



Arlington
Public
Schools



Arts Education BRIEFING REPORT

MARCH 2021



ARTS EDUCATION

The Arts Education Office operates within the Department of Teaching and Learning (DTL) to meet APS Strategic Plan goals and DTL core services. Arts Education is an essential part of the core curriculum from pre-kindergarten to grade 12 that provides opportunities to develop artistic literacy and supports the academic and social-emotional growth of all students. The mission of the arts education office is to recruit, hire, and retain highly effective teachers while leading a culture of continual learning toward the implementation of best practices and curriculum design, aligned to APS and state standards. This provides the opportunities for students to receive high levels of arts education as well as to develop the necessary problem-solving and critical thinking skills that will transfer to all aspects of their lives.

During the 2019-20 school year, there were 8035 enrollments among students in grades 6 through 12 in Instrumental Music, Choral Music, Visual Arts and Theater. The arts offer powerful tools for expression – tools for making connections, critical thinking, personal realization, communicating, for problem solving, and civic engagement. They are an essential part of human history and provide a foundation for students to succeed. All students will be equipped to problem solve and use the tools they learn in the arts to build and innovate our future worlds.

MAJOR SERVICES PROVIDED

- Development and implementation of high-quality Arts programs.
- Providing outside opportunities for students to be involved in the Arts
- Hiring and retaining highly effective teachers.
- Designing the curriculum and aligning instructional resources for implementation.
- Providing instructional support for schools.
- Designing sustained and continuous professional learning for teachers.
- Providing accelerated opportunities for students in the arts through APS Arts Honors Programs and Regional Scholastic Art Competition.
- Creating and maintaining Partnerships with Arts organizations including the Kennedy Center, Wolftrap, and Signature Theater.

BRIGHT SPOTS

Each year the Arts Education office supports numerous opportunities for students to be challenged in the Arts, which is a testament to the highly-effective teachers, professional learning, rigorous curriculum and instructional resources. In the Spring of last year the shutdown due to Covid made it impossible for us to have in person concerts including three of our Honors Programs . Below you will find a few virtual performances created by our teachers in Spring of 2020.



Yorktown HS: "Let Peace and Love Shine Through" arr. Rollo Dilworth
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y87sn42Dkso&t=88s>



Long Branch ES: "Ev'rybody Wants to Be a Cat" Virtual Chorus
<https://vimeo.com/423566957>



Swanson MS: "Wrinkle In Time"
<https://vimeo.com/428572883>

2019-2020 DISTRICT XII, ALL-VIRGINIA JAZZ, SENIOR HONOR CHOIR & ALL-REGIONAL ORCHESTRA

Three APS high school students were accepted into the All-Virginia Jazz Ensemble. The performance was given at the Virginia Music Educators Association Conference in Hot Springs, Virginia on Thursday, November 21, 2019, with two nationally acclaimed guest conductors. This prestigious ensemble is available to approximately 40 students around the state who are accepted into one of the two ensembles. Three APS high school seniors were selected as members into the 2019 Virginia Music Educators Association (VMEA) Senior Honor Choir. The choir is open only to the top 125 singers from around Virginia and is the highest honor a choir student can attain during his or her high school career. Auditions were open to seniors enrolled in choral programs at their respective schools. The audition took place at Longwood College October 12, 2019. Students performed at the Virginia Music Educators Association's convention in Hot Springs, VA on November 23, 2019. Six APS high school students were accepted into the Northern Virginia All-Regional Orchestra that performed on Nov. 9, 2019, at Fairfax High School. The

orchestra is one of four regional orchestras in the state where approximately 110 strings, wind and percussion players are accepted via a rigorous audition that took place in September. The top players of each instrumental section are then eligible to audition for the All-Virginia Band and Orchestra later in the school year.

2019-2020 ALL-STATE MS & HS MUSICIANS

On April 25, 2020, eighteen Arlington Public Schools middle and high school instrumental and choral students were slated to perform in Richmond, VA for the All-Virginia Music Band, Chorus and Orchestra Festival. Although the event had to be canceled to Covid-19, these selected students went through a highly competitive audition process for one of five ensembles that normally perform: Concert Band, Symphonic Band, Orchestra, Treble Choir and Mixed Choir.

