



2026 SNAPSHOT of the ARTS

IN ALASKAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

based on district survey responses

In 2023 the **National Endowment for the Arts** and **Alaska State Council on the Arts** awarded funds to the Alaska Arts Education Consortium to investigate what was happening with arts education in Alaska.

The goal of the **Alaska Arts Education Data Project** is to gather data and analyze the accessibility, equity, and quality of arts education. Arts education encompasses teaching and learning in and through the arts, both during and outside of the school days, focusing on children, youth, and communities. We champion a vision of equity, diversity, and inclusion that ensures the full and fair participation of all students in arts programs, policy formation, and decision-making, making sure all voices are heard.

A 2026 voluntary district survey, designed by a cross-sector working group, was conducted for the third consecutive year. The first launch in the 2023-2024 school year received responses from 18 out of 53 districts. The second year expanded to 42 of 53 districts, achieving a 79% response rate and covering all regions of the state. The third collection process, during the 2025-2026 school year, was streamlined by providing districts with their prior year's responses and asking for updates. New data were collected from districts who did not respond in the second year. The third survey launch was conducted from March 27 through June 19, 2026. Complete or updated data were received from 52 out of 53 districts. The second round data were used for the one remaining district, which enabled a **100% response rate**. This report shares a *full landscape picture of arts education in Alaska's public Pre-K-12th grade education system*.



Stay tuned for more information on <https://akartsed.org/projects/>

Contact the Alaska Arts Ed Data Project:

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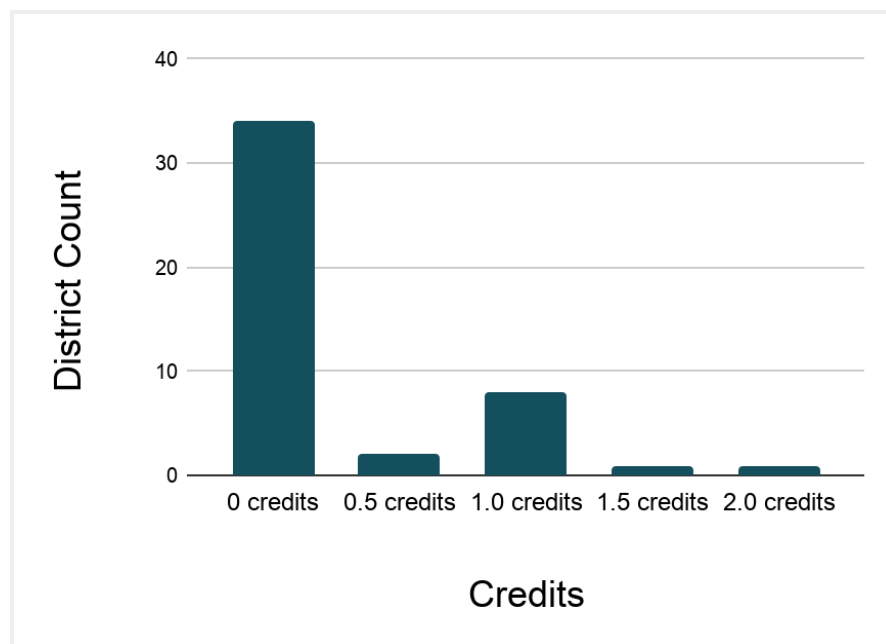
Policy

Number of districts reporting arts are referenced in their strategic plan

Category	District Count
Directly	3
Indirectly	20
Don't know	3
Other (Examples: Our board goal of college, career, and life ready directly references the arts; "Increase student participation in activities")	7
Not at all	20

Number of districts reporting the minimum number of arts credits required for graduation:

CATEGORY	DISTRICT COUNT
0 credits	34
0.5 credits	2
1.0 credits	8
1.5 credits	1
2.0 credits	1



Personnel & Budget

Number of districts (out of 52 respondents) reporting allocated funding for certified arts teachers (*include Type M, full-time and part-time*)

Category	Districts with Filled Positions	Districts with Current Vacancies
Dance	2	1
Music	25	3
Theatre	9	1
Visual Arts	21	5
Media Arts	10	1
Alaska Native Arts	24	4
Other Cultural Arts	5	2

