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# Arts Smarts or Random Visits: Arts Field Trips in the American Education Policy Context

Angela R. Watson

*University of Arkansas, Fayetteville*

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Arts Smarts or Random Visits: Arts Field Trips in the American Education Policy Context

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Education Policy

by

Angela R. Watson  
University of Arkansas  
Bachelor of Science in Education, 2014

May 2019  
University of Arkansas

This dissertation is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

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Jay P. Greene, PhD.  
Dissertation Director

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Robert Maranto, PhD.  
Committee Member

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Albert Cheng, PhD.  
Committee Member

## **Abstract**

The school field trip is as much a part of the American educational experience as letter grades and recess. However, in response to a variety of pressures such as accountability, safety, and funding, the school field trip is reported to be in decline. Traditional field trip destinations, like museums and zoos, claim that attendance has declined. Further, these institutions feel pressure to connect field trips directly to state educational standards, or even design field trips to meet state standards that may be outside their areas of expertise, in order to justify a field. In this collection of three studies, I examine the effects of culturally enriching field trips to arts institutions on student outcomes in an experiment. I conduct a qualitative study of multiple field trips and report stakeholder perspectives. Finally, I examine the state of arts field trips across the country, including a longitudinal report on field trip attendance to art museums in multiple states. I find positive benefits of field trips to students on social-emotional outcomes. Further, there is evidence that these benefits compound with more field trip attendance. Stakeholders, including the student participants, report benefits from these field trips that both align with and expand from the experimental study findings. Lastly, I find that there is evidence of a decline in field trips to art museums and document the reported impact of the policy pressures on these field trips.

## **Acknowledgements**

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Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank my family. Without the understanding support of my husband and children, my parents and parents-in-law, as well as an extensive network of family and friends, not only this work, but this career path, would have been impossible. I am who I am today in great part because of each of you. Thank you.

## **Dedication**

This edition of *Arts Smarts or Random Visits: Arts Field Trips in the American Education Policy Context* is dedicated to my boys, Jacob and Connor, who first inspired me to return to school while a mother of a toddler and a baby, and whose school experiences drive me every day to make education better for all of our kids. I love you. Learn lots, and go out into the world and do great things.

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## Introduction

The school field trip is as much a part of the American educational experience as letter grades and recess. Ask American adults on the street to tell you about their favorite field trips, and they will likely recall trips taken in primary or secondary school that made a lasting impact on at least their memories of school, if not upon their lives. They likely share the common experience of the excitement of getting out of school, loading up on buses, or in chaperone's cars, and heading somewhere special to learn something valuable. For me, my most memorable field trip was in the third grade when I went to the local university astronomy department's planetarium. I remember the main room had a high ceiling with a large white dome. I watched projected images of the constellations on the ceiling while my classmates and I all laid on the floor. I was amazed. That day I learned about space and the planets, and I remember feeling excited, and smart, as if I had just experienced something meaningful and important. What was your most memorable field trip? Recall it and how it made you feel, as we proceed.

While products of the American education system share this common experience, and likely have fond memories of trips they took and the learning that occurred, field trips are under pressure in the present educational policy climate. In response to a variety of pressures such as accountability, safety, and funding, the educational school field trip is thought to be in decline (Ruppert, 2006; Gadsden, 2008; McCord & Ellerson, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Student Youth & Travel Association, 2016; Gara, Brouillette, & Farkas, 2018). Administrators or traditional field trip destinations, such as museums and zoos, have claimed for decades that attendance has been receding. While there have been obvious short-run declines in attendance in response to events such as 9/11 and the Great Recession, there are also claims of more systematic and enduring declines as a result of, or in response to, policy pressures.



This collection of work adds to the literature on the impacts of arts field trips and arts education in several important ways. The evidence presented in this dissertation provides important additions to our limited knowledge of the significance of educational field trips, specifically arts field trips, on students' social-emotional outcomes. It adds to the experimental findings on the value of arts field trips, the first study of arts field trips for minority students, as well as the first evidence of compounding benefits from attending multiple field trips over time. Additionally, this dissertation adds a detailed look at stakeholder perspectives about the value of arts field trips and the outside pressures that impact both attendance and access. Lastly, this work reports the first evidence of declining arts field trip attendance using actual attendance data collected from arts institutions across the country.

In Chapter 1, I report the first experimental evidence of the effects of a multi-visit arts field trip program where public elementary school students are randomly assigned to receive either three arts field trips in one year, six arts field trips in two years, or "business as usual" of one field trip a year that may or may not be arts-related. My co-authors and I find positive benefits of field trips for students on measures of tolerance and social perspective taking. Further, there is evidence that these benefits compound with a second dose of treatment. Additionally, this chapter is a critical new work that documents, for the first time, the effects of arts field trips on minority students attending economically disadvantaged and struggling schools.

In Chapter 2, I describe the results from a qualitative study that looks inside the "black box" of an experimental study, and considers stakeholder perceptions of the value of multiple arts field trips. This important study adds a variety of stakeholder voices to the discussion about the importance of arts field trips to better inform and expand our understanding of them. Further,

stakeholders, including the student participants, report benefits from these trips that both align with and expand upon experimental study findings.

Finally, in Chapter 3, I examine the current state of arts field trip attendance and access across the country, including a report on longitudinal field trip attendance to many of the nation's leading art museums. I consider the impact of policy pressures on arts institutions and document the decline in attendance using original K-12 field trip attendance data collected directly from arts institutions. Data of this kind have never, to my knowledge, been compiled, therefore, this chapter is an important first look at true field trip attendance trends over time.

Taken together, the research presented in the following chapters represents important contributions to the literature and understanding of the value of arts field trips. Further, it hints at the value and promise of policy changes that could thicken the "thinned" curriculum in ways that would better interest and engage students, and could lead to important positive academic and social-emotional outcomes.

The insights and evidence these studies provide are important to stakeholders at all levels in these arts institutions and education systems. Further, these studies provide evidence that arts field trips, at least to the nation's top art museums, do indeed appear to be declining, that arts field trips benefit students in measurable and meaningful ways on academic as well as social-emotional outcomes, and that stakeholders report that test-based accountability pressures are taking a toll on arts attendance and access, especially for students attending disadvantaged schools.

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## Chapter 1<sup>1</sup>

### **Altered Attitudes and Actions: Social-emotional Effects of Multiple Arts Field Trips**

#### **Introduction**

For generations, K-12 students across America have loaded onto buses and headed off on field trips. However, in recent decades, institutions such as arts venues, science museums, and zoos have reported a decline in field trip attendance (McCord & Ellerson, 2009). Teachers and students also report a decline in school sponsored field trips, particularly for minority students in struggling schools (Government Accountability Office, 2009; Keiper, Sandene, Persky, & Kuang, 2009). Amidst concerns for student safety in a post-9/11 world, and in efforts to maximize “seat time” to increase math and reading standardized test scores in a high-stakes accountability context, schools are under pressure to reconsider the cost to benefit ratio of traditional educational field trips (Gadsden, 2008; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). While many stakeholders maintain that field trips have value above that of common measures of learning such as test scores (Student & Youth Travel Association, 2016), there is pressure on district and building administrators to maximize easily measured metrics of learning. If field trips, which are costly in resources such as time and money, do have measurable impacts on student outcomes, then institutions can defend their worth. If they do not have measurable benefits, critics will continue to cut them, and proponents will have difficulty defending the inherent, yet heretofore largely unmeasured, value of field trips. While there is prior research on the value of a single arts field trip, there is no prior work on the effects of multiple arts field trips and whether or not benefits compound with increased exposure. This study provides evidence of the social-

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was co-authored with Jay P. Greene, Heidi Holmes Erickson, and Molly I Beck.

emotional benefits of multiple arts-related field trips, as well as evidence that when field trips cease, benefits dissipate.

This study describes the second-year results of a rigorous, longitudinal experiment in which urban students of color in ten elementary schools within a district are randomly assigned to receive either field trips to three arts institutions or the district's standard curriculum, which includes a single field trip to a cultural venue that may be arts-related. The treatment field trips occur at one of the largest arts centers in the nation, The Woodruff Arts Center in Atlanta, Georgia. This experimental study is the first one of its kind focused on the effects of multiple arts-related field trips on student social-emotional skills, as well as the first study on the effects of arts field trips on this population. We find significant social and emotional benefits from student exposure to multiple arts field trips. In particular, students randomly assigned to attend multiple arts-related field trips report higher levels of tolerance and social perspective taking (SPT). In this study, we define *Tolerance* as the willingness to accept people who have different ideas and opinions, whereas *SPT* is defined as the understanding that people view the world in different ways. Increased exposure to arts experiences through attending multiple field trips has no effect on students' desire to consume or participate in the arts or their reported levels of *Empathy*. We do find evidence of increased levels of *Conscientiousness* for female treatment group students, and evidence of a compounding effect for female students who receive three additional field trips, in year two of the study. However, we find that this effect recedes when treatment ceases. Taken together, our results suggest that there are meaningful educational benefits to the traditional practice of school field trips to arts institutions, that more exposure appears to produce compounding benefits, and that once treatment ceases, the effects recede.

## Previous Literature

While rigorous research on the value of field trips, particularly culturally enriching field trips, is a relatively new field, there is a burgeoning literature. Previous research on the impacts of field trips shows correlations and some causal estimates between culturally enriching activities such as arts field trips and enhanced student academic and social-emotional outcomes. While our study is the first of its kind to examine the effects of arts-related field trips on social-emotional skills with urban elementary students of color, there is literature about the importance mission-driven charter schools such as KIPP and YES Prep place on field trips in the curriculum of schools of choice. Comprised of urban, African American students at risk, a population similar to the population in our study, these schools view field trips as a fundamental part of education and preparation for a life in society (Matthews, 2009; Maranto, 2015). Further, there is evidence that minority students in struggling traditional public schools have the least access to both arts exposure in the schools and field trips (Government Accountability Office, 2009; Keiper, Sandene, Persky, & Kuang, 2009). Further, adult stakeholders report funding, school administration, and testing as barriers to student travel (Student & Youth Travel Association, 2016).

While not focused on urban minority populations, there is an existing literature examining the effects of arts field trips on public school students. A recent large-scale experiment studies the effect of a single visit to an art museum and finds that students who tour an art museum demonstrate detectable significant effects when measured two months after the visit occurs (Greene, Kisida, & Bowen, 2014). Effects on desire to consume arts in the future are significant for treatment students, and through tracking free tickets given to all students, researchers note that treatment students are more likely to act upon their consumption desires by

revisiting in the future (Kisida, Greene, & Bowen, 2014). Similarly, there is evidence that students who visit the art museum demonstrate increased levels of critical thinking, as well as increased tolerance, content knowledge, and historical empathy (Bowen, Greene, & Kisida, 2014; Greene, Kisida, & Bowen, 2014). Further, these benefits appear stronger for students from economically disadvantaged and rural backgrounds. A more recent descriptive study of the effects of single-visit art museum field trips finds similar results, with students experiencing increases in critical thinking, creative thinking, and human connection, defined as an awareness or sense of connection to others and the self (Randi Korn & Associates, 2018). In addition to comparing the effects of a single art museum visit, this study adds a second treatment condition of a near identical art program occurring in a classroom instead of at the museum. They find that the in-gallery field trip appears to be more impactful than simply seeing and discussing reproduced art content at school (Randi Korn & Associates, 2018).

In similar experimental studies focusing on field trips to see live theater performances, researchers find statistically significant benefits to students on self-reported levels of tolerance and social perspective taking, and evidence of an increased desire to consume theater in the future (Greene, Hitt, Kraybill, & Bogulski, 2015; Greene, Erickson, Watson, & Beck, 2018). Further, in an attempt to parse out the mechanism of arts' impact, Greene et al. (2018) added a second treatment condition wherein students are randomly assigned to receive a field trip to a live theater performance of a play, a field trip to see a movie production of the same play, or to experience the school's regular curriculum. Students who receive the live arts exposure experience the largest impacts, with increased levels of tolerance, SPT, and desire to consume theater in the future compared to students in the control group (Greene et al., 2018). Students

who attended the field trip to see the movie production of the same play were not significantly different on any of the measures from control group students who remained at school.

While not focused explicitly on field trips as the delivery instrument, several studies examine the impact of cultural exposure on student outcomes. A recent meta-analysis of arts integration programs on student performance finds a four percentage point increase in student achievement; however, the authors caution that none of the included studies could establish causal links between arts integration programming and academic gains (Ludwig, Boyle, & Lindsay, 2017). In a study of identical twins, researchers find that increased cultural activity is correlated with higher grades and rates of high school graduation (Jægar & Møllegarrd, 2017). An experimental study of a district wide arts enrichment program shows positive outcomes on student attendance, school engagement, and sense of civic obligation, as well as increased standardized test scores (Bowen & Kisida, 2019). Longitudinal studies of student outcomes also find positive correlations between arts exposure and academic outcomes (Ruppert, 2006; Lacoë, Painter, & Williams, 2016). Further, one study of an arts integration program finds evidence that length of exposure to the arts is important, with students who receive longer and more intensive exposure experiencing greater results. However, this same study shows diminishing effects once treatment ceases (Lacoë, Painter, & Williams, 2016).

Additional studies examine non-academic impacts of arts exposure and find promising evidence of increased social-emotional skill levels. A recent meta-analysis of drama-based learning finds both positive academic and social-emotional outcomes for student participants (Lee, Patall, & Cawthon, 2015). Similarly, researchers find social and emotional benefits to students shortly after exposure to drama activities in a set of experiments (Goldstein & Winner, 2012).



## Research Questions and Theory

While there is evidence that students benefit from field trips to arts and cultural institutions and learn from arts-related activities, there is little evidence addressing the question posed in this study, that is; “What is the impact of multiple arts field trip exposures on student social and emotional outcomes?” We add to the existing literature by conducting the first large-scale experiment examining the impact of multiple arts field trips, over multiple years on social-emotional skills, and examining whether or not effects persist once exposure ceases. We hypothesize that as students with low prior arts exposure benefitted from a single arts field trip, it is also likely that these students continue to benefit from additional arts field trips and that benefits may compound over time. This study is also the first arts field trip study to link students to their administrative data with the potential to track social-emotional, academic, and behavioral outcomes over time, thus following students as they move into middle school, choose electives, graduate from high school, matriculate into postsecondary education and into adulthood.

Arts field trips offer students the obvious experience of attending an arts institution and benefitting from what it has to offer, whether that is seeing a play, experiencing a concert, or discussing a work of art with peers. However, these arts field trips offer another layer of experience and benefit that is less obvious by connecting students to the larger world outside that of their school or neighborhood. Students, even students in large cities, and economically disadvantaged students in particular, tend to travel in small circles from home to school and within their neighborhoods. Middle-class families with disposable resources of time and money are likely to take their children outside these daily enclaves to experience the more diverse world (Kornrich, 2016). However, for families with scarce resources of both time and money, access to these expanding experiences is restricted. Prior studies of single visit field trip experiences with a

majority white sample suggest that students from more rural, isolated and economically disadvantaged areas received the greatest benefit from culturally enriching field trip experiences (Bowen, Greene, & Kisida, 2014; Greene, Kisida, & Bowen, 2014; Greene et al., 2018). We hypothesize that the students in our study, who are predominately isolated minority urban students from low-income families are also likely to benefit in similar ways. For students isolated physically and socioeconomically, the school field trip is their chance to connect to the larger society in a way that may otherwise not be open to them. This connection exposes them to different people, places, and ideas. We theorize that these experiences will lead to increases in a variety of social-emotional feelings. We hypothesize, based on the findings of prior studies, that we will see positive gains on social-emotional characteristics such as *Tolerance* and *Social Perspective Taking (SPT)*. We also expect, based on the literature, to see positive outcomes on students' desire to consume arts.

### **Study Design**

This study expands upon the limited literature on the value of culturally enriching arts field trips by using an experimental design to estimate the effects of multiple arts-related field trips on both social-emotional attitudes and actions as well as the desire to consume and participate in the arts. Our primary research questions for this study are whether or not students experience social-emotional benefits from multiple field trips to arts institutions, and how long these effects persist once students stop participation.

While we believe that all students likely benefit from repeated exposure to arts experiences, it is also likely that there is a diminishing return to repeated exposures, i.e. the relative benefit to the student from exposures one to three is more than the gain from exposures 50-53. For those who have multiple prior exposures, the additive benefit of more exposures may

exist but could be smaller and therefore difficult to measure, while the benefit of additional exposures for those with less prior exposure could continue to be significant. For this reason, we test the impact of multiple exposures in one year, the impact of multiple exposures over multiple years, and the persistence of effects once exposure ceases. Further, we contribute to the literature by linking students' self-reported survey data with their administrative data, used here to control for potential student differences. Consequently, for the first time in this type of arts field trip study, we can link students' attitudes and actions with performance over time<sup>2</sup>.

This paper examines the impact of multiple arts field trip experiences on seven attitudes and actions: desire to *Consume* and *Participate* in the arts, *Empathy*, *Social Perspective Taking (SPT)*, *Tolerance*, *Conscientiousness* and *Effort*. Survey questions were designed to probe students' attitudes as well as actions they intend to or actually take. All constructs rely on students' self-reports and performance on survey measures; therefore, results are a snapshot of the potential full range of impacts of the treatment, because it is unlikely that we perfectly capture the entire effect of the intervention in a limited survey or that these students are able to fully self-report the impact of treatment.

Our preferred study design would be to randomize at the student-level instead of at the grade level. However, the logistical strain of taking some students from each grade, all from different classes and schools, on three field trips a year proved too much of a challenge. The best compromise to preserve the relationship with the schools and to minimize disruption is randomization within the schools by grade level. We believe this design preserves the rigor of the experiment. Students in these schools are homogenous populations and the majority of students receive free or reduced-price lunch (FRL). Further, we believe that students within the

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<sup>2</sup> See Erickson et al. (2019) for academic and engagement outcomes from the same intervention.

same school, who come from the same neighborhood and are in adjacent grades differ by so little that randomization by grade is appropriate. These schools serve students from similar urban neighborhoods with similar demographic characteristics. All of these schools “feed” into the same middle schools by sixth grade.

Because randomization into treatment and control makes the two groups as near to identical as possible, our study design is relatively straightforward. Within each school, we randomly assigned students within either fourth or fifth grade to the treatment group or control group. For balance on both age/grade and numbers between treatment and control, we ensure an equal distribution of fourth and fifth grade students across treatment and control groups. For instance, in school A, all fourth grade students are assigned to treatment and are scheduled to receive three arts field trips. Fifth grade students in school A receive “business as usual” which is one field trip per year. This field trip may be to an arts venue or some other cultural venue. In school B, fifth grade is the treatment group and fourth grade is the control group, but all other protocols are the same. Table 1 describes the within school, by-grade randomization used in this study.

Table 1: Treatment Assignment in Year 2 by Cohort

<b>School 1</b>		<b>School 5</b>	
4 <sup>th</sup>	Treatment	4 <sup>th</sup>	Treatment
5 <sup>th</sup>	Control	5 <sup>th</sup>	Control
6 <sup>th</sup>	Treatment- Prior	<b>School 6</b>	
<b>School 2</b>		4 <sup>th</sup>	Treatment
4 <sup>th</sup>	Treatment	5 <sup>th</sup>	Control
5 <sup>th</sup>	Control	<b>School 7</b>	
6 <sup>th</sup>	Treatment- Prior	4 <sup>th</sup>	Treatment
<b>School 3</b>		5 <sup>th</sup>	Control
4 <sup>th</sup>	Control	<b>School 8</b>	
5 <sup>th</sup>	Treatment- Double	4 <sup>th</sup>	Control
6 <sup>th</sup>	Control	5 <sup>th</sup>	Treatment
<b>School 4</b>		<b>School 9</b>	
4 <sup>th</sup>	Control	4 <sup>th</sup>	Control
5 <sup>th</sup>	Treatment- Double	5 <sup>th</sup>	Treatment
6 <sup>th</sup>	Control	<b>School 10</b>	
Cohort 1	Cohort 2	4 <sup>th</sup>	Control
		5 <sup>th</sup>	Treatment

*Randomization occurred within schools between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades. Students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade from schools 1 and 2 were randomly assigned to treatment when they were in 5<sup>th</sup> grade in year 1 of the study. As such, in year 2 they are one-year post treatment. Students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade in schools 3 and 4 were randomly assigned to treatment when they were in 4<sup>th</sup> grade in year 1 of the study. As such, in year 2 they receive an additional dose of treatment for a total of 6 field trips.*

In the first year of our study, during the 2016-17 academic year, *Cohort One* consists of students from four public schools within the same school district. In the second year of the study, in the 2017-18 academic year, the *Cohort One* control students from year one continue to serve as our control group, and treatment students from year one continue to serve as treatment students in year two. Additionally, students who are in the fourth grade in year one and who are in the fifth grade in year two receive a second dose of treatment, three additional arts field trips, for a total of six arts-related field trips over two years. However, students who are in the fifth grade in year one, and who are now moved on to the sixth grade in the middle school did not receive additional arts fields trips besides those provided as part of their regular school

curriculum. The result of this design is that treatment students from *Cohort One* receive either three or six arts field trips over two years. This variance in treatment exposure allows us to measure the effect of three treatment field trips, six treatment field trips, and the persistence of these effects after treatment ceases.

Our four original schools add a second cohort of fourth graders, *Cohort Two*, in year two of the study. Further, six new schools, within the same district and from a new neighborhood, entered the study. These additions give us a total of ten schools in our second cohort. The six new schools follow the same randomization protocol as in the prior cohort. We again ensure that three of the new schools have fourth grade treatment groups and that three schools have fifth grade treatment groups.

At the beginning of the school year and prior to treatment, we surveyed all students in fourth and fifth grades to obtain pre-treatment measures. It is important to note that we do not have baseline survey measures. Teachers were aware of treatment status within their school after randomization occurred but before surveys could be administered. Students in the treatment group then receive three field trips over the course of the year with most occurring from late fall and early spring before standardized testing season begins in April. Similarly, the control group receives “business as usual” and may attend a school sponsored field trip. In the late spring, after standardized testing is complete, we again survey all students in our study to collect post-treatment outcome measures.

## **Intervention**

In partnership with The Woodruff Arts Center in Atlanta, Georgia, and a large urban school district in the surrounding area, fourth and fifth grade students were randomly assigned to receive an arts field trip to each of the three Woodruff partners: the Alliance Theatre, the Atlanta

Symphony Orchestra, and the High Museum of Art, or to serve as a control group. We then followed these students into a second year, where some students received a second round of treatment with three additional arts-related field trips, for a total of six field trips in two years.

In year one of the study, the field trips consisted of the Alliance Theatre's production of *Cinderella and Fella*, the High Museum of Art's *I See Literacy* program, which includes a docent-guided tour and a hands-on studio workshop, and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's performance *Nature's Symphony: How Nature has Inspired Famous Works of Music*. The three high-quality field trip experiences, all part of the regular education programming at each venue, are carefully designed for maximum impact and cultural relevancy, and are aligned to state standards. The hour-long theater performance was a witty and culturally relevant adaptation of the traditional Cinderella story. A trained volunteer docent led the High Museum of Art's hour long tour, which featured a focused study of several works of art in multiple galleries. A staff teaching artist facilitated an hour-long hands-on studio experience. Finally, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra performed music carefully selected for younger audiences in their 1700 seat facility that was filled to capacity for the hour-long experience.

In year two of the study, the field trips consisted of the Alliance Theatre's production of *The Jungle Book*, the High Museum of Art's *STEAM* tour and hands-on studio workshop, and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's *Concert for Young People Series* performance of *The Colors of Music, Sounds We Can See*. All field trips were similar in length and content to the prior year. While the Alliance Theatre was closed for a complete remodel in year two of the study, satellite theaters of similar size were used to stage their performances.

It is important to note that the treatment consists only of the offer to attend three field trips and a one-day professional development session for the classroom teacher. Whether or not a

teacher chooses to incorporate additional learning activities or to use materials provided by The Woodruff Art Partners, either prior to or after the visit, is done at the discretion of the teacher or school. Further, as part of their school programming, control students in our study receive one field trip a year to a culturally enriching venue. In the years of our study, control students did attend The Woodruff venues on field trips with their schools. In the 2016-17 academic year, our control group of fourth grade students attended the symphony and our control group of fifth grade students attended the art museum. While the symphony performance was identical, the art museum programming consisted of a self-guided audio tour and did not include a hands-on studio component. In the 2017-18 academic year, the fourth or fifth grade control group students did not attend a Woodruff venue<sup>3</sup>; however, both our treatment and control group sixth grade students attended the Alliance Theatre's performance of *Alice Between*.

## Methodology

The survey outcomes described in this paper consist of cultural *Consumption* and *Participation*, *Empathy*, *SPT*, and *Tolerance*. Further, we use the students' survey responses to calculate careless answering and non-response, which are proxy measures of student *Conscientiousness* and *Effort*, respectively. The constructs measured remain largely the same between the two years. Specific changes to constructs are detailed in the next section. Additionally, in year one the survey includes measures of *Grit* and *Satisfaction with Life*. However, these scales demonstrated low reliability in year one and were dropped to shorten the overall survey length.

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<sup>3</sup> In the 2017-18 academic year, control students attended the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, and the Atlanta History Center.



In addition to the survey data, we also obtained detailed student-level administrative data through a partnership with the school district for both the year prior to treatment as well as for the treatment years. Detailed descriptions of both the survey data and the administrative data follow.

## **Survey Constructs**

### **Consumption and Participation**

Because earlier research suggests that visiting cultural institutions increases the desire to frequent those institutions in the future, we include measures of *Consumption* on the survey. We also include measures of the desire to *Participate* in the arts because we hypothesize that arts exposure through field trips might inspire students to become more involved in the arts.

Cultural *Consumption*, which we adopt from Kisida, Greene, and Bowen (2014), has separate scales for a student's desire to consume visual art, theater, and the symphony with seven questions in each scale. The scales include questions such as "How interested are you in visiting an art museum?" and "I plan to see live theater performances when I am an adult." Cultural *Participation* also has separate scales for each art form and measures a student's desire to create art themselves (Kisida, Greene, & Bowen, 2014). The scale includes a total of four questions for each art form such as "How interested are you in making a work of art?" and "How interested are you in playing a musical instrument?" Students choose from five Likert style answer options from "not interested" to "very interested" for each question. The Cronbach's alpha, a measure of the construct's reliability, for composite *Consumption* is 0.91 and 0.83 for *Participation*.

### **Empathy**

In both years of the study, our survey includes a measure designed to probe students' levels of *Empathy*. However, between year one and year two, the items in the construct change.

