Arts Disciplines, Courses Offered, and FTE Changes From the Proposition 28 Arts and Music Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act

Initial Reports From Districts and Schools

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Preface

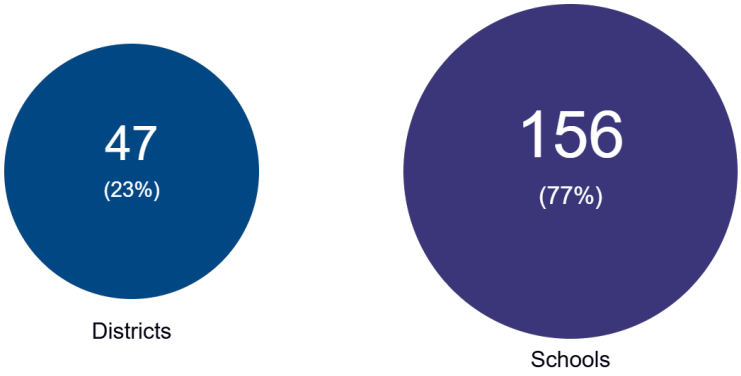
In 2022, California voters passed Proposition 28 (Prop 28), the Arts and Music (AMS) Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act, which established annual funding (ranging from $938 million to more than $1 billion) for arts education for all public schools across the state. This first-of-its-kind legislation 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 which arts disciplines schools and districts offered and the number of arts courses and full-time equivalent staff (FTEs) they added using Prop 28 AMS funds. The brief focuses on questions only asked of district and school staff, so COE respondents are excluded.

Overview of Respondents and Data

To ensure that the most valid data were used, respondents who answered less than 25% of the survey questions were removed from the analysis. Although 302 district and school respondents began the survey, data from 203 (68%) were included in the analysis. Of these respondents, 47 represented districts and 156 represented schools (Figure 1). The percentage of respondents removed for not meeting the 25% threshold was similar across both groups. However, not all respondents answered all questions, and question wording varied between districts and schools. These differences are noted in each section of the brief.

Figure 1. Distribution of Respondents



Arts Disciplines Offered

District and school staff were asked to identify which arts disciplines were available in their district or school both before and after Prop 28 AMS funds became available. In total, 151 respondents answered these questions, with 45 representing districts and 106 representing schools.

Key Takeaways

- Dance, theatre, and media arts were added at greater rates than music and visual arts were following the availability of Prop 28 AMS funds (Table 1). This pattern likely reflects the fact that music and visual arts were widely available before Prop 28 was passed.

Table 1. Gains and Losses by Arts Discipline

Arts discipline	District added	District dropped	School added	School dropped
Dance	+5	–1	+14	–1
Theatre	+4	0	+13	0
Media arts	+4	–1	+8	0
Visual arts	+3	–1	+4	0
Music	+2	–1	+4	0

- Although dance, theatre, and media arts were more likely to be added by using Prop 28 funds, music and visual arts remained the most commonly offered disciplines after Prop 28 implementation (Table 2).

Table 2. Percentage Offering Each Arts Discipline

Arts discipline	District before	District after	School before	School after
Music	93.3	95.6	87.7	91.5
Visual arts	86.7	91.1	91.5	95.3
Theatre	71.1	80.0	74.5	86.8
Dance	64.4	73.3	44.3	56.6
Media arts	66.7	73.3	62.3	69.8

These numbers do not represent the proportion of districts and schools in the state that offer each discipline. They are an overestimation because it can be assumed that individuals were more likely to respond to the survey if their district or school offered arts education.

- Significant differences were observed based on grade levels served, with high school respondents reporting substantially higher availability of nearly all arts disciplines than middle and elementary school respondents reported (Table 3).
- All disciplines showed increases across at least one grade span. The exception was music, which remained unchanged at the elementary and middle school levels, where it was already offered by a large majority of respondent schools before Prop 28 implementation.

Table 3. Percentage of Schools Offering Each Arts Discipline by Grade Levels Served

Arts discipline	Elem. before	Elem. after	Middle before	Middle after	High before	High after
Dance	21.4	38.6	0.0	6.7	57.1	65.3
Media arts	14.3	21.4	40.0	46.7	81.6	89.8
Music	71.4	71.4	93.3	93.3	93.9	95.9
Theatre	28.6	50.0	66.7	80.0	91.8	100
Visual arts	64.3	78.6	86.7	93.3	98.0	100

Again, these numbers do not represent the proportion of schools that offer each discipline in the state. They are an overestimation because it can be assumed that individuals were more likely to respond to the survey if their school offered arts education.

