

Orange County Public Schools Arts Education Report



Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) Superintendent Ron Blocker has assembled a Budget Study Committee made up of two teams that will address 2009-2010 budget adjustments caused by a projected shortfall in state revenue. The citizens team includes representatives from local community groups and school advisory councils. On Tuesday, the team met to evaluate the impact of potential cuts in arts extended learning opportunities (aka field trips) and other areas on the stakeholders - our children, the community and OCPS' strategic plan.

After intense discussion, the team rated the severity of the impact to students if they lose these opportunities at six, the most severe on a scale of one to six. The team determined that these cuts would hinder student achievement, student opportunities and an educational experience that develops creative, well-rounded citizens.

The panel's conclusions will be assessed by Superintendent Blocker's team as they prepare their budget recommendations for the School Board. The team will meet at least once more to discuss proposed athletic cuts. The meetings are open to the public.

Six reasons why community-based extended learning opportunities in the arts matter:

1. They are curriculum-based and tied to the Sunshine State Standards, directly contributing to academic achievement.
2. They are equitably distributed - meaning every child attends, regardless of their family's ability to pay. For instance, every third, fourth and fifth grade student in Orange County attends the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra's Young People's Concerts each year.

3. They involve not only arts-related instruction but include experiences at the Orlando Science Center and Orange County Regional History Center.

4. They are an excellent return on investment as measured by required teacher evaluations.

5. The total cost of \$880,000 as reported in the Orlando Sun-Sentinel on [Wednesday](#) includes transportation and is heavily subsidized by United Arts and the arts organizations.

6. 106,786 student experiences were provided to OCPS students at an average cost of \$3.86 per student in the 2007-08 school year (not including transportation costs).

Many thanks to the members of the team for articulating the value community-based extended learning opportunities bring to our OCPS students.

As always thank you for your advocacy efforts. Your voice *does* make a difference.

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