The original construct contains ten statements such as “It upsets me when another child is being shouted at.” Students are given answer choices on a five-point scale ranging from “disagree a lot” to “agree a lot.” Three items from the original construct in year one are retained in year two, and three new items such as “After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters” were added for a total of six items in the construct. This change was made to shorten the survey and to better capture feelings of empathy that might be impacted by arts exposure. The Cronbach’s alpha for *Empathy* is 0.81 in year one of the study, and 0.68 in year two.

### **Social Perspective Taking**

Theory and prior research suggest that exposing students to a broader world through field trips in general, and arts field trips in particular, increases their ability to understand other people’s points of view (Greene et al., 2018), a skill that is referred to as *Social Perspective Taking (SPT)* (Gehlbach, 2004; Gehlbach et al., 2008; Gehlbach, Brinkworth, & Wang, 2012). The construct used in the survey to measure *SPT* has been used in prior studies (Greene et al., 2018) and is identical in both year one and year two. The scale consists of seven questions such as “How often do you attempt to understand your friends better by trying to figure out what they are thinking?” and “When you are angry at someone, how often do you try to ‘put yourself in his or her shoes?’” Answer choices range from “almost never” to “almost all the time.” The Cronbach’s alpha for *SPT* is 0.78.

It is possible that the students in this study did not fully understand the questions in this construct and were therefore not able to accurately answer them. The majority of students in this study have low reading ability. Only 20% of the students in our sample have composite standardized test scores at or above the “proficient” range. In our planning meeting with district and school stakeholders, teachers and principals expressed concern that students may struggle

with reading the survey. To compensate for this deficit, we read the surveys aloud during administration. However, even with this accommodation, it is possible that students with a lower receptive vocabulary may still not have been able to fully comprehend the questions and, as a result, may not have been able to accurately respond. These questions, more so than items in the other constructs, were difficult to understand and used idioms such as “Put yourself in his or her shoes” that were unfamiliar to young students.

### **Tolerance**

A measure of particular importance to The Woodruff partners is that of *Tolerance*. Tolerance of different people and ideas is a touchstone in American society and our Art Partners are particularly interested in measuring any impact of arts-related field trips on students’ reported levels of tolerance. In the first year of the study, our survey contained six *Tolerance* questions in a single construct. The Cronbach’s alpha for this first version of the *Tolerance* construct was poor. As a result, three of the original questions regarding tolerance of women, people with differing opinions, and people who are “different” were retained from year one. Additionally, three new questions probing students’ levels of political tolerance were added to the survey in year two.

The tolerance survey items in year two consist of a three-question scale of political tolerance adopted from Peterson, Campbell, and West (2001). It includes questions such as “Some people have views you oppose very strongly. Do you agree that these people should be allowed to come to your school and give a speech?” Students are given answer choices on a five-point scale ranging from “disagree a lot” to “agree a lot.” The Cronbach’s alpha is 0.62. We also combine this scale with three other related statements such as “I think people can have different opinions about the same thing” which are used in prior studies and that are designed to measure

their level of acceptance of other people and different opinions (Greene, Kisida, & Bowen, 2014). The Cronbach's alpha for the six question *Tolerance* scale is 0.63.

### **Conscientiousness and Effort**

Careless answering and item non-response, the degree to which a student is willing to carefully answer the questions and complete the survey, are both calculated as proxy measures of *Conscientiousness* and *Effort*. These measures are used and validated in similar studies (Hitt, 2015; Cheng & Zamarro 2016; Hitt, Trivitt, & Cheng, 2016; Zamarro et al., 2016). For these measures, students do not directly answer questions about their levels of conscientiousness or effort. Instead, we use student survey response patterns to calculate these outcomes. Item non-response is very simply the percentage of questions in the survey left blank and is a measure of whether or not a student is willing to persist through the survey to completion. For careless answering, we identify inconsistencies in answer patterns to related questions to determine if a student is randomly answering or is carefully answering each question.

### **Administrative Data**

Our access to student administrative data sets this study apart from all previous experimental arts field trip literature. The student-level administrative data provide us with access to student outcomes such as disciplinary infractions, class history, GPA, and standardized test scores. In Erickson et al. (2019) we look at the effects of multiple arts-related field trips on student engagement in school, as well as impacts on test scores. In the portion of the study discussed here, we use administrative data primarily to control for baseline differences and for analyzing groups of students by proficiency levels. A composite of all prior year standardized test scores in core subjects is used to control for students' baseline performance. Further, while randomization should control for any bias between the treatment and control groups, it occurs

before baseline measures are collected with the survey instrument. Acquiring administrative data allow us to ensure that our treatment and control groups are similar and to control for significant differences. Controlling for pre-treatment measures of the outcomes also improves the precision of our estimates of treatment effects.

## **Sample**

Our full sample consists of 1,363 students from ten elementary schools in a large urban school district. Table 2 details pre-treatment demographic and survey information for the entire sample. The average age of our sample is 10.5 years old and 50% of our sample identify as female. Over 98% of students are non-white with most students identifying as black or African American. There are no significant demographic differences between the treatment and control groups at baseline. Free and reduced lunch status is not included because the district reports that all students in the school in this study qualify. We believe that students across treatment and control groups have similar socioeconomic backgrounds because students live in the same neighborhoods and attend schools that feed into the same middle schools within the district.

Further, treatment and control groups had similar standardized test scores in the prior year, similar number of disciplinary infractions, and similar levels of school engagement. The treatment group is statistically more likely to report a greater desire to consume art and theater. Classroom teachers knew before pre-treatment surveys were administered whether their class was in the treatment group or control group. We believe this pre-treatment difference in desire to consume the arts may be the result of treatment teachers priming their students by informing them of the field trips prior to the pre-treatment survey. Further, it appears that treatment students are more apt to recall prior arts visits, also likely due to the aforementioned priming effect, thus reminding them of past visits.

While this priming effect is not ideal, it could be considered an important part of the

Table 2: Pre-Treatment Comparisons of Treatment and Control Groups

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Control (mean)</b>	<b>Treatment (mean)</b>	<b>Difference (T-C)</b>	<b>Observations</b>
<b>Demographics:</b>				
Age in years	10.48	10.59	0.11	1135
Female	51.21%	51.14%	-0.07	1363
Black or African American	98.82%	99.32%	0.50	1018
Students with Disabilities	15.50%	15.27%	-0.23	1228
<b>Baseline Standardized Test Scores</b>				
ELA	-0.35	-0.31	0.04	1202
Math	-0.32	-0.28	0.04	1201
Combined Tests	-0.37	-0.34	0.03	1205
<b>Baseline Discipline Measures</b>				
Infractions	0.12	0.12	0.00	1363
Suspensions	0.04	0.06	0.02	1363
<b>Prior Year Percent Absent</b>	4.47%	4.58%	0.11	1228
<b>"School is Boring"</b>	0.04	0.00	-0.04	1193
<b>Desire to Consume Art</b>	-0.05	0.14	0.19***	1222
<b>Desire to Participate in Art</b>	0.03	0.05	0.02	1222
<b>Previously attended The Woodruff</b>	75.10%	80.61%	5.51*	1181
Previously attended Alliance				
Theatre	32.10%	30.84%	-1.26	1211
Previously attended Atlanta				
Symphony	39.74%	47.95%	8.21**	1216
Previously attended High Museum				
of Art	49.03%	52.38%	3.35	1133

*The difference between treatment and control group students are adjusted controlling for school fixed effects. \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$*

effect of assignment to treatment in that even the promise of field trips was enough to make students more likely to say they wanted to go. Whatever the case, we do control for these pre-treatment differences in our analysis.

### **Consent and Attrition**

We received consent forms from 78% of all enrolled fourth and fifth grade students in the ten schools in both years of the study. There is a 39.6% attrition rate from students who

enroll in the schools in the fall to students from whom we obtain outcome surveys in the spring<sup>4</sup>. Further, there is a 6.8% differential attrition rate between the treatment and control group with more students attriting from the control group. The overall and differential attrition rates fall within the tolerable threat of bias under optimistic assumptions (What Works Clearinghouse). We believe these optimistic assumptions are appropriate for this study because it is unlikely that treatment status affects the attrition of a student from our sample. The students in our sample are a highly mobile population and movement within the year is common.

### Model

Given our experimental research design and appropriate randomization, we employ a straightforward model to estimate the causal effect of arts field trips on various student outcomes. Our model is as follows:

$$Y_{is} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 1Treat_{is} + \beta_2 2Treat_{is} + \beta_3 PTreat_{is} + \beta_4 PreTreat + X_i \beta_5 + \theta_s + \alpha_i + \varepsilon_{is}$$

where the outcome of interest is  $Y$  for student  $i$  in school  $s$ ,  $1Treat$  equals 1 if students are assigned to treatment and 0 if they are control,  $2Treat$  equals 1 if students receive a second dose of three field trips and 0 if they do not,  $PTreat$  equals 1 if students are treated in the year prior but not in the current year (this variable is for sixth grade students who were treated in fifth grade),  $PreTreat$  is the outcome measure prior to treatment,  $X_i$ , a vector of student characteristics including gender and grade, and  $\theta$  is a fixed effect for each school. We also include student

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<sup>4</sup> For the portion of the study described here, administrative data are only used if a student also has a completed survey, therefore attrition rates vary from those reported in Erickson et al. (2019) where administrative data are used for consenting students regardless of whether they completed a survey.

random effects,  $\alpha_i$ , to account for correlation between students' error if they appear over two years. All standard errors are clustered at the teacher-level.

Our primary analysis pools both *Cohorts One* and *Two* across all ten elementary schools and estimates effects after one year of treatment, after two years of treatment, and the effect of prior treatment one year after treatment ceases. The data are structured as an unbalanced panel. We believe random effects are appropriate because we are correcting for student errors correlated over time and not trying to account for potential endogeneity where fixed effects would be more appropriate.

## **Results**

In the following tables of the outcome analyses, all scales are converted into standardized z-scores with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. The reported results in the following tables, therefore, are the effect sizes expressed as a percentage of a standard deviation.

### **Cultural Consumption and Participation**

We find no treatment effect in the combined sample on students' desire to be cultural consumers of all three art forms as seen in Table 3, either when controlling for pre-survey differences in desire to consume or not. However, when we look at the impact of field trips for each cohort individually, we find a significant increase of 0.33 standard deviations in treatment students' desire to consume the arts in *Cohort One* only. Similar to past research, we find no effect of arts field trips on students' desire to participate in the arts either when we combine all three art forms or when we examine each art form individually. This lack of interest in participating in the arts could be due to students' exposure to high quality productions and works of art and having a realistic understanding of the difficulty of producing quality art.



Table 3: Treatment Effect on Consume & Participate

	Consumption			Participation		
	Combined	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Combined	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
<b>1st Treatment</b>	0.118 (0.073)	<b>0.334***</b> (0.119)	0.013 (0.077)	-0.033 (0.064)	0.039 (0.113)	-0.027 (0.084)
<b>2nd Treatment</b>	-0.055 (0.089)	0.155 (0.127)		-0.124 (0.122)	0.004 (0.157)	
<b>Previous Treatment</b>	-0.146 (0.127)	-0.105 (0.129)		-0.149 (0.151)	-0.200 (0.155)	
<b>Composite Test Score</b>	-0.009 (0.029)	-0.032 (0.038)	-0.025 (0.035)	0.006 (0.029)	0.018 (0.047)	-0.016 (0.037)
<b>Female</b>	0.210*** (0.056)	0.261*** (0.068)	0.190*** (0.070)	0.456*** (0.061)	0.524*** (0.102)	0.365*** (0.069)
<b>Grade 6</b>	-0.063 (0.108)	0.035 (0.107)		-0.333** (0.141)	-0.229 (0.142)	
<b>Observations</b>	1,271	688	760	1,271	688	760
<b>Number of Students</b>	1,006	423	760	1,006	423	760

*Fixed effects for the ten elementary schools and student random effects are included in each model. Standard errors clustered at the teacher level are in parentheses. Observations refer to the number of observations in the panel. Number of students refers to the number of unique students in the sample*

*\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$*

## Empathy

We find no significant effects of treatment in either cohort or in the combined sample for *Empathy*. Because the construct was changed significantly between year one and year two, it limits the number of students taking either version of the survey, and thus limits our ability to detect effects.

## Social Perspective Taking

Contrary to past research and our hypothesis, we find no significant effect of the treatment on students' level of *SPT* when using the entire sample. As discussed, this outcome is likely due to the low reading ability and age of the students, as well as the difficulty decoding the meaning of more complex questions in this construct. When we limit the sample to students with

higher combined test score proficiency levels, we do find a significant impact on students' level of *SPT*. In Table 4, high ability treatment group students score 0.27 standard deviations higher on the *SPT* scale than their control group peers. Further, when we control only for reading ability, as opposed to the combined test scores from all core subjects, the result for the combined cohorts becomes marginally significant at 0.18 standard deviations, thus supporting the idea that reading ability may hinder our ability to detect the true effect of treatment on *SPT*.

Table 4: Treatment Effect on Social Perspective Taking

	<b>Combined</b>	<b>Cohort 1</b>	<b>Cohort 2</b>
<b>1st Treatment</b>	0.172 (0.107)	<b>0.276*</b> (0.155)	0.063 (0.130)
<b>2nd Treatment</b>	-0.076 (0.239)	-0.045 (0.265)	
<b>Previous Treatment</b>	0.279 (0.341)	0.388 (0.357)	
<b>Pre SPT</b>	0.433*** (0.063)	0.274*** (0.092)	0.581*** (0.055)
<b>Pre Composite Test Score</b>	0.122* (0.064)	0.183 (0.111)	0.106 (0.077)
<b>Female</b>	0.204* (0.123)	0.141 (0.195)	0.166 (0.146)
<b>Grade 6</b>	0.018 (0.289)	0.065 (0.305)	
<b>Observations</b>	290	149	186
<b>Number of Students</b>	238	97	186

*Fixed effects for the ten elementary schools and student random effects are included in each model. Standard errors clustered at the teacher level are in parentheses.*

*Observations refer to the number of observations in the panel. Number of students refers to the number of unique students in the sample \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$*

For this reason, we believe that the results we find for the students with higher test scores, and likely higher vocabularies, are similar results to those we might have seen if the students with lower test scores and likely lower vocabularies had been able to accurately answer the questions.

## **Tolerance**

While the measure of *Tolerance* is of particular interest to our research partners, there is some difficulty using the scale. Because the measure changes between the year one and year two versions of the survey, it decreases the number of observations with either version of the measure.

When we restrict our analysis of *Tolerance* to the single item that is consistent across all surveys, “I think people can have different opinions about the same thing,” we see a positive and significant difference, shown in Table 5, with treatment students reporting tolerance levels 0.11 standard deviations higher than their control peers. This question was chosen because it was used in prior work, consistently used across survey years, and because it is most closely related to our theory about how arts field trips affect students.

This finding is lower than expected and lower than in prior studies where the original *Tolerance* scale rendered positive outcomes. While it is possible that these arts treatments with these students are somehow less effective at increasing levels of tolerance than in prior studies, it is also possible that there is a saturation point to tolerance messaging. Students of color in our sample may be exposed to more discussions of race and tolerance. For example, during visits to the schools, we saw bulletin boards in hallways and classrooms featuring messages and heroes who promoted tolerance. Further, the district in this study has prioritized social-emotional learning (SEL) as one of several turnaround strategies.

Table 5: Treatment Effect on Tolerance "Different Opinions"

	<b>Combined</b>	<b>Cohort 1</b>	<b>Cohort 2</b>
<b>1st Treatment</b>	<b>0.112*</b> (0.058)	0.116 (0.089)	0.087 (0.075)
<b>2nd Treatment</b>	0.165 (0.102)	0.163 (0.125)	
<b>Previous Treatment</b>	-0.149 (0.200)	-0.168 (0.211)	
<b>Pre "Different Opinions"</b>	0.174*** (0.045)	0.188*** (0.063)	0.153*** (0.051)
<b>Pre Composite Test Score</b>	0.161*** (0.033)	0.181*** (0.047)	0.153*** (0.043)
<b>Female</b>	0.282*** (0.068)	0.335*** (0.082)	0.276*** (0.089)
<b>Grade 6</b>	-0.307* (0.175)	-0.317* (0.191)	
<b>Observations</b>	1,187	665	695
<b>Number of Students</b>	927	405	695

*Fixed effects for the ten elementary schools and student random effects are included in each model. Standard errors clustered at the teacher level are in parentheses. Student random effects are included when students are observed in their first and second treatments or their first and previous treatment. Observations refer to the number of observations in the panel. Number of students refers to the number of unique students in the sample \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$*

### Conscientiousness and Effort

Overall, the field trips do not have a significant effect on our *Effort* measure of survey non-response. However, treatment appears to differentially affect females when it comes to *Conscientiousness*. Further, those impacts appear to compound with increased treatment exposures. We see in Table 6 that, in our combined sample, female students are 0.24 standard deviations less careless in their answering, meaning that they are more likely to thoughtfully answer the questions as compared to male peers. We also find that in the second year of

treatment, treated females become even more conscientious, 0.37 standard deviations less careless. While the level of significance drops, it is likely due to reduced power from a smaller sample of female students with two rounds of treatment. Unfortunately, the effects dissipate quickly once treatment ceases; female students who are treated in year one, but not in year two, exhibit the same level of conscientiousness as female students who were never treated. Lastly, it appears that *Cohort One* is driving this *Conscientiousness* effect. A discussion of potential reasons for the strength of year one results are included in the next section.

Additionally, it is worth pointing out that the survey in year two is 20 questions shorter than the survey used in year one, after dropping two of our original constructs. This decrease in survey length may have artificially inflated *Cohort One* students' level of *Conscientiousness* in the second year because it is easier to persist through a 70-question survey in year two than through a 90-question survey in year one. However, because surveys are read aloud to students, and because both surveys are long, we believe that the difference between the two surveys is minimal. Further, because students are only compared to other students within the same school and in the same year, both the treatment and control students would have taken surveys of the same length.

Table 6: Treatment Effect on Survey Carelessness Answering

	<b>Combined</b>	<b>Cohort 1</b>	<b>Cohort 2</b>
<b>1st Treatment</b>	0.039 (0.090)	0.021 (0.095)	0.136 (0.109)
<b>2nd Treatment</b>	0.138 (0.211)	0.186 (0.180)	
<b>Previous Treatment</b>	0.065 (0.164)	0.096 (0.169)	
<b>1st Treat*Female</b>	<b>-0.243**</b> (0.107)	<b>-0.367**</b> (0.149)	-0.187 (0.138)
<b>2nd Treat*Female</b>	<b>-0.374*</b> (0.223)	<b>-0.495**</b> (0.232)	
<b>Prev Treat*Female</b>	0.067 (0.150)	-0.033 (0.173)	
<b>Pre Carelessness</b>	0.343*** (0.030)	0.296*** (0.037)	0.406*** (0.041)
<b>Pre Composite Test Score</b>	-0.144*** (0.033)	-0.083* (0.044)	-0.172*** (0.039)
<b>Female</b>	0.024 (0.074)	0.087 (0.108)	0.009 (0.082)
<b>Grade 6</b>	-0.385*** (0.103)	-0.371*** (0.091)	
<b>Observations</b>	1,211	675	713
<b>Number of Students</b>	946	410	713

*Coefficients interpreted as “less careless” therefore more Conscientious. Fixed effects for the ten elementary schools and student random effects are included in each model. Standard errors clustered at the teacher level are in parentheses. Observations refer to the number of observations in the panel. Number of students refers to the number of unique students in the sample \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$*

## Year Two Disruptions

Our study results appear to be driven largely by students from year one *Cohort One*. Either something extraordinary happened to students in year one of the study or something extraordinary happened in year two of the study to mute the overall effects. We believe the second scenario is more likely true.

It is worth noting that in year two of the study, the Alliance Theatre was closed for remodeling and used satellite venues for their performances instead of their usual home theater. While the different venues did not appear from one observation to be disrupting, it was out of the ordinary and different from the treatment conditions in the prior year. Students in year two may have responded differently than in year one to the change in venue or unfamiliar surroundings of a production in a different theater, thus causing our year two effects to be less detectable than in year one.

Additionally, in the midst of fall survey administration in year two of the study, thus directly affecting *Cohort Two* as well as *Cohort One* in year two, Hurricane Irma hit Atlanta. When we arrived to administer pretreatment surveys, parts of the city and surrounding region were at a standstill. Many areas had no power. Several of our schools were closed due to power outages and downed trees. Even after power was restored and roads were cleared of debris, some of our schools remained closed because cafeteria food had spoiled without refrigeration and needed to be replaced before students could return and classes could resume.

Similarly disruptive, there were winter ice storms in year two of the study, which caused the cancellation of originally scheduled symphony performances and missed days of school. As a result, some of the treatment groups received a substitute symphony performance, *The Quilt of American Music*, designed for grades seventh to twelfth instead of the regularly scheduled performance. While all classes attended a symphony performance, some students received a performance with different content from that experienced by others in the treatment group and from what some students may have been prepared for at school. Further, the substituted performance was tailored to older student audiences. Since field trips to the High Museum of Art

and the Alliance Theatre occurred in the fall or later in the spring, the winter weather and subsequent school closings and trip rescheduling did not directly impact them.

These multiple events of disruption, particularly the confounding effects of two natural disasters and multiple days of missed school, could help explain the lack of significant results in year two of the study. We are attempting to measure social-emotional outcomes. Disasters that include loss of electricity, loss of work, and a multitude of other difficulties can negatively affect students, and therefore alter the types of outcomes we are attempting to measure. This stress and chaos, occurring not once but twice during year two of our study, could mute the small effects of our intervention, thus causing those effects to be more difficult to measure.

Further, treatment students effectively miss an additional three days of school in order to attend our field trips. While we believe that missing “seat time” for field trip experiences is generally worth the sacrifice, there must be a point where missing three MORE days of school in an already highly disrupted year is likely to produce adverse effects. This adverse effect may have been enough to counteract any good that the field trips did, thus making the effects more difficult to measure.

### **Conclusion**

The evidence from this study suggests that there are important social-emotional and academic benefits to arts-related field trips. We find significant benefits to students on reported level of *Tolerance* as well as increased levels of *Social Perspective Taking* for students at or above average proficiency levels. This study is the first to show increased effects from multiple arts field trips, a compounding effect. We also find encouraging evidence that treated female students are more conscientious. The vast majority, 75% of the control group and 80% of the treatment group, had attended The Woodruff before, as well as during the study. Therefore, we



can be confident that the benefits we find accrued over time and were not simply the impact of attending a “first” art field trip.

While the results from this study differ from earlier studies, this study is conducted with a younger and more racially homogenous group than prior studies. Further, these students are all from urban areas, whereas the majority of prior study participants came from more rural areas. Finally, the reading comprehension barrier may not have been totally alleviated by reading surveys aloud. Certainly, this modification would mitigate some of the barrier, but if a low vocabulary is also associated with a lower reading level, then simply reading difficult words aloud would do little to help students better understand the survey’s meaning.

### **Future Work**

A third cohort, *Cohort Three*, of students from the six schools in year two is added in year three, as well as students from five new schools, totaling eleven schools in *Cohort Three* and fifteen schools in the study. We are currently collecting data on these students, giving us more observations and more power to explore marginally significant outcomes and treatment conditions. We also plan to collect administrative data for students as they move into sixth grade at the local middle school, which is an important time when students have their first experience choosing elective courses. We will gather data on how treatment students approach the choice of elective courses when given the opportunity, and if they select into arts-related elective courses at different rates than their control group peers. By using longitudinal administrative data, we plan to follow both the short- and long-term effects of arts-related field trips on student outcomes. Finally, we will follow these students through their K-12 experience, gathering information on outcomes such as credits earned, graduation rates, whether or not they go to college, and what kinds of employment they secure in their adult lives.

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## Appendix

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## **Chapter 2**

### **Inside the Black Box: Stakeholder Perceptions of the value of Arts Field Trips**

#### **Introduction**

During the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era of high-stakes K-12 education accountability, learning not directly tied to increased test scores was “thinned” from the curriculum (Ruppert, 2006; Gadsden, 2008; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Student Youth & Travel Association, 2016). Among the educational activities in decline as a result of stringent accountability is the field trip (McCord & Ellerson, 2009; Greene, Kisida, & Bowen, 2014), particularly for economically disadvantaged minority students in struggling schools (Ruppert, 2006; Gadsden, 2008; Government Accountability Office, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). Teachers and students report a decline in school sponsored field trips (Government Accountability Office, 2009; Keiper, Sandene, Persky, & Kuang, 2009).

However, accumulating evidence indicates that culturally enriching field trips boost educational outcomes such as social-emotional learning (SEL) (Bowen, Greene, & Kisida, 2014; Greene, Kisida, & Bowen, 2014; Kisida, Greene, & Bowen, 2014; Greene, Hitt, Kraybill, & Bogulski, 2015; Greene, Erickson, Watson, & Beck, 2018; Randi Korn & Associates, 2018; Watson, Greene, Erickson, & Beck, 2019), school engagement, and test scores (Erickson, Greene, Watson, & Beck, 2019). While rigorous studies show significant benefits from attending field trips, there is little information on stakeholder perceptions of these experiences and benefits.

This study, an extension of a primary experimental study (Erickson et. al, 2019; Watson et. al, 2019), contextualizes the primary study while also documenting and exploring the

experiences of arts field trip stakeholders, including arts venue administrators and volunteers, as well as attending school teachers and students, after multiple field trips to arts institutions in their communities. In the primary study, randomly assigned fourth and fifth grade students from the Atlanta, Georgia metro area received three field trip experiences in a single academic year. Some students also received a second year of field trips, for a total of six arts field trips in two years. Students were surveyed prior to and after attending the field trips. Additional administrative data for each student was obtained from the participating school district and linked to student survey responses. While the experimental study provides causal estimates of the impact of field trips on student outcomes (Erickson et. al, 2019; Watson et. al, 2019), it does not provide desirable details regarding the content of the field trips, nor does it humanize stakeholder experience, or stakeholder perceptions of the experience.

To fill this gap, this qualitative study looks inside the “black box” of the experimental primary study. Both approaches have distinct advantages. While the experimental study provides us with causal estimates, it provides a limited knowledge of stakeholder experience, whereas this study allows for greater detail about field trip context and content, and gives stakeholders a voice. Data collection methods include site visits, field notes, field trip observations, semi-structured interviews and informal conversations with a variety of adult stakeholders, individual interviews and focus group conversations with students, and the collection of educational materials the Art Partners offered as supplementary materials to educators. These data collection methods provide a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the context and value of arts field trips. I focus on treatment students’ field trip experiences to each of the three Art Partners at The Woodruff Arts Center in Atlanta, Georgia, as well as the experiences of a variety of adult stakeholders involved in the field trips including The Woodruff’s administrators and educators,

classroom teachers, and public-school administrators. While my primary interest is student experience, understanding the level of adult stakeholder buy-in is important to the overall understanding of field trips, since without these adult advocates, field trips are unlikely to occur.

