



Updates on Fast Response Surveys and NAEP Arts Assessment

FRSS Surveys on Arts Education

The U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) are collaborating to conduct seven surveys on arts education in U.S. public schools. The surveys will be conducted through the NCES Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), which was used to conduct previous national surveys on arts education in 1999–2000 and 1994–1995.

Although interest in arts education among policymakers, educators, and families has not abated during this decade, no national-level data have been gathered on this core academic subject since the 1999–2000 FRSS surveys. In 2008, the Congress requested a new study on arts education that builds on the prior studies.

Description of the Current FRSS Surveys

Seven new FRSS surveys will be administered during the 2009–2010 school year and will address topics in K–12 arts education at the elementary- and secondary-school and teacher levels. Specifically, a survey will be conducted for each of the following populations:

- Elementary school principals;
- Elementary music specialists;
- Elementary visual arts specialists;
- Elementary general classroom teachers;
- Secondary school principals;
- Secondary music specialists; and
- Secondary visual arts specialists.

An important goal for the new surveys is to enable comparisons to be made with the results from a decade ago. In order to do so, the 2009–2010 elementary and secondary school surveys and the elementary teacher surveys will address many of the same topics and retain many of the same items from their respective 1999–2000 surveys. At the school level, this includes topics and questions on the availability and characteristics of instructional programs in music, visual arts, dance, and drama/theatre; staffing; funding sources; and changes in arts education programs. At the teacher level, this includes topics and questions on teachers' educational backgrounds (e.g., degrees, certification, years of experience); participation in professional development activities; teaching loads; teaching practices; integration of the arts into other curriculum areas; and involvement in arts-related activities outside of school.

The 2009–2010 data collection also will include two teacher surveys at the secondary-school level. These will collect baseline data for secondary school music and visual arts specialists and will cover topics similar to what is included on the elementary music and visual arts specialist surveys, as well as new questions specific for teachers at the secondary level.

Survey Development

Survey development is providing for comparisons to be made between the 1999–2000 and 2009–2010 data. For the 2009–2010 school-level and elementary-teacher surveys, this will require using as many items exactly as they were worded in the 1999–2000 surveys. This effort, however, is being balanced with consideration for the data quality of the items that were used in the 1999–2000 surveys, as well as with the need to collect data on new and emerging topics in K-12 arts education.

Standard procedures for survey development are used in drafting the questionnaires, including conversations with responding populations (i.e., principals and teachers) and experts in the field, followed by testing. Feasibility calls to respondent populations provide feedback on whether the survey definitions in the draft questionnaires are consistent with current terminology in the arts education field, whether the requested information is readily available, whether the respondents' understanding of each survey item is consistent with its intended meaning, and whether any key issues in arts education are not addressed in the survey. Once finalized, the surveys are undergoing rigorous pretests.

Timeline and Survey Results

The elementary and secondary school surveys will be administered beginning in the fall of 2009, and the elementary and secondary teacher surveys beginning in January 2010. The release of initial data results, in the form of *First Look* reports, will occur approximately one year after the close of each school and teacher data collection. A *First Look* report will be produced for the following surveys: the elementary school survey, the secondary school survey, the set of elementary teacher surveys, and the set of secondary teacher surveys. A larger, more comprehensive report will follow these *First Look* reports. This publication will provide combined and detailed findings for all of the surveys, including comparisons between the 1999–2000 and 2009–2010 data for elementary and secondary school and elementary teacher surveys.

National Assessment of Educational Progress in the Arts

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the only nationally representative, continuing evaluation of the condition of education in the United States and has served as a national yardstick of student achievement since 1969. Through the National Assessment of Educational Progress, *The Nation's Report Card* informs the public about what America's students know and can do in various subject areas.

The Arts in NAEP

The arts have been included in NAEP twice in the 1970s, in 1997, and most recently in 2008. The 1997 and 2008 assessments in music and visual art are based on the Governing Board's Arts Education Assessment Framework and Specifications. These documents, adopted by the Board in 1994, were developed through an 18-month process involving artists, classroom teachers, policymakers, business representatives, researchers, and testing experts. The Framework and Specifications cover four arts disciplines: music, visual arts, theater, and dance at grades 4, 8, and 12.

For each arts area, samples of students are presented with test questions and performance tasks to measure their knowledge and skills, as appropriate, in three areas:

- *Creating* refers to expressing ideas and feelings in the form of an original work of art, for example, a dance, a piece of music, a dramatic improvisation, or a sculpture.
- *Performing* refers to performing an existing work, a process that calls upon the interpretive or re-creative skills of the student.
- *Responding* refers to observing, describing, analyzing, and evaluating works of art.

In 1997 the NAEP arts assessment was conducted nationally at grade 8. For music and visual arts, representative samples of public and nonpublic school students were assessed. For theater, a special targeted sample was selected from 8th-grade schools that offered theater courses and from students who took those courses. Dance was not assessed because only a small percentage of schools had regular dance programs.

Findings from the 1997 arts assessment were reported in several ways: a brief Highlights Report, a comprehensive Arts Report Card, a CD-ROM containing sample tasks and student responses, and an on-line report of the test development process. Further information on these materials is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>.

The Next Arts Report Card

Results of the most recent NAEP arts assessment are to be released in the late spring of 2009, and will provide trend information for grade 8 in music and visual arts, as a follow-up to the 1997 NAEP arts assessment. National-level results will be reported for key subgroups of students by race/ethnicity, gender, free/reduced price lunch, and by various student, teacher, and school background factors. Assessments in theatre and dance were not conducted in 2008, due to low incidences of these programs in the nation's schools.