



Preliminary Outcomes of California's Proposition 28 Arts and Music Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act

**Initial Reports from County Offices of
Education, Districts, and Schools**

October 2026

Sharon Herpin

Kelly Wynveen



Preface

In 2022, California voters passed Proposition 28 (Prop 28), the Arts and Music (AMS) Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act, which established annual funding (ranging from \$938 million to more than \$1 billion) for arts education for all public schools across the state. This first-of-its-kind legislation provides a permanent funding source dedicated to arts education for California's public school students. WestEd, in partnership with Create CA, received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and funding from the Perenchio Foundation to study the initial impact of these funds on the state's arts education landscape.

In spring 2025, WestEd surveyed staff from county offices of education (COEs), districts, and schools across the state to understand the initial impact of this funding. This brief focuses on examining the extent to which COEs, districts, and schools in California observed 13 potential positive outcomes related to Prop 28 AMS implementation.

Overview of Respondents and Data

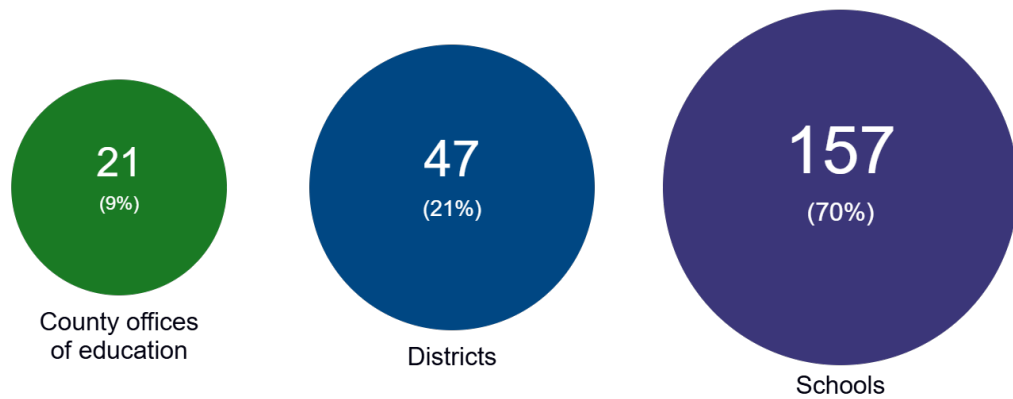
To ensure that the most valid data were used, respondents who answered less than 25 percent of the survey questions were removed from the analysis. Although 332 respondents began the survey, data from 225 (67%) were included in the analysis. Of these respondents, 21 represented COEs, 47 represented districts, and 157 represented schools (Figure 1). The percentage of respondents removed for not meeting the 25 percent threshold was similar across all three groups.

All respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they observed 13 potential outcomes related to Prop 28 AMS implementation in their county, district, or school. Responses were measured on a 5-point scale from 1 = not at all to 5 = extensively. Items with a rating of 2.5 or above were considered observations



of positive outcomes, whereas lower ratings indicated that outcomes were yet to be observed or may not occur because of funding.

Figure 1. Distribution of Respondents



Preliminary Outcomes

Findings suggest that respondents are beginning to observe meaningful benefits associated with Prop 28 AMS implementation, particularly in the areas of program expansion, staffing, instructional supplies and materials, and student access. However, ratings varied substantially across respondent groups, which indicates that implementation experiences remain uneven across the state.

Key Takeaways

- District respondents perceived that outcomes were more positive overall, with higher ratings on 11 of 13 items compared with the ratings that COE and school staff provided (Table 1). District respondents rated four items greater than 3.5. The highest rated item for COE respondents was 3.26. The highest rated item for school staff was 3.20.



- District respondents rated four items greater than 3.5, which means they indicated that the following outcomes were observed: the expansion of existing arts programs, increased discussion about the arts, more students receiving arts instruction, and new arts teachers hired.
- The highest rated items among COE respondents, all at or greater than 3.00, were increased discussion about the arts, expansion of existing arts programs, more students receiving arts instruction, and a greater emphasis on the value of the arts.
- School staff rated only one item greater than 3.00: increased availability of arts supplies and materials.