Three research questions guide this study with regard to the context of the field trip experience, what the field trip experience was, and how stakeholders viewed their experiences. I add to the literature by documenting the context and details of the arts field trips in this study, as well as by providing evidence of stakeholder perceptions of the field trips. I find that adult as well as student stakeholders report the importance of experience and exposure as the main impacts of educational arts field trips. Additionally, I find that classroom teachers support and advocate for experiential field trips for their students and consider it an important part of the job of educating students in their schools and community. Further, students learn from these experiences and articulate that learning in intricate detail months after the field trips occur. Students also recall field trips from years past, connecting new experiences to prior learning, thus indicating that these are important and memorable experiences for them. I also find evidence of student-to-student connection via common experience, as well as shared meaning and learning. Lastly, students advocate for these experiences for themselves and for their peers, and articulate the importance of these experiences with poignant and compelling detail.

The paper proceeds as follows. To begin, I discuss the previous literature on the importance of arts field trips for positive student academic and social outcomes, as well as the decline in field trip and arts access, particularly for economically disadvantaged and minority students. Next, I describe the research design and research questions. I document the context of this study in detail, and then present the findings, and conclude with discussions of future work.



## Previous Literature

### Academic Benefits

Both common wisdom and historical practice support the belief that educational field trips benefit students. While the rigorous empirical literature is scarce regarding the value of field trips, there is growing evidence that arts field trips benefit students' academic and social development. In Erickson et al. (2019) researchers report experimental evidence of increased student engagement in school, as well as increased standardized test scores after attending multiple arts field trips.

There is also increasing evidence that there are measurable non-cognitive impacts of attending an arts field trip, as well as the generation of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) for students who may need it most (Adams, Foutz, Luke, & Stein, 2006; Goldstein & Winner, 2012; Bowen, Greene, & Kisida, 2014; Kisida, Bowen, & Greene, 2016; Greene et al., 2018). In Watson et al. (2019), I report evidence of increased social-emotional skills, as well as the first experimental evidence of compounding benefits from attending multiple arts field trips over time.

Similar results from exposure to both single visit and multi-visit field trips have been found by other researchers as well. When crowded schools needing classrooms turned to unused education space in California museums, students received more than the three Rs. With repeated exposure to cultural experiences over years, these students had higher test scores, better attendance, and lower rates of disciplinary action. When students returned to traditional classrooms at their schools, these positive effects decreased (Lacoe, Painter, & Williams, 2016).

While not focused explicitly on field trips as the delivery instrument, several studies examine the impact of cultural exposure on student outcomes. A recent meta-analysis on arts integration programs within schools finds a four percentage point increase in student achievement (Ludwig, Boyle, & Lindsay, 2017). In a study of identical twins, researchers found that increased cultural activity is correlated with higher grades and rates of high school graduation (Jægar & Møllegarrd, 2017). A study of a district wide arts enrichment program showed positive outcomes on student attendance, school engagement, and sense of civic obligation, as well as increased standardized test scores (Bowen & Kisida, 2018). A similar study found increased attitudes of academic resilience (Kanevsky, Corke, & Frangkiser, 2008). A recent meta-analysis of drama-based learning found positive academic and social-emotional outcomes for student participants (Lee, Patall, & Cawthon, 2015). Similarly, researchers found social and emotional benefits to students shortly after exposure to drama activities in a set of experiments (Goldstein & Winner, 2012).

### **Equity of Access**

Arts field trips provide students with access to important experiences. The experience of attending an arts institution and benefitting from what it has to offer, whether that is seeing a play, experiencing a concert, or discussing a work of art with peers connects students to the larger world outside that of their school or neighborhood. This connection exposes them to different people, places, and ideas. For students isolated geographically and socioeconomically, the school field trip is their chance to connect to their larger society in a way that may otherwise not be open to them.

Students, even students in large cities, and economically disadvantaged students in particular, travel in small circles from home to school and within their neighborhoods (Ruppert,

2006; Kornrich, 2016). Middle-class families with disposable resources are likely to take their children outside these daily confines to experience the larger world (Kornrich, 2016). However, for families with scarce resources, access to these expanding experiences is restricted. If access to this larger society is limited, through restricted access to school field trips, then an experiential gap by social class and even race is created. When arts access within schools is differentially restricted along economic and/or racial lines, it may exacerbate gaps to the degree that it becomes a civil rights issue, impairing some students' abilities to connect with and participate in society. Further, if cultural field trips build cultural or social capital, the very students who need them the most are likely the ones most likely to be denied them (Ruppert, 2006; Gadsden, 2008; Government Accountability Office, 2009).

Many children, particularly children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, lack this type of cultural exposure. Schools, which used to provide some arts exposure, now have a narrow, test-focused curriculum, such that any opportunity gaps students have in exposure to cultural institutions are replicated, rather than disrupted, by schools. As traditional public-school curriculum has thinned, middle class parents have supplemented their children's education with private lessons in art, music, sports, and dance, to name just a few. This discrepancy creates an experiential learning gap for students who are not receiving this supplementary education exposure.

While Watson et al. and Erickson et al. (2019) are the first to document the academic and social-emotional benefits of arts field trips in an experimental study for economically disadvantaged urban minority students, there is prior literature about the importance mission-driven charter schools such as KIPP and YES Prep place on field trips in the curriculum of schools of choice. Comprised of urban, African American students at risk, a population similar to

the population in this study, these charter schools view field trips as a fundamental part of education and preparation for a successful life in society (Matthews, 2009; Maranto, 2015).

A recent study, although not experimental, of the effects of single-visit art museum exposures found that students experienced increases in critical thinking, creative thinking, and human connection<sup>5</sup> (Randi Korn & Associates, 2018). This study, in addition to examining the effects of a single art museum visit, added a second treatment condition of a near identical art program exposure happening in a classroom instead of at the museum. The authors found that the in-gallery exposure appeared to be more impactful than simply seeing and discussing identical art content at school.

In experimental studies focused on field trips to live theater performances, researchers found statistically significant benefits to students on self-reported level of tolerance and social perspective taking, and evidence of increased desire to consume theater in the future (Greene, Hitt, Kraybill, & Bogulski, 2015; Greene et al., 2018). Again, in an attempt to parse out the mechanism of arts' impact, researchers in this study added a second treatment condition wherein some students received a field trip to a live theater performance of a play, some received a field trip to see a movie production of the same play, and the control group stayed at school and received neither the field trip nor the play or movie treatment. Students who received the live arts exposure experienced the largest impacts.

In a study by Bowen, Greene, and Kisida (2014), results show that students exposed to a few hours in a world class art museum in their community were able to recall details about the art many weeks later, were able to use critical thinking constructs to understand new art which

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<sup>5</sup> Human Connection is defined as an awareness or sense of connection to others and the self, p10. (RK&A, 2018)

they had never seen before, and were able to display improved “historical” empathy, meaning that they were able to better understand their place in the world and in time. An important social-emotional finding of this study was that students exposed to the field trip scored higher on measures of tolerance, which include responses to statements such as “people can have different opinions about the same thing.” Further, results were strongest for disadvantaged students, whose prior exposure to art may have been limited and who, therefore, likely had the most room for growth.

### **Accountability Pressures**

In recent decades cultural institutions, such as arts venues and history museums, have reported declining field trip attendance (Ellerson & McCord, 2009; Greene, Kisida, & Bowen, 2014). Teachers and students also report a decline in attending school sponsored field trips (Government Accountability Office, 2009; Keiper et al., 2009). Evidence suggests that the decline is due in part to increased high-stakes accountability pressures (Gadsden, 2008; Government Accountability, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). Under test-based accountability systems, schools focused on increasing math and reading test scores are under pressure to reconsider the costs and benefits of traditional educational field trips (Gadsden, 2008; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Student Youth & Travel Association, 2016).

Are educational field trips worth the lost classroom time and spent funding? While many take a positive answer to this question for granted, schools stretching limited funding, do not. As schools are pressured for results on test score outcomes, they lean towards increased seat time and away from more difficult to measure learning experiences such as field trips to art and other cultural institutions (Gadsden, 2008; Government Accountability Office, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Kisida, Bowen, & Greene, 2016; Student & Youth Travel Association, 2016).

In response to accountability pressures, schools allocate additional instructional time to math and reading test preparation while cutting back on non-tested subjects and other activities (Gadsden, 2008; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Student Youth & Travel Association, 2016).

Academically low-performing schools that serve students from high-poverty areas are more likely to report a decline in school sponsored field trips, including arts-focused trips (Government Accountability Office, 2009; Keiper et al., 2009). These schools also face the greatest accountability pressures. A decline in field trips in high poverty areas is especially concerning as field trips can provide equitable access to cultural institutions for students across various economic and racial groups.

### **Research Design**

An interactive study design, detailed in Figure 1, guided this study (Maxwell, 2012, p. 77). The goal of this study is to further the understanding, knowledge, and literature about the value and importance of cultural field trips for young students, particularly at-risk students who may lack equitable access to social and cultural capital. Throughout modern American educational history, field trips have been a valued part of education. That historical importance is dwindling. By describing the field trip experience of youth from an urban setting, at risk for a host of negative outcomes, I hope to shed light upon and better understand the value of arts field trips for these students in a local context, as well as for similar students across the country.

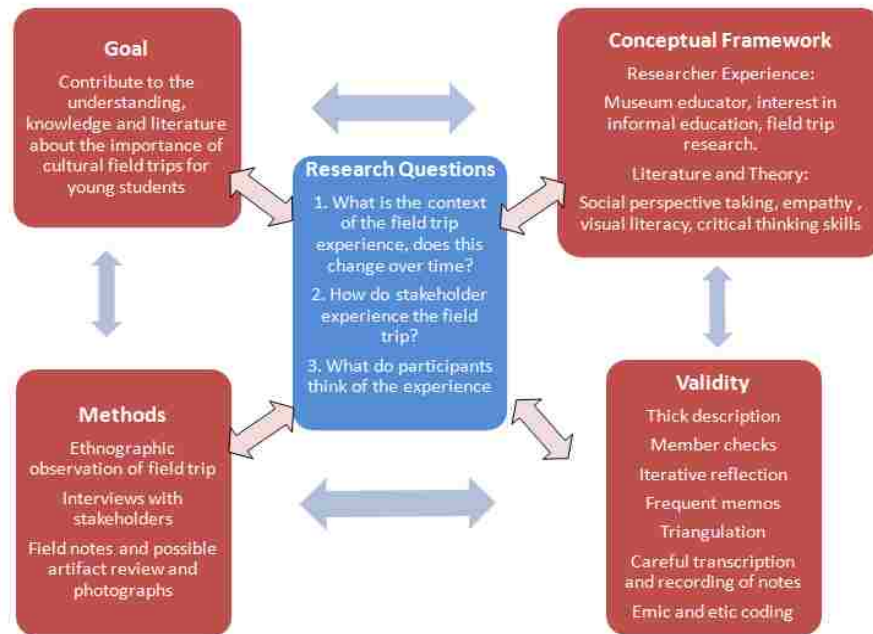


Figure 1. Interactive Research Design Model

The conceptual framework for this study was constructed from existing literature and theory, as well as emerging and pre-existing beliefs that deepened over the course of the study as my knowledge, experience, and understanding expanded. The broad, overarching question addressed here is whether or not field trips are a valuable experience for students.

### Research Questions

The research questions used to guide this study are as follows.

*1. What is the context of the field trip experience, and does it change over time? For instance, how long are students at the institution, who is with them, and what type of field trip experience is it, (e.g. is it self-guided, an audio tour, or a docent tour)?*

To answer this question, I recorded the details of the arts field trips through structured observation, including recording the number of students in attendance, the number of

chaperones, the format of field trip (guided, self-guided, audio tour), the demographics of the participants, the context of the experience, and the time of exposure.

### *2. How do stakeholders experience the field trip?*

This question includes students, teachers, museum educators, and caregivers who participated in the field trips and seeks to define the “how” and “what” of their lived experiences. To answer this question, I conducted observations of stakeholders during the field trip experiences in order to gather rich, in-depth, experiential accounts. I recorded participant responses and actions; if they were engaged and if they appeared to enjoy the field trip, by observing their level of engagement as evidenced by interaction with the docent or technology, and by reading information plates or other printed materials about what they were viewing. Similarly, additional information about student engagement was recorded by observing engagement between students, as well as between students and their teachers during the experience. Efforts were also made to collect data by taking notes on participant conversations.

### *3. What do participants think of the experience? What are their perceptions, and how do they make meaning from the field trips?*

This study examines participant perceptions as evidenced by their testimony, as well as the retention of information and quality of their recall. The information I need to answer this question is perceptual and possessed by the participants. For this reason, to best answer this question, I interviewed students and other stakeholders before, during, and after the field trips, using semi-structured interviews. Interviews are context-bound collaborations between two people in conversation, therefore, a predetermined interview protocol with open-ended questions was used to guide the conversation, but I allowed the discussion to unfold naturally and to take



different directions if needed. Allowing students to describe their experience is an important component to understanding the value of field trips. Similarly, interviewing teachers, museum educators, and other adults helps increase our understanding of field trips and the role of adult investment (see interview protocols in Appendix A).

In an effort to gather experiential descriptions and perceptual information from the students, I observed them immediately following the field trip experience. During field trips, students oftentimes have unstructured activities while still at the museum. This access provided me the opportunity, as a participant observer, to record student responses to the field trips.

## **Data**

### **Collection**

To answer the research questions posed in this study, I used a variety of data collection methods. I made eight site visits to Atlanta, which included two dozen visits to The Woodruff Arts Center's Art Partners, as well as visits to performances at three satellite venues, and twenty visits to participating schools over the two and a half years included in this study. During the site visits, I attended a variety of meetings, professional development sessions, dinners, and tours with stakeholders such as program funders, The Woodruff's executives, the school district superintendent, volunteers, teachers, and students. To further inform my research and to better understand the cultural field trip offerings, I visited multiple cultural and educational field trips sites in Atlanta, Georgia including the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, the Birth Home of Martin Luther King, Jr., the Georgia Aquarium, the Fernbank Museum of Natural History, the Atlanta Botanical Gardens, and The Wren's Nest.

I observed four field trips at The Woodruff; one for both the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the High Museum of Art, and two productions by the Alliance Theatre, one at its home stage in the first year of the study, and one at a satellite stage in year two of the study, due to renovations.

Additionally, during site visits and field trip observations, I interviewed participating stakeholders, took field notes, and documented experiences with photos and voice recordings. I conducted thirty-three formal interviews with adult stakeholders including fifteen Woodruff administrators and program staff, eight Woodruff representatives such as volunteer docents and teaching staff, and ten school staff and classroom teachers. In general, interviews with adult stakeholders occurred by phone, or before, during, or after site visits or observations. In addition to formal interviews, I had a variety of informal conversations with additional stakeholders throughout my many visits. Caregiver consent to interview a convenience sample of students was obtained, and I interviewed eight students from one to six months after their last field trip. The following descriptions of gender are based on assumptions by me as the observer for the purposes of data collection and reporting, and do not necessarily reflect the actual gender identifications of the participants.

Two students, one male and one female, who I will refer to here as Trevon and Jada, were interviewed individually at their respective schools, and six students, three male and three female, who I will refer to as Demetrius, Darryl, Jamal, Shanice, Jasmine and Kiara, were interviewed at once in a focus group due to scheduling constraints. All students were in fifth grade when interviewed, but one student, Jada, attended the field trips when she was in fourth grade and was interviewed the following fall when she was in fifth grade.

## **Sample**

Students considered in this study are treatment students in the primary study. Treatment students average 10.5 years in age and are in fourth and fifth grades. They are Southern, urban, and 99% identify as African American or black (Watson et. al, 2019). Students attend schools in economically disadvantaged areas that are historically at high risk of the effects of generational poverty, chronic low expectations, racism, and deficits in mainstream social and cultural capital. The field trip exposures occurred throughout the fall, winter, and early spring of the academic years of 2016-17 and 2017-18.

## **Data Analysis and Methods**

Data analysis began at the time of initial contact with participants, during the site visits and field trip observations. During this time, descriptive as well as demographic data were collected, and running field notes were taken in order to record emerging themes as they developed. Similarly, I recorded my personal thoughts and ideas in real-time, or immediately following the observation, to record themes of potential importance, ideas I had regarding the data collected or other data that emerged, and description about context that might apply to these new ideas or findings. I also attended arts field trips at other institutions, and with other populations of students, to broaden my understanding of common practices at arts institutions across the country, and to create a construct from which to build my understanding of how best to collect and analyze data for this study.

During the field trip observations, I systematically collected data on participant numbers, grade, observed gender and race/ethnicity of all participants, including teachers, docents and any chaperones. During the visual arts field trip observations, I also cataloged the number, name, and style of all works visited, made notes as to questions students asked and who asked them. I

counted the number of students raising their hands in response to educator questions, the style of presentation and information provided by the educator, and the time spent at each “stop.” At each stop and approximately every 3-5 minutes during the tour and studio experiences, I scanned the group to count students engaged and on task. I also cataloged the instructional style of the tour or experience, the duration of the various sections of the experience, and any other important information that I could glean through observation including participant comments.

While themes and ideas that emerged during the observational data collection phase influenced the interview process, I created and used a pre-determined interview protocol for semi-structured interviews. However, influential ideas, or strong themes that emerged during observation were recursively integrated into the pre-existing interview protocol.

Before coding either of the above observational and interview datasets, I transcribed the interviews verbatim and reread my field notes. To preserve the authenticity of student communications, quotes are transcribed exactly as spoken. Participant’s names have been changed to protect their privacy. Similarly, quotes from classroom teachers are anonymous and approximate dates are given to restrict potential identification.

The two datasets were coded at different times. I coded the observational data and field notes first. After reading the field notes through completely to clarify meaning and refresh my memory, I pre-coded these data using counts for demographic details about students, such as total number of students, number of male and female students’ grade, observed race or ethnic makeup of group, number and gender of chaperones, teachers, museum educators, number of minutes spent on the field trip, and similar quantitative measures. Upon completion of this step, I made a pre-coding memo of my thoughts, ideas, and feelings after the initial reading of the observational data.

Next, I coded observed measures of student engagement during each field trip experience, and descriptions of the mood of their participation, i.e. did they seem bored or excited, as well as their apparent engagement before and after the field trip experience. I also coded field notes from before and after the field trip for more indicators of student experience, and evidence of student thoughts about the experience. Second and third iterations occurred after the initial coding, and after the interview coding.

After the transcription of the interviews, I read the transcribed notes to ensure accuracy and to engage more fully with the data. I then re-read the transcripts and pre-coded words or phrases of importance to themes taken directly from my research question or themes that emerged from the coding of the observational data and field notes. Next, I selected the primary emic themes that seemed most important or relevant to the study design. I formally coded and reduced the data in stage one, based on the selected themes. Next, I reflected on the themes that emerged, compared them to my initial research questions, and consulted my interactive design model to ensure alignment. Then, I engaged in a second-stage coding episode in response to changes made in my research design as a result of earlier coding and reflection. As a final phase of data analysis, I merged the findings from the two datasets to form final overarching themes upon which the findings and conclusions are based.

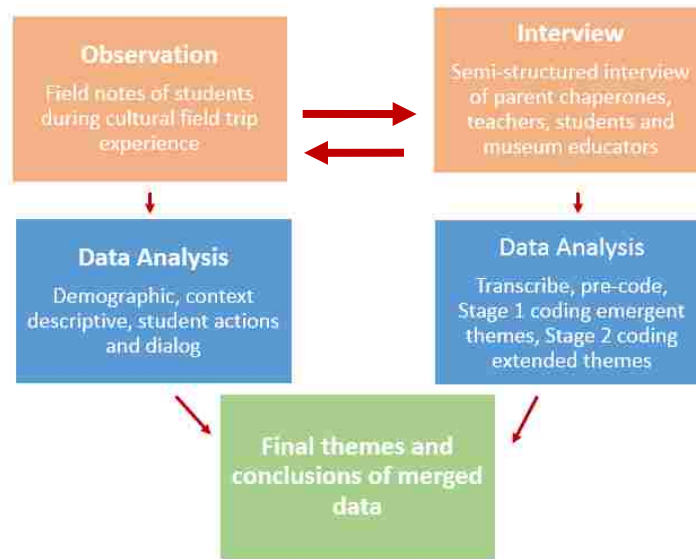


Figure 2. Data Analysis Plan

Several strategies to ensure validity were employed. These included reflexive consideration of the interactive model, extended time in the field, theoretical support, accurate and thick description, triangulation through various data collection methods, and multiple coding events. Using my extended time in the field to better facilitate understanding the context of the experience and of those experiencing it is an important component to the trustworthy depiction and interpretation of the data.

The ethical treatment of the participants was a significant concern, particularly because I was observing children. I obtained permission from The Woodruff Arts Center to observe the field trip, and stakeholders were informed of my presence during observations, site visits and interviews. Consent forms and interview protocols, as well as the research design, received Internal Review Board approval from the University of Arkansas.

## Site Visits and Study Context

This study summarizes information gathered from multiple methods of data collection. Data were gathered during multiple visits to the Art Partners and schools described over two and a half years. A detailed description of the arts field trip context and venue programming, as well as each of the educational field trips follows. The rich description of context answers the first and second research questions asked in this study: What is the context of the field trip experience, and does it change over time, and how do stakeholder experience the field trip?

### Georgia

In 2018, the Georgia Department of Education (DOE), with significant buy-in and support from teachers across the state, revised their fine arts standards, which had not been revised since 1993. Georgia, led by its capital, Atlanta, is an emerging arts industry locale, with burgeoning music and movie industries that currently import talent from across the country. Both businesses and schools in the region see the economic opportunity for the state to grow their own talent, and promoting arts education has become an economic concern. In the spring of 2018, in order to incentivize arts education across the state, the DOE changed the school rating structure. Schools failing to provide students with arts education could lose as much as six points, the equivalent of a letter grade, on the state's school rating system. To further incentivize the arts, *StART* grants of up to ten thousand dollars from the state go to help schools in rural districts set up fine arts programs. While these developments in Georgia's education policy are encouraging for arts advocates, they did not take effect until the fall of 2018 and did not directly impact the findings in this study, but do speak to the emerging importance of arts in the state at the time (personal communication with Georgia DOE Fine Art Director, February, 2019).

## **Atlanta**

Atlanta, is the capital city of Georgia. According to the 2010 US Census, Atlanta has almost half a million residents, over 50% of whom are African American making it the fourth largest black majority city in the United States. Further, the surrounding Atlanta metropolitan area houses more than 5.8 million residents (2010 US Census). Atlanta has a rich arts and cultural heritage, boasting an impressive list of resident music and film stars, as well as the birth-home of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Since 2005, the City of Atlanta's Office of Cultural Affairs has supported the *Cultural Experience Project*, which is aimed at exposing Atlanta's youth to the cultural heritage of the city through increased access to field trips. The stated goals of the program are to "further student understanding of art and culture," to "increase students "exposure and knowledge of art and cultural institutions," and to "enrich students' education beyond the walls of the classroom..." (City of Atlanta, 2018).

### **Participating School District**

A large, urban, majority minority school district from the Atlanta metropolitan area participated in the primary study, and it was from this sample that students for this study were drawn. Students and teachers from ten schools participated. Both the student body and the administrative staff of the schools were primarily African American. These schools ranged in total enrollment from a minimum of 250 students to a maximum of 700 students, with an average total enrollment of 440 students. The majority of students in the schools were classified as receiving free or reduced-price lunch (FRL). Both students and teachers in these schools were highly mobile. At a meeting with school officials, school principals said that they had student attrition rates of approximately 25% each year. Additionally, there were several instances of



teachers leaving a school mid-year and of students moving to other classrooms after a teacher left. Further, results from the primary study where student data were available showed that only 20% of fourth and fifth grade students at the schools in the study scored at or above proficient levels on combined math and reading state standardized test scores in the years of the study. Despite the prevalence of socioeconomic disadvantage in the schools, 80% of treatment students reported that they had visited at least one of The Woodruff Art Partners in the past (Erickson et. al, 2019).

Finally, in a meeting with the district superintendent and other district level administrators, I became aware that the schools in this district were organized as “local governance charters,” meaning that they had the flexibility to make decisions at the school level regarding curriculum and services provided to the students. The intention of this arrangement is that schools can be more nimble and innovative in meeting the needs of their students. However, it also became apparent that there was wide variance in arts programming access between the schools in this study.

Some schools had no visual arts programming, but might have music or theater courses instead. I make this point to illustrate that even within the schools in the district in this study, there was significant variance as to the level of arts exposure students were receiving, and it appeared that the arts access fluctuated from year to year. In interviews, teachers reported that in some schools students received music class once a week. In other schools there was no music program. In still other schools there was no visual arts program or students receive an arts class every other week for 45 minutes. A teacher at one of the schools described a recent experience at her school. The music teacher left and the next year “they came in and took every instrument in the school.” She said this was a problem because “kids can’t compete with students who have

had access to music” instruction for years. “Certainly, they can’t compete once they get to high school.” She indicated that this deficit effectively eliminated options for kids as early as elementary school (anonymous personal communication, September 2018).

Teachers in the schools did advocate for students to attend the arts field trips. In interviews with The Woodruff staff, several people said that they believed teachers wanted to come and that teachers, particularly the art and music teachers, were advocates in the schools. In interviews with teachers at five different schools, I was repeatedly told by every teacher whom I spoke with that the arts field trips were important “exposure” for students. Indeed, every teacher used the word “exposure” in their interview and many also used the word “experience.” As one teacher summed it up,

This is a good chance for them [the students] to come and get an experience and get some exposure. That is our job, to expose these kids to things because how can they even know if they like something or not if they have never even seen it before? Maybe this will be something they will like when they grow up.

The teacher also said that the field trips help prepare them for middle school when they can choose to take a music class. “They will at least know what the instruments are” (anonymous personal communication, February 2018).

## **Findings**

### **Woodruff Arts Center**

Located in the center of Atlanta’s Midtown, The Woodruff Arts Center is one of the largest arts centers in the world and one of the only arts centers in the United States to offer visual and performing arts on one campus (The Woodruff Arts Center). Founded in 1968, it receives a total of 800,000 visits each year to its three Art Partners; the Alliance Theatre, a Tony Award winning theater that hosts the *Alliance Theatre for Youth and Families*, the Grammy

Award-winning Atlanta Symphony Orchestra offers a concert series entitled *Concerts for Young People*, and the High Museum of Art, the leading art museum in the Southeast.