2019-2020 DISTRICT XII HONORS CHORUS, HONORS ORCHESTRA AND HONORS BAND

APS had more than 100 students' middle school and high school students who were accepted into District XII Honors Chorus. All APS schools' secondary schools participated. Additionally, six middle school and high school students were accepted into District XII Honors Orchestra. The District XII High School and Middle School Chorus auditions took place on November 9, 2019. The Honors Treble Choirs and Honors Mixed Choirs performed on February 8, 2020 at Washington Liberty High School. District XII Junior and Senior Orchestra ensembles performed January 12, 2020 at Wakefield High School. Twenty-two APS students were accepted into the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors' Association (VBODA) District XII All-District Bands. These students were selected by audition on January 11, 2020 and performed in the All-District Band Event January 30-February 1, 2020 at Chantilly High School.



2020 Middle School Honors Band Concert
<https://vimeo.com/394296044/093d530f39>

APS HONORS MUSIC PROGRAM

The Arts Education Department held auditions for four weeks starting the last week of October which ran through mid-November for six different music ensembles open to APS 4th-8th graders. Over 600 students came out to audition representing every elementary and middle school. The

Honors Band, Honors Orchestra and Middle School Honors Chorus met for a 4-day period in January with a culminating concert on Saturday, January 25, 2020, and the elementary honors chorus, junior band and junior orchestra had a final performance scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2020.

SCHOLASTIC ART COMPETITION

In 2019-2020, The Regional Scholastic Art Award Exhibit was on display at all of the middle and comprehensive high schools showcasing approximately 650 pieces of art from APS middle and high school students. Approximately 940 pieces were awarded at the regional level from over 2,000 submissions. The program, currently in its 97th year, is a national program recognizing outstanding creativity in teens grades 7-12. Seventeen APS students were awarded by the national non-profit organization which presented the National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and received a national award on Thursday, June 4, 2020. A gala celebration at Carnegie Hall in New York City scheduled and replaced with a virtual gala celebration.



Scholastic Gold Key Winners
drive.google.com/file/d/1i-6aZnbnGzrsdTnCVLDFlrP0joZQUS7/view

REFLECTIONS AND MLK ART CONTESTS

The Arts Education Department receives numerous requests for participation in arts contests throughout the year. These opportunities are shared with teachers and students. Arts teachers are instrumental in supporting students who participate in many contests; however, we are extremely proud of our student interest in the CCPTA Reflections contest and the Martin Luther King art contest. Over 1,000 art entries were received in these contests. This is another example of our excellent teachers working collaboratively to provide outside opportunities and successes for students in the arts.

NAMM AWARD

In March of 2020 and for the 4th year in a row, Arlington Public Schools was honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education.

The Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. To qualify for the Best Communities designation, APS answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction

time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas. This award recognizes that APS is leading the way with learning opportunities as outlined in Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA recommends music and the arts as important elements of a well-rounded education for all children. Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational/cognitive and social skill benefits for children who make music. In a series of landmark studies by scientists and researchers at Northwestern University a link was found between students in community music programs and life-long academic success, including higher high school graduation rates and college attendance. In another study from the University, it was discovered that the benefits of early exposure to music education improves how the brain processes and assimilates sounds, a trait that lasts well into adulthood.

About The NAMM Foundation

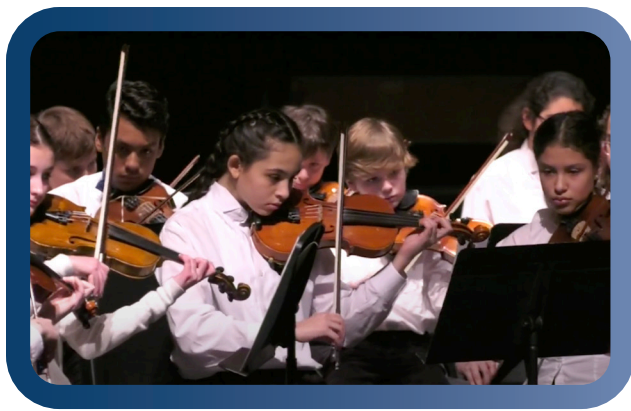
The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit supported in part by the National Association of Music Merchants and its approximately 10,300 members around the world. The foundation advances active participation in music making across the lifespan by supporting scientific research, philanthropic giving, and public service programs. For more information about the NAMM Foundation, please visit www.nammfoundation.org.

