

Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford

Position Statement on Arts Education

Adopted February 4, 2009

The Connecticut State Board of Education believes every student needs and deserves a high-quality education in the arts, including dance, music, theater and the visual arts. The arts are an integral component of the comprehensive curriculum provided to all Connecticut students at every grade. They play an essential role in the daily lives of citizens and are essential to the expression of human experience. An understanding and appreciation of the arts, as well as the ability to participate in the arts, are essential attributes of an educated person. There is also strong evidence that students educated in and through the arts achieve at higher levels in other areas of the curriculum and in their adult lives.

The Board believes the arts contribute to children's education and preparation for life in numerous ways. For example, the arts:

- are among our primary vehicles for communication of ideas and feelings;
- enable students to develop a deep understanding of cultures, including America's diverse heritage and the immense range of cultures across the globe, leading to tolerance and respect for others;
- play an important role in the economy and culture of Connecticut and the nation;
- help foster success in the world of work by cultivating essential skills such as problem solving, creative thinking, effective planning, time management, team-work, management of information, effective communication and an understanding of technology;
- offer avenues for students to develop rewarding vocational and avocational pursuits and uses of leisure time;
- are areas in which students can find and develop their personal "genius" (talents, intelligences); and
- provide opportunities for interdisciplinary learning that increase student motivation and achievement across the curriculum.

PK-12 arts education should enable students to achieve the arts goals and standards outlined in *Connecticut's Common Core of Learning*, Connecticut's Arts Frameworks and Connecticut's *Guide to K-12 Program Development in the Arts*. By the end of high school, all graduates of Connecticut should be able to:

- understand and use the materials, techniques, forms, language, notation, literature/repertoire, and diverse cultural and historical contexts of the arts;
- create, perform or respond with understanding to different art forms; and
- develop a lifelong interest in at least one art form to be able to continue lifelong involvement in that art form as a creator, performer or audience member.

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In providing all children with a quality arts education, everyone has a role.

Teachers and schools play an essential role in ensuring quality arts education by:

- providing all students with access to quality instruction in a variety of art forms, including music, visual arts, dance, theater and video/film;
- balancing the demands of other academic priorities with equal access for all students to participate in art-related activities;
- recognizing and showcasing students' arts accomplishments;
- providing interested students with access to advanced study in desired art forms, to prepare them for lifelong involvement and arts careers;
- providing appropriate staffing, facilities, scheduling and resources, including technology, to ensure a quality comprehensive arts education;
- making use of community, regional and state arts resources as a means of enriching the school arts curriculum; and
- taking advantage of the arts' capacity to engage students and increase learning throughout the curriculum.

Parents play an essential role in their children's arts learning by:

- singing, dancing, drawing and otherwise engaging in creative play with their children;
- encouraging and providing opportunities for their children to participate in and observe the arts;
- helping their children find and nurture their special artistic talents; and
- working with their district to improve the quality of arts education.

Teacher and administrator preparation and in-service professional development programs play an essential role in improving the quality of arts education by:

- preparing highly qualified teachers who are knowledgeable about the content, methods and pedagogy of the art form they teach;
- providing programs to develop skilled educators not only in art and music, but also in dance, theater and video/film;
- providing arts faculty and administrators with opportunities to improve their ability to deliver quality arts instruction, including participation in local, state-wide and regional in-service sessions and conferences specifically designed for their arts discipline; and
- including the arts in the education and training of all educators to ensure they tap the power of the arts as they plan and deliver instruction in all curriculum areas.

To meet the goals outlined above, the Connecticut State Department of Education develops statewide partnerships with the arts community including: museums, theaters, professional artists and higher education institutions that support arts education in schools. The Department encourages students' participation in the arts as creators, performers, supporters and audience members, which helps foster the continued growth of intelligent, thoughtful and flourishing communities.