With a robust education program, The Woodruff is the largest arts educator in the state, impacting 200,000 students each year with diverse programming (The Woodruff Arts Center). While the three Art Partners operate as separate entities under The Woodruff Arts Center umbrella, there is collaboration among the three Art Partners for education programming. Each Art Partner has dedicated education teams that design and administer programming. However, collaborations occur among teams composed of representatives from all partner institutions. The Woodruff provides support with shared facilities, events, development, and human resources.

Further, as the largest arts educator in Georgia, arts education is a major part of The Woodruff's mission and daily work. Not only does it host students, but it offers professional development opportunities for teachers and has outreach programs that partner with area schools to reach students and teachers in their classrooms. All three Art Partners also offer open access to online teaching materials, further extending their influence and impact in the larger Atlanta metro area and beyond.

### **Alliance Theatre**

The Alliance Theatre is a Tony Award-winning theater seated in Midtown Atlanta on the campus of The Woodruff. The 770 seat Alliance Stage was renovated in 2018; however, the field trips under study here occurred prior to and during the renovation. In the first year of the study, field trip students attended an hour-long, professionally staged performance of *Cinderella and Fella*, a witty and culturally relevant adaptation of the traditional *Cinderella* story. Many aspects of Georgia flora and fauna were incorporated into the set and dialogue. The sounds of frogs

chirping in the night and talk of the kudzu reminded students of their own backyards. Screams of excitement electrified the theater as the lights went down and the actors took the stage. Students clapped in unison and stomped their feet until the balcony shook. The students' intense engagement was apparent when they roared with laughter at subtle jokes and sat silently still during tense moments. During the hour that I sat with the students while observing the field trip, and despite the verve of the occasion, there was not one instance of disruption; not one child out of more than 700 had to be ushered out for misbehavior. All heads faced forward and all eyes were upon the stage.

In the second year of the study, the Alliance Theatre, despite being closed for a complete remodel, did not disappoint. Students were treated to a whimsical adaptation of *The Jungle Book*. Although the satellite theater was slightly smaller, holding 500 students instead of 700, the production was just as engaging. Students were so close to the stage that several students commented in interviews that the actors were “spitting” on them as they spoke their lines. Of particular interest was my chance to sit in on the early planning meetings for this production. While the planning and care taken to make these productions relevant and engaging comes through in the actual productions, being in the room where it happens elucidated the process. The entire production team, from the director conveying her vision for the production, to the set and costume team sharing their sketches, were concerned about making the environment an important part of the production, and making the animals seem animalistic without being full costumes. Students would have to imagine the animals, thus requiring more effort and participation in co-creating the vision and experience.



Figure 3. *The Jungle Book*, show art courtesy of The Alliance Theatre

On the day that I observed the play, hundreds of children were ushered class by class into the auditorium. Most were in upper elementary grades, but some were as young as preschool and required booster seats to see the stage. As students walked into the theater, the curtains were open and the stage was lit. You could see the scaffold of a jungle scene and hear the sounds of crickets and the songs of the jungle. Many students were so struck upon entering the theater that they stopped dead in their tracks and I heard more than one reverent “Woooooow.” When the lights went down and the play began, not a soul in the packed theater moved. No one made a sound. As I was observing the engagement of the students during the field trip, I watched for heads moving as a sign of disengagement. There were no wiggles to be seen. Students were quite literally sitting forward on the edges of their seats, their bright eyes wide, and their little round heads all perfectly still.

In interviews with teachers from five of the schools in the study, some indicated that teachers had carefully integrated *The Jungle Book* theme into their art and English language arts (ELA) curriculum. At the performance, the lobby was filled with easels displaying student corporate artwork depicting themes from *The Jungle Book*. One student, Darryl from the focus group interview, told me that in his class, he watched two *Jungle Book* movies before they saw the play. “We watched... both of them. Mr.\_ told us we were going to compare and contrast them. Mogli.” However, a student from the same school, Trevon, indicated that he did not know what play he was going to see until it began, and that his class had not integrated any of the material into their classwork.

There seemed to be variance in whether or not educational materials provided by the Art Partners were used by the classes who attended the field trips, but both the students who were in classrooms where lessons had included the performance themes, and students from classrooms that did not indicated that they liked the show and could recall details about the performance.

### **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra**

The Grammy-Award winning Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO) is located on The Woodruff campus in Atlanta Symphony Hall. In addition to the regular concerts, the symphony produces a special series of concerts developed specifically for students on field trips. The series, entitled *Concerts for Young People*, produces three concerts each season for a variety of age groups. One concert is recommended for pre-K-2<sup>nd</sup> grades, another for 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades, and a third concert is developed for 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades, although the grades are recommendations and students of any age are welcome at any of the concerts. All concerts are aligned with state standards. Further, there are online education materials and resources available to teachers to help incorporate and extend the learning in the classroom. The short season runs from December

through March 1<sup>st</sup> and field trips cost between \$10.00 per student for general ticket admission, to \$6.50 per student for Title I schools. Thirty-four percent of the patrons for this concert series come from Title I schools (personal communication with Managing Producer of Education Concerts, February 2018). The Managing Producer of Education Concerts at the ASO, Tiffany Jones, spoke candidly about relationships and breaking down the barriers that teachers must overcome in order to get their students through the door, whether that means helping the teachers with the logistics of planning their trip, or supplying them with the needed letters for administrators, the ASO is committed to removing barriers and bringing students to the symphony.

The concerts have considerable demand and serve more than 43,000 students each season (personal communication with Tiffany Jones, February 2018). Ms. Jones credits the high demand to the relationships built over time between the symphony staff and the schools, as well as to the built-in advocacy of the schools' music teachers. In order to accommodate this number of students in such a short season, it is necessary to run two consecutive performances, with one performance beginning at 10:00 a.m. followed by a second performance at 11:45 a.m.

In the first year of the study, students attended a performance entitled *Nature's Symphony: How Nature Has Inspired Famous Works of Music*. I was unable to observe the field trip in year one. In year two of the study, students were scheduled to attend *The Colors of Music, Sounds We Can See*. However, winter storms closed schools several times over the winter. Consequently, some treatment group schools had to reschedule their field trip. Because of aforementioned demand and tight scheduling, some of the treatment schools were rescheduled to see an alternate show entitled *The Quilt of American Music* that was designed for 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. It was this performance and field trip that I observed.

When I arrived at Symphony Hall, my first time to visit, I quickly became aware that I was at the right place because the narrow city streets were lined with yellow school buses for blocks. Students loomed outside the entrance. After traversing the gauntlet of students in waiting, I made my way inside to an equally full lobby packed with a thousand people. As the first performance concluded and the doors opened, a thousand more students emptied into the already full lobby. Thousands of excited students tried to find their way outside and to pick out their yellow bus from among the mass of yellow buses that had now pulled into a large circle drive outside. The organized chaos of the event was staggering, and yet everyone seemed to find his or her way. Within minutes, the second group of more than 1,000 students were entering the performance hall and the lobby, brimming with students only moments before, was largely empty.

There were, however, three schools that had not checked in. The performance was scheduled to begin at 11:45 a.m., and yet three schools and approximately 300 students were missing. As symphony staff tried to contact the schools, they delayed the start of the performance. One school called organizers and informed them that the school bus never showed up. I overheard that the music teacher had been standing outside the school since 8:00 a.m. with a handful of money she had collected from her students waiting for a bus that never came. Ms. Jones explained that this type of thing was not uncommon and that busing was a logistical barrier. She said, “They might not even show up, or might show up and not even know what they were here to see.”

Indeed, in later interviews with teachers and students, there was evidence that some teachers and schools had tried to incorporate the program theme into classes like music, art and ELA. Some teachers expressed frustration that they had prepared students to see a different show



than what they attended because of the snowstorm substitution. On the other hand, the music teacher from one of the schools told me that she had not used any of the offered materials or prepared students for any particular show because she had been too busy preparing for the school “Christmas” performance. However, her students were familiar with the symphony and the instruments, and she did not feel that the lack of preparation for the concert would impair their experience, especially since the show was changed at the last minute.

The start of the concert was delayed for a total of almost twenty minutes. The last two schools finally arrived. Concert staff responded with the grace of people dedicated to meeting the needs of children along with the experience to understand the challenges these schools face in getting a busload of students across Atlanta. The 81 late students and four teacher-chaperones, who were on a bus that had gone to the wrong location, were now ushered straight from the bus, without a bathroom break, up into the darkened balcony. I followed them because these late students also happened to be from the primary study treatment group.

While their late arrival was less than ideal, it did make for a dramatic entry. The house lights were already down, and just as students made it to their seats, the lights came up and the music began, Morton Gould’s *American Salute*. Students were awestruck. However, that magic soon began to fade. Within fifteen minutes of the show beginning, student engagement began to wane. About half of the students were still on the edges of their seats, eyes wide. The role of the conductor was of particular interest and students acted out a pantomime of the conductor’s baton. As evidence of their excitement and engagement, students tried to clap between movements, but quickly learned to wait. When a pause came in the music, students would look around to take their lead from others. The other half of the students went from wide-eyed to closed-eyed as they curled up in their seats and either pretended to or did sleep. This behavior spread through the

balcony, but I did not see this occur on the hall floor below. I did however, witness a sea of blue screens below and in the balcony, as many, if not most, of the adults were on cell phones or other devices during the performance. One teacher near me tried to hide the light from her students with her purse, while one male teacher was so bold as to have a full-sized iPad out in plain view. Of all of the adults visible in the balcony, only one was not on a device during the performance.

At the end of the one-hour performance, I spoke with three ushers, all retired music teachers from the Atlanta area. I mentioned the students sleeping. One of the ushers was quick to defend them, saying that possibly they had not slept or eaten and needed to rest. Another usher said that it was not uncommon for adult patrons to shut their eyes or even to sleep during performances because they could hear the music better with closed eyes and could relax. These ushers also said that it was possible that teachers had out their phones because they were coordinating bus pick-up or lunch schedules and that it might not mean that teachers were disengaged and setting a bad example for their students.

In an interview, a male teacher told me that these experiences were “great for the kids” and that the programming had been “integrated into art, social studies and ELA for months” at his school. Similarly, a female teacher told me that the field trips “are exposure” and that they “give kids some context to talk about music” (anonymous personal communications, February 2018).

### **High Museum of Art**

The High Museum of Art, founded over a century ago with a permanent collection of 157,000 works, is the leading art museum in the Southeast. In 2018, the museum underwent a complete reinstallation that began after the students in this study attended their field trips. A field

trip to the museum costs \$8.00 per student with an optional add-on of a \$3.00 per student hands-on studio experience. Since 2003, an endowment funds a program entitled *Art Access* that covers the cost of field trips visits and buses for Title I schools in the area. This funding also pays for a staff person dedicated to meeting the needs of Title I school visits and building relationships within those schools and the community. Because of the *Art Access* program, the High is able to reimburse up to \$100,000 a year on bus costs. Students who visit as part of the *Art Access* program also receive a “Welcome Back” card that allow them to return on a future visit to the museum with their family for free.

In further efforts to remove barriers for students and families, as well as for the larger community, the High offers free admission one Sunday a month and can see as many as 6,000 patrons on that day. The High also standardized admission prices to \$14.50 for anyone 6 years and above in an effort to eliminate confusion with different price points for admission. Further, this ticket price includes special exhibitions, so patrons only pay once when they come to the museum. “We are really deeply committed to getting people early, getting people in, getting people comfortable...” with visiting the museum, said Virginia Shearer, the Eleanor McDonald Florza Director of Education for the High (personal communication, September, 2018). The High education department has a staff of more than a dozen, with 120 trained docent volunteers and another 150 docents in training.

We are always asking ourselves how we can better serve schools. What is the museum’s role in helping schools achieve their goals? How can we be really impactful and do something meaningful for students? Museums should be a resource for schools. We are better able to adapt content to meet schools’ needs, said Shearer.

On my first “field trip” observation at the High, a tour led by the museum’s Head of Schools and Teacher Services. Hurricane Irma hit Atlanta the week that I was there and consequently the public schools were closed and the field trip was canceled. Instead of the

planned field trip, I and several colleagues received a behind the scenes tour that the students would have experienced, including the High's new STEAM programming, as well as tours through the facilities, studio spaces, and the collection.

The following academic year I observed that same field trip alongside a dozen fifth grade students. A trained volunteer docent led the High Museum of Art's program, which featured a focused study of several works of art in multiple galleries. The field trip was designed as a two-hour experience; one hour in the galleries and another hour in the studios. However, the bus was more than fifteen minutes late, which meant that both the gallery tour and the studio tour were shortened. During the gallery tour, students were remarkably engaged as evidenced by when they were asking and answering questions, listening, and observing. Every few minutes I scanned the group and counted any students who appeared disengaged, whether that meant talking amongst themselves or simply staring off into space. While some were indeed more interested in other works of art near them, I did not count that as a sign of disengagement but as being even more engaged. They wanted to see more than what they were being shown. Oftentimes, some other work of art caught their interest and they wanted to pursue it and were restricted. The docent would refocus students with suggestions that they could return with their family for free and explore more of the museum another time.

Upon the conclusion of the gallery tour, docent ushered the students to a studio space where a staff teaching-artist welcomed them to what was planned as a sixty-minute hands-on studio art-making component. In interviews with the students, this experience was what they most enjoyed about the field trip. They were excited to have the opportunity to paint, something they were rarely, if ever, allowed to do at school (personal communications with multiple students, spring and fall of 2018). While the studio component seemed hectic and rushed to me,

and appeared slightly overwhelming to the teaching artist, she later told me the tour group was late which made her job difficult to complete in a shorter amount of time (personal communication with teaching artist, March 2018).

Every child appeared fully engaged and trying to follow the directions of the teacher. Classroom teachers seemed particularly stressed during this time. The student to chaperone ratio observed was 12:1. While in the studio, two of the teacher-chaperones left, to the chagrin of two teacher-chaperones who were left in a crowded classroom with 24 students. As the teaching artist rushed through the activities, one classroom teacher began to threaten and then punish male students. One student was made to “sit out” for most of the studio experience, although I did not see him do anything obvious to deserve the timeout. It was unfortunate, but it was obvious that the stress of the day and the circumstances were wearing on the classroom teachers. It takes a lot of effort for teachers to take students on field trips. It would be certainly be easier to stay at school in a familiar and controlled setting. Relieving as much stress as possible for teachers should be a key goal of arts providers.

### **Student Stakeholders**

To answer the final research questions asked in this study, “What do participants think of the experience? What are their perceptions, and how do they make meaning from the field trips?” I refer to the student interviews. A convenience sample of student participants was requested through a contact with the Art Partners. She reached out to the schools with whom she had relationships and where she thought they would be most likely to agree to participate. Information about the research study and the interview process was then sent to the schools and the schools reached out to students. I interviewed any student for whom a consent form was returned.

My first student interview was with a student that I will call Trevon. He and I met in his school near his classroom where we sat facing each other in two chairs awkwardly placed in the hall, and where students and teachers occasionally walked by. He seemed shy. I introduced myself and began to ask him questions about his arts field trip experiences. He said that his favorite of the three field trips was to the art museum. When I asked why that was his favorite, he said, “because we had, we made a project, and they had us looking at different kinds of art and stuff.” This was a common theme with all of the students I interviewed. They all loved the hands-on art making component of the field trip. One student said that it was “because we got to paint” and that they did not get the chance to paint at school (personal communication with Shanice, April 2019). I also asked Trevon what his favorite work of art was. “I forgot what it called,” he said. Luckily, I had observed his field trip and was familiar with the art he saw. I told him that was okay and to just describe it. “The, uh, it was different kinds of glass and stuff. At first, I thought it was one whole mirror, but then the lady, she said, she said it was like mirrors in front of each other.”



Figure 4. Gerhard Richter (German, born 1932), 11-Scheiben (886-3) (11-Panes), 2003, hard-coated tempered glass and wood

Trevon was recalling a favorite work of many of the students, called (*11-Panes*) by Gehard Richter, and he was telling a stranger about it in detail in the busy hallway of his school more than a month after he had attended the field trip. The quality of his recall was remarkable. He also expressed that he had listened to “the lady,” who was the tour docent. Trevon was equally able to recall his favorite parts of the *Jungle Book* play and the symphony performance that he attended up to three months prior to the interview.

In my second student interview session, a focus group of six students, they were similarly able to recall details about their field trip experiences. Additionally, during the near hour interview, students had a vibrant conversation with each other, recalling details and spurring their peers to recall and build upon each other’s remembrances. “I liked the TV that tells time,” said Demetrius. A peer mumbled something. “Y’all didn’t see that?” (talking to his peers). Because it was like... It was like people on the inside that move around and ummm... clean it up and stuff.” Indeed, this description of the work was accurate and quite detailed. His peers remembered and began to agree. Demetrius seemed pleased.



Figure 5. Maarten Baas (Dutch, born 1978), *Analog Digital Clock* from the Real Time series, 2009, digital video (color, silent), dimensions variable.

He was describing, in detail, Maarten Baas' *Analog Digital Clock*. He was also connecting with his peers at that moment through a past common experience, and had created a new shared experience in recalling the details of the field trip. He had also been validated and validated the feelings of others by sharing his perception of a favorite work. Jasmine, also part of the focus group interview, then said, "My favorite part was when we had, we were with the lady and my teacher and she gave us a little ribbon and we had to swung it around a little glass mirror thing. Yah, and it made you go dizzy." "Oh yah" others in the group said in unison as they laughed and smiled. Then Darryl said "It had all that glass, so as soon as you looked you see all different people." All the students recalled the work and got very excited and chattered to one another about their remembrances of the piece. They were describing Anish Kapoor's *Untitled*.



Figure 6. Anish Kapoor (British, born India, 1954), *Untitled*, 2010, stainless steel, 118 1/8 x 118 1/8 x 24 inches.

In my final student interview, I met in a conference room of a school with a fifth grade student who attended the field trips the prior spring while in fourth grade. The student, who I will call Aliyah, was self-assured and ready to share her experiences. We spoke one-on-one for over thirty minutes. "I love field trips," she said, "mostly because I can get away from school, and mostly I can learn stuff about other things." I asked her to define a field trip for me as if she were



explaining it to a classmate who had never been before. “A field trip is like a trip away from campus where you can learn about other things you haven’t learned about ever before, or if you learned about it, you can learn more about it.” I asked Aliyah if she could remember field trips she had gone on in the past and she quickly named off four years’ worth of field trips, details about each one and what grade and school she was in when she attended. She was able to recall details of the field trips from the previous spring. She recalled what she made in the hands-on studio component at the art museum as well as what classmates made. She was able to recall her favorite work of art and even offered that it was “abstract.” Again, this recollection was from more than six months prior. Her favorite field trip was to the symphony, “I loved all the woodwinds, and the violin, and the brass, and violas.” She said she played several instruments herself, as did her parents. “It’s really awesome to see people play it and professionals and things like that.”



Figure 7. Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, photo courtesy of ASO

Of all the students I interviewed, only one did not like the arts field trips and said he would rather have stayed at school. But after some discussion, even he was willing to say he would go back to the theater if he had been sitting where he could see. All other students, when asked, said they would return to all of the arts field trip venues and would recommend that their friends go there as well.

Finally, when asked about whether field trips were important experiences or if learning time might be better spent staying at school, students had this to say. “Because it tells us about how to do more work. It shows us how to draw... and to play instruments. And it shows us how to create,” said Trevon. Demetrius echoed his sentiments, “Because it is a learning experience. I learned that like, what if somebody want to be an artist like when they grow up. They can like get ideas from the art museum.” Darryl, who loved the field trips and could recall vivid details about all three experiences said this about the importance of field trip experiences, “Oh yes, it’s important because, um, when it be telling you about the work you be doing in the classroom, it reflects on your work. The captions under the pictures, they be showing me, when they be talking.” I particularly liked that he referenced that he had read the captions under the pictures to get more information. Finally, Aliyah summed up the importance of field trips, “If you want your child to stay in school, make sure they go on a field trip to learn more about things...especially if you don’t want to see the same walls over and over again.”

### **Additional Findings**

It is worth mentioning, that in all of my field trip observations I did not see any chaperone who was a parent or caregiver. There were adults present, particularly at the symphony and theater performances with whom I was unable to speak, and it is possible that they were parents present. However, I have observed many field trips, both in this setting and

elsewhere, and parent chaperones generally have a sidelines demeanor that classroom teachers do not. I never saw anyone that I suspected was a parent and I never spoke with, or was referred to, a parent chaperone. I mention this because it is a testament to the importance of schools providing these arts field trip experiences. Busy parents may not be able to participate in these types of activities with their children. Further, the parents and caregivers themselves may not have had exposure to these experiences and might feel uncomfortable or unwelcome.

One of the research goals of the primary study and a reason for the longitudinal design is to follow students into middle school to see if the increased arts field trip exposure increases the likelihood that treated students select arts-related elective when they get the chance. Of the students I interviewed who were fifth grade students in the spring semester, all but one seemed to be unaware that they could choose elective classes when they went to middle school the next year. Of all the students I spoke with, only Aliyah knew that she had the opportunity to choose music class, and that appeared to be because she already played an instrument and had an older cousin in the band.

### **Conclusion**

The rich, descriptive evidence from this study adds to the understanding of the primary experimental study, as well as to the broader understanding of the value of arts field trips to stakeholders. It also provides stakeholders, especially students, with a voice to express the meaning and importance they place of the arts field trip experiences to visual art museums, the symphony, and the theater.

The words of “exposure” and “experience” were repeated by adult stakeholders again and again in interviews. Additionally, teachers, who must go to great trouble and effort to ensure that

students attend field trips, also stated that they believed field trips were an important and necessary part of their jobs of giving students a complete education.

Most importantly, student stakeholders clearly demonstrated that they learned from the experiences, retained that learning, could express that meaning long after the initial event, and connected that meaning to prior experiences as well as to the experiences of peers. Students could recall details about the recent field trips and often connected those experiences to similar past experiences of their own and used those to relate to and connect with peers. Further, students advocated for field trip experiences for themselves and peers.

### **Future Work**

While The Woodruff case presents interesting findings, it is unclear how generalizable these findings are to the larger context. In this case, 75% of students in this study reported having attended The Woodruff at least once before. Access is open and many barriers are removed. The Woodruff Arts Center is an amazing facility. Most communities do not have access to these types of award-winning arts institutions; therefore, it is unclear how impactful arts field trips experiences may be to more modestly funded or smaller arts facilities. Smaller facilities may be less able to offer the same range of experiences, or may have fewer resources to dedicate to their education programming. On the other hand, it is possible that smaller institutions are able to foster better relationships and feelings of belonging, or to provide other benefits to patrons that larger and less nimble institutions are less able to do. Additional work with a variety of populations and in a variety of settings is needed. A forthcoming study (Watson, 2019), detailed in the next chapter, surveying access to the arts, arts field trip attendance, and the impact of policy pressures on field trip experiences across the nation closes a small part of the gap in our knowledge about differences by state.

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## Appendix

### Semi Structured Interview for School Teacher/Student

1. How long have you been at (School name)?
2. How many times have you been to this museum/ theater/symphony?  
[What about your students, have many of them been here before?]
3. Before you came, how did you/the students feel about going on a field trip to an art museum/theater/symphony?  
Did you talk about it in class before you came?  
Did you know ahead of time what you would be seeing/doing today?
4. What did you think about the experience?  
[What did your students think about the experience?]  
Can you give me some examples?
5. What was your/their favorite part?  
Why do you think that is?
6. Do you think you/ they will want to come back again sometime?
7. How is this compared to the other field trips you have been on at this museum/theater/ symphony?



## **Chapter 3**

### **State of the Art: Declining Trends in Art Museum Field Trip Attendance**

#### **Introduction**

A common narrative, oft-repeated in arts education circles, is that educational field trip attendance has steadily declined for decades (Ruppert, 2006; Gadsden, 2008; McCord & Ellerson, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Student Youth & Travel Association, 2016), particularly for isolated, economically disadvantaged, and minority students in struggling schools (Ruppert, 2006; Gadsden, 2008; Government Accountability Office, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). Teachers and students also report a decline in school sponsored field trips (Government Accountability Office, 2009; Keiper, Sandene, Persky, & Kuang, 2009). This trend is of particular concern in light of an emerging body of rigorous research, which indicates that educational field trips to arts institutions benefit students in important ways, including social-emotional skill acquisition and academic outcomes including increased standardized test scores (Bowen, Greene, & Kisida, 2014; Greene, Kisida, & Bowen, 2014; Kisida, Greene, & Bowen, 2014; Greene, Hitt, Kraybill, & Bogulski, 2015; Greene, Erickson, Watson, & Beck, 2018; Randi Korn & Associates, 2018; Bowen & Kisida, 2019; Erickson, Greene, Watson, & Beck, 2019; Watson, Greene, Erickson, & Beck, 2019). A variety of reasons, including safety concerns in a post-911 era, lack of funding, and accountability pressures have been blamed for the decline. However, until now, there has been little rigorous evidence to support the claims of declining field trip attendance.

In this study, I report original longitudinal K-12 field trip attendance data gathered from 18 leading art museums in 16 states and the District of Columbia; the first data of this kind ever

compiled to my knowledge. I find that, for the majority of art museums for which data are available in my sample, field trip attendance has declined. Further, I find that the majority of art museums report that they are under pressure to align field trip offerings to standards, to justify field trips, and to remove all cost barriers in order to compete. Many of the museums in the study reported that “testing season” impacts attendance patterns, and that time barriers appear to be more of a determinant to field trip attendance than funding. Additionally, I find that many museums have had to find alternate funding streams to incentivize field trip attendance and to compete for a share of the field trip market, and that this outside funding has changed museum data collection practices. I also find that unlikely factors such as busing logistics restrict field trip access and museum capacity in important and meaningful ways. Lastly, I report that there is a mismatch between the demographic characteristics of arts field trip facilitators, who are in most cases are volunteer docents, and their young student guests. This mismatch causes or exacerbates feelings of exclusivity and “not belonging” for a very diverse group of new museum visitors.

The paper proceeds as follows. To begin, I discuss the previous literature on the importance of arts field trips for positive student academic and social outcomes, as well as the decline in field trip and arts access, particularly for economically disadvantaged and minority students. Next, I describe the research design and the research questions. Further, I document the context of this study in detail. I then present my findings and conclude with discussions of future work.