KENNEDY CENTER PARTNERSHIP CETA AND COHORT

Since 1998, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Arlington Public Schools have been members of the Kennedy Center's Partners in Education program. Selected because of their demonstrated commitment to the improvement of education in and through the arts, partnership teams participate in collaborative efforts to make the arts integral to education. Beginning in the 2016-17 school year, Arlington Public Schools and the Kennedy Center formed their first cohort of thirty teachers to achieve the Kennedy Center Changing Education Through the Arts



(CETA) Certificate of Study. In April of 2018, 21 teachers received the Certificate of Study at the Kennedy Center and in 2019 and the additional 9 teachers from Cohort I received their certificate in 2019. Cohort II currently has 24 teachers who are working towards their certificate of study and in April 2020, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts awarded 18 APS teachers Certificates of Study. The certificate is an ongoing recognition program for teachers who participate in the Kennedy Center's professional learning. In order to receive a Certificate of Study, teachers participate in a minimum of 21 hours of professional learning through the CETA program in order to explore ways to bring the arts into their classroom. In addition, they develop and submit documentation that shows evidence of the impact of the arts on student learning. Through CETA each year, more than 700 teachers participate in approximately 90 courses and workshops, which impact around 21,000 students and are available to any teacher in the D.C. metropolitan area.

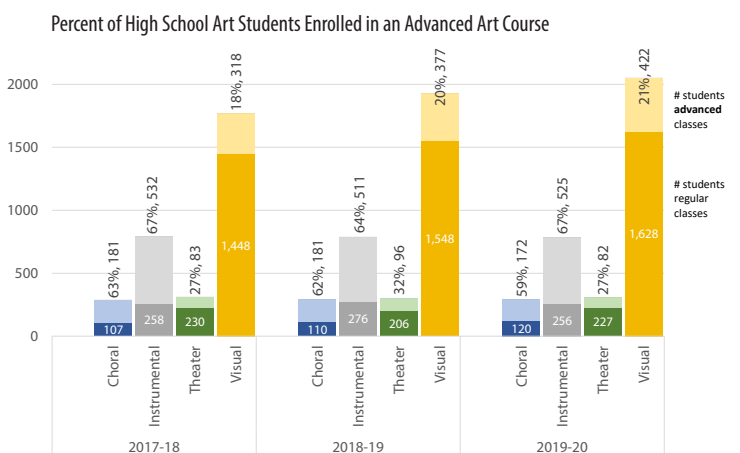
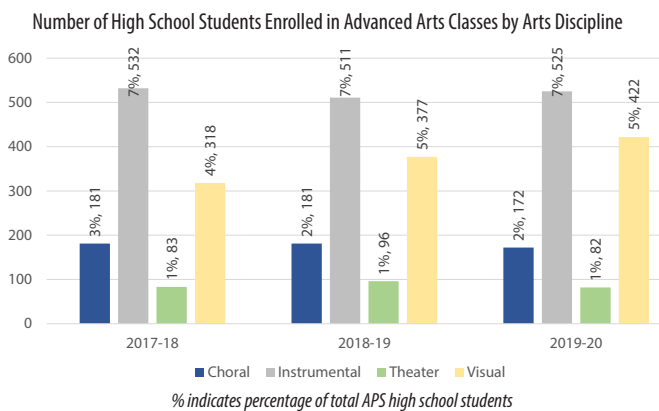
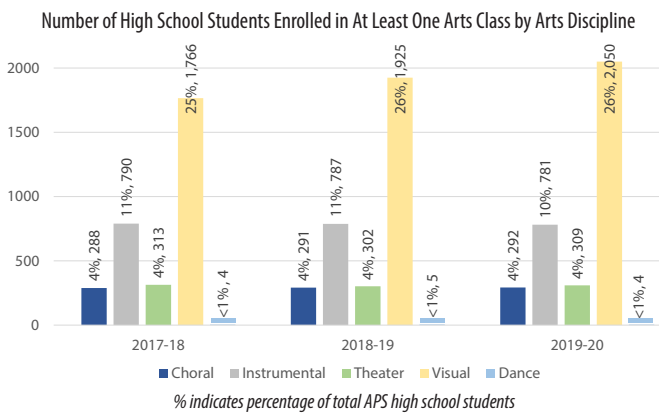
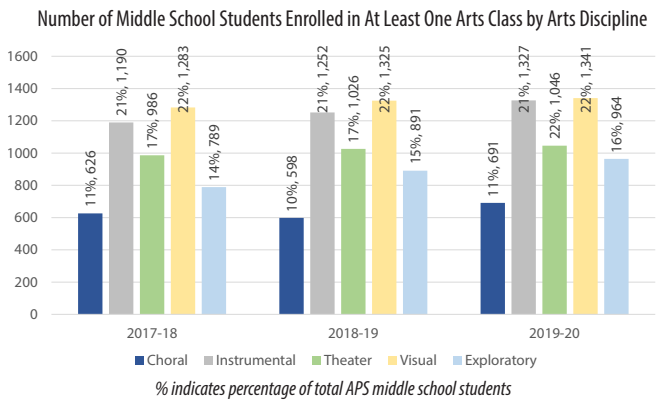


