



NORTHEAST LOUISIANA
ARTS COUNCIL

The State of Arts Education in Rural Northeast Louisiana

assessing our children's needs and opportunities to create an equitable future

Why Arts Education Matters

The Arts Council of Northeast Louisiana firmly believes that every child should have the opportunity to participate in arts education. Arts accessibility makes children well-rounded, and we believe that children who study arts grow up to contribute to their communities greatly. Study after study shows that arts education is positively correlated with higher attendance, graduation rates, and standardized test scores (Scheuler, 2010). Children involved in arts are less likely to be

suspended out-of-school than those without arts, and when they grow up, they are 26 percent less likely to be arrested than adults who did not have arts education. Additionally, “students of the arts are significantly more optimistic about their chances to attend college than non-arts students,” and they are 55 percent more likely to attend postsecondary school than non-arts students (Elpus, 2013). We believe all children in northeast Louisiana should have the chance to study arts.

“Students in the arts have lower dropout rates, higher GPAs, and better scores in math and language on standardized tests.” (Brown, 2017)

Research Methods

The Arts Council of Northeast Louisiana strives to be a transformative force for the community by encouraging a passion for the arts, promoting partnerships and collaboration, and ensuring access to the arts for all.

After discovering that many schools in our region did not employ full-time arts teachers, the Arts Council sought out hard data and numbers to better understand how we can make arts accessible to all, specifically school children. We wanted to know exactly how many children have or do not have the opportunity to take an arts class, whether that be visual art, band, choir, or theatre.

In February, 2018, the Arts Council implemented a phone survey to all 51 public schools in the 10 rural parishes it serves: Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, Madison, Morehouse, Richland, Tensas, Union, and West Carroll. Region 8’s 11th parish,

Ouachita, was excluded from this study to solely focus on rural schools. School secretaries or other administrators like assistant principals answered the questions. The Arts Council asked the following questions:

1. Does your school have any arts (visual art, choir, band, theatre, etc.) teachers on staff?
2. If so, what are the teachers’ names and what subjects do they teach?
3. Are these classes accessible to the entire student body, or just those students identified as gifted and talented?
4. Are these classes accessible to the entire student body, or just certain grades?
5. How many total students are enrolled in your school?
6. How many students are in the grades that are offered the arts classes? How many students are enrolled in talented classes?

Elpus, Kenneth. “Arts Education and Positive Youth Development: Cognitive, Behavioral, and Social Outcomes of Adolescents Who Study the Arts.” National Endowment for the Arts, 2013.

Brown, Kimberly. “The Arts and Dropout Prevention: the Power of Art to Engage.” National Dropout Prevention Center/Network at Clemson University, Oct. 2017.

Scheuler, Leslie. “Arts Education Makes a Difference in Missouri Schools.” Missouri Alliance for Arts Education, 1 Mar. 2010.

Major Findings

Of the 20,279 children in public schools in our rural parishes, **nearly half** of them have no opportunity to study arts.

As of February 2018, 9,922 students (49 percent) have no chance to take an arts class. Of the 51 schools in our 10 rural parishes, only 20 have full-time arts teachers on staff whose classes are available to all students. This does not necessarily mean that all students take those classes, but it does mean that all students have the opportunity to study arts.

Eight other schools have full-time arts teachers, but their classes are only available to a portion of the school. For example, Epps School has a fine arts class, but it is only available to seniors. In our calculations, we added the number of seniors to the number of students who have an opportunity, and added the rest of the children to the number of students who do not have an opportunity. While younger students will eventually have the opportunity to enroll in the fine arts class, they do not have an opportunity to learn about arts this current school year.

There are 17 schools who do not have arts teachers available for the entire school, but do have arts teachers for students identified as “talented.” These traveling arts teachers pull out individual students who have passed an examination to qualify for an IEP (Individualized Education Program). While the talented program gives some children opportunity, it leaves average students behind. For example, in Jackson Parish, 62 students have been identified as talented in visual art and 24 have been identified as talented in music. Nearly 2,000 other children in Jackson Parish do not have the same opportunity as those identified as talented. Finally, there are 8 schools that do not have any arts teachers on staff. All of those schools are elementary schools, with the total number of students being 2,297.