Other Findings of Interest

- The percentage of district respondents who reported access to all five arts disciplines increased from 56% to 62%, suggesting modest progress toward arts education systems that are more comprehensive. Approximately one quarter reported adding at least one new arts discipline offering after Prop 28 funds became available.
- At the school level, respondents who indicated that their school offered all five disciplines increased from 38% to 48%. Similar to districts, approximately one quarter reported adding at least one new arts discipline offering after Prop 28 funds became available.
- Urban, suburban, and rural respondents reported similar levels of offering visual arts instruction both before and after Prop 28 funds were received. Urban and rural respondents generally reported larger increases in dance, music, theatre, and media arts offerings than did suburban respondents.
- Although the number of charter school respondents was small (*n* = 12), they reported lower initial availability of arts disciplines at their schools but also reported greater increases in offering arts courses after Prop 28 AMS funds were available.

Course Offerings and FTE Positions

District and school staff were asked how many arts-related courses and how many FTEs were added in their district or school since Prop 28 AMS funds became available. The questions were open-ended items requesting that respondents enter a number. In total, 133 respondents answered these questions, with 38 representing districts and 102 representing schools.

Key Takeaways

- School respondents were less likely to respond to questions related to course offerings and FTEs than were district staff, which suggests that district staff may have been more aware of staffing and course expansion efforts. Although a numeric response was requested, seven school employees (5%) wrote in "unsure" or "don't know." Another 54 (35%) skipped the question compared with 19% of district employees who skipped the question.
- School respondents were more likely to report that no new courses or FTEs were added—34% of school staff and 14% of district staff reported that no new arts courses were added, and 38% of school staff and 10% of district staff reported that no new arts FTEs were added.
- At the district level, respondents reported adding approximately 500 new arts courses with an average of 13.6 per district. This equated to 305 new FTEs with an average of 7.8 per district (Table 4).
- At the school level, respondents reported adding approximately 225 new courses with an average of 2.5 per school. This equated to 91 new FTEs with an average of 0.96 per school.

Table 4. Art Courses and FTEs Added

Additions	District courses added	District FTEs added	School courses added	School FTEs added
Total added	501.6	304.9	226.2	90.9
Average added	13.6	7.8	2.5	0.96
Median added	5.0	4.0	1.0	0.50

Note. District staff were asked to respond across schools in their district, whereas school staff were to respond only for their site. This accounts for the large variations between the two groups.

Other Findings of Interest

- There is a direct correlation between the number of courses added and the number of FTEs added, although some respondents reported adding new courses without adding any new FTEs.
- Urban district respondents were much more likely to add courses than were suburban and rural respondents, averaging 22.0 new courses per urban district compared with 13.8 for suburban districts and 3.7 for rural districts. In terms of FTEs added, urban districts averaged 19.2 new FTEs compared with 3.9 for suburban districts and 1.6 for rural districts.
- Urban and rural schools were more likely to add courses and FTEs than were suburban schools. Respondents from urban schools reported an average of 4.0 courses added, rural respondents reported an average of 4.3 courses added, and suburban respondents reported an average of 1.7 courses added. Additionally, 21% of urban and 8% of rural respondents reported no new courses compared with 43% of suburban school respondents. In terms of FTEs added, urban schools averaged 1.3 new FTEs compared with 0.9 for suburban schools and 1.0 for rural schools, with 14% of urban schools, 46% of suburban schools, and 25% of rural schools reporting no changes in FTEs.
- Elementary school respondents reported somewhat higher numbers of courses added than did middle and high school respondents, with 2.4 courses added at the elementary level compared with 1.6 in middle schools and 1.6 in high schools.
- Schools that began using their Prop 28 AMS funds during the 2023–24 school year reported an average of three new courses added compared with two courses added for those beginning to use funds in the 2024–25 school year.
- Schools reporting the use of itinerant arts teachers also reported a higher average number of new courses added (4.1), whereas schools without itinerant teachers added an average of 2.0 new courses.

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