



Arts, Care & Connection

Increasing access to arts learning for K-5 Oregon Students

Overview

The WRAP program is partnering with Arts for Learning Northwest, (formerly Young Audiences of Oregon and SW Washington) on the development of a series of four arts courses designed for K-5 students, with integrated mental health content in the areas of dance, visual arts, theater, and music. These supplemental courses are intended primarily to reach elementary students who have no or limited access within the school day to arts courses. The courses will be designed for classroom teachers to supplement their curriculum, with training included in the basic elements of these four art areas. Additionally, the courses will be accessible to arts specialists who seek to include more learning opportunities that promote student mental health and well-being within their arts courses. While the courses are not attempting to provide a full, comprehensive arts learning program, they aim to provide schools with a stepping stone toward building a comprehensive arts program led by licensed art educators that provides regular, sequential arts learning opportunities for students within the school day.

Main Objectives:

- To increase understanding and fluency with arts techniques and vocabulary; which will benefit students with background knowledge to further arts learning in middle and high school and provide rich opportunities for literacy development through the arts content area.
- To provide high-quality learning opportunities to students that promote and support mental health and well-being through the arts during the school day, in alignment with ODE's [care and connection campaign](#) and [integrated model of mental health](#), and new [Oregon SEL Standards and Framework](#).
- To increase accessibility for all students to arts and social-emotional learning, including English Learners, through alignment with English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards.
- To deepen learning in the arts content area needed for authentic STEAM learning.
- To provide the opportunity for teachers to be co-learners, exploring Arts and SEL content alongside their students and modeling a learners mind, and engaging with teachers and arts educators across the state in PLCs and art form professional development.

To learn more about these courses, please email the Well-Rounded Access Program team at ODE.WRCoursesGrant@ode.state.or.us.

Key Outcomes:

ODE data have highlighted a significant number of schools at the elementary level that have no access to in-school core content area learning opportunities through the arts, as required per OAR-581-022-2030(2)(a)(E). These courses aim to serve those students and communities so they have access to a well-rounded education.

Multiple culturally specific and community based engagement partners identified a need for mental health promotion and building social skills in the current educational climate. The arts offer multiple entry points to mental health promotion opportunities (Aska McBride et al., 2019)¹, and this program seeks to utilize these qualities to provide integrated opportunities for students.

These courses will center student voice and choice structured around shared inquiry and learning, feature a diverse set of teaching artists and art forms, promote cross-cutting skills in the arts, and promote mental health, in alignment with ODE's student success plans for focal student groups.

[Oregon's Transformative SEL Framework and Standards](#) utilizes and expands on CASEL's definition of Transformative SEL to help build capacity for strengthening school cultures that center equity, and support student and adult well-being through a systemic approach. The framework and standards are to be implemented in Oregon school districts by July 1, 2024, and the Arts, Care & Connection program will provide an opportunity for K-5 educators to learn about teaching and learning within this new framework and set of standards in the context of arts learning opportunities.

Access Lessons and Sign Up for Future Professional Development Opportunities

As part of this partnership, lesson materials and professional development are free to educators, and PDU's will be offered for attendance at professional learning for this project. For more information about professional development or to sign up, visit the [Arts Education Resources website](#) from the Oregon Department of Education.

Background and Funding:

In October 2020, Oregon received a five-year, \$9.8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to expand access to well-rounded education courses.

In January 2022, ODE published a [Needs Assessment](#) that highlighted the importance of and current inequitable access to high-quality, well-rounded STEAM courses. This Needs Assessment, along with a [year-long engagement process](#), was the basis for ODE's decision to expand access to these courses, allotting almost \$1 Million (approximately 10% of the total funding) for these efforts. This partnership is projected to continue through June 30, 2025.

More information about this program and to learn about other projects sponsored by this program, visit ODE's [Expanding Access to Well-Rounded Education webpage](#).

The content of this curriculum and professional development does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, and does not imply endorsement by the U.S. government.

¹ Aska McBride, M. R., Farrington, C. A., Maurer, J., Nagaoka, J., Puller, J. S., Shewfelt, S., Weiss, E. M., & Wright, L. (2019). (rep.). *Arts Education and Social-Emotional Learning Outcomes Among K-12 Students*. Ingenuity, UChicago Consortium on School Research.