In total, there are 9,922 students without the opportunity to learn arts.

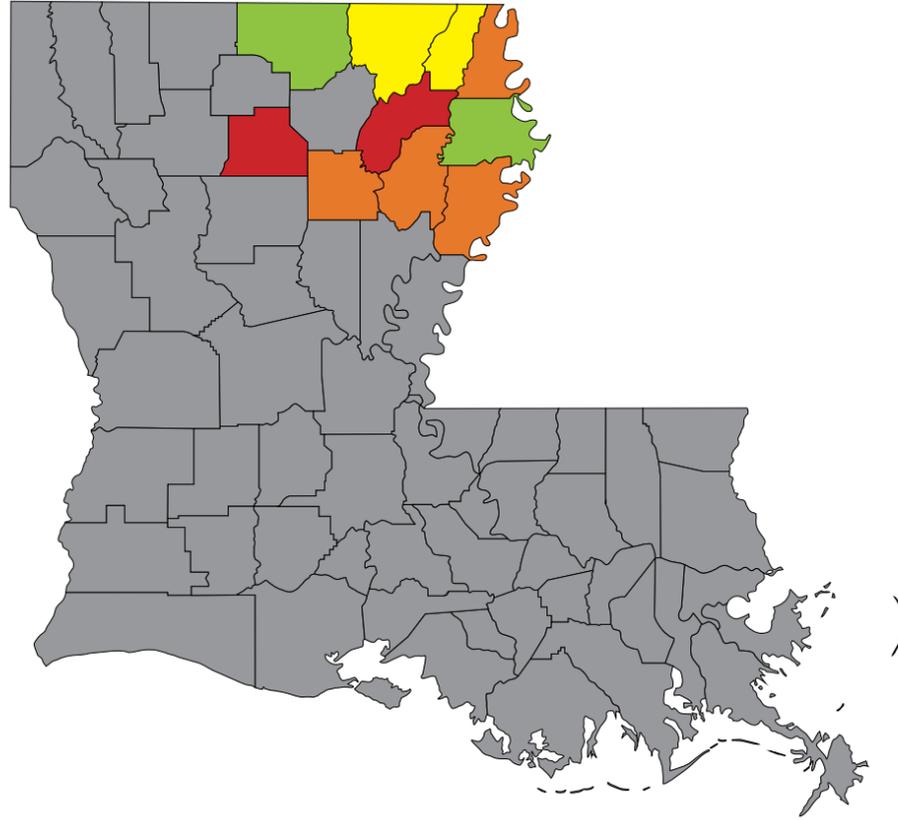


- Schools with Accessible Arts Teachers - all grades
- Schools with Accessible Arts Teachers - certain grades only
- Schools without Accessible Arts Teachers - talented only
- Schools without Accessible Arts Teachers - none whatsoever

9,922

the number of students in rural northeast Louisiana without arts education opportunities

Arts Education Opportunity by Parish



Jackson Parish - 12.2%

Of Jackson Parish's 2,262 students, 87.8 percent do not have any arts opportunities.

Jackson Parish has a talented arts program, with 62 students in talented visual art and 24 in talented music. One English teacher at Quitman School offers a theatre class to high school students.

The remaining 1,986 students in the Jackson Parish do not have arts education opportunities.

Richland Parish - 13.9%

Of Richland Parish's 2,977 students, 86.1 percent do not have any arts opportunities.

Rayville High School has a visual art, band and choir program, meaning the school's 374 students have the opportunity to study art. Richland Parish has an additional 40 students who have been identified as talented who take individualized arts classes.

The remaining 2,563 students in the Richland Parish do not have arts education opportunities.



Franklin Parish - 35.9%

Of Franklin Parish's 3,123 students, 64.1 percent do not have any arts opportunities.

Band is offered to the middle school blocks of Baskin School and Crowville School. Franklin Parish High offers band and visual art. Franklin Parish also has a talented arts program.

The remaining 2,001 students in Franklin Parish do not have arts education opportunities.