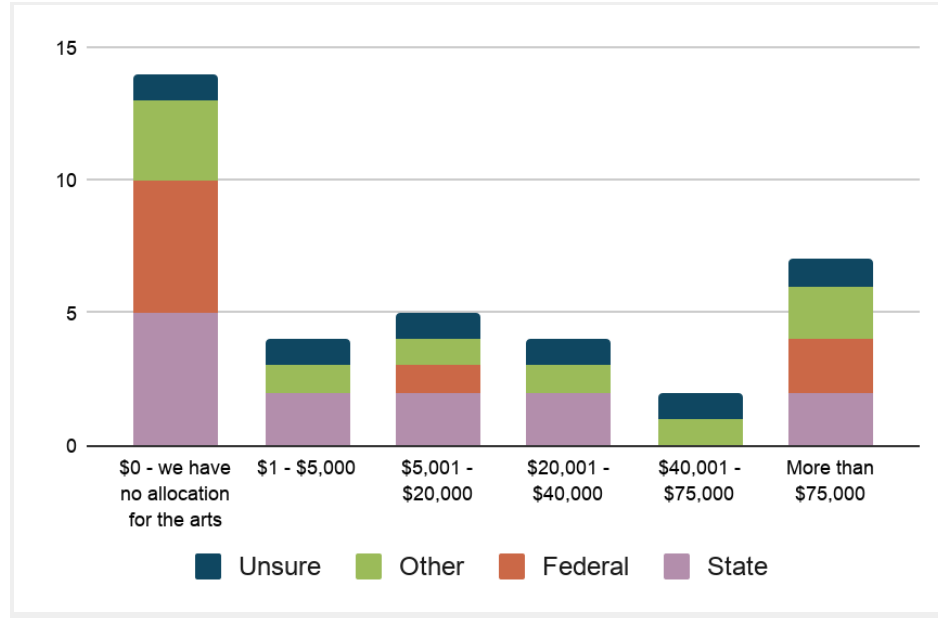
Total number of staff (*certified and classified*) providing instruction in the arts (*elective or required*)

Category	Districts with 1 FTE	Districts with 2 FTE	Districts with 3 FTE	Districts with 4 FTE or more
Dance	1	1	1	0
Music	15	5	1	9
Theatre	8	0	0	2
Visual Arts	15	4	0	5
Media Arts	6	1	0	2
Alaska Native Arts	20	3	0	4
Other Cultural Arts	1	1	1	0

Number of districts reporting allocation sources and ranges outside of staff salaries

Category	Districts with State	Districts with Federal	Districts with Other	Districts with Unsure
\$0 - we do not have an allocation for the arts	5	5	3	1
\$1 - \$5,000	2	0	1	1
\$5,001 - \$20,000	2	1	1	1
\$20,001 - \$40,000	2	0	1	1
\$40,001 - \$75,000	0	0	1	1
More than \$75,000	2	2	2	1

Allocation for arts education outside of staff salaries (8 out of 53 districts report arts ed allocation of general funds)



In the last 2 years, funding received from outside sources other than district general funds to support arts education

Category	District Count
Native Corporations or Native Corporation Non-Profit (example: Sealaska Heritage Institute/Goldbelt Heritage)	17
Alaska State Council on the Arts	13
Federal grants other than Title funding	9
Alaska Arts Education Consortium	8
PTA or Parent Group	5
Local or regional business or corporation	4
Private foundation(s)	4
In Kind or Donations	4
City or Borough Government	4
Local arts council	3
Other	0
None of the above	14