## **Previous Literature**

### **Declining Attendance**

Public schools, which used to provide some arts exposure, now have a thinned curriculum, such that any cultural deficits students come to school with likely remain untouched

at school. However, new federal education legislation calls for access to a well-rounded education (US Department of Education, 2016; Ludwig, Boyle & Lindsay, 2017) that renews focus on access to arts integration, and according to Horowitz (2004), one component of arts integration should be arts field trips (Ludwig, Boyle & Lindsay, 2017). Despite this call, a variety of studies report that survey respondents state that they, their students, or their children attend fewer field trips (Ruppert, 2006; Gadsden, 2008; McCord & Ellerson, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Student Youth & Travel Association, 2016; Gara, Brouillette, & Farkas, 2018). This decline in attendance is more concentrated for isolated, economically disadvantaged, and minority students in struggling public schools where accountability pressures are more intense, and where scrutiny is more focused (Ruppert, 2006; Gadsden, 2008; Government Accountability Office, 2009; Sandene, Persky, & Kuang, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). Further, both teachers and students, again especially in disadvantaged schools, report decreased access to arts access in schools, with reduced visual arts programs and stories of canceled music and theater programs (Government Accountability Office, 2009, Sparks, Bahr, & Zhang, 2015; Watson, 2019). As arts programs in schools are cut, or when a single art teacher is shared among several schools, which is a common practice, it reduces the number of arts advocates in each school. It is these advocates who traditionally planned arts field trips.

While the literature points to declining arts access for American youth in our public schools, other studies point to an increase in adult arts attendance, with certain groups of people attending more than others: visits to art museums increase with socioeconomic status and higher levels of education (Shewfelt, Ivanchenko, Menzer, & Shingler, 2015; National Endowment for the Arts, 2018). However, attendance declines for minorities and economically disadvantaged adults (Shewfelt, Ivanchenko, Menzer, & Shingler, 2015).

## **Reason for the Decline**

While a variety of reasons, such as concerns about student safety in a post-911 society, the Great Recession, and decreased school funding have been offered as contributors to the decline in field trip attendance, accountability appears the most frequently in the literature. The evidence suggests that the decline is due in part to increased high-stakes accountability pressures (Gadsden, 2008; Government Accountability Office, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). Under test-based accountability systems, schools focused on increasing math and reading test scores are under pressure to reconsider the costs and benefits of traditional educational field trips (Gadsden, 2008; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Student Youth & Travel Association, 2016).

As struggling schools on “improvement plans” are pressured for better results on test score outcomes, they lean towards increased seat time and away from the more difficult to measure learning experiences such as field trips to art and other cultural institutions (Gadsden, 2008; Government Accountability Office, 2009; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Kisida, Bowen, & Greene, 2016; Student & Youth Travel Association, 2016). In response to accountability pressures, schools allocate additional instructional time to math and reading subject matter and test preparation while cutting back on non-tested subjects and other activities (Gadsden, 2008; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Student Youth & Travel Association, 2016). Academically low-performing schools that face the greatest accountability pressures and serve students from high-poverty areas are more likely to report a decline in school sponsored field trips, including arts-focused trips (Government Accountability Office, 2009; Keiper et al., 2009).

## **Experiential Benefits**

Despite the reported decline in field trip attendance, there is an emerging body of rigorous research that indicates that educational field trips to arts institutions benefit students in

important ways. Erickson et al. (2019) report experimental evidence of increased student engagement in school, as well as increased standardized test scores after attending multiple arts field trips, while other researchers find positive effects of arts integration of science content knowledge (Hardiman, JohnBull, Carran, & Shelton, 2019), and increased observation skills (Gurwin, et al., 2017).

There is also increasing evidence that arts field trips generate measurable non-cognitive impacts, as well as the generation of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) for students who may need it most (Adams, Foutz, Luke, & Stein, 2006; Goldstein, & Winner, 2012; Bowen, Greene, & Kisida, 2014; Kisida, Bowen, & Greene, 2016; Greene et al., 2018; Hardiman et al., 2019). Cultural capital is theorized to lead to social mobility and can be gained through experience (DiMaggio, 1978). Watson et al. (2019) report evidence of increased social-emotional skills, as well as the first experimental evidence of compounding benefits from attending multiple arts field trips over time. Randi Korn & Associates (2018) find that students who attend a single arts field trip demonstrated higher levels of creative and critical thinking. California students who received repeated exposure to cultural experiences had higher test scores, better attendance, and fewer disciplinary actions (Lacoe, Painter, & Williams, 2016). A study of a district wide arts enrichment program showed positive outcomes on student attendance, school engagement, and sense of civic obligation, as well as increased standardized test scores (Bowen & Kisida, 2019), while a similar study found increased attitudes of academic resilience (Kanevsky, Corke, & Frangkiser, 2008).

Additionally, several studies examine the impact of cultural exposure on student outcomes such as student achievement (Ludwig, Boyle & Lindsay, 2017) and higher grades and rates of high school graduation (Jægar & Møllegarrd, 2017) and find positive correlations. A

recent meta-analysis of drama-based learning found positive academic and social-emotional outcomes for student participants (Lee, Patall, Cawthon, & Steingut, 2015). Similarly, researchers found social and emotional benefits to students shortly after exposure to drama activities in a set of experiments (Goldstein & Winner, 2012).

### **Equitable Access**

If arts field trips benefit students, then a decline in these beneficial experiences is concerning. If the experiences are further restricted for students along socioeconomic or racial/ethnic lines for students who need them most, then the situation deserves immediate remedy. While Watson et al. (2019) and Erickson et al. (2019) are the first to document the academic and social-emotional benefits of arts field trips in an experimental study for economically disadvantaged urban minority students, there is prior literature about the importance that mission-driven charter schools such as KIPP and YES Prep place on field trips in the curriculum of schools of choice. Comprised largely of urban, African American students at risk, these schools view field trips as a fundamental part of education and preparation for a successful life in society (Matthews, 2009; Maranto, 2015).

For students who are isolated geographically, physically, and/or socioeconomically, school field trips are their chance to connect to their larger society. Students, even students in large cities, and economically disadvantaged students in particular, travel in small circles from home to school and within their neighborhoods (Ruppert, 2006; Kornrich, 2016). Middle-class families with disposable resources take their children outside these daily confines to experience the larger world (Houston & Ong, 2013; Kornrich, 2016). For families with scarce resources, access to these expanding experiences is restricted. If access to this larger society is limited, through restricted access to school field trips, then an experiential gap by social class and race is

created. Further, when arts access within schools is differentially restricted along economic and/or racial lines, it may impair some students' abilities to connect with and participate in society. If cultural field trips build cultural or social capital, then the very students who need them the most are the ones most likely to be denied them (Ruppert, 2006; Gadsden, 2008; Government Accountability Office, 2009; Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012).

In a recent study, researchers found increased levels of human connection<sup>6</sup> in students who attended a single arts field trip (Randi Korn & Associates, 2018) and earlier research found similar outcomes in historical empathy<sup>7</sup> (Bowen, Greene, Kisida, 2014). In addition to comparing a single art museum visit, Randi Korn and Associates (2018) added a second treatment condition of a nearly identical art program exposure taking place in a classroom instead of at the museum. They found that the in-gallery exposure was more impactful than simply seeing and discussing identical, but not original, art content at school. In Greene et al.'s research (2018), focused on field trips to live theater performances, researchers found statistically significant benefits to students on self-reported levels of tolerance and social perspective taking, and evidence of increased desire to consume theater in the future. Again, in an attempt to parse out the mechanism of arts' impact, researchers in this study also added a second treatment condition wherein some students received a field trip to a live theater performance of a play, some received a field trip to see a movie production of the same play, and the control group stayed at school and received neither the field trip to the play nor the movie. Students who received the live arts exposure experienced the largest impacts. Both studies offer a testament to the value of experiencing original works of art first hand as opposed to providing

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<sup>6</sup> Human connection is defined as an awareness or sense of connection to others and the self, p10. (RK&A, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Historical empathy is defined as understanding one's place in time (Bowen, Greene, & Kisida, 2014).

an in-school field trip substitute, and demonstrate that anything less than a field trip is less.

Further, results were often strongest for disadvantaged students, whose prior exposure may have been limited and who, therefore, likely had the most room for growth (Bowen, Greene, Kisida, 2014; Greene et al. 2019).

This study adds to the literature in three important ways. First, while the data reported here are not comprehensive, it is the first time to my knowledge that original field trip attendance data have been collected and reported from art museums across the country. It demonstrates that longitudinal field trip attendance data exist, that the vast majority of art museums are willing to share data when asked, and that reporting these data adds to our knowledge of actual field trip attendance in the United States. Second, I document the impact of policy, pressures, and practices upon arts field trip offerings through a combination of evidence gathered from site visits, field trip observations and interviews with a variety of arts education stakeholders from across the country. Third, based on these data and stakeholders' testimonies and practices, I present recommendations with the potential to ameliorate the decline in field trip attendance and increase museum capacity and thereby, access.

### **Research Design**

This study seeks to further the understanding, knowledge, and literature about arts field trip attendance trends over time by documenting the context, pressures felt, and resulting practices of arts education programs at leading art museums across the country. Data collection methods used include site visits, interviews, field trip observations, and attendance data collection.



## Research Questions

The research questions used to guide this study are as follows.

1. *Has art museum field trip attendance declined and does any decline appear to be related to policy or other shocks?*

The nation's art museums have this information. In order to answer this question, I requested and compiled K-12 field trip attendance records from 18 arts institutions across the country.

Requested data spanned the years from 2000 to 2018. This timeframe was requested because it contained the implementation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) high-stakes accountability policy. Further, potential shocks include the Great Recession around the year 2009, as well as the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that replaced NCLB in the 2016-17 academic year.

2. *What is the perceived impact of education policy changes on arts field trip attendance and access?*

In order to answer this question, I interviewed arts education and field trip stakeholders from across the country about their perceptions of the context of field trip attendance in their state. I also gathered information on field trip offerings, and whether or not those appeared to be driven by alignment to educational standards.

3. *What other pressures or practices appear to be impacting arts field trip attendance and access?*

The same methods as described above are used to answer this final question. Additionally, I incorporate information gathered from extensive site visits to arts institutions in the United States

and abroad to gain a better understanding of practices in the United States and how pressure particular to our national context might impact field trip attendance and access.

## **Data**

### **Collection Methods**

To answer the research questions posed in this study, I used a variety of data collection methods including site visits, field trip observations, interviews, and attendance data. After conducting a search of art museums in each state, I chose either a leading museum or a museum located in or near a place I could easily visit. For instance, while en route to a conference in Chicago, I rented a car and visited a museum in Wisconsin. In most states, there are only one or two fine arts museums. Museums were all located in capital cities or in metropolitan areas, and all but one was founded decades or centuries ago, although two had been closed for one or more years for a renovations. All museums also had large permanent collections ranging in size from 3,000 works to 1 million works or more.

Initial contact was made with museums via an email introducing myself and my research, and requesting to schedule a phone interview, a site visit, a field trip observation, or a combination of those. If repeated emails were not returned, I attempted to call the education department of the museum. Occasionally, a second institution was chosen and contact was initiated, particularly if the first institution was difficult to reach. My initial goal was to obtain attendance data from at least ten art museums from across the country. As a result, my initial contact list was composed of states from each region of the United States with large museums or where I had already established contacts that might be more willing to share their data.

Once contact was made, I conducted a phone interview or an in-person interview if feasible. After a relationship was established, I requested access to their K-12 field trip attendance data from 2000 to the present, or whatever data they had available and were willing to share. I also requested site visits and field trip observations when feasible. When the first group of museums easily agreed to share attendance data, I expanded my data collection goal to twenty museums and expanded my contact list. While not all museums ultimately shared their attendance data, I was able to gather some form of data from art museums in thirty-one states and the District of Columbia.

To further inform my research, I conducted site visits to arts institutions in four foreign countries on four continents during the two and a half years of this study. I also visited multiple cultural and educational field trips sites across the United States and internationally including libraries, and historical sites, aquariums, science and history museums, botanical gardens, and theaters. This experience has given me keen insight into both arts field trip practices and those of competing institutions, and has provided a basis for comparison that can help me identify areas of difference for possible policy recommendations.

I also observed twelve field trips in art museums, and conducted 35 formal interviews with the education staff at art museums regarding their educational programming and practices<sup>8</sup>. Interviews are context-bound collaborations between two people in conversation. Therefore, a predetermined interview protocol<sup>9</sup> with open-ended questions was used to guide the conversation, but I allowed the discussion to unfold naturally in order to take different directions, if needed. Questions included basic information about the cost and timing of field trips, tour

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix A for complete table of site visits, field trip observations, and interviews by state.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix A for copy of interview protocol.

facilitators, whether or not the museum offered hands-on studio art making during a field trip, and specific questions regarding declining attendance and accountability pressures.

### **Sample**

Of the 38 museums contacted, 35 responded to the initial email or phone call. Of those who responded, 31 provided an interview, and 18 provided field trip attendance data, another two museums attempted to provide data, but the data were corrupted and they were in the process of recollecting the data for resubmission. Of the museums contacted where data were requested<sup>10</sup>, three museums did not have data to share, and only one museum, indicated that data did exist but declined to share the data. Further, at the time of writing, another five states had promised to provide data and were in the process of obtaining either data, or permission to release data. Further, seven museums coordinated a total of twelve K-12 field trip observations.

Of those who agreed to provide data, 10 museums stated that they needed to get approval prior to releasing their attendance numbers. Only six museums were able to provide data as far back as the year 2000. Although the data request was for the years 2000-present, three museums sent data dating as far back as 1996. Additionally, one museum sent data back from 2001, and one sent data back from 2002. Further, only 14 museums shared data prior to 2010. All museums made note in their data of a variety of exceptional circumstances that created significant changes in their year-to-year attendance numbers, such as severe weather that closed schools, funding or policy shocks, reinstallations, and special exhibits.

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<sup>10</sup> Data was not requested from all museums contacted if it became obvious that data was not available or if data from another museum in the state had already been obtained.

## **Data Limitations**

The data are not comprehensive to all states, to all arts field trips in a state, or all art museums in a state. The data only detail total K-12 field trip attendance, but do not break down attendance by paid or unpaid admission, or in other nuanced detail that would be desirable. Despite these limitations, the data do provide a first glimpse into the state of arts field trip attendance in the United States using actual attendance data gathered directly from participating institutions.

Upon receiving the attendance data from museums, it became apparent that the majority of museums did not collect or had only recently begun collecting “clean” data (personal communication with art museums in Georgia, Indiana, and Tennessee<sup>11</sup>). In conversations with museums’ staff, several apologized, and stated that the data had not become “clean” until around 2015 when they began using computer driven data collection (personal communication with art museum in Georgia). Several museums’ staff said that before that time, data collection was conducted by volunteer docents with paper and pencil while on tour (personal communication with art museums in Georgia and Tennessee). There was some evidence that private funder demand for data collection was the impetus for changed and more exacting data collection practices (personal communication with art museums in Florida and Georgia).

## **Data Analysis and Methods**

Data analysis began at the time of initial contact with participants, during the field trip observations and site visits. During this time, descriptive as well as demographic data were collected, and running field notes were taken to record emerging themes as they developed.

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix A for complete list of interviews by state.

During the field trip observations, I systematically collected data on number of participants, gender, grade, race or ethnicity of all participants including teachers, docents and any chaperones. I also cataloged the number, name, and details of works visited, and made notes as to questions students asked and who asked them. I counted the number of students raising their hands in response to educator questions, the style of presentation and information the educator provided, and the time spent at each “stop.” At each stop, and approximately every three to five minutes during the tour and studio experiences, I scanned the group to count students who were engaged and on task. I also cataloged the instructional style of the tour or experience, the duration of the various sections of the experience, and any other important information that could be gleaned by observation including participant comments.

### **Site Visits**

I conducted site visits to 35 art museums in 23 states and the District of Columbia during the two and a half years of this study, as seen in Figure 1. Site visits generally lasted between one and three hours. I toured the collection, family, and studio education spaces. I also toured outdoor sculpture parks and nature areas, when available. During site visits, I read educational materials and museum guides, as well as guiding information in the galleries.

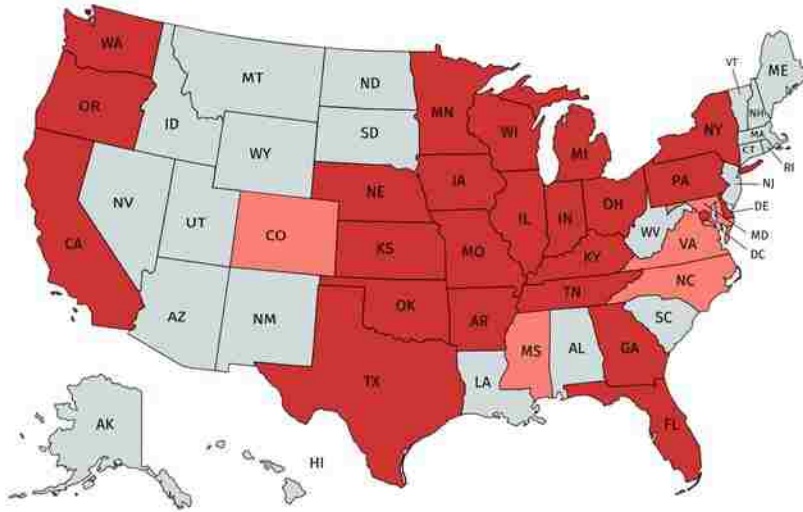


Figure 1. Art Museum Site Visits

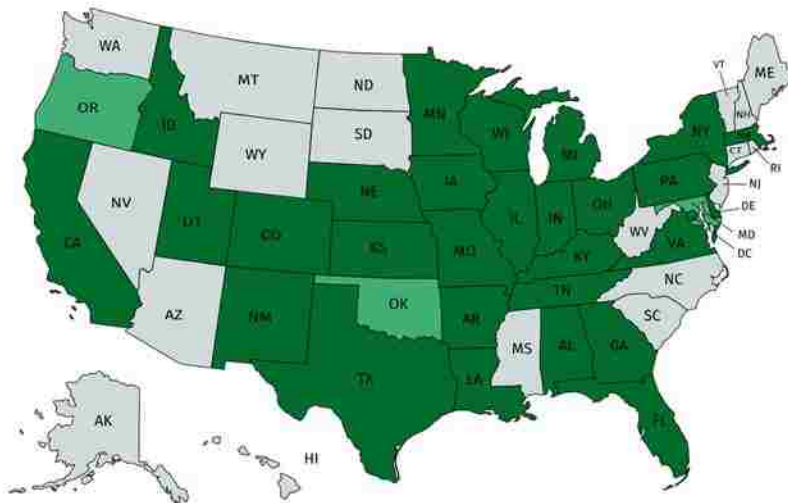


Figure 2. Art Museum Interviews

**Interviews**

While a site visit was not always feasible, I was able to enlarge my sample by interviewing museum education administrators at museums in additional states, detailed in Figure 2. A pre-determined interview protocol was used to guide semi-structured interviews. Interviews typically lasted twenty-five to fifty minutes and were conducted over the phone or in-

person, while taking running notes that were later transcribed. In most cases, I interviewed the head of education for the museum.

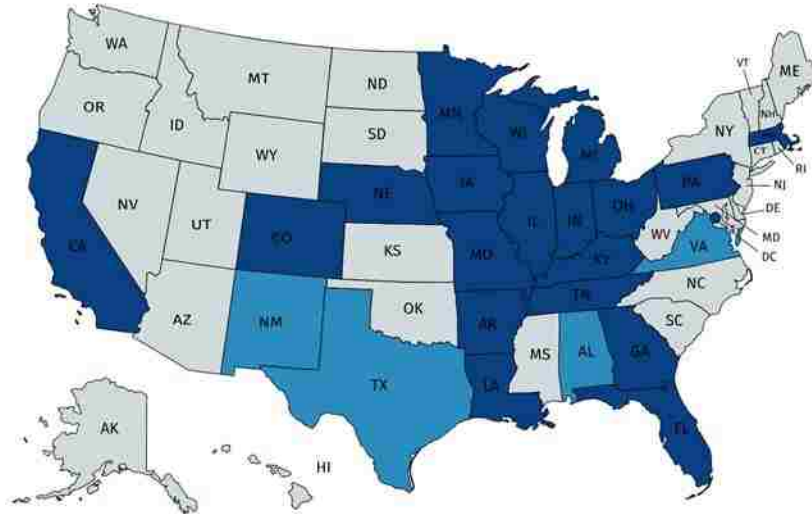


Figure 3. Art Museum Attendance Data

### **Attendance Data**

Lastly, 18 of the 35 museums contacted, who responded to initial contact efforts, agreed to share longitudinal K-12 field trip attendance data, if available, while seven more museums either attempted to share data or promised to share data as soon as they were available. In some instances, the data were quite limited indicating that some museum education departments are not data driven, or that there is no demand for labor intensive data collection. Generally, data were sent in a single file with annual totals compiled by academic year. Occasionally, data were in individual files by academic or fiscal year and I had to sort and compile K-12 field trip attendance data from a more general pool of data.



## Findings

To answer the first research question, *Has art museum field trip attendance declined and does any decline appear to be related to policy or other shocks?* I turn to the K-12 longitudinal field trip attendance data collected directly from 18 of the country's leading art museums. The data come from one art museum in each state, with the exception of the District of Columbia that has data from two museums, and is not presumed to be representative of all art museums in a state, nor is it representative of all arts field trips attended in a state. The data simply provide a look at the attendance of a single arts institution in a variety of states, across time. This data is, however, important information about arts field trip attendance that is new to the literature, and which gives us factual information about the current trends of declining field trip attendance to arts institutions, as opposed to estimates based on survey responses from decades past.

Of the 18 art museums from which data is available, all but four have declined in field trip attendance<sup>12</sup>. For example, in Figure 4, the art museum in Minnesota has experienced a significant decline in field trip attendance of nearly 20,000 students since 2012, and this decline occurred despite the museum offering world-class facilities, leading edge educational programming, and extensive efforts to remove all cost barriers associated with the field trip including busing costs for those most in need (personal communication with art museums in Minnesota).

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix B for results by state. Museums reporting attendance data for fewer than four consecutive years do not have a dedicated figure.

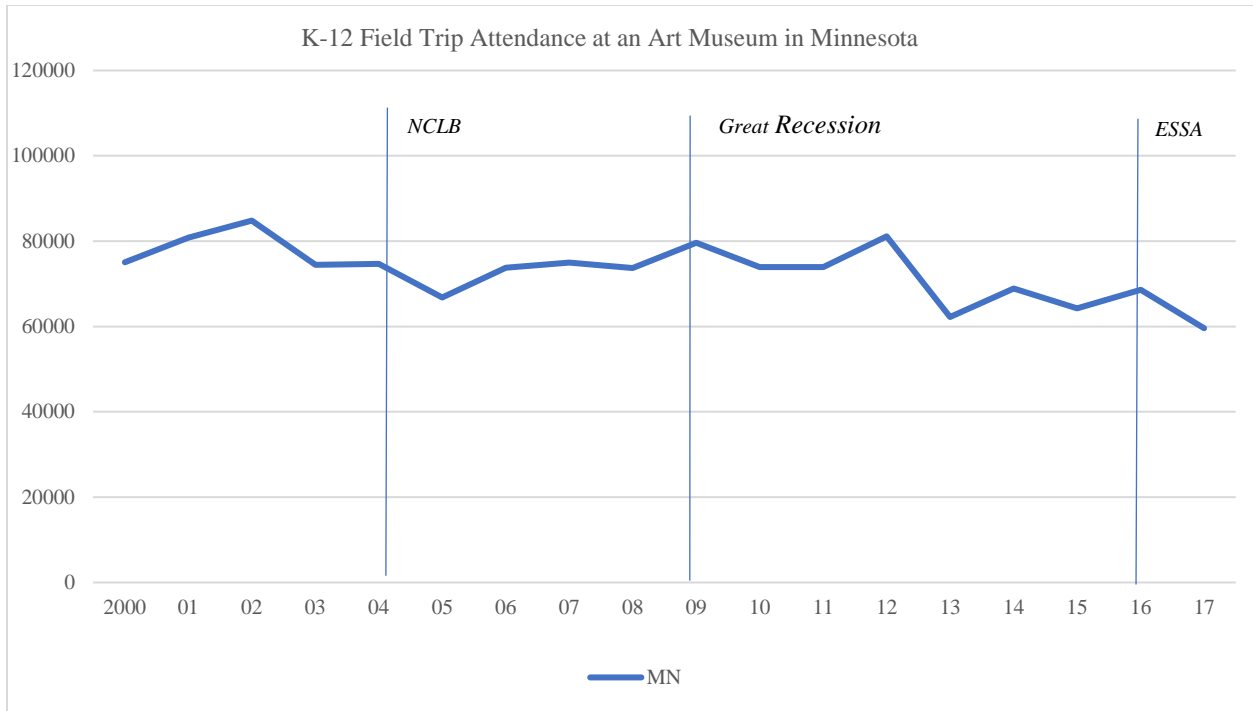


Figure 4. Field Trip Attendance at an Art Museum in Minnesota

To answer the second part of the first research question, *Does any decline appear to be related to policy or other shocks?* the answer is more difficult to discern. In Figure 5, when data from all 18 art museums are combined, there do appear to be similar patterns of decline around policy shocks such as the implementation of new high stakes accountability laws. There also appear to be trends related to the Great Recession. However, the data are noisy, with frequent steep shifts in attendance. In interviews with art museum education administrators, they said that large fluctuations in attendance can occur for many reasons (personal communications with art museums in CO, GA, IA, MN, MO, and VA).

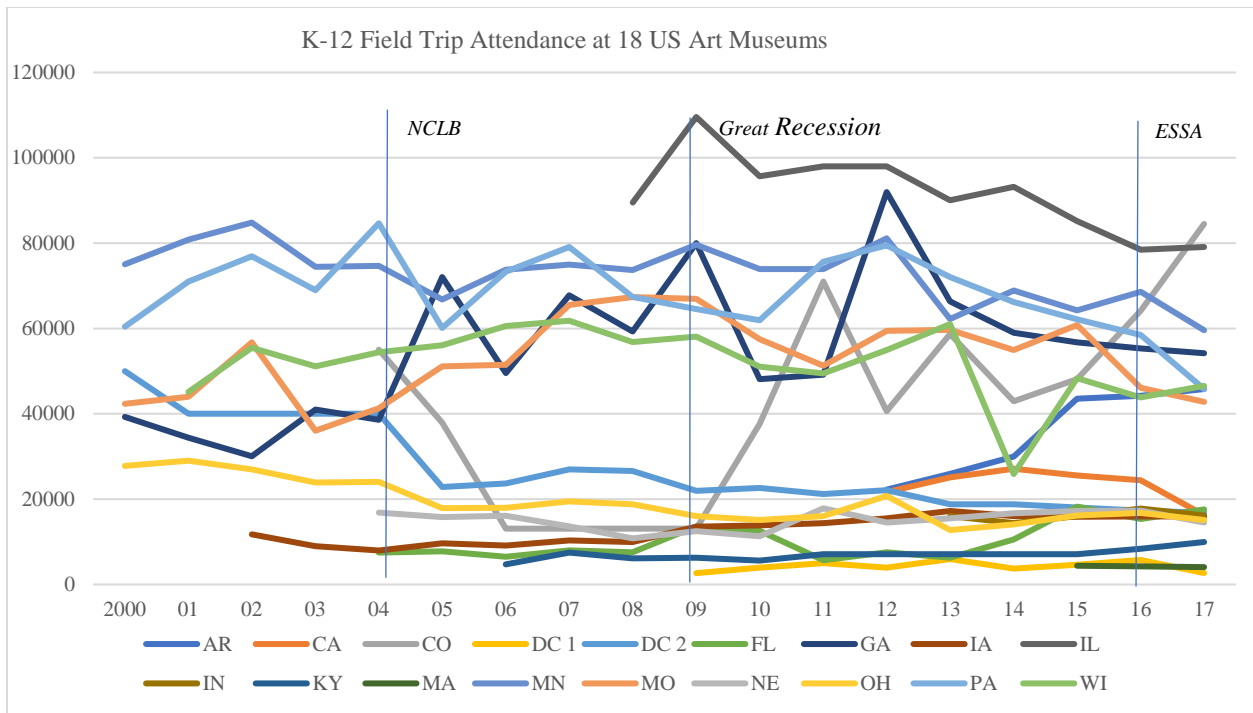


Figure 5. K-12 Field Trip Attendance at 18 US Art Museums

The most frequent reason cite for fluctuations in attendance was increased attendance for a high-profile special exhibition (personal communications with art museums in CO, GA, MO, VA). For instance, in the data for the museum in Georgia, there was an increase of nearly 20,000 students in one year and then a related decline in the following year.

