arts educators.

While the arts face competing pressures of test-based and market-based accountability, test-based accountability seems to win out, not so much in the volume of course offerings, but in their quality and character. Creativity and artistic merit are not easily quantified. Because arts education does not fit into the paradigm of data-driven instruction and accountability, it is easy for reformers and funders to dismiss it as a “nice to have” rather than a necessity. But in New Orleans, creativity is an integral part of life. It is one of the city’s greatest resources. If our goal is to prepare young people for a lifetime of joyful learning as well as social and professional fulfillment, then the arts must be a central part of the city’s educational vision.

How is this Research Related to Other ERA-New Orleans Studies?

This work relates to other topics that ERA-New Orleans researchers have examined:

In *What Schools Do Families Want (And Why)?*, Douglas N. Harris and Matthew Larsen looked at which characteristics have the most influence over which schools that average families in New Orleans choose. This is important given the theory that choice might counteract the tendency of test-based accountability to narrow the curriculum. The authors found that parents were more likely to choose schools that had higher school performance scores, more extracurriculars or sports, a football team or band, and for elementary schools, after-school childcare.

In *Is There Choice in School Choice? School Program Offerings in the New Orleans Public Schools Market*, Paula Arce-Trigatti, Jane Arnold Lincove, Douglas N. Harris, and Huriya Jabbar looked at how New Orleans schools differentiate themselves. Researchers found wide variation in schools based on characteristics like school hours, the number of extracurriculars or sports offered, adopting a curriculum theme such as STEM or the arts, or having a focus on college preparation.

About the Education Research Alliance for New Orleans

The mission of the Education Research Alliance for New Orleans (ERA-New Orleans) is to produce rigorous, objective, and useful research to understand the post-Katrina school reforms and their long-term effects on all students. Based at Tulane University, ERA-New Orleans is a partnership between university-based researchers and a broad spectrum of local education groups. Our Advisory Board includes (in alphabetical order): the Louisiana Association of Educators, the Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools, the Louisiana Federation of Teachers, the Louisiana Recovery School District, New Schools for New Orleans, NOLA Public Schools, Orleans Public Education Network, and the Urban League of Greater New Orleans. For more information, please visit the organization's website.

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