WHAT WE LEARNED

We have learned that with sustained focus, alignment of goals, resources, and a systemic action plan we can increase opportunities and impact student achievement. Staff has also learned the effectiveness of the pyramid model when done consistently and with alignment to desired outcomes. Effective use of the pyramid model across the performing arts has increased enrollment and had an impact on student retention in the arts which has increased student enrollment in advanced arts courses. In addition, we have found that professional learning when based on teacher interest, needs and aligned with APS strategic goals moves us further in our work. This year we implemented small cohorts of elementary arts teachers establishing a personalized professional learning focus and increased collaboration. These cohorts are led by teachers which provides teacher leadership opportunities for staff and supports sustainable professional learning.

We continue to grow all our secondary programs and have seen a significant increase in enrollment in choral music since 2013-14 and a substantial increase in instrumental music since 2016-17. This increase continues to hold steady through 2019-20. Hiring highly-qualified teachers and continuing to provide outreach

DATA THAT PROVIDES INSIGHT





opportunities through the effective pyramid model has contributed to this success. We have seen a slight decrease in Theater enrollment and have added the pyramid model to theater in 2018-19, our numbers seem to be maintaining. Over the past two years we have held a Theater Festival that included all secondary schools. Additional outreach includes bringing small productions from middle schools to the elementary schools and bringing high school productions to the middle schools. Additionally, to showcase more of the arts we have increased our use of social media through twitter and Instagram.

We continue to look at creative ways to provide more opportunities for students to take electives through online or blended learning options including taking Personal Finance during the summer online.

At all levels we continue to focus on professional learning for teachers through the Arts Academies listed in the Professional Learning Framework which include, but are not limited to, areas of differentiation, technology, conversational solfege, special needs students, gifted identification, effective Collaborative Learning Teams and Equity and Access in the Arts.

In March of 2019-20 when the pandemic caused schools to close, we were very concerned about how to deliver high quality arts instruction to all students and also how would we get all of our arts teachers to be technology proficient. During this time our critical thinking and our strong arts lead teachers helped us to achieve this goal. We created smaller cohorts of teachers based on content they taught, we used backward planning and collaborative sharing to test out different music subscriptions and software. We designed extensive ongoing professional learning for arts teachers in a tiered model to build efficacy. We recorded and archived all training for future reference. We established, advocated and received approval for all secondary performing arts teachers to use Zoom in order to meet our students needs. Teachers continued to meet weekly throughout the summer to plan their curriculum using power standards and deliver it in the virtual setting. Additionally we provided training for teachers in how to create virtual performances and online galleries so that the arts would continue to inspire us throughout the pandemic. We learned that we are more adaptable than we thought we were, more willing to take on risks when we work in collaborative groups with ongoing support.

MOVING FORWARD

There is some concern that an unanticipated consequence of virtual learning in the arts may be a drop in enrollment. Many students involved in performing arts are interested in ensemble experiences which create a sense of community for all students. Arts electives teachers rely on building relationships with students, delivering high quality instruction, and students' positive experiences in the arts to build their programs and strengthen the ensembles.

These experiences are very difficult—if not impossible—to achieve in the virtual setting. Having no band camp, in-person concerts, music field trips or experiences playing to a live audience all may contribute negatively to enrollment.

The arts electives are sequential, and programs rely on the continuous enrollment to strengthen all levels of an arts area. Teachers have worked very hard to build these programs.

It is essential that even during budget constraints we find creative ways to fully staff and offer a sequence of arts electives in 2021-22. If a school is not able to offer, for instance, a 6th or 9th grade band or choral class due to low student interest, this decision will have a cumulative negative effect on the growth of the program and may dismantle it for four consecutive years.