East Carroll Parish - 49.4%

Of East Carroll Parish's 1,013 students, 50.6 percent do not have any arts opportunities.

East Carroll Parish offers band to the middle and high schools. The remaining 513 elementary school students do not have arts education opportunities.



Tensas Parish - 50.3%

Of Tensas Parish's 503 students, 49.7 percent do not have any arts opportunities.

Students in grades 7-12 have the opportunity to study art. Tensas Parish also has a talented art program. The remaining 250 elementary school students do not have arts education opportunities.



Caldwell Parish - 53.2%

Of Caldwell Parish's 1,561 students, 46.8 percent do not have any arts opportunities.

Caldwell Parish High offers visual art, band, choir, and drama. Caldwell Parish Junior High offers visual art, band, and choir. The remaining 730 elementary school students do not have arts education opportunities.



West Carroll Parish - 61.7%

Of West Carroll Parish's 2,064 students, 38.3 percent do not have any arts opportunities.

West Carroll Parish offers fine arts classes to various high school students, and a music teacher travels throughout the parish to various schools. There are 790 students without arts education opportunities.



Morehouse Parish - 71.9%

Of Morehouse Parish's 3,875 students, 28.1 percent do not have any arts opportunities.

Visual art and/or music classes are offered to middle and high schools and select elementary schools, but there are 1,089 elementary students in the Morehouse Parish who do not have arts education opportunities.



Madison Parish - 100%

All 1,215 students in Madison Parish have arts education opportunities. A music teacher travels to the elementary schools, choir is offered in middle school, and both choir and band are offered in high school.



Union Parish - 100%

All 1,686 students in Union Parish have arts education opportunities. Visual art is taught in elementary school, band is offered in junior high, and both visual art and band are offered in high school.

Funding Opportunities

\$47,000 - annual arts teacher salary

\$7,000 - baby grand piano for a choir

\$5,000 - in-service arts training

\$3,000 - arts field trip for 300 students

\$500 - scripts & copyright for a play

\$150 - sheet music & licensing for a band

\$75 - art supplies for 1 student

\$10 - arts field trip for 1 student

Arts Council Goals

1. Arts Teachers in Schools

Ideally, the Arts Council wishes to see all art forms represented in every school for every student. To begin leveling the playing field, the Arts Council looks to partner with regional school districts to apply for state, federal, and foundation grants to put arts teachers in schools that have none. The Arts Council is investigating a pilot program to place

arts teachers in rural schools so that every child would have access to arts. This program would help fund teacher salaries for years one and two, with the goal that the school would fully fund the salary by year three. If the pilot program is successful, it could be replicated throughout Region 8.

2. In-Service Arts Training

Until all public schools in the region have full-time arts teachers on staff, the Arts Council would like to offer in-service arts training for regular education teachers. At these professional development workshops, the Arts Council would bring in skilled and experienced educators who would train teachers how to incorporate arts into the

curriculum. For example, one such in-service training would teach English teachers how to incorporate theatre, speech and drama into their lesson plans. These English teachers could possibly begin after-school drama clubs with public performances.

3. Arts Field Trips and School Tours

Many school children in northeast Louisiana have never experienced a live musical or dramatic performance, and many have never visited an art museum or gallery.

The Arts Council of Northeast Louisiana strives to be a transformative force for the community by encouraging a passion for the arts, promoting partnerships and collaboration, and **ensuring access to the arts for all.**

The Arts Council looks to partner with area arts organizations to give children in rural northeast Louisiana the opportunity to experience art. The Arts Council wishes to fund field trips for schools by paying for tickets, bus rides, and lunch for children. The Arts Council also wishes to take performing arts organizations on tour via its RUPAR (Rural Underserved Presenters and Representatives) program. The organizations could visit schools, perform, and teach the children about their art.

The Arts Council plans to partner with the following organizations for field trips and tours:

- Louisiana Delta Ballet
- Louisiana Opera
- Masur Museum of Art
- Monroe Symphony Orchestra
- Strauss Theatre
- Strauss Youth Academy for the Arts
- Twin City Ballet
- ULM School of Visual and Performing Arts



