

County of Los Angeles
County Progress Report
2009-2010



"Enriching lives through effective and caring service."



County of Los Angeles Government

Los Angeles County has the distinction of being one of the original twenty-seven California counties. It was formed in 1850, the year California became the thirty-first state in the Union.

Originally, the County occupied a comparatively small area along the coast between Santa Barbara and San Diego, but within a year its boundaries were enlarged from 4,340 square miles to 34,520 square miles, an area sprawling east to the Colorado River.

During subsequent years, Los Angeles County slowly ebbed to its present size, the last major detachment occurring in 1889 with the creation of Orange County. In spite of the reductions in size, Los Angeles County remains one of the nation's

largest counties with 4,084 square miles, an area some 800 square miles larger than the combined area of the states of Delaware and Rhode Island.

The jurisdiction of Los Angeles County includes the islands of San Clemente and Santa Catalina. It has a population of more than 10.4 million—more residents than any other county in the nation, exceeded by only seven states. Within its boundaries are 88 cities.

The governing body is the Board of Supervisors. The Board, created by the State Legislature in 1852, consists of five supervisors who are elected to four-year terms of office by voters within their respective districts. The Board functions as both the executive and legislative body of County government.



The current members of the Board of Supervisors are (left to right): Michael D. Antonovich, Fifth District; Don Knabe, Fourth District; Chair Gloria Molina, First District; Mark Ridley-Thomas, Second District; and Zev Yaroslavsky, Third District.

To assist the Board of Supervisors, a chief executive officer with a staff experienced in management provides administrative supervision

to 37 departments and numerous committees, commissions and special districts of the County.



Arts Commission

Arts Education and the Creative Economy

Arts education is crucial to preparing students to be the creative, adaptable, critical thinkers needed in the 21st century workforce. Creative industries comprise the second largest business sector in the Los Angeles region, generating nearly 1 million jobs. The lack of arts education in the K-12 public school curriculum to adequately prepare students for these jobs is a serious concern.¹ Studies have shown that high-quality learning experiences in the arts improve students' abilities to create and test theories, visualize new possibilities and develop an ethic of persistence.²

In September 2002, following a report that showed inadequacies in arts education in the region,³ Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted *Arts for All: Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education*, a strategic plan to restore education in dance, music, theatre and the visual arts to the County's 81 school districts.

The Arts Commission, in collaboration with the L.A. County Office of Education and more than 100 private and public partners, leads *Arts for All*. Established in 2003-04, Arts for All offers school districts coaching to achieve five critical success factors to establish arts education infrastructure: a school board-adopted policy, implementation plan with timeline, district-level arts coordinator, 5 percent district budget allocation and at least a 400:1 ratio of students to credentialed arts teachers. The decision to concentrate on infrastructure was driven by the understanding

that if arts education were woven into the fabric of the school district, it would be more difficult to eliminate during challenging economic times. This supposition has proven to be true. In the current fiscal crisis, arts education programs in *Arts for All* districts experienced budget cuts, but they were part of across-the-board belt tightening rather than the total elimination of arts education programs and staff.

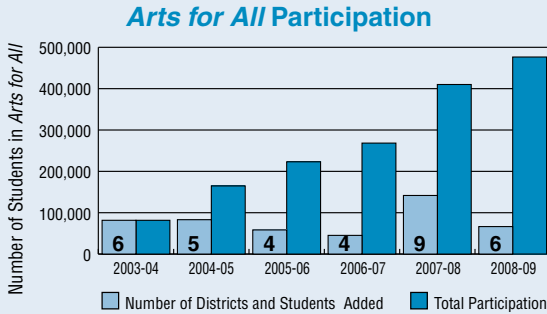
Arts for All also assists school districts in the implementation of their art education plans. The Artist Residency Grant Program subsidizes the cost for school districts to bring artist teachers—who have been vetted for quality and adherence to California state standards—from the *Arts for All's* roster into the classroom. In its first three years, the number of students reached through the program has nearly tripled, increasing from 2,500 to 7,264. In this way, *Arts for All* helps enrich the arts education curriculum in school districts and raises the standards for artist teachers in the classroom.

Arts Education Measures:

- (1) Number of participating school districts and students participating in *Arts for All*

Analysis

By 2008-09, 34 of 81 County school districts, representing 476,531 students, were actively participating in the *Arts for All* initiative. Twenty-eight of the school districts have a school board-adopted plan, and six are in the process of developing plans. Overall, Los Angeles



School Districts Participating in Arts for All

- 2003-04 Culver City, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Norwalk-La Mirada, Pasadena, Rosemead, Santa Monica-Malibu
- 2004-05 Beverly Hills, Burbank, Castaic, Compton, Hacienda La Puente plus above
- 2005-06 ABC (serves the cities of Artesia, Cerritos, Hawaiian Gardens, as well as portions of Lakewood, Long Beach and Norwalk), Alhambra, Little Lake City, Palos Verdes Peninsula plus above
- 2006-07 Inglewood, Mountain View, Paramount, Wiseburn plus above
- 2007-08 Bassett, East Whittier City, Lancaster, Montebello, Palmdale, Pomona, Redondo Beach, Saugus Union, South Pasadena plus above
- 2008-09 Glendale, Lawndale, Lynwood, Manhattan Beach, San Marino, Temple City plus above

County school districts are showing significant improvement in arts education for the first time in more than a generation.⁴ There have been sizeable increases in the number of school districts adopting policies and plans and establishing arts coordinator positions. Improvement has been accelerated in *Arts for All* school districts: between 2005 and 2008, they adopted policies at 2.5 times the rate of other school districts and plans at 1.6 times the rate of other school districts. The number of arts coordinators in *Arts*

for *All* school districts increased by 44 percent versus a 15 percent increase in other districts.

What Is in L.A. County's Future?

Despite the fiscal crisis, Los Angeles County school districts continue to join *Arts for All*. Five new districts have signed on for the 2009-10 school year, bringing total students represented to 517,531. With the help of a \$1.2 million grant from The Wallace Foundation and guided by case studies of the first 11 districts to join the initiative,⁵ the Arts Commission and its partners, starting in 2009-10, are offering school districts additional services to address obstacles to implementation of arts education plans. These include training for school district leaders, the building of arts education advocacy teams and help in identifying funding sources. Ultimately the success of *Arts for All* is measured by what is happening in the classroom. A data collection system is being designed and indicators established to collect information such as the number of students engaged in arts education, the quality of the instruction and the equitable distribution of arts instruction.

References

- 1 *Creative Economy Report 2008*, Otis College of Art and Design and the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation.
- 2 *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Achievement and Social Development*, Arts Education Partnership, 2002.
- 3 *Arts in Focus: Los Angeles Countywide Arts Education Survey*, Arts Education Task Force of Arts for LA, 2001.
- 4 *2008 Arts Education Performance Indicators (AEPI) Report*, Arts for All Executive Committee.
- 5 *Arts for All: The Vanguard Districts – Case Studies from the First Five Years*, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, 2009.