

What is Inclusive Participation?

Secondary Sequential Visual and Performing Arts: Inclusive Participation in AISD

Creative Learning Initiative

Introduction

One of the primary goals of the Creative Learning Initiative (CLI) is to ensure equitable access to creative learning and the arts for every student in Austin Independent School District (AISD). Although some degree of varied participation in visual and performing arts is expected due to students' interests, disparities in participation based on student characteristics (e.g., race, English learner status, and economic disadvantaged status) are problematic because this type of disparity may indicate systematic discrepancies in access, rather than differing levels of interest. To ensure no systemic discrepancies in access to visual and performing arts, we developed two measures of visual and performing arts participation: within-school inclusive participation and between-schools inclusive participation.

Within-School Inclusive Participation

Our measure of within-school inclusive participation examines differences in visual and performing arts enrollment between each student group and the school average (Figure 1). We do this to ensure that every student group within a school has the same opportunities to participate in the arts as other students at that school, and that student groups do not predict participation. We examined participation for these groups: Hispanic, White, Black, Asian, two or more races, English learners, special education students, and economically disadvantaged students.

Figure 1.

Within-school inclusive participation for each student group, whereby each student group's average participation was compared with the school's average participation

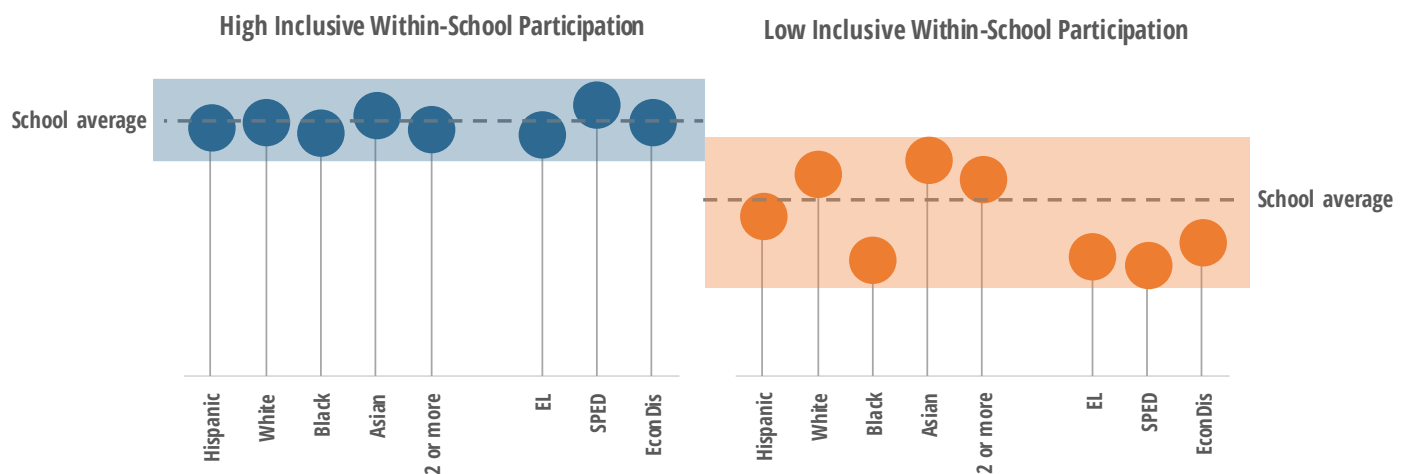


Campuses differed in the level of student group participation disparity. Some campuses succeeded in ensuring that participation in visual and performing arts was not dependent on student group membership (i.e., that participation was inclusive of all groups).

We call this measure *inclusive within-school participation*. At campuses with high inclusive participation, visual and performing arts participation by all student groups was close to the school's average participation. However, other campuses struggled to ensure equal participation across student groups, resulting in many of their student groups participating in fewer visual and performing arts courses than the school's average, or low inclusive participation. At campuses with low inclusive within-school participation, the visual and performing arts participation of many student groups was below the school's average participation. The difference between high and low inclusive participation is illustrated in Figure 2. Note the width of the bands around the example schools' overall averages. These bands indicate the range of the groups' averages. The wider the band, the less evenly participation was distributed across the student groups at the school.

Figure 2.

At schools with **high inclusive within-school participation**, all student groups participated at the same rate as the school's average, whereas at schools with **low inclusive within-school participation**, many student groups participated at a much lower rate than the school's average.



Source. AISD student enrollment records

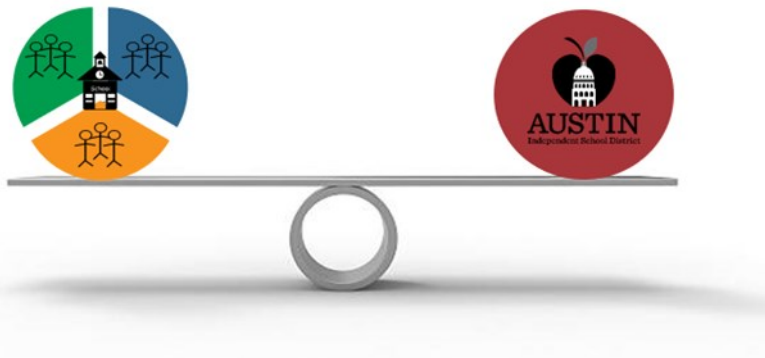
Note. EL = English learner; SPED = special education; EconDis = economically disadvantaged

Between-Schools Inclusive Participation

Our measure of between-schools inclusive participation looks at how a school's student groups participate in visual and performing arts courses, compared with the district's overall average (Figure 3). This metric helps us understand how student group participation compares with that of the district. We are working toward a goal of every student group participating at the same rate, regardless of the school they attend.