PROGRAM EVALUATION RECOMMENDATION PROGRESS

The Arts Education Office Evaluation was presented in the Spring of 2018. Data collected over the course of the evaluation process was analyzed and used to develop recommendations for additional course offerings in the arts, professional learning opportunities, needed resources, areas of improvement, and sustaining areas we have done well.

Recommendation 1: Explore opportunities for APS to increase awareness of and participation in arts courses.

Work with schools and departments to encourage arts opportunities for all students and find creative solutions to scheduling conflicts.

Update:

- Met with the Supervisor and Directors of Counseling and counselors to discuss scheduling conflicts and other issues preventing students from participating in the arts. Looked at different models used across the county to increase these opportunities.
- Met with counselors to enhance their understanding of arts careers in alignment with students' interests in their individualized personal academic plans.



- Met with secondary arts teachers to provide training to create i-movie videos highlighting their programs and opportunities for students to participate in the arts, specifically to support feeder programs.
- Provided two 2-hour professional learning opportunities for arts staff around Equity in the Arts.
- Created vertical pyramid models in which elementary, middle and high school teachers meet to strengthen ongoing participation in the arts.
- Made recommendations for two new high school arts courses Advanced Theater Studies and Intermediate Orchestra , as well as selecting high school arts courses that meet the honors criteria.

Recommendation 2: Develop and implement a countywide theater equipment replacement schedule. Continue to work with the external theater inspection company and APS safety inspector to assess and maintain APS theater facilities. Develop a countywide replacement schedule for theater equipment using a graded A–F system and include a maintenance cycle in the APS budget.

Update:

- Provided professional learning on proper use and maintenance of theater equipment for staff.
- The Arts Education Supervisor continues to work with the APS contracted company to update the theater equipment grading system.
- Arts Education Supervisor continues to work collaboratively with Facilities to prioritize and replace outdated theater equipment and maintain the facilities.

Recommendation 3: Expand outreach opportunities for parents and students to find out more about arts courses in planning their A2E pathway.

Update:

- Participated in Harvesting Dreams for our Children event, providing information on opportunities for students in the arts.
- Continued collaboration with Supervisor of Equity and Excellence to showcase the arts at the Black History Month Celebration.
- Met with staff to increase outreach to all stakeholders.
- Added additional language to APS Arts website to include instrumental rental fees and fee scales for free and reduced lunch.

Recommendation 4: Explore effective ways to consistently identify students as gifted in the arts across all schools.

Update:

- Worked with Supervisor of Gifted Services to update and streamline the Gifted Referral form and process.
- Met with the resource Teachers for the Gifted to discuss ways to collaborate with arts teachers in order to increase arts referrals and identifications.
- Provided additional professional learning for teachers on the referral process and what gifted looks like in the arts.
- Sought feedback for staff and created a new gifted identification form for art and music that aligns with other content areas.

GRADUATE PROFILE



Karl Green

Wakefield, 2015
Tisch School of the Arts, NYU

Known for his mesmerizing performances at Signature Theatre as a teenager—including a powerful turn as Emmett Till—Arlington native Karl Green recently landed his first role in an Off-Broadway production. *Eve’s Song*, a play by Patricia lone Lloyd and directed by Jo Bonney, which had a run at The Public Theater in New York City.

A 2015 winner in Arlington Magazine’s annual Extraordinary Teen Awards, Green is now 22. But he says he was able to tap into memories of his high school days to perform the role of Mark, a 14-year-old whose family is collapsing in the wake of a messy divorce, all while Mark’s sister is coming to terms with her identity and revealing to her family that she’s gay.

Green’s interest in the stage started early. He appeared in plays in middle school and wrote his own scripts. Once he entered high school, he discovered the Signature in the Schools program, landing roles in local productions of *Anne & Emmett*, *Revolution*, *Hero Worship*, *Un-American* and *Veni-Vidi-Vici*.

“I remember walking away with a sense of ‘this is where I belong and this is my community,’” says the actor. Green says he was able to “draw from my life to build the emotional life and character of Mark” in a play that tackles issues of race and social injustice through the lens of a typical black family in America. “The play really explores the idea that everyone is walking around with masks,” he says, adding that real connection happens when the masks come off. “I think that happens in the theater.”

Karl was part of the APS Fine Arts Apprentice Program for 2 years, graduated from Wakefield High School, and is currently attending New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts.

Courtesy Arlington Magazine, October 16, 2018, byline: Catherine Douglas Moran