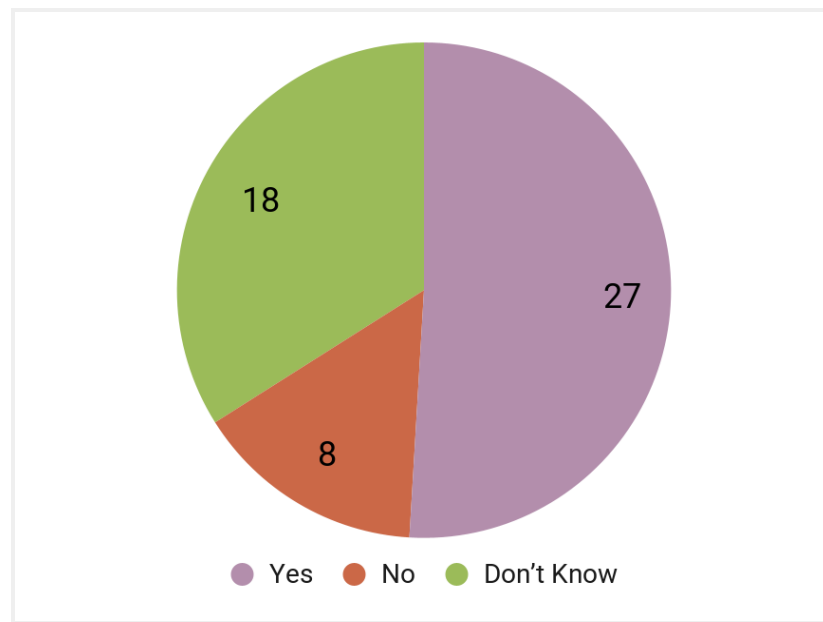
Curriculum & Instruction: Elementary

Number of districts reporting approved or adopted arts curriculum

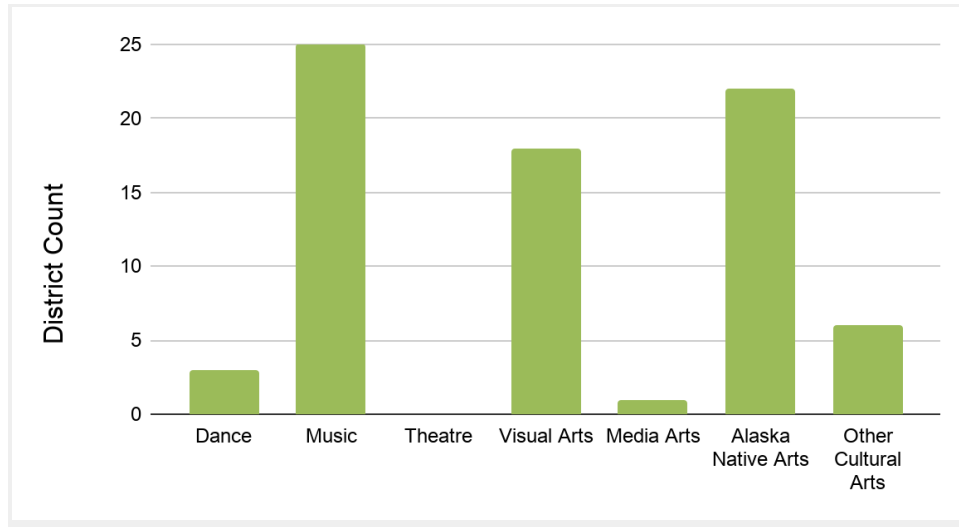
Category	Pre-K	Grades K-2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Dance	0	3	3	4	8
Music	4	17	17	18	21
Theatre	0	2	2	3	7
Visual Arts	3	13	13	16	16
Media Arts	0	2	2	4	10
Alaska Native Arts	3	6	7	7	15
Other Cultural Arts	1	1	1	1	4

Districts reporting curriculum aligned with Alaska Arts Standards (Adopted under 4 AAC 04.140) and the associated Anchor Standards

