
Position Statement On Arts Education

Adopted October 6, 1999

The Connecticut State Board of Education believes that every student needs and deserves a high-quality, comprehensive education in all of the arts, including dance, music, theatre and the visual arts. The arts play an essential role in the daily lives of citizens in our society, and are essential to the expression of human experience. An understanding and appreciation of the arts, as well as the ability to participate in creating and performing 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 that 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, teamwork, management of information, effective communication and an understanding of technology;
- offer avenues for students to develop rewarding 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

A quality arts education should therefore be an integral part of the core curriculum for all Connecticut students, including those at every age and grade level, living in every type of community, and receiving every form of schooling — public and private, comprehensive and vocational, standard and special education. The K-12 arts education program should enable students to achieve the arts goals and standards outlined in *Connecticut's Common Core of Learning* and *Connecticut's Guide to K-12 Program Development in the Arts*. By the end of high school, all graduates of Connecticut schools should be able to:

- understand and use the materials, techniques, forms, language, notation, literature/repertoire, and diverse cultural and historical contexts of each art form;

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- create, perform and respond with understanding to all of the arts; and
- develop sufficient proficiency in at least one art form to be able to continue lifelong involvement in that art form as a creator or performer, as well as audience member.

Improving student achievement in the arts is therefore an important component of implementing the Board's general education agenda outlined in *Working Together for Student Achievement* and *Nurturing the Genius of Connecticut's Students: Connecticut's Comprehensive Plan for Education 1996-2000*.

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 substantial, sustained, sequential instruction in the arts delivered by expert teachers who can model, support and evaluate students' arts work;
- seeking ways to provide all students with access to quality instruction not only in the common arts areas of music and the visual arts, but also in dance, theatre and video/film;
- assessing and improving students' arts achievement at all levels;
- recognizing and showcasing students' arts accomplishments;
- providing interested students with access to advanced study in each art form adequate to prepare them for lifelong involvement and arts careers;
- providing appropriate staffing, facilities, scheduling and other support necessary to ensure a quality comprehensive arts education;
- planning facilities and technology that provide students with opportunities to create electronic arts products, including multimedia;
- making use of community, regional and state arts resources as a means of enriching the school arts curriculum;
- ensuring that parents understand the role they can play in their child's arts education; 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 young children;
- providing their children throughout life with access to arts performances and exhibitions, to stimulate their artistic interest and growth;
- encouraging their children to participate in arts courses and activities, both in and outside school;

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- helping their children find and nurture their special artistic talents; and
 - working with their local 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:

- providing programs to develop skilled educators not only in art and music, but also in dance, theatre 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 that they tap the power of the arts as they plan and deliver instruction in all curriculum areas.