Table 1. Average Rating by Respondent Group, Overall Outcomes

Outcome	Counties	Districts	Schools	Overall
Increased discussions about the arts	3.26	3.62	2.93	3.27
Expansion of existing arts programs	3.16	3.75	2.86	3.25
More students receiving arts instruction	3.05	3.62	2.73	3.14
Increased availability of arts supplies	2.53	3.27	3.20	3.00
New arts teachers hired	2.63	3.56	2.51	2.90
New arts programs implemented	2.68	3.48	2.51	2.89
Strategic arts plan developed	2.79	3.33	2.51	2.88
Greater emphasis on value of the arts	3.00	3.08	2.51	2.86
Higher quality arts instruction	2.47	3.10	2.81	2.79
Art disciplines not previously available introduced	2.53	2.98	2.28	2.59
New arts partnerships	2.68	2.62	2.07	2.46



Outcome	Counties	Districts	Schools	Overall
More integration of the arts in non-arts or multisubject classrooms	2.42	2.42	1.76	2.20
Adoption of an arts curriculum	1.63	2.12	1.84	1.86

Note. Responses were on a 5-point scale. Items with a rating of 2.5 or greater were considered positive outcomes and lower ratings indicated that the outcome was yet to be observed or may not occur because of funding.

Other Findings of Interest

- Respondents from urban settings reported some of the highest rates of positive outcomes. Six items were rated at 3.00 or greater: more students receiving arts instruction (3.32), more arts teachers hired (3.22), expansion of existing arts programs (3.14), increased availability of arts supplies (3.13), increased discussions about the arts (3.08), and implementation of new arts programs (3.00).
- Respondents from rural settings rated four items at 3.00 or greater: increased discussions about the arts (3.40), more students receiving arts instruction (3.35), expansion of existing arts programs (3.16), and implementation of new arts programs (3.00).
- Respondents from suburban settings provided the lowest ratings overall, with only two items greater than 3.00: increased availability of arts supplies (3.23) and expansion of existing arts programs (3.04).
- Urban and rural respondents were much more likely than suburban respondents to indicate that more students were receiving arts instruction.
- Middle and high school respondents provided higher ratings than did elementary school respondents for an increased availability of arts supplies and an expansion of existing arts programs. But elementary school respondents provided higher ratings for hiring new arts teachers, arts integration in non-arts classes, the introduction of new art disciplines, and a greater emphasis on the value of the arts.



- Administrators provided much higher ratings overall than did practitioners, indicating an average of 3.36 compared with 2.53. Administrator ratings were higher for every item, with a difference greater than 1.00 for 6 of 13 items.

Responses Regarding Increased Student Participation in the Arts

Participants were asked to indicate whether Prop 28 AMS funds led to increased student participation in arts education. Response options were yes (significantly), yes (somewhat), yes (slightly), no change yet but it will increase, no change yet and it is unlikely to increase, no change and participation has or will decrease, and unsure.

Nearly two thirds of respondents (62%) reported some increase in student participation (Table 2). Half of respondents (50%) reported a significant or moderate increase, and 12 percent reported a slight increase. District respondents were more likely to report an increase than were COE and school-level staff and less likely to respond as unsure.

Table 2. Percentage by Respondent Group, Increased Student Participation, Response Summary

Response summary	Counties	Districts	Schools	All
Any yes (significantly to slightly)	68.4	80.5	55.7	62.0
Any no or no change	15.8	14.6	34.3	28.5
Unsure	15.8	4.9	10.0	9.5



Table 3. Percentage by Respondent Group, Increased Student Participation, Response Breakdown

Response breakdown	Counties	Districts	Schools	All
Yes, significantly	21.1	29.3	20.0	21.1
Yes, somewhat	42.1	39.0	22.9	42.1
Yes, slightly	5.3	12.2	12.9	5.3
No change but it will increase	5.3	0.0	12.1	5.3
No change yet and it is unlikely to increase	5.3	12.2	18.6	5.3
No change and participation has or will decrease	5.3	2.4	3.6	5.3
Unsure	15.8	4.9	10.0	15.8

Related Findings of Interest Regarding Increased Student Participation

- Rural respondents were more likely to report any increase in student arts participation (72.7%) than were urban (68.4%) and suburban (55.2%) respondents.
- Respondents working in middle schools were much more likely to report any increase in student arts participation (75.0%) than were staff from high schools (48.4%) and elementary schools (44.0%).
- Administrators were more likely to report any increase in student arts participation (85.7%) than were practitioners (57.0%).
- Charter school respondents were more likely to report any increase in student arts participation (70.0%) than were respondents working in traditional public schools (54.6%).



