



# State of the Arts in Education

## 2021 Impact Report

At the State of the Arts in Education inaugural event, local leaders came together to discuss, envision and advocate for the continuous impact of the arts for students in Houston ISD. We celebrated successes of the last few years and investigated where the arts are headed in education.

Topics included:

- Stories about the personal impact of the arts
- A review of the current state of Houston ISD Fine Arts
- The importance of equity when discussing education
- Current research on the impact of the arts

*As you read through this report, click the play button to watch each section of the live event!*



"As an organization, Arts Connect Houston fills a new space in Houston. Collectively, we work towards creating the right conditions for lasting systems change so that every student, in every school, in every classroom has access to the arts without regard to family income or where they live."

**Deborah Lugo, Executive Director**



### Collective Outcomes

Over **30,000** students participate annually in diverse arts partnership opportunities

**20,000** more students in class with a certified Fine Arts teacher

Over **70** local, national and Arts and Culture Partners

- Increased amount of principals turning to arts education as a tool to advance campus goals
- Increased connection to and within the arts community here in Houston; more individuals seeing the arts as part of a complete education
- District-level changes to ensure the arts have a seat at the decision-making table

### Equity Matters: Arts Education and Student Impacts

Dr. Daniel Bowen, Assistant Professor, Department of Education Administration and Human Resources, Texas A&M University

Dr. Ruth López-Turley, Professor of Sociology and Director of Houston Education Research Consortium

Learn more about the impact of the arts for students.

- When conducted rigorously, research does show that the arts improve: student and parent engagement, attendance, critical thinking skills, writing achievement, empathy, tolerance and more!
- When we look at the impact of arts learning by student subgroups, we find effects that are substantially greater in magnitude - in many cases two to three times - when compared to the general student population.
- When we provide arts learning opportunities, schools are compensating for learning opportunities that would not otherwise be taking place for historically marginalized students.



"Equity in education means giving students what they need in order to thrive. Equity acknowledges that some students have greater need than others. And, that we, as a society, have a responsibility to meet those needs. Unfortunately, we have not done a good job of pursuing educational equity. In fact, we've done the opposite. Instead of giving more to those who need more, we tend to give more to those who have more. Students in higher income families get more educational resources both at-home, and, at school."

**Dr. Ruth López-Turley, Director of Houston Education Research Consortium (HERC)**



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### Fine Arts in Houston ISD

Wenden Sanders, Director of Fine Arts, Houston ISD

Since its creation in 2017, the Fine Arts Department has made significant advances to improve access to arts education opportunities on all campuses across Houston ISD.

- The student to Fine Arts teacher ratio has decreased to 291:1 from 361:1
- The Fine Arts Department supports 675 certified Fine Arts teachers; a 13% increase in just four years
- 30 elementary Fine Arts deserts have been eliminated and 36% of students are on a campus with four or more certified Fine Arts teachers



While great work has been done, there are still many necessary strides to ensure equitable access for all students in Houston ISD. Today, nearly 70,000 students throughout the district are on campuses with either 0 to 1 fine arts teacher. That includes 11% of our students that still do not have access to any arts. Those disparities are incurred primarily by our Hispanic and Black students, who are more likely to find themselves on a campus with one fewer fine arts teacher than a white student in the district.

"The arts, in general, create an outlet – an outlet for feelings, ideas and creativity. But more than that, there's 21st century skills embedded in the arts...Every child should be face to face with an arts teacher on every level – from elementary to high school."

**Lauren Anderson, Associate Director of Education and Community Engagement, Houston Ballet**

**During the event, we heard stories from a variety of arts beneficiaries. Check out their stories below!**

Hear from young artists in Houston ISD

**Artists' Report**

Hear from community leaders

**The Arts Unlock**

Hear from our Arts & Culture Partners

**Partner Perspectives**

Hear from the leaders of Arts Connect

**Art Stories**

### Arts Connect Champion Awards

**Dr. Grenita Lathan**



**Champion in Education**

**Lauren Anderson**



**Champion in the Arts**



### Advocate for the Arts in Education

It is time to invest in the arts opportunity – the opportunity to nurture the next generation as creative, thoughtful, and proactive leaders driven by equity, compassion, and hope.

**So, how will you use your voice to act right now to advocate for the arts?**