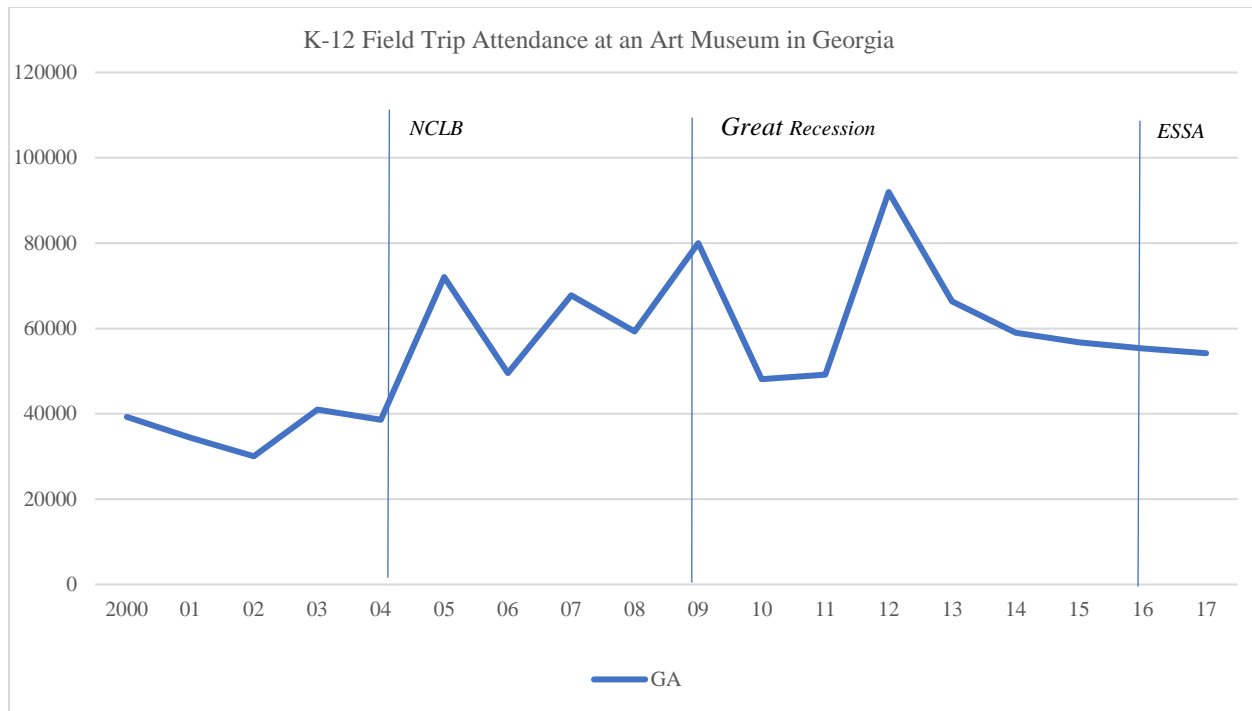


Figure 6. Field Trip Attendance at an Art Museum in Georgia

The first employee I interviewed about the attendance spike told me that she believed this number was a mistake; however, she was not working at the museum at the time in question. In a second interview, with administrator who was there during that time, she said the spike was related to a high profile exhibition (interview with Georgia). Additionally, the museum had received a special grant to bring additional students to the museum for that particular exhibition. The museum administrator indicated that the museum did not have the capacity or funding to serve the additional 20,000 students on a regular basis.

Indeed, most of the museums in the study had similar stories about steep changes in attendance. Sometimes fluctuations in attendance had to do with a series of weather events that closed schools and thereby decreased attendance. In other cases, museums or parts of museums were closed for reinstallations or complete rebuilding, thus decreasing their field trip hosting capacity for a limited time. For these reasons, determining if arts field trip attendance declines

are directly attributable to policy or other shocks is impossible with these data because attendance fluctuations could be the result of many factors that are or are not policy related.

There were four museums that data were available for that were experiencing an increase in field trip attendance. The first was a newly opened art museum in Arkansas where no art museum had previously existed, and where all financial barriers to field trip attendance had been removed. This museum provides funds for buses, substitute teachers, and even provides students with a sack lunch during the field trip experience (the only museum in the study that provided lunch for students). As such, it would be logical to expect attendance to increase following the opening of such an institution. However, in the most recent years, it appears that their field trip attendance growth has begun to falter. Similarly, a museum in Florida, that recently relocated to a new and significantly larger facility, is also experiencing increased field trip attendance.

The other museum in this study that is experiencing an increase in field trip attendance is in Colorado. In interviews with the education staff there, they said that in 2015 the museum made the decision to make admission and field trips free for children 18 and younger, and have been on an upward attendance trend ever since.

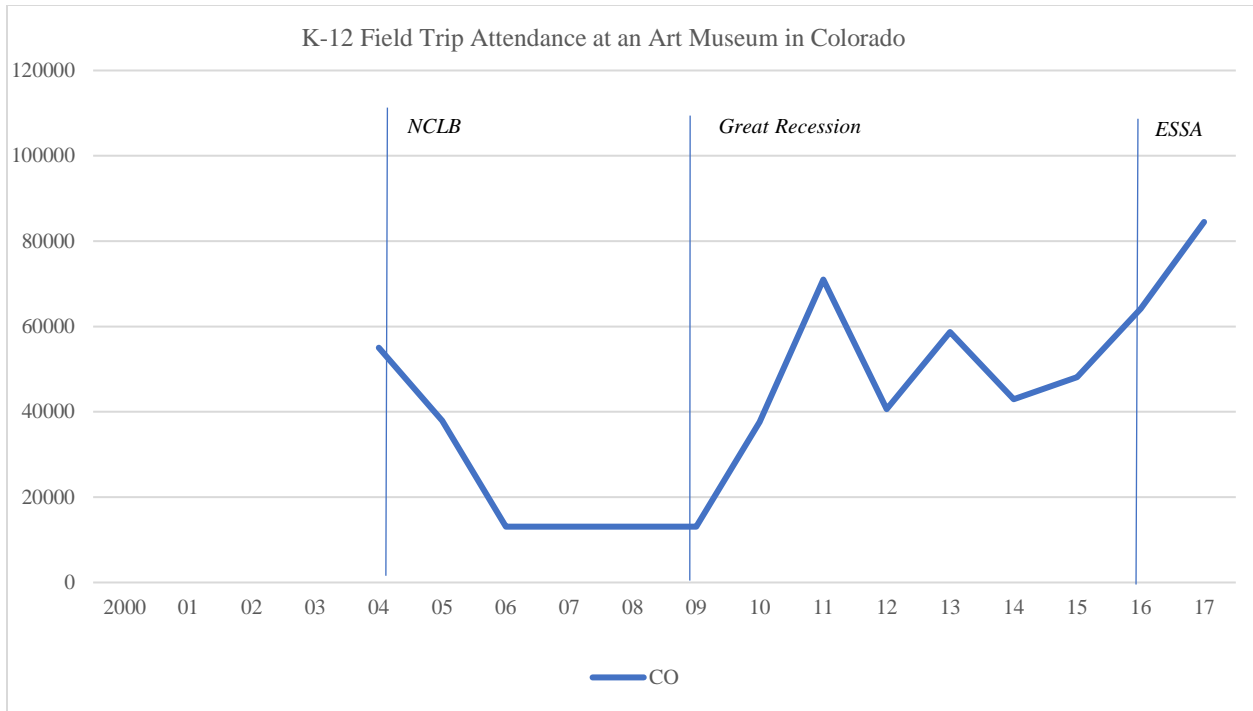


Figure 7. Field Trip Attendance at an Art Museum in Colorado

To answer the second research question in this study, *What is the perceived impact of education policy changes on arts field trip attendance and access?* I turn to data gathered from site visits, observations, and interviews with education administrators at art museums from across the country. In interviews with museums educators at the art institutions, all but four indicated that they felt pressure to align museum field trips directly to standards. Some went so far as to have ready-made materials with specific alignments to state standards for teachers to present to their principals, justifying what the field trip would accomplish towards meeting specific learning goals. Most museums had field trips with specific themes, such as STEAM<sup>13</sup>, specific times in world or state history, and then a field trip related to literacy or literature. Some museums indicated that this pressure to align to learning goals was new for them, but other

<sup>13</sup> STEAM is an acronym for science, technology, engineering, art and math.

museums said that this alignment of tours to subject matter was what they had always done, and that explicit alignment to standards was simply taking the alignment a step further. Other museums, which seemed to either have higher capacity, or to be smaller and more nimble, were open to custom designing field trips to meet the needs of teachers. Of the museum education staff interviewed, ten indicated that there was some level of field trip differentiation and customization available.

Another perceived consequence of education policy and high stakes accountability was the competition for time. Of those interviewed, four museums indicated that time was more of a barrier than money in their area, particularly since many museums had supplementary funding for Title I schools with high concentrations of poverty. Educators at several museums said that schools were limited on the number of field trips that they could take, some only taking one per year (personal communication with an art museum educators in GA, ID, NE, and PA). As such, the competition for student attendance was keenly felt by art museum staff. Museum educators felt the need to align field trip content to state standards in order to justify the worth of their field trip compared to that of other competing institutions. “In order to get funding, we have to prove we are meeting standards,” (personal communication with art museum in Virginia).

Field trips are an afterthought, so it requires an invitation and providing them with a reason to come. There is increasing pressure to justify a field trip to an art museum. Principals and teachers don’t see the obvious connection to art field trips like they would to science museums or botanical gardens. (Personal communication with arts museum in Alabama)

Further, museums administrators felt the need to remove as many cost barriers as possible to incentivize attending the art museum over higher cost field trips to other venues. “Our funding is part of our general operating budget, so we are very fortunate. I am not sure colleagues at zoos or science museums, where there is a fee and no bus money, could say the same thing,” (personal

communication with art museum in Iowa). This need to compete for scarce field trip attendance opportunities and the resulting need for funding created an interesting outcome. Several art museums reported that they began collecting more reliable data and implementing more robust data collection methods due to funder demand for accountability.

During attendance data collection, it became obvious that the majority of art museums did not collect data at all or collected back-of-the-envelope data prior to 2009 (personal communication with art museum in Georgia, Illinois, and Tennessee). Very few institutions had data before this time, and of those who did have data, they were quick to inform me of their concerns about the accuracy of the data. In one interview, a museum educator told me that “Before 2009, the docents collected attendance data with paper and pencil while on tour. It wasn’t until 2009 that we began collecting data and not until 2015 that it was really “clean,” (personal communication with art museum in Georgia). This sentiment was repeated by several museums in the study. Indeed, several museums in the study still are not collecting rich attendance data (personal communications with art museums in Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, and Tennessee) and several of these museums have field trip costs largely covered by internal funding and may not be externally incentivized to collect more detailed data.

Indeed, in an interview, a museum staff-person indicated that they did not start collecting demographic data on field trip participants until an outside funder required it for meeting the funding requirements. In earlier years, and without funder demand, the tedious collection of detailed demographic data were unnecessary. It was rational for museums to spend their money and time elsewhere. As attendance declined and museums struggled to maintain their market share by providing free field trips, additional private funding was necessary. Private funders, in turn, demanded accountability and assurance that their funding was impacting the desired



populations, thus new methods of data collection were implemented. While this conclusion is somewhat anecdotal, it does appear that the need to remove cost barriers and to compete with other types of field trips necessitated acquiring private funding that then necessitated more formal data collection methods.

Another important impact of accountability policy revolves around standardized testing seasons. Of the museums interviewed in the study, about half of the museums interviewed indicated that the spring, and specifically the months of March and April, could be generally slow with intense increases in attendance after the end of year standardized tests were complete, usually in April. The museums had a set capacity for the number of field trips in a day, and were stretched to bursting during some weeks and left empty on others. Further, there seemed to be a pattern of low attendance during the early fall months when schools tended not to take field trips.

There was also a perception in some areas, particularly in economically challenged areas or schools, that arts education in the schools had decreased. As one museum educator in Alabama told me, “We have 16 schools with no recess, much less art. They have three PE teachers but no art teacher.” A museum educator in Washington echoed those sentiments, “Access to art depends on race and economic status. It is rare to find an art teacher in a Title 1 school.” Arts integration is increasingly being implemented because there are no longer art teachers as art advocates in each school building. Therefore, art museum education program administrators have shifted their efforts to building relationships with elementary classroom teachers, offering them arts integration professional development, and trying to help them feel more comfortable with art. Many museums have begun sending teaching artists out into the schools to build relationships and to teach art in each school one day a month or more. Relatedly, museums that served high numbers of disadvantaged students were more likely to

offer a hands-on studio art-making component, and indicated that this offering was very popular with teachers and students who did not have access to this experience in their schools (personal communications with art museums in Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and Washington).

To answer the final research question in this study, *What other pressures or practices appear to be impacting arts field trip attendance and access?* I will consider two important barriers to field trip attendance: the problems of transportation and of inclusivity. One of the most surprising findings is the magnitude of the busing barrier to field trip access, and the cascade of barriers transportation creates. I never considered that transporting students would be a concern, especially when schools are equipped with a fleet of buses charged with no other duty than to transport students to and from. However, arts educators and all field trip organizers I spoke with in the field, and likely those reading now, laughed openly at my naiveté.

Transportation is a major barrier. Not a single museum in this study indicated that transportation is not an issue for them. Indeed, it is potentially the most critical barrier, because it hinders those who WANT to attend, who are ready to attend, but who are logistically barred from attending. While it seems as if it would be an easy problem to remedy, it is not. Consider this scenario.

*6:00 a.m. Buses depart to pick up students and get them to school by...*

*7:45 a.m. Before classes begin at 8:00 a.m. Some school districts stagger their starting times so that buses can pull double duty, dropping off one set of students at 7:30 a.m., and then picking up another set of students for an 8:30 a.m. drop off. The earliest a bus can be available for a field trip pick up would be 9:00 a.m.*

*9:00 a.m. The bus is ready and waiting. Students board and the bus leaves at 9:15 a.m., if all goes well. If the field trip venue is nearby, students can be there by 10:00 a.m. However, if it is*

*farther away, it could be 11:00 a.m. or later before a field trip can even begin. This time estimate does not account for restroom breaks and traffic problems.*

*10:00 a.m. Under the best circumstances, the bus arrives at the field trip location. Students are hurriedly shuffled in for bathroom breaks at the museum and then it is off on their adventure.*

*Most field trips last 1-2 hours maximum.*

*11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Students have completed the field trip and are now missing their lunchtime. If they are close by, the bus will take them back to school where they will eat a late lunch. If their school is farther away, they either eat a sack lunch in some corner of the museum, or they eat on the bus-ride back to school, although this may be against the rules as well. Only one museum in this study had a dedicated lunch space for student visits, and even that one would only accommodate one class of students at a time. Despite seeing thousands of students each year and knowing they needed to eat, museums fail to accommodate them for lunch.*

*1:00 p.m. The buses have to leave to get students back to school by ...*

*2:00 p.m. So that they can get ready for schools to begin dismissal.*

*2:30p.m. The bus-drivers can resume their originally scheduled program of returning students to their homes.*

Because of the busing logistical gymnastics described above, field trips at most art museums in this study began after 10:00 a.m., some even as late as 11:00 a.m. The result of this busing constraint is that most museums only offer field trips between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., a three-hour window that drastically reduces their capacity to grant access to a large number of students. However, the cascade of consequences resulting from the constrained transportation does not stop here.

The vast majority, 30 out of 32 museums in this study, use volunteer docents to facilitate their school tours. The museums in Arkansas and Pennsylvania use paid education staff as tour facilitators for all school tours. A frequent complaint from teachers and students, and a concern at the forefront of arts education program administrators, is that the art museums are not inclusive, that students who visit feel unwelcome, and that they do not see anyone at the museum who looks like them. Indeed, again and again, art museum educators told me that the guests who come to the art museum as part of a field trip are the most diverse group that steps through the door on any given day (personal communications with art museums in AL, FL, ID, MO, MN, NM, and NE).

However, the docent staff, composed of people who are able to volunteer between the constrained hours of 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. are a special group. This majority female, middle to upper class, highly educated, white, and retired corps of workers does not reflect the diversity of their audience. The guests may be children, however, they feel the misalignment (personal communications with art museums in Georgia, Missouri, and Virginia). Of the museum education administrators I spoke with, all but those with hired staff acknowledged that docent gender, race, generation and socioeconomic status matching is an issue. Art program administrators at six museums went so far as to admit that they actively try to recruit a more diverse docent corps, or said that they are exploring the cost of using staff instead of docents, at least for student groups (personal communications with art museums in AL, FL, GA, MO, TX, VA, and WA). Additionally, those museums that offered a hands-on studio component as part of the museum experience used volunteer docents for the gallery tour and a staff teaching artist who has more diverse demographic characteristics for the studio component to try to strike a more

inclusive balance, at least for some portion of the field trip experience (personal communication with art museums in Georgia).

While a potential solution to the docent issue is to hire tour staff to guide field trips, this increase in cost would decrease capacity. The field trip experience could be more inclusive, but fewer students would have access to the experience. Another solution that some museums have tried is to extend the hours that field trips are offered. This arrangement would open doors to a more diverse docent staff, but would also increase costs in terms of operating expenses for extended hours for a limited audience. Capacity would still be constrained by transportation logistics. Some schools require students to report to school early on field trip days in an attempt to bypass the transportation timing constraint, but for economically disadvantaged schools where the majority of students ride the school bus as opposed to being driven to school by a parent, an early report time is impossible.

Again, this constraint may seem like a simple problem to solve, however, it is not. Museums value their docents and consider that as much as the docents serve the community, the museum is also serving the docent by providing for them a chance to impact youth in meaningful ways. Further, it is oftentimes a goal of museums to engage the community and to become a place where generations meet. Lastly, as one museum docent coordinator told me, “No one will touch the docent problem because many of the docents are also donors, and no one wants to rock the boat” but that administrators needed to decide “who we are serving with the field trips. Are they for the students or for the docents?” (Anonymous personal communication).

## **Conclusion**

This study reports actual attendance data gathered from 18 art museums from across the United States and finds that arts field trips, at least in the majority of the museums in this study, have declined in recent years. While there may be some patterns of decline related to accountability or economic shocks, the data is noisy and inconclusive. The qualitative evidence also points to the impact of policy pressures like accountability, standardized testing, and meeting educational standards on field trip attendance as well as arts access, especially for students in struggling schools. According to art museum educators, teachers want to attend field trips but are restricted by time, administrative pushback, and logistics. Further, there is a considerable mismatch between the demographic characteristics of volunteer docents who facilitate the vast majority of field trips in this study and the diverse students whom they serve. This demographic mismatch may lead students and teachers to feel excluded and unwelcome, thus exacerbating the decline in field trip attendance.

## **Future Work**

This study provides an important look at field trip attendance trends and the pressures that may impact both arts field trip access and the resulting attendance. However, the data collected for this study are rich, and I believe they have more information to share. Future work will include the collection of more data from more states, a study of the nation's "arts deserts", and how geographic, socioeconomic, and racial/ethnic isolation impacts access to the arts. Also, of interest are the bi-coastal concentrations of art, where millions of works of art are housed at the edges of the nation, while large swathes of the center of this country go largely without.

Lastly, while I believe that art exposure has a particular value, especially for developing social and cultural capital, I am interested in the impacts on student outcomes from other types of field trips such as of those to other cultural and educational institutions.

### **Policy Implications**

Policymakers should be concerned that isolated students, either in rural areas, racially homogenous areas, or isolated by social class or economic status, have restricted access to art both in the daily practice of their schools and through field trips. If arts access increases academic and social-emotional outcomes, then some students unfairly have restricted access to those increased outcomes.

The transportation issue has large effects on arts field trip access and attendance. Museums should consider opening earlier and chartering buses instead of reimbursing schools for them, to increase field trip capacity. Further, lengthy forms and the need to turn in receipts makes bus reimbursement difficult for teachers. One museum in Missouri, in an effort to make the process more nimble for all concerned, has a “bus scholarship” of a set amount that is paid to the school as soon as the field trip is complete. The money can then be used for anything, for the bus expense, to compensate a substitute teacher, or anything else that they see fit.

By relaxing the busing constraint and increasing capacity through increased field trip hours, art museums could simultaneously diversify their docent core: a field trip window from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. could allow a more diverse group of volunteers to participate. Further, museums could increase the number of students each docent tours to increase capacity and diversity. Tours in Australia had one docent to 20 young students and no other adults, the norm in the United States is one docent and one additional adult for every 10 students.

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**Appendices**  
**Appendix A**

<b>State</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Site Visit</b>	<b>Field Trip Observations</b>	<b>Interview Date</b>	<b>Interview</b>	<b>Attendance Data</b>
<b>AL</b>	Y	0	0	3/19	Museum Education	P
<b>AR</b>	Y	1	2	9/17	4 Museum Education	Y
<b>CA</b>	Y	1	0	11/18	Museum Education	Y
<b>CO</b>	Y	0	0	1/19	Museum Education	Y
<b>DC1</b>	Y	1	2	3/17	3 Museum Education	Y
<b>DC2</b>	Y	0	0	11/18	Museum Education	Y
<b>DE</b>	Y	1	0	10/17	Museum Education	N
<b>FL</b>	Y	2	0	1/18	2 Museum Education	Y
<b>GA</b>	Y	1	2	2017-2019	6 Admin., Volunteers	N
<b>IA</b>	Y	1	0	11/18	Museum Education	Y
<b>ID</b>	Y	0	0	12/18	Museum Education	P
<b>IL</b>	Y	1	1	11/17	2 Museum Education	Y
<b>IN</b>	Y	1	0	11/18	Museum Education	Y
<b>KS</b>	Y	1	0	11/18	Museum Education	N
<b>KY</b>	Y	1	0	11/18	Museum Education	Y
<b>LA</b>	Y	0	0	12/18	Museum Education	P
<b>MA</b>	Y	0	0	11/18	Museum Education	Y
<b>MI</b>	Y	2	2	11/18	Museum Education	P
<b>MN</b>	Y	2	0	11/18	2 Museum Education	Y
<b>MO</b>	Y	1	1	12/18	Museum Education	Y
<b>MS</b>	Y	0	0	.		N
<b>MT</b>	N	0	0	.		N
<b>NE</b>	Y	1	0	3/19	Museum Education	Y
<b>NM</b>	Y	0	0	3/19	Museum Education	P
<b>NY</b>	Y	5	0	12/18	Museum Education	N
<b>OH</b>	Y	2	0	10/18	Museum Education	Y
<b>OK 1</b>	Y	3	0	.		N
<b>OK 2</b>	Y	1	0	.		N
<b>OR</b>	Y	1	0	.		N
<b>PA</b>	Y	2	2	10/17	2 Museum Education	Y
<b>TN</b>	Y	1	0	11/18	Museum Education	Y
<b>TX 1</b>	N	1	0			N
<b>TX 2</b>	Y	0	0	3/19	Museum Education	P
<b>UT</b>	Y	0	0	1/19	Museum Education	N
<b>VA</b>	Y	0	0	3/19	Museum Education	P
<b>WA</b>	Y	1	0	3/19	Museum Education	P
<b>WI</b>	Y	1	0	11/17	2 Museum Education	Y