- All district respondents (100%) from large districts (25,000+ students) indicated at least some increase in student participation in the arts compared with 72.7% for those in smaller and mid-sized districts. And respondents from smaller districts (1,000–4,999 students) were more likely to report a significant increase (36.4% compared with 30% in large districts and 18.2% in mid-sized districts).

Participant Stories

Participants had the opportunity to share a story about the impact of Prop 28 AMS funds to date, such as how it was affecting schools, teachers, students, course availability, or accessibility. Their written responses were analyzed for common themes and are shared here along with quotations representative of the theme.

Arts supplies and materials are available in the classroom.

The availability of arts materials was the most common theme.

- “Being able to get new instruments and repair older ones allowed me to dramatically increase the number of openings in my arts classes.”
- “With Prop 28, I was able to provide all students with their own art kit that they have been able to use throughout the entire school year.”
- “I am finally getting proper equipment to run a ceramics program. My old wheels were about 50 years old, not working, etc. Now I will have a wheel for every student!”
- “Prop 28 funds have DRAMATICALLY improved the quality of my students’ work. They are really excited about their personal art kits they get to use, and they take such good care of the materials—unlike when the supplies are shared.”
- “Teachers are thrilled to have access to materials—and not having to pay for them out of pocket.”



Arts instruction was introduced or brought back.

Prop 28 AMS funding allowed some students to experience arts instruction for the first time while also enabling districts and schools to restore programs that had been eliminated in previous years.

- “We haven’t had music during the school day for at least 4 years. We brought it back this year. It has been amazing!!”
- “Ten sites hired elementary art teachers this year. Elementary schools have never had credentialed art teachers before. Students and staff are extremely excited to have this available to our students for the first time.”
- “With Prop 28 funding we have been able to hire 12 itinerant arts teachers who now serve in our TK–5 schools. This allowed us to go from 20 percent to 100 percent of our TK–5 students receiving regular arts instruction.”
- “Our school had no designated art class, and now we have 300 students learning about art through a unique program that uses nature as a lens to teach arts and explore the natural world.”
- “I have worked in the same school part time for 20 years. Next year, because of Prop 28, I will be full time ... FINALLY.”
- “Prop 28 meant I could move back to California and teach elementary art full time. I teach around 1,100 students between two campuses, and it is amazing to see their growth in confidence, knowledge, and willingness to try new things.”

Improvements were seen in students’ emotional well-being and engagement in school.

Respondents shared stories of observing clear positive impacts for individuals or groups of students that resulted from the introduction of or increased access to arts instruction. Several also described how Prop 28 AMS funds removed barriers for some students from families with lower income who were previously excluded from participating in the arts.



- “I had one 3rd grader tell me that she had woken up that morning and immediately thought, ‘I have art class today!’ I had a 4th grader tell me that when she engaged in making art, ‘I feel complete.’ I see students again and again say ‘Yes!’ when they realize it’s art time.”
- “At our recent middle school open-house art show, an elementary school sibling was excited to share what they had learned about Yayoi Kusama. Another elementary art student was discussing the ‘value’ and shading technique they noticed in a middle school artist’s work. These connections were not possible a year ago.”
- “Students in grades 4–5 at our bilingual/bicultural charter school are getting visual arts with a certificated teacher, during the school day, for the first time. Students are thriving.”
- “The level of enthusiasm that students have had now that they are receiving art is rewarding. In school surveys, students mentioned they wish they had art more often.”
- “For the first time, every student has been provided with dance shoes and tights, removing a major barrier that often prevented Title 1 students from fully participating. No longer do students have to feel self-conscious or excluded due to a lack of proper attire—they can now focus on learning and expressing themselves confidently.”
- “Students coming into my music program no longer feel barred from participating because they are from low-income communities. We have been able to provide a base/comprehensive program [that includes] instruments to all students!”

Coaching, professional development, and content specialists were introduced.

Several respondents described using Prop 28 AMS funds to offer professional learning opportunities to arts educators or to bring outside experts in to work directly with students.



- “We were able to send our new arts teachers to conferences to build their skills and allow them to connect with the visual and performing arts (VAPA) teacher community for extra support.”
- “Prop 28 has allowed us to bring in part-time arts coaches to help with classroom support: running small group rehearsals [and] giving individual mini-classes in acting, musicality, vocal practice, choreography, and new visual arts practices. It has provided invaluable experiences for students who cannot afford private lessons.”
- “Prop 28 funding has allowed me to bring in vocal coaches to work with our students, many of which have been able to have some one-on-one time with [the coaches] to improve their understanding of their voice.”