Figure 3.

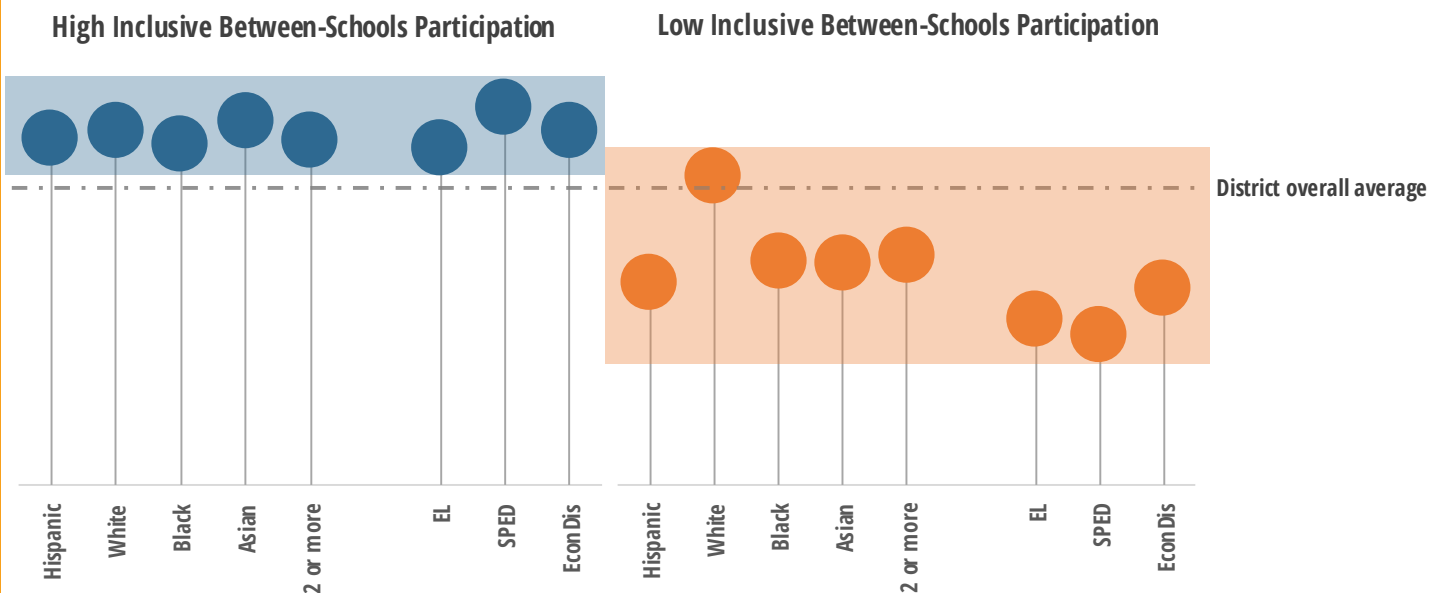
Between-schools inclusive participation across the district, whereby each student group's average participation is compared with the district's overall average participation.



At schools where between-schools inclusive participation was high, all or most of the student groups' average number of credits were at or above the district's overall average. At schools where between-schools inclusive participation was low, the average number of credits of many student groups were below the district's overall average. If between-schools inclusive participation was low at any school, it means that participation in visual and performing arts in schools across the district was dependent on the student group. This is an indicator of inequality in access to visual and performing arts participation in the district.

Figure 4.

Most student groups at schools with **high inclusive between-schools participation** participated at rates at or above the district average, whereas several groups may have had average participation rates that fell well below the district average at schools with **low inclusive between-schools participation**. This is how it could look.



Source. AISD student enrollment records

Note. EL = English learner; SPED = special education; EconDis = economically disadvantaged

Conclusion

A school can have high within-school inclusive participation but have low between-schools inclusive participation, indicating that student groups at the school are participating equivalently in the arts but at a lower level when compared with the district's average participation. Conversely, a school can have low within-school inclusive participation but have high between-schools inclusive participation, indicating that some student groups are participating at a higher level than other student groups at the school, and yet student groups are participating in the arts at a higher level when compared with the district's average participation. Therefore, it is important to measure both within-school and between-schools inclusive participation to get the full picture of arts participation.

As a district, we are invested in moving toward truly equitable, inclusive visual and performing arts participation and look forward to all student groups within a school, and between schools, participating at the same level. However, because we know that is not currently the case, we are observing visual and performing arts participation at every secondary school to highlight challenges and successes. As we continue to monitor these metrics, we anticipate that visual and performing arts participation will become inclusive for all students at the secondary level.

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September 2020

Publication 20.05 RB