## Appendix B

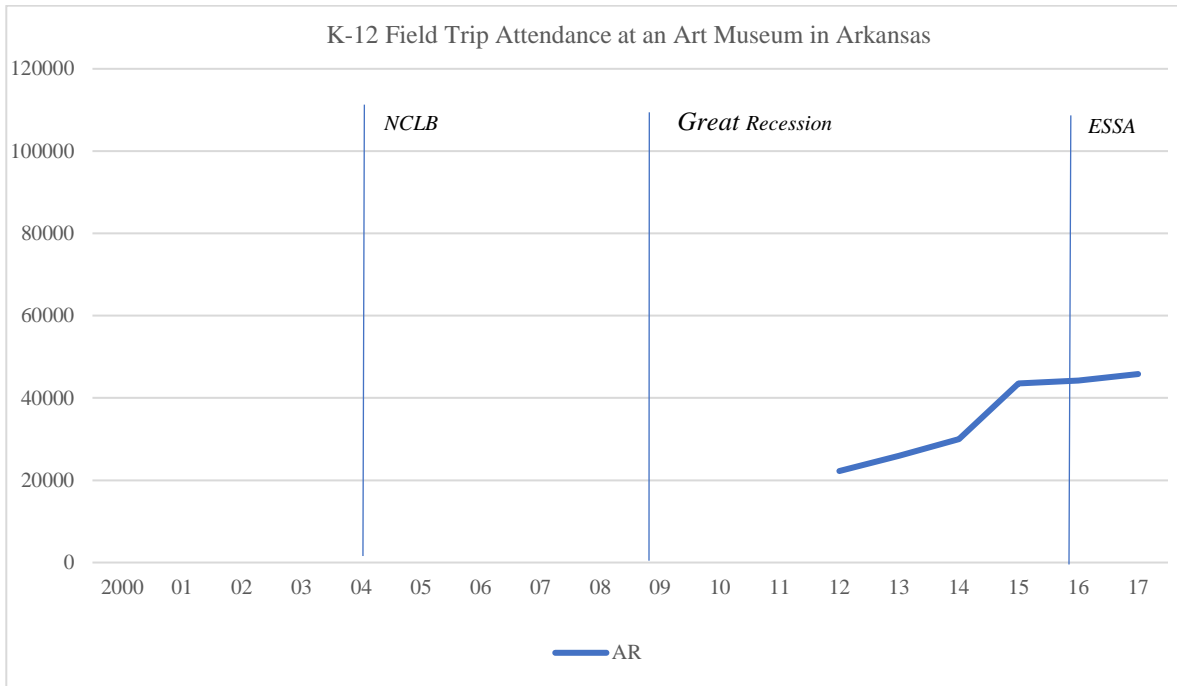


Figure 8. Field Trip Attendance at an Art Museum in Arkansas

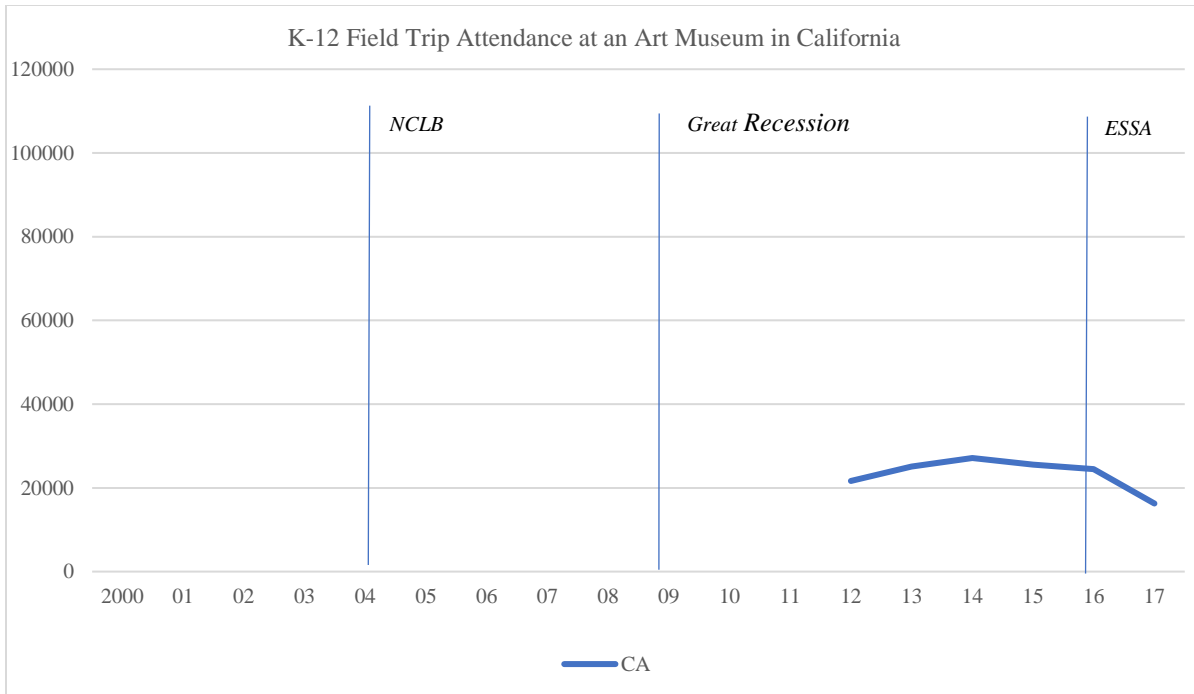


Figure 9. Field Trip Attendance at an Art Museum in California

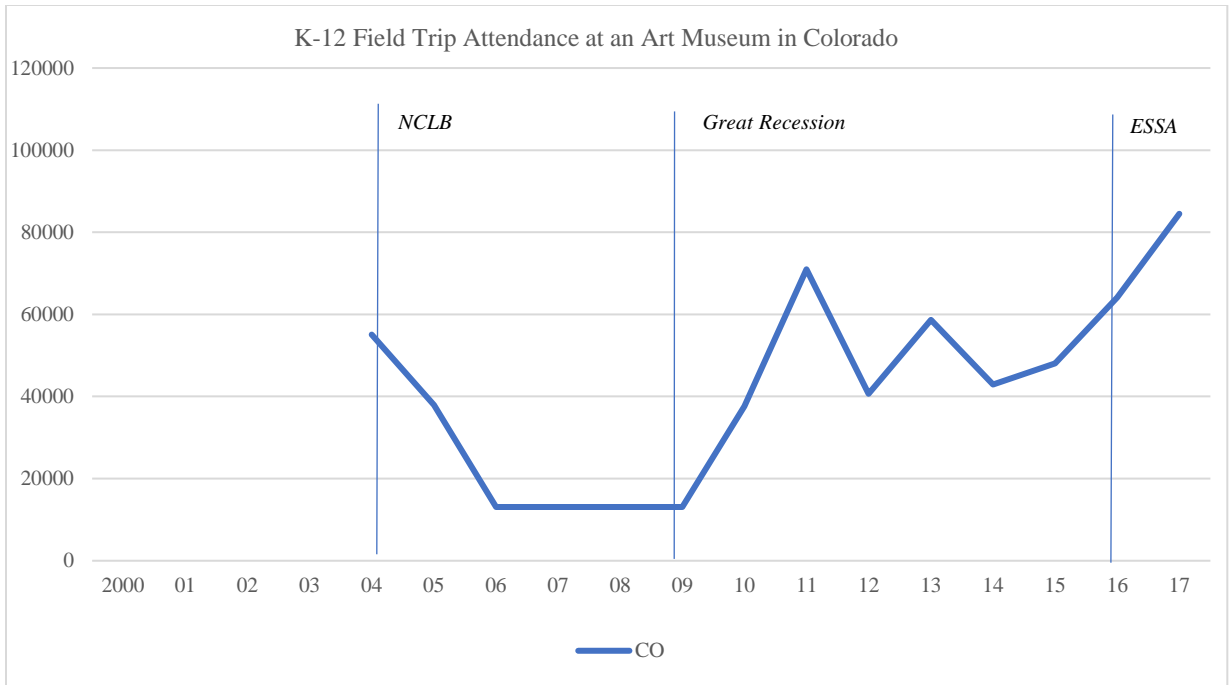


Figure 10. Field Trip Attendance at an Art Museum in Colorado

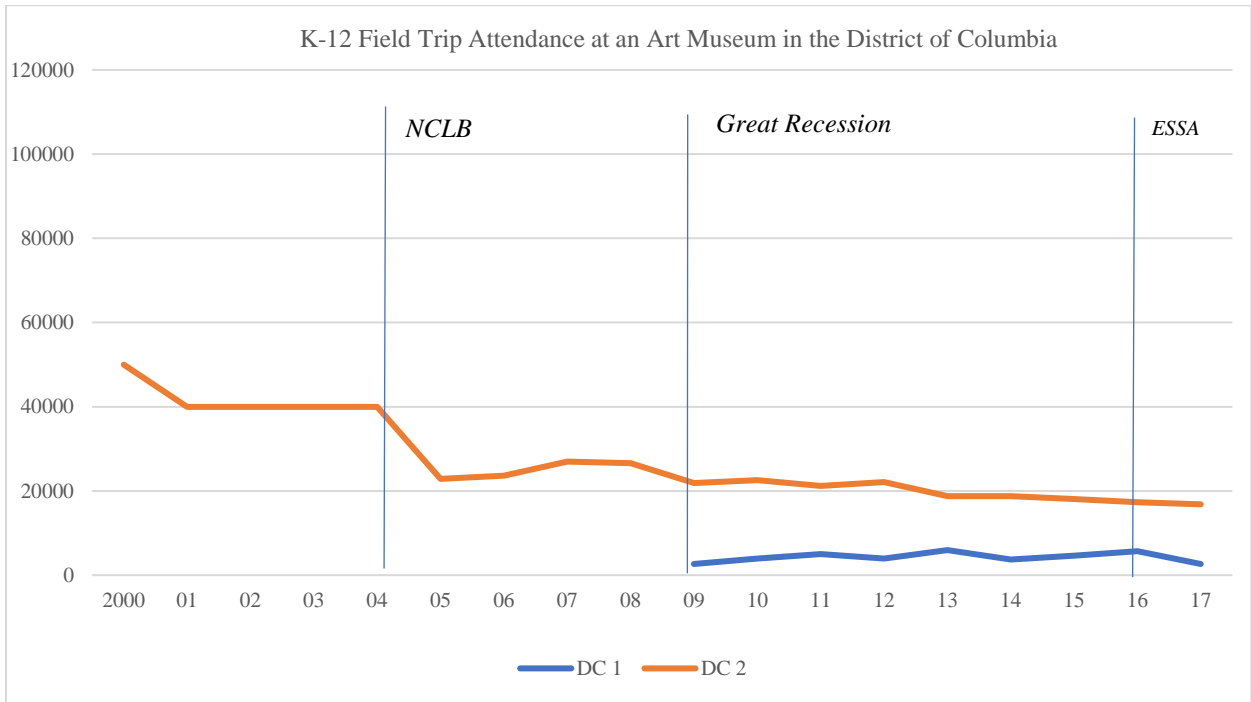


Figure 11. Field Trip Attendance at an Art Museum in the District of Columbia

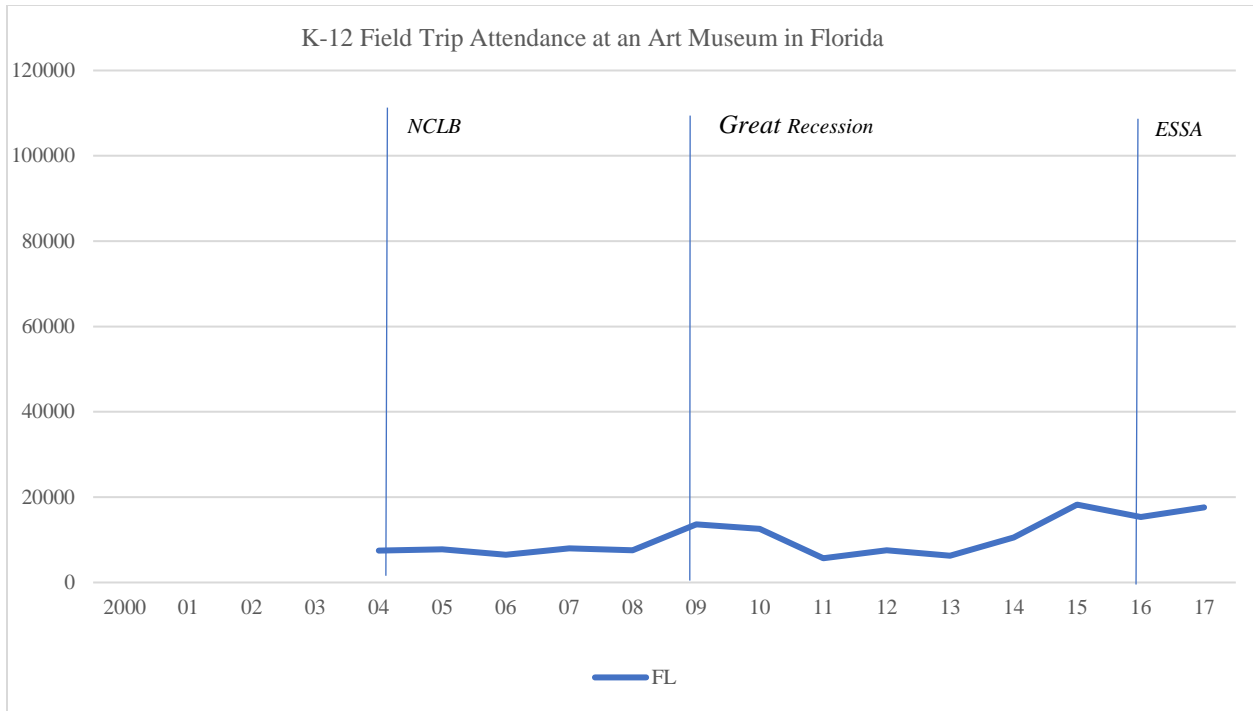


Figure 12. Field Trip Attendance at an Art Museum in Florida

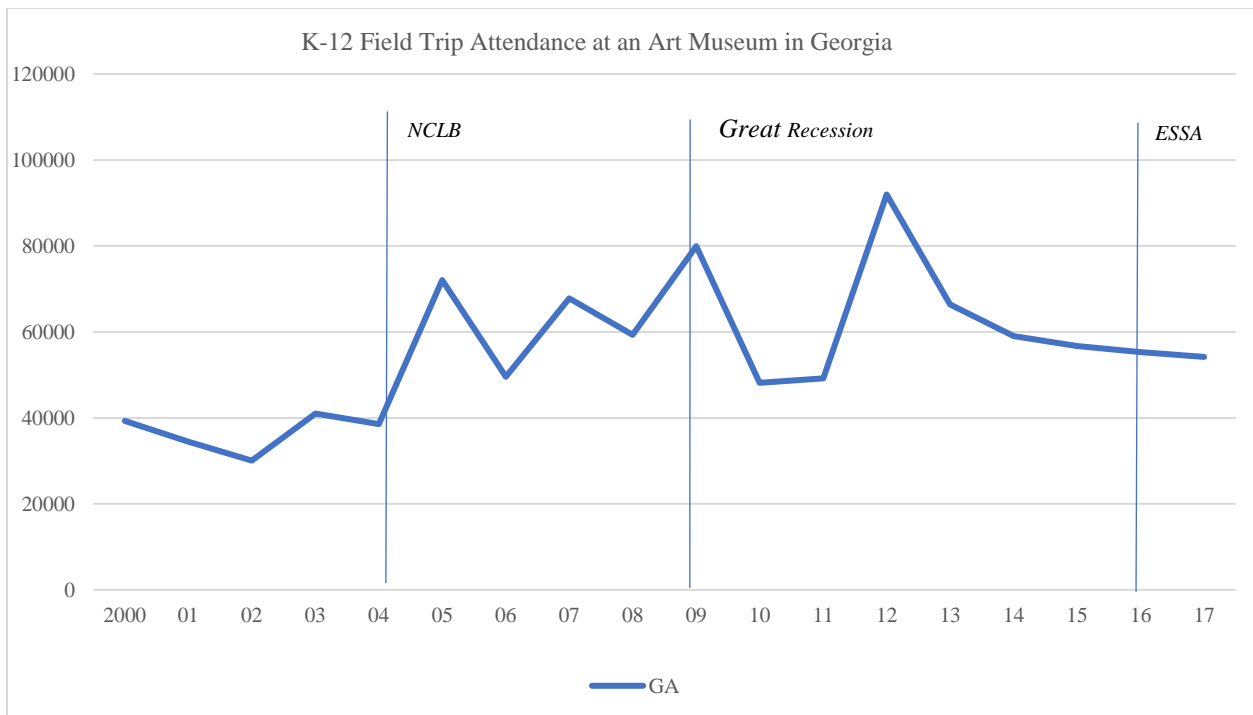


Figure 13. Field Trip Attendance at an Art Museum in Georgia

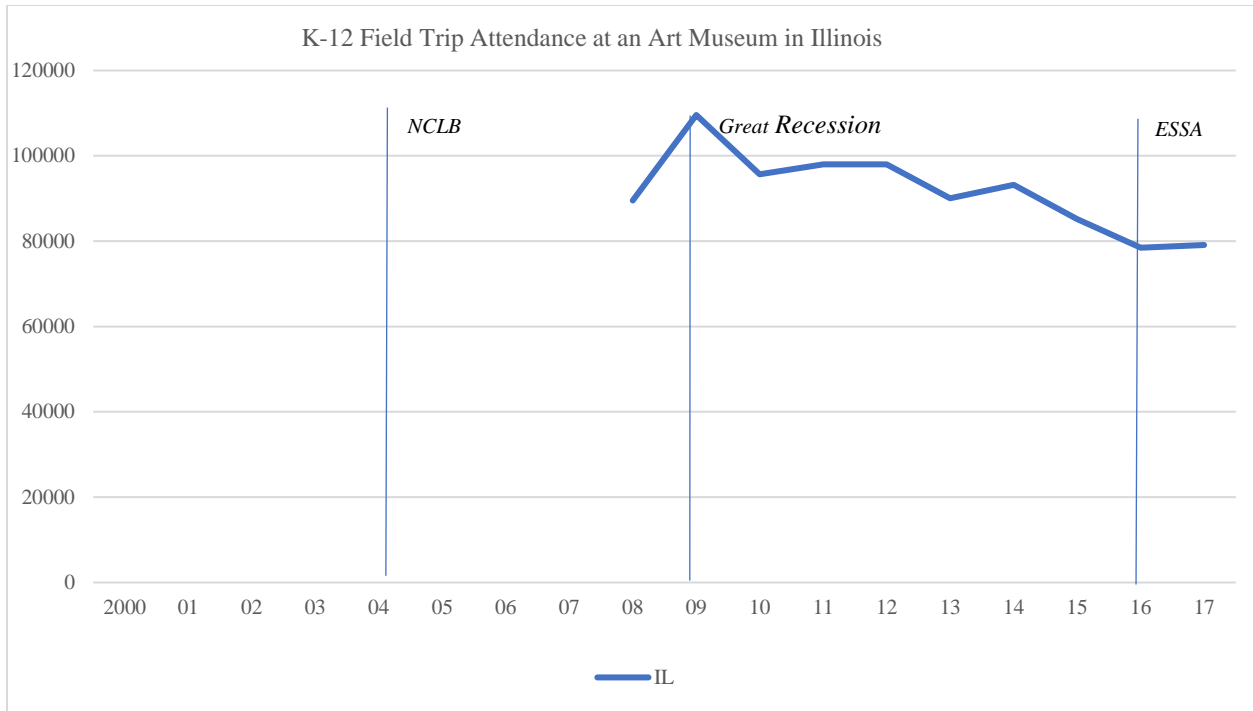


Figure 14. Field Trip Attendance at an Art Museum in Illinois

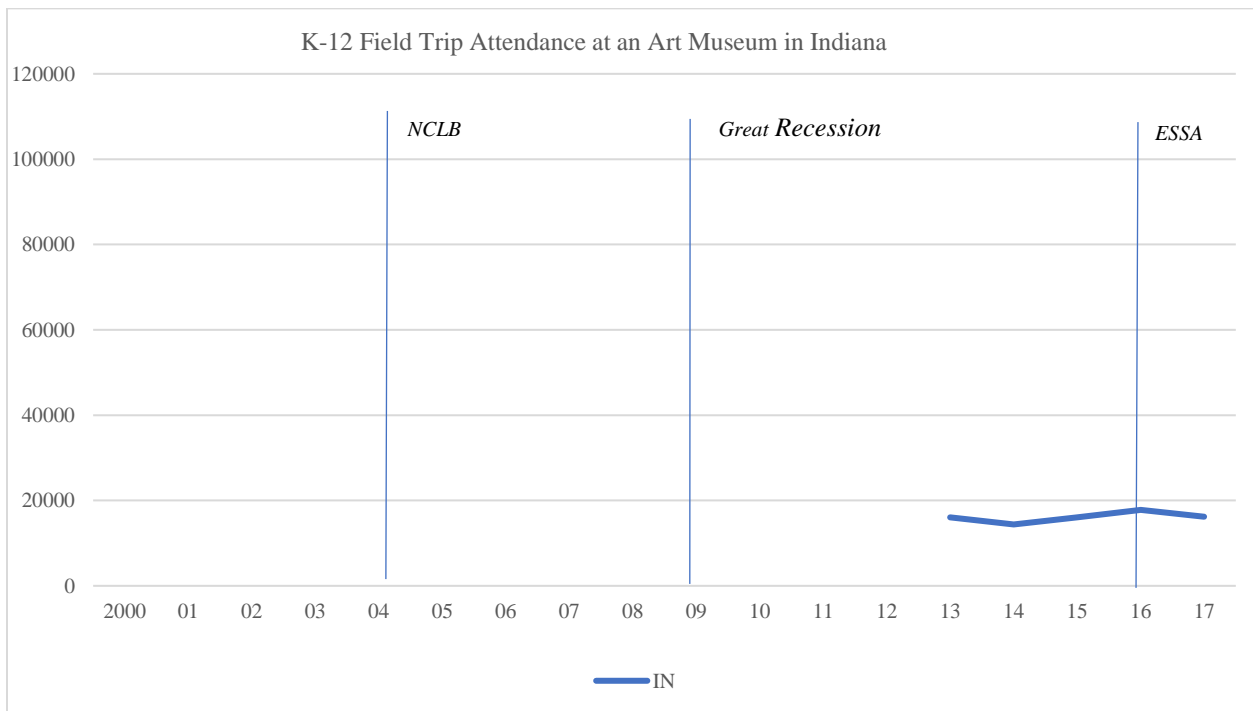


Figure 15. Field Trip Attendance at an Art Museum in Indiana



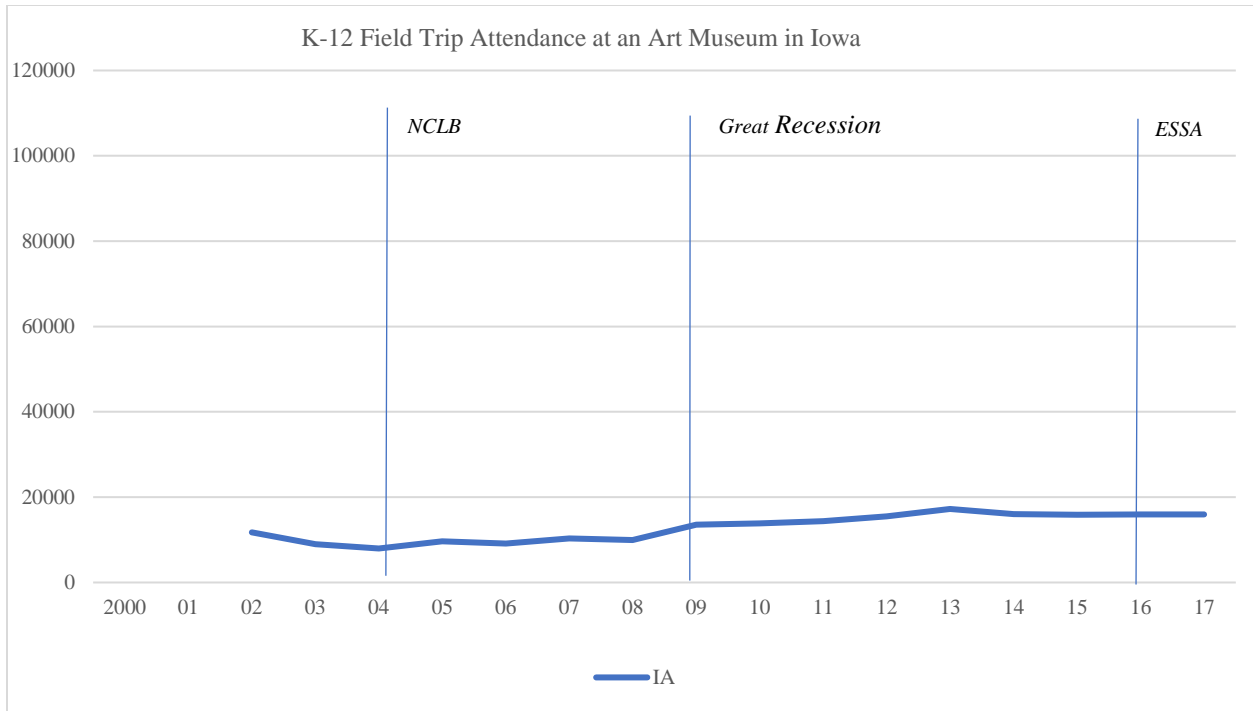


Figure 16. Field Trip Attendance at an Art Museum in Iowa

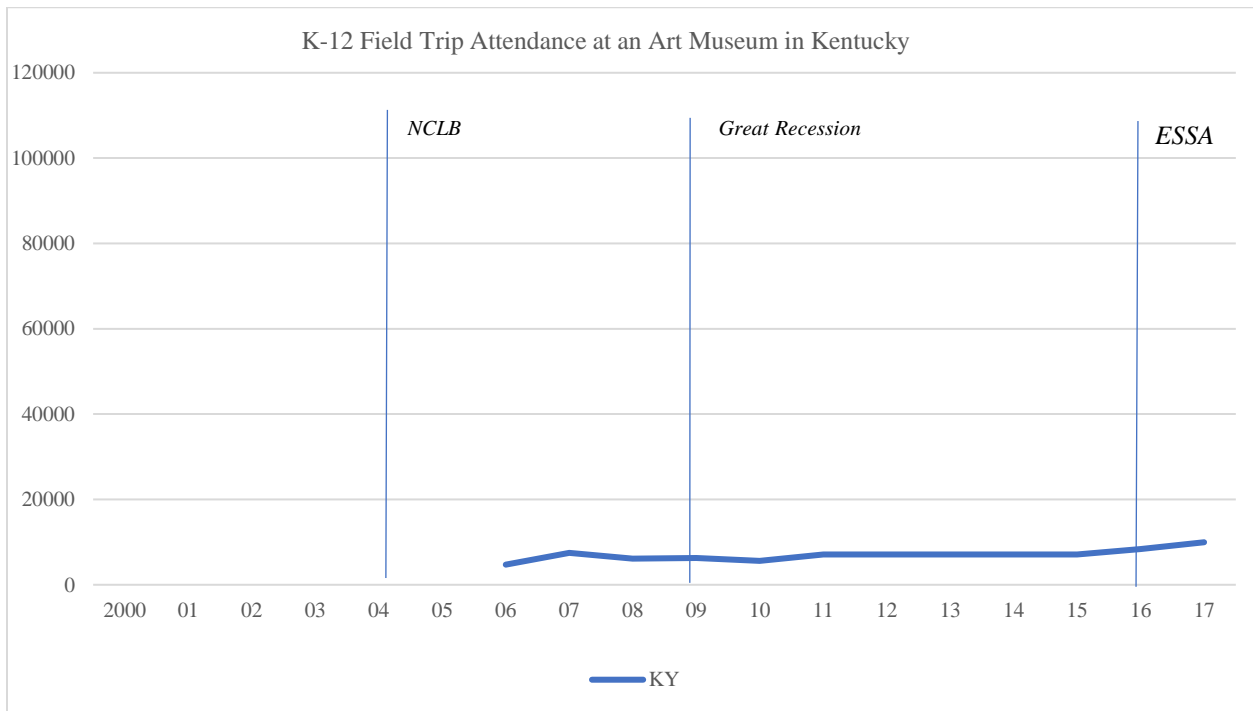


Figure 17. Field Trip Attendance at an Art Museum in Kentucky

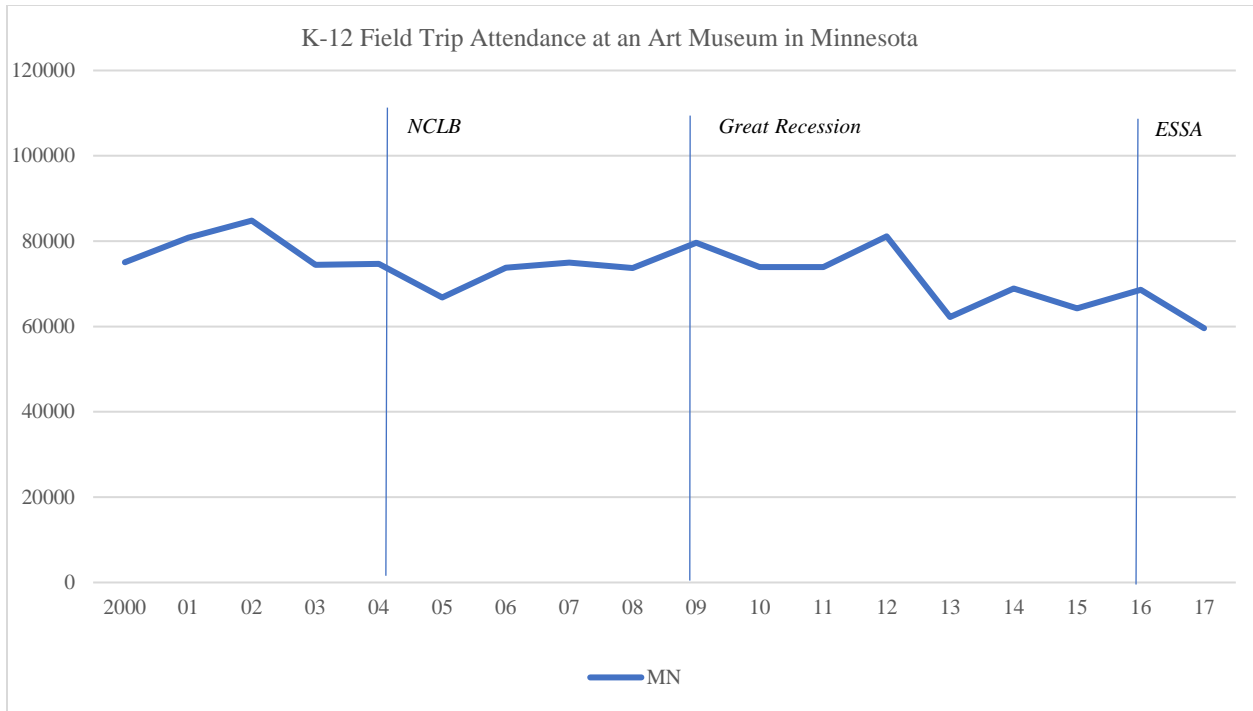


Figure 18. Field Trip Attendance to and Art Museum in Minnesota

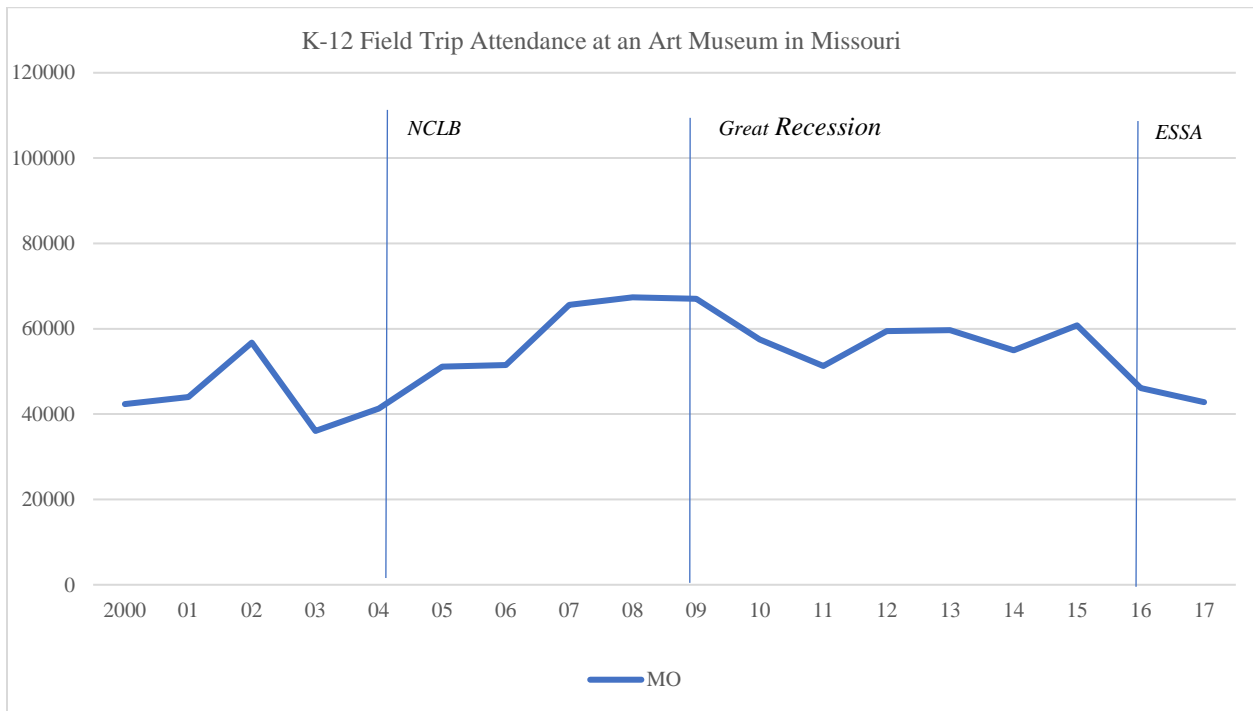


Figure 19. Field Trip Attendance to and Art Museum in Missouri

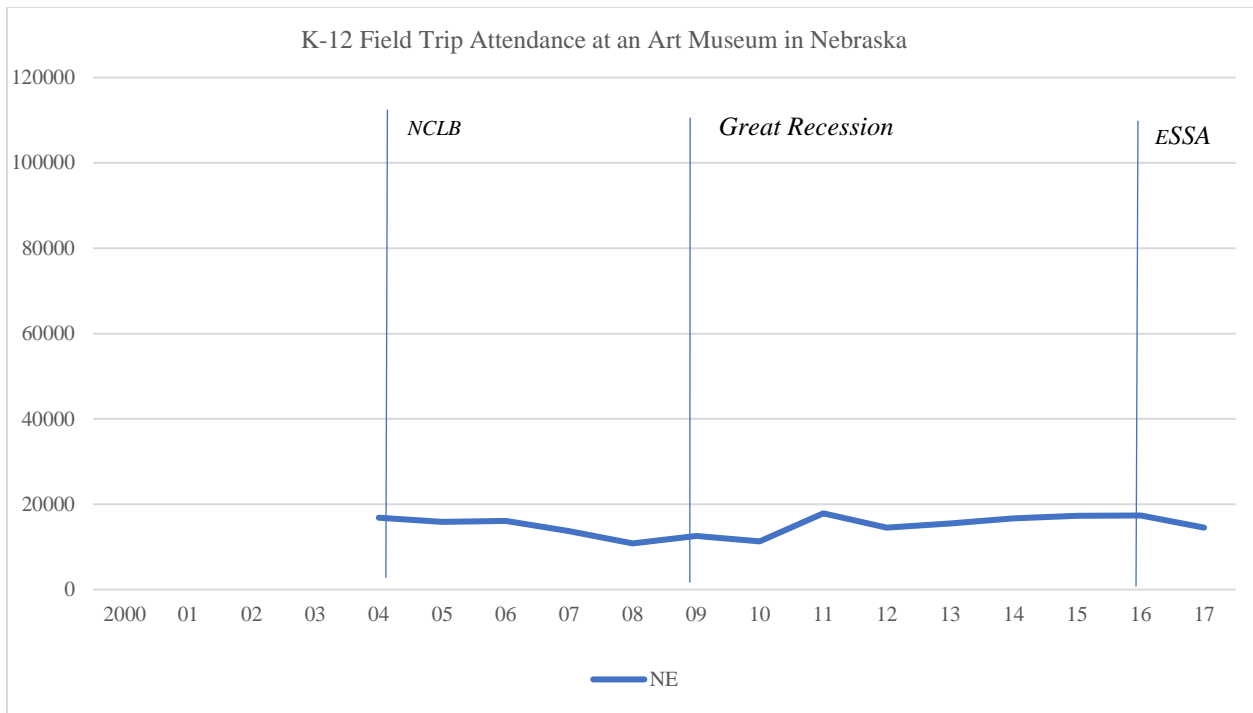


Figure 20. Field Trip Attendance to and Art Museum in Nebraska

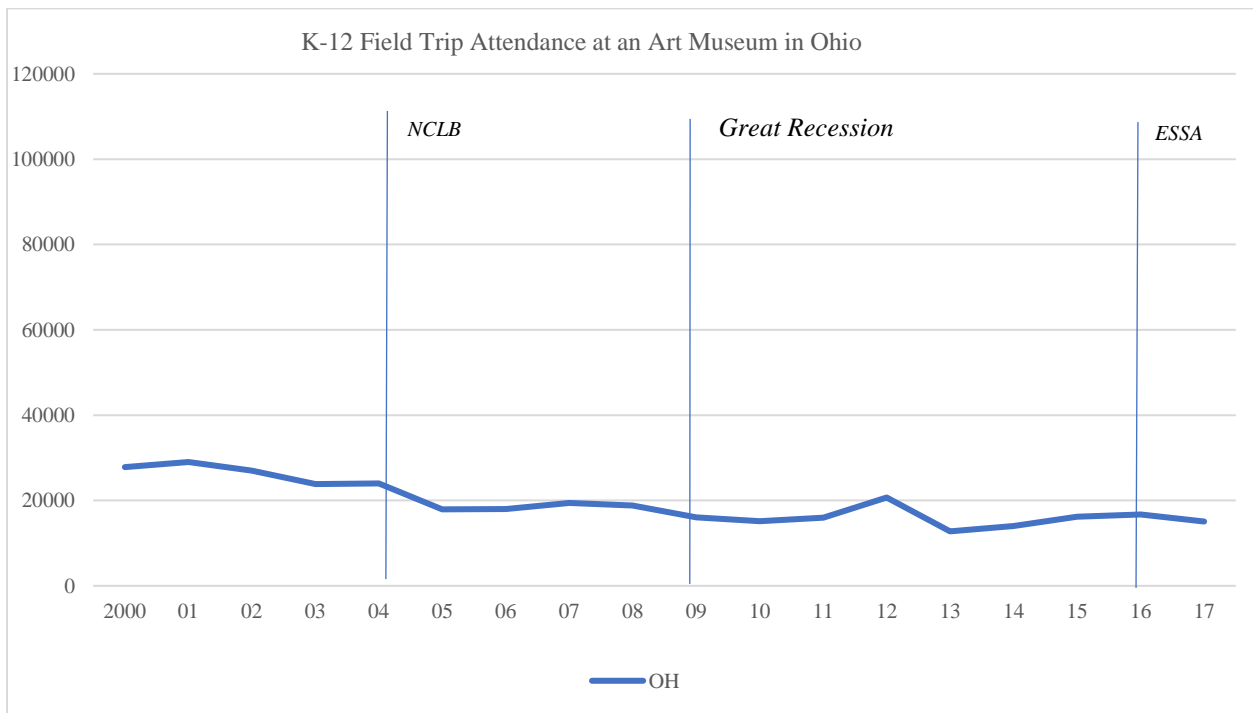


Figure 21. Field Trip Attendance to and Art Museum in Ohio

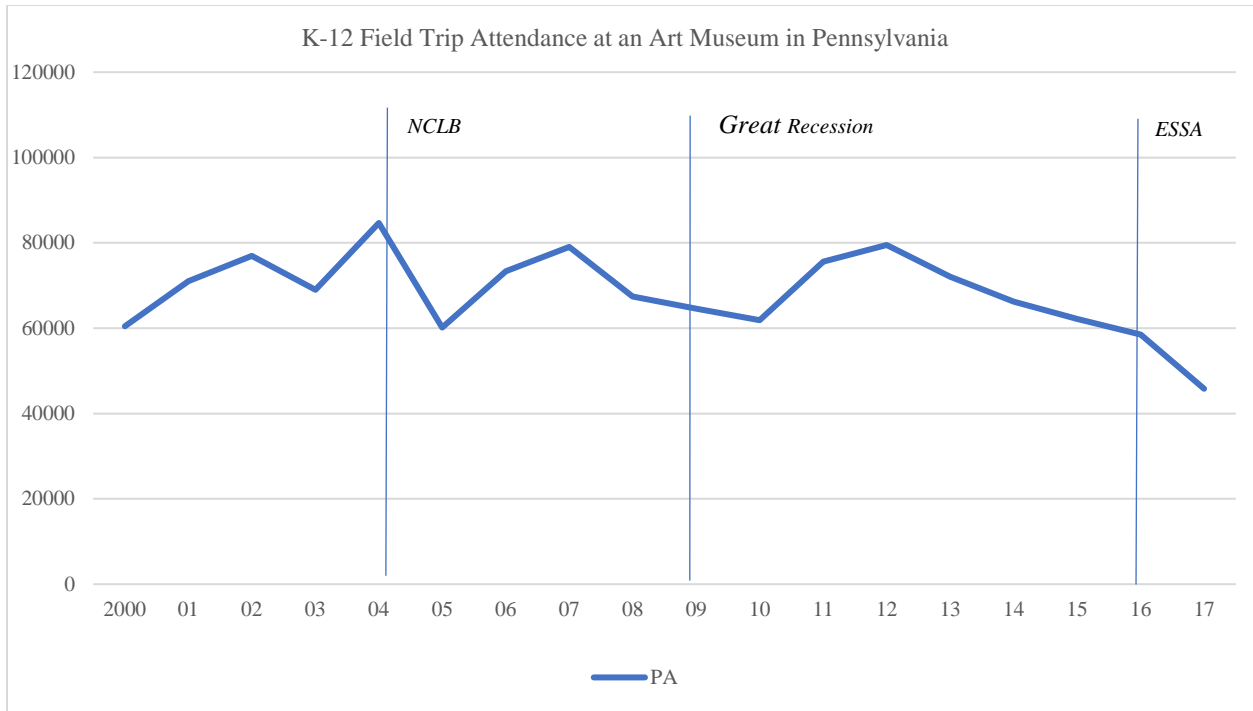


Figure 22. Field Trip Attendance to and Art Museum in Pennsylvania

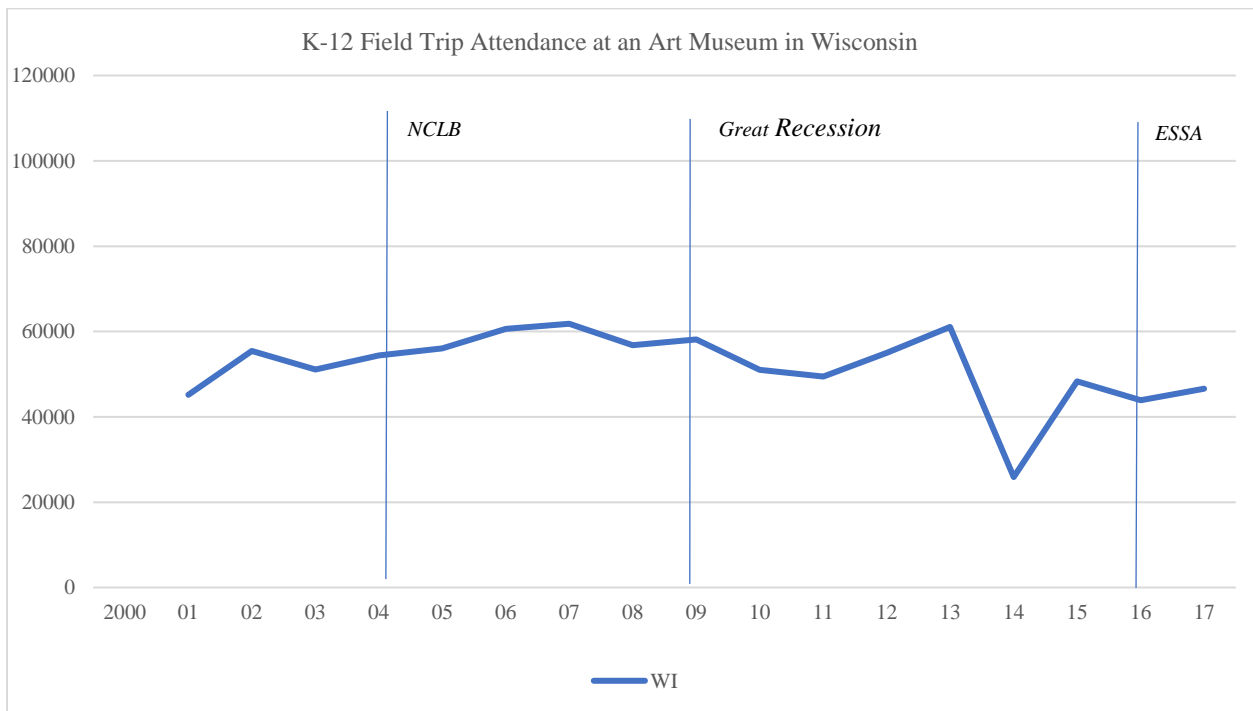


Figure 23. Field Trip Attendance to and Art Museum in Pennsylvania

## Conclusion

The goal of this body of work is to add to our knowledge about the importance of arts field trips for students' academic outcomes, to motivate future research, and to inform education policy and practice. The three studies contained in this work triangulate the importance and impact of arts field trips, pointing towards exposure and experience as key, while also showing us the consequences of our past policy decisions on arts access and field trip attendance.

In Chapter 1, I report the first experimental evidence of the effects of multiple arts field trips. My co-authors and I add to the literature about the positive benefits of field trips on academic outcomes, as well as measures of tolerance and social perspective taking, and the first evidence of compounding benefits of additional field trips over time. In Chapter 2, I present the results of a qualitative study looking inside the black box of an experimental study and allowing stakeholders to tell us what they value about their field trip experiences. Finally, in Chapter 3, I examine the state of arts field trip attendance and access across the country, using attendance data, gathered and compiled for the first time, from art museums across the United States.

I find that arts field trips increase student academic and social-emotional outcomes, and that attending more field trips over time increases those benefits. I find that teachers believe in field trips, and consider providing these experiences to be part of their job of educating their students, and that students advocate for field trips, not just to get a day away from school, but for educational reasons. More so, I find that students are learning from these experiences, that they can recall intricate details months after the field trips occurred, and that they connect these shared experiences with their peers, connect field trips to shared experiences from the past, and build new shared experiences in the process, all of which is likely to connect these students to one another and to their schools.

Taken together, the research presented here represents an important contribution to the literature and understanding of the value of arts field trips. Further, it hints at the value and promise of policy changes that could thicken the “thinned” curriculum in ways that would better interest and engage students, and could lead to important positive academic and social-emotional outcomes as seen in Chapter 1 and described in Chapter 2.

What was your most memorable field trip? Recall it, and how it made you feel. If you had not gone on that trip would your life have been different? I never attended a school field trip to an art museum as a child because I grew up in a rural state that did not have an art museum then. However, I do remember my first trip to an art museum. When I was about nine, my family drove to Houston, Texas to visit an uncle, and my father took my brother and me to the art museum. I distinctly remember the visit because my five year old brother tried to climb a sculpture that was suspended from the ceiling and the security guards quickly got animated. I discovered Monet at that museum, and from his work, all the impressionist and post-impressionist artists. I studied art in junior high school and college, and I am sure that all of my art experiences have influenced what I have accomplished so far. This work, this research topic, is a direct descendant of my first trip to an art museum.

All kids need an opportunity for arts exposure and experience. Field trips can play an important part in equalizing access to cultural institutions. For students who would not otherwise have the opportunity to attend cultural institutions and share in arts experiences, a school field trip may be their only chance. Important findings about the benefits of these types of cultural experiences continue to increase, as does the rigor of the research. Further, there is increased evidence that there is a decline in these types of field trips (McCord & Ellerson, 2009), and that the decline may be more pronounced for the very students who benefit most, isolated

economically disadvantaged students (Government Accountability Office, 2009; Keiper, Sandene, Persky, & Kuang, 2009).

While the common wisdom has been that field trips are a best practice, there is now evidence to support and encourage the practice. Students, especially students who have had less prior exposure, benefit in important ways from the experiences had on school field trips. Stories of student remembrances of field trips past are common. Clearly, field trips are memorable educational events, but now we have evidence that they are also impactful, increasing students' social-emotional skills and encouraging students to put forth more effort in school. As one teacher from The Woodruff field trip summed it up, "How can they even know if they like something or not if they have never even seen it before? Maybe this will be something they will like when they grow up." Indeed.

### **Future Work**

While the body of research around the value of arts field trips continues to grow, there is still a need for more work. The multi-visit field trip study is the first one to study the effects of field trips on a minority population. Additional work of this kind should be conducted on other populations. The same study is entering its third year of data collection and there are plans to continue the work, using administrative data, to follow students into secondary school and beyond.

The longitudinal field trip attendance data from Chapter 3 could be used to answer more questions about the practices associated with field trip offerings, funding, and access. I am particularly interested in looking at the prevalence of arts deserts in the United States, and how vast concentrations, as well as deserts of art collections can impact the influence of art in the