Misuse of funds and supplanting were observed.

A few respondents described how Prop 28 AMS funds were being used to cover budget shortfalls, replace existing arts funding, or pay for non-arts purposes.

- “Our district used declining enrollment to justify using Prop 28 to maintain arts teacher staffing rather than increasing arts enrollment.”
- “Our programs were beginning to show growth and new courses were being offered, but the money—for 3 years—is being swept and utilized to cover budget shortfalls. All new Prop 28 hires are being eliminated and all Prop 28 funds are going to pay for current VAPA positions.”
- “I need someone to hold our CFO accountable for spending this additional funding appropriately. The VAPA coordinator met with district admin and came up with a comprehensive plan. That recommendation was ignored, and instead they used most [of the Prop 28 money] to supplant funding.”
- “All I hear is districts NOT spending the money on arts education but rather [on the] maintenance of existing arts spaces or to make up for budget deficits. At my school, we literally get zero Prop 28 funding from the district.”



Implementation delays created frustration.

A few respondents described frustration from what seemed like paralysis while waiting for guidance, leaving funds unspent.

- “The funding has not been used by the district yet. There is no longer an arts coordinator to oversee the district arts programs. The district has not offered a collaboration time for the arts disciplines [teachers] to meet at all during the course of this school year. The plan of the district is not clear.”
- “I cannot say that there has been an impact yet, because we have not received any of the Prop 28 funding.”
- “Proposed in December, discussed in January, and now it’s toward the end of March and nothing has arrived yet. Still waiting on materials.”
- “Prop 28 funding and the need to be getting quotes and figuring out how the whole process works has been like an additional part-time job on top of my teaching job. It has made my workload almost impossible and has created tension between arts teachers due to the lack of oversight from site administration.”

Respondents are hopeful.

A final theme was the hope and optimism respondents expressed about already seeing changes in their students and the potential long-term impact of Prop 28 AMS funding.

- “Prop 28 has the potential to change the landscape of California arts education for decades to come—if we could just finesse the rollout and discuss strategic plans for sustainable growth within existing structures.”
- “Given time and a better understanding of the grant requirements, I think we’re beginning to hear decision-makers express a desire to be more intentional and proactive with their work around the arts. It’s encouraging.”



- “It has been amazing to no longer be an afterthought in my school. I now have the funding to create exciting arts classes and the supplies I need to implement them. I feel like we’ve gone from ‘just elective classes’ to having more credibility.”
- “As a small charter high school, we have always maintained the bare minimum in VAPA requirements. However, this is the first time that we have been able to offer more, and our students are absolutely loving having Art 2 and Intermediate Guitar classes. This year, one of our seniors started an art club, and students just took a field trip to the SF MOMA.”
- “The requirement to write site plans is opening up great conversations and helping principals to see new possibilities and better understand the potential impact of the arts.”
- “One of the greatest impacts is walking on the high school campus at lunch and seeing groups of students sitting together and playing the guitar. That is a success.”

Taken together, the findings suggest that Proposition 28 AMS funding is beginning to produce meaningful changes in arts education across California. Respondents reported increased student access to arts instruction, expanded arts programs, improved availability of materials, and greater student participation in the arts. Although some respondents noted ongoing challenges related to implementation, capacity, and accountability, many remained optimistic about the potential of Prop 28 AMS, and some shared stories of the success they are already witnessing. These early outcomes indicate promising progress while underscoring the importance of sustained support and strategic planning to ensure long-term impact.





© 2026 WestEd. All rights reserved.



Suggested citation: Herpin, S., & Wynveen, K. (2026). *Preliminary outcomes of California's Proposition 28 Arts and Music Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act: Initial reports from county offices of education, districts, and schools*. WestEd.

WestEd is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that aims to improve the lives of children and adults at all ages of learning and development. We do this by addressing challenges in education and human development, increasing opportunity, and helping build communities where all can thrive. WestEd staff conduct and apply research, provide technical assistance, and support professional learning. We work with early learning educators, classroom teachers, local and state leaders, and policymakers at all levels of government.

For more information, visit [WestEd.org](https://www.wested.org). For regular updates on research, free resources, solutions, and job postings from WestEd, subscribe to the *E-Bulletin*, our semimonthly e-newsletter, at [WestEd.org/subscribe](https://www.wested.org/subscribe).