

Using Arts Data to Match Community Organizations to School Needs

Launched in 2012, Chicago nonprofit Ingenuity collects data on arts education in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and on local arts organizations. Once fed into Ingenuity's web-based tool, artlook, schools can use the data map to find arts partners that can help them meet their instructional needs, arts organizations can use it to find schools where they are needed, and administrators and advocates can use data dashboards to track Chicago's progress in increasing access to arts education.

Ingenuity staff gather arts data from CPS's publicly available administrative resources, from a survey of school-based liaisons, and from local arts organizations. School-based survey responses provide data on school arts staffing, instructional minutes devoted to arts instruction, the percentage of students able to access that instruction, and other indicators on assets that help sustain quality arts programming. Based on these data, Ingenuity is able to certify schools as excelling, strong, developing, or emerging based on the arts education resources offered.

Over six years, CPS more than doubled the percentage of its schools rated as excelling or strong, and it markedly increased the percentage of high schools offering three or more arts disciplines, the number of active arts partners working in CPS schools, and the percentage of schools meeting recommended instructor-student ratios.¹

"The number of students in CPS who attend schools that are strong or excelling in the arts has increased by more than 100,000 since we began tracking this information," said Steve Shewfelt, director of data and research for Ingenuity. "We still have another 100,000 students that we want to get into that same category. The data we collect through the

platform is what we used to design strategies to achieve that goal, in partnership with CPS."

With the support from the Kennedy Center's Any Given Child program, Ingenuity in 2019 began to assist six other communities that will use the Ingenuity platform to develop their own arts education census data and maps: Jacksonville, Florida; Houston; New Orleans; Portland, Oregon; Sacramento, California; and Baltimore. Shewfelt said he expects the public-facing maps in each community will launch in early 2020, with updates in each subsequent school year.

Ingenuity is also working with Partnering with Arts Education in Maryland Schools to bring artlook to schools throughout the state, starting with Baltimore City Public Schools and three other Maryland counties.

"The potential is to drive increased access to and understanding about arts education in each of these communities," Shewfelt said. "What communities need in order to realize that potential is a committed group of people who are interested in participating and sharing information that feeds into the platform; support from the leadership in the school district, the funding community, and the arts education community writ large; and an eagerness to improve the access students have to a quality arts education program." ■

¹Ingenuity, "State of the Arts in Chicago Public Schools: Progress Report, 2017-18" (Chicago: Ingenuity, 2018).

Six communities follow Chicago's lead in developing arts education census data and maps.

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