

A Cohort Study of Arts Participation and Academic Performance



*A Comparison of Cohort Data from 2007-2008, 2010-2011, and 2013-2014
Overview of Analysis Prepared by Dr. Steven N. Kelly, Florida State University*

OVERALL ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Participation in more than one fine arts credit is associated with higher proficiency rates at graduation. All three research studies have consistently shown that there continues to be a significantly greater difference between students enrolling in four or more credits of fine arts and those enrolling in few or no fine arts courses.

HIGHER TEST SCORES

HIGHER GPA'S

REDUCED DROP OUT RATES

This difference extends across socioeconomic factors, race categories and students with disabilities.

HIGHER GRADUATION RATES

Success is not limited only to students participating in the arts over a long period of time. Students who earned two or more arts credits during high school were more likely to score at proficiency levels for mathematics and reading/language arts, and to score above their counterparts on both state standardized assessments and the SAT.

In a 2013-2014 cohort study of 202,321 12th grade seniors, data showed evidence of a strong relationship between individuals who participated in school arts experiences and higher academic success as demonstrated by grade point averages, scores on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and math and verbal portions of the SAT exam.* The results showed the positive effect of participation in fine arts classes on a broad base of individuals, including students from varying races, ethnicities, socioeconomic levels, and students with disabilities.

Furthermore, the data authenticated that students participating in arts classes for four or more credits benefited even more.

HIGHER TEST SCORES. Overall results on the SAT math and verbal exams show a trend that scores improve as students take more fine arts credits. Scores on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) for reading, mathematics, and writing were higher for students taking arts classes.

Data comparing student's socioeconomic status and race reflect that the positive comparisons on test scores are consistent.

SAT scores for both mathematics and verbal exams continue to indicate that SAT scores improve as students take more fine arts courses.

Regardless of socioeconomic status or race, analysis indicated that students enrolled in 4 or more fine arts courses scored higher on standardized testing than those not taking arts-related classes.

REDUCED DROP OUT RATES. The longer students participate in fine arts classes the less likely they are to drop out of school. This is validated by the data that showed a decrease from greater than 30% to less than 6% when earning fine arts credits.

HIGHER GPA'S. Students not meeting bright futures criteria benefit as much by taking fine arts credits as those meeting bright futures criteria indicating that all students had higher GPAs.

What can I do?

- Learn more about the project on the cfaefl.org website.
- Talk with parents, colleagues, and administrators about the value of arts education.
- Put the information on your website.
- Develop data for your students.

**Research conducted prior to the replacement of FCAT. For more information, contact Dr. Kathleen Sanz, Center for Fine Arts Education (kdsanz@cfaefl.org) or download the full report from the CFAE Advocacy site at <http://cfaefl.org/Advocacy>*