Category	District Count
Yes	27
No	8
Don't Know	18



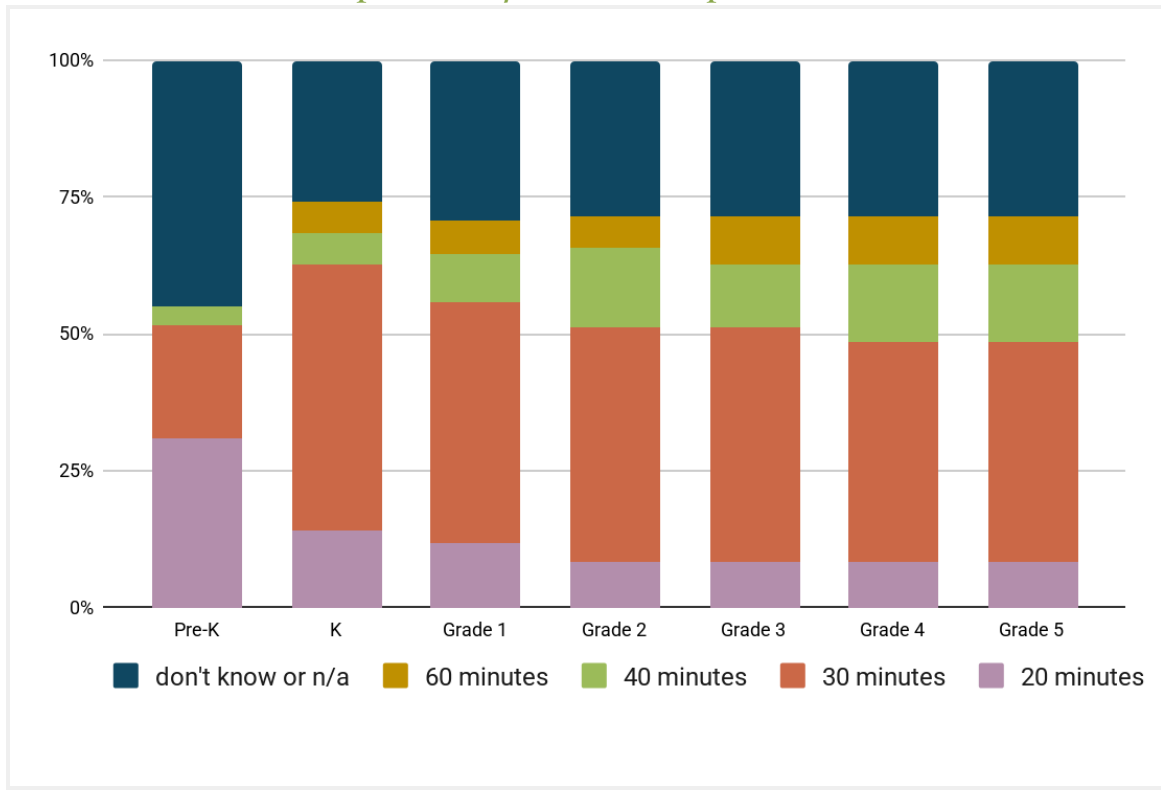
Number of districts reporting that ALL elementary students have opportunities to receive arts instruction



Times and length of elementary art instruction per week (examples reported by districts)

Category	District Responses
Dance	• None reported
Music	• ranges from 30 minutes a day to 30 minutes a week to 20 days per year
Theatre	• none reported
Visual Arts	• ranges from 30 minutes a day to 30 minutes a week to 2 times a month for 60 minutes • dependent upon classroom teacher
Media Arts	• 5 times a week for 30 mins (could be visual or media)
Alaska Native Arts	• ranges from 30 minutes a day to 3 hours a semester to seasonal • integrated with instructional content
Other Cultural Arts	• 5 times a week

Typical length of time for elementary arts lessons,
percent of districts responses



Number of districts reporting Visual or Performing Art elementary instruction (*not integrated with another subject*)

Grade	daily	weekly	two times per month	monthly	rarely	don't know or not offered
Pre-K	1	0	6	0	1	7
K	3	1	14	1	0	9
1	3	1	13	1	0	10
2	3	1	13	1	0	10
3	2	1	14	1	0	10
4	2	1	14	1	0	11
5	2	1	13	2	0	10

Curriculum & Instruction: Secondary

Number of districts reporting consistent secondary (*middle and high school*) arts instruction (*last 4 years*)

Category	District Count
Music - band	28
Music - choir	23
Visual Arts - drawing or painting	23
Visual Arts - ceramics	18
Music - guitar	17
Media Arts - digital arts	15
Alaska Native Arts - fiber arts (weaving, beading, skin sewing)	13
Visual Arts - photography	13
Alaska Native Arts - carving	12
Theatre - stage acting	11
Alaska Native Arts - sculpture (ivory, wood, bone)	11
Visual Arts - printmaking	10
Visual Arts - crafts	9
Visual Arts - video or film production	9
Music - orchestra	9
Music - ukulele	8
Alaska Native Arts - dancing, drumming	7
Theatre - technical theatre	6
Alaska Native Arts - storytelling	4
Visual Arts - jewelry	3
Visual Art history	3
Music history	3
AP Arts (visual art, art history, music theory)	3
Dance - jazz	2
Alaska Native Arts - metals	2
Dance - ballet	1

Number of districts reporting assessment and feedback for secondary arts education