lives of people from specific regions. For instance, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, one of several large art collections in the state of New York possesses a permanent collection of over two million works of art. In contrast, Mississippi's largest art museum has a permanent collection of around 5,000 works of art. Similarly, many states in the central and northwest regions of the United States appear to be art poor. It would be interesting to look at how this disparity impacts arts education funding and educational standards in those states.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Arts field trips, at least to the museums in this study, are in decline. Policymakers should heed the warning signs of policies that unintentionally promote a thinned curriculum, when the evidence in these studies points to the benefits of a more robust and heartier curriculum that engages and interests students and connects schools to the greater society in important and meaningful ways. The impact of a richer and more robust curriculum and of more diverse experiences for students could pay dividends for years to come. The arts, and field trips, could be that "thickening agent" to a thinned curriculum, focused on standardized test scores to the exclusion of all else.

Evidence continues to amass indicating that arts field trips benefit students and that students in struggling schools, oftentimes economically challenged and majority minority schools, have the least access to arts exposure either inside or outside of school. If students in more prosperous schools have increased access to arts experiences, and therefore increased access to educational opportunities that create beneficial outcomes, this practice becomes a civil rights issue. School districts should take a close look at the equitable access of art experiences amongst their schools. Further, schools should ensure that both students and parents are aware,



early on, of the opportunity to choose arts electives in middle school, especially for students at risk of low prior arts exposure.

As schools move away from weekly arts classes and towards arts integration, where art is incorporated into regular curriculum but does not have a dedicated period or class, the built-in arts advocates within schools will be reduced. Without adult advocates, field trips will not happen. Ensuring that adults within schools value arts education, including field trips, is important. Building relationships with multiple classroom teachers instead of a handful of arts teachers within a building or district will be more difficult, and new methods of outreach and maintenance need to be developed.

As the education accountability apparatus that was No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and that is now the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is in flux, the time is ripe for policy and practice changes that incentivize cultural field trips. ESSA specifically addresses this issue when it calls for a “well rounded education,” and the arts and arts field trips should play a part, especially for students who are most at risk of not sharing in these common experiences and of having exposure to the larger world. Further, ESSA comes with new flexibility for local districts and even schools to play a part in determining what metrics are used to measure “success.” Education policy stakeholders should bend this flexibility towards renewed access to educational field trips. Indeed, it could be diverse experiences and exposure, such as those detailed in this dissertation, that helps learning “stick” and students to stay engaged and stay in school. Students should once again load up on buses and depart upon the great American field trip.

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## Appendix



Office of Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board

August 17, 2017

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Angela Watson  
Jay P. Greene

FROM: Ro Windwalker  
IRB Coordinator

RE: PROJECT MODIFICATION

IRB Protocol #: 1708015482 (previously 17-02-484)

Protocol Title: *Museum Field Trip Observations*

Review Type:  EXEMPT  EXPEDITED  FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 08/16/2017 Expiration Date: 08/15/2018

Your request to modify the referenced protocol has been approved by the IRB. **This protocol is currently approved for 275 total participants.** If you wish to make any further modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

Please note that this approval does not extend the Approved Project Period. Should you wish to extend your project beyond the current expiration date, you must submit a request for continuation using the UAF IRB form "Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects." The request should be sent to the IRB Coordinator, 109 MLKG Building.

For protocols requiring FULL IRB review, please submit your request at least one month prior to the current expiration date. (High-risk protocols may require even more time for approval.) For protocols requiring an EXPEDITED or EXEMPT review, submit your request at least two weeks prior to the current expiration date. Failure to obtain approval for a continuation *on or prior to* the currently approved expiration date will result in termination of the protocol and you will be required to submit a new protocol to the IRB before continuing the project. Data collected past the protocol expiration date may need to be eliminated from the dataset should you wish to publish. Only data collected under a currently approved protocol can be certified by the IRB for any purpose.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or [irb@uark.edu](mailto:irb@uark.edu).

**To:** Jay Philip Greene  
GRAD 200

**From:** Douglas James Adams, Chair  
IRB Committee

**Date:** 05/08/2018

**Action:** Expedited Approval

**Action Date:** 05/04/2018

**Protocol #:** 17090102-170002

**Study Title:** An Evaluation of Culturally-Enriching Field Trips

**Expiration Date:** 05/26/2019

**Last Approval Date:** 05/27/2018

The above-referenced protocol has been approved following expedited review by the IRB Committee that oversees research with human subjects.

If the research involves collaboration with another institution then the research cannot commence until the Committee receives written notification of approval from the collaborating institution's IRB.

It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without Committee approval. Please submit continuation requests early enough to allow sufficient time for review. Failure to receive approval for continuation before the expiration date will result in the automatic suspension of the approval of this protocol. Information collected following suspension is unapproved research and cannot be reported or published as research data. If you do not wish continued approval, please notify the Committee of the study closure.

**Adverse Events:** Any serious or unexpected adverse event must be reported to the IRB Committee within 48 hours. All other adverse events should be reported within 10 working days.

**Amendments:** If you wish to change any aspect of this study, such as the procedures, the consent forms, study personnel, or number of participants, please submit an amendment to the IRB. All changes must be approved by the IRB Committee before they can be initiated.

You must maintain a research file for at least 3 years after completion of the study. This file should include all correspondence with the IRB Committee, original signed consent forms, and study data.

cc: Heidi Lauren Holmes, Investigator  
Angela R Watson, Investigator  
Molly Irene Beck, Investigator  
Laura Kathryn Flock, Investigator