Category	District Count
Teacher developed assessments	30
Project-based assessments	22
Exhibitions	21
Formative assessments	16
Conferencing with individual students	14
Summative assessments	11
Rubric form	11
Portfolios	10
No assessments	8
District developed and required assessments	5
Don't Know	3

Number of districts reporting access to digital technology tools for secondary arts education

Category	District Count
Color printers	36
3D printers	34
Software (<i>Adobe, Garage Band, Finale, Autodesk, Maya, Blender, etc</i>)	27
Scanners	22
Laser engraving printers	19
Fab labs	15
Digital drawing tablets	13
ELMO (<i>document camera</i>)	13
Other	7
None of the above	6
MIDI keyboard labs	3
Opaque projectors	1
Don't Know	0

Professional Development

Districts offered professional development activities or funds for professional development in the arts

Category	District Count
None of the above	17
Artists in Schools workshops	12
District wide in-service(s)	10
Workshops with professional artists or arts groups	10
Online, self-directed professional development or training	9
Building level in-service(s)	8
Professional learning communities (PLCs)	7
Large group presentations with visiting artists/performers/Elders	7
Credit courses for teachers/staff focused on the arts	6
Other (please specify)	5
Don't Know	4

Greatest need for educator professional development in the arts

Category	District Count
Arts Integration and resources	26
Alaska Native Arts (<i>e.g., traditional, contemporary, wood, metal, fiber arts, dancing, drumming</i>)	25
Other Cultural Arts	19
Connecting Instruction to the Alaska Arts Anchor Standards	17
Music (<i>e.g., general, band, orchestra, choir</i>)	16
Visual Arts	14
Theatre	10
Media Arts	8
Dance	7
Other (<i>example: Current practices and trends in the arts, culturally responsive teaching</i>)	3

General Issues

Number of districts reporting area of strength in arts education

Category	District Count
Music (e.g., general, band, orchestra, choir)	26
Visual Arts	19
Alaska Native Arts (e.g., traditional, contemporary, wood, metal, fiber arts, dancing, drumming)	18
Theatre	7
Media Arts	5
Other Cultural Arts	4
Dance	3
Other	1
Arts Integration	2

Challenges or obstacles districts report that interfere with arts instruction

Category	District Count
State or federal mandates (funded or unfunded)	32
Lack of resources to hire teachers	31
Budget shortfalls	29
Population too small to hire arts teachers	18
Cost of shipping supplies	18
No time during school day	17
Lack of applicants for arts positions	12
Access to teacher training and professional development	11
Other	9
Lack of arts administrative coordinator	8
Facilities are inadequate	6
Lack of space	4
Little if any interest from, or engagement by, community or communities	3
Poor bandwidth	2
Old technology	2
Lack of support from school board	1
None of the above	0

Districts reporting greatest need in arts education

Category	District Count
Certified Arts Staff	25
Teacher or Support Staff Professional Development	22
Arts Resources	20
Other	14
Time Management or Scheduling	13
Curriculum	12
Community or Volunteer Support	12
Technology	4
Internet Access	0

District examples of on-going (*at least multi year*) partnerships with local or regional arts agencies or cultural organizations

- University of Alaska Southeast
- Sitka Fine Arts Camp
- Alaska State Council on the Arts
- Sealaska Heritage Institute
- BBRCTE
- New Visions network
- Huna Heritage
- Hoonah Indian Association
- Rural Arts Initiative Arts Consortium
- Yakutat Tlingit Tribe
- Sealaska Heritage Foundation
- Anchorage Symphony
- Anchorage Concert Association
- The Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida
- Kodiak Arts Council
- Alutiiq Museum
- Kodiak History Museum
- Alaska Arts Education Consortium
- Kodiak Area Native Association
- Private music contractor
- Organized village of Kasaan

Suggestions for ensuring that every Alaskan student has the opportunity to participate in the arts at every grade level

Category	Response Count
Funding (<i>consistent, BSA, grants, specific for small schools/districts</i>)	20
Resources (<i>supplies, networks, curriculum, professional development, certificates</i>)	11
Commitment (<i>prioritize, strategic plan, required arts</i>)	9
Time (<i>needs to be dedicated, classroom schedules</i>)	5
Staff (<i>dedicated FTE, small schools/districts</i>)	5
Connections (<i>arts integration, cultural arts, partnerships, technology</i>)	3