

Arts Education

The Arts Education Working Group reviewed Goal Four of Arts Plan NJ, drafting new objectives to address current conditions, needs, and opportunities. This report recognizes and reflects the significant progress in arts education made at the state policy level, especially with the formal adoption of the Core Curriculum Content Standards in the Arts. The Working Group, a cross-representation of the state's arts and education communities, recognized that school-based tools in arts education can also inform and improve lifelong learning in the arts. The value of collaboration, communication and sharing expertise and arts resources among educators and others was the common thread that wove through the group's discussions. A regular forum to continue these conversations and a central resource organization for arts and arts education in New Jersey were identified as absolutely essential to the ongoing health of arts education in the state. The Working Group's recommendations include numerous strategies to consider as means of addressing these objectives.

The Goal: *To make high quality arts education available to all New Jerseyans.*

The Top Five Objectives

- 1. Ensure that the visual and performing arts standards are taught as part of the core curriculum; are infused into other content areas; and are assessed, monitored, and funded as part of a complete education in preK-12 public schools. Encourage and support the integration of the visual and performing arts in preK-12 private schools as well.**
 - Include the arts in long-range planning for educational facilities so that spaces for dance and theatre, historically overlooked, are developed.
 - Develop and disseminate standards, by content area, for the space and resources that are needed to support quality arts education. Using the "Opportunities to Learn" national standards as a model.
 - Advocate for school budgets and resources that provide appropriate financial support for high quality art programs.
 - Monitor the implementation of the new licensing regulations in the arts to ensure that there are enough adequately prepared teachers to meet statewide school needs. Encourage national efforts towards multi-state licensing that will help states meet teaching staff needs.

- Hold all districts accountable for implementing standards-based programs in all arts disciplines, and where necessary remedy non-compliance.
- Disseminate arts frameworks that illustrate quality teaching activities in the arts to all districts.
- Define the fundamental skills that general classroom teachers need to deliver and amplify the arts.
- Develop and disseminate guidelines to all districts on what to look for when hiring arts teachers.
- Provide arts specialists with appropriate space, time and materials.
- Encourage the major educational organizations and associations to endorse the Secretary of Education’s policy clarification on the arts as core subject matter.
- Encourage the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) to include the arts in the State Report Card.
- Support authentic assessment of individual student achievement in all four arts disciplines in New Jersey schools.

2. Improve the rigor and quality of visual and performing arts programs by identifying best practice standards and encouraging schools and arts organizations to implement them; establishing a central resource that consolidates research, advocacy strategies and best practices, and links arts education resources throughout New Jersey; connecting community-based resources (including artists and arts organizations) to educational institutions for potential participation in arts education curricula and programs.

- Build a strong, central organization for arts education – possibly under the umbrella of an organization such as ArtPRIDE – to establish and maintain an arts education clearinghouse for all New Jersey, both through organizational support and a web-based resource.
- Post and promote on the web-based site the organizations, programs and schools that exemplify best practices in arts education and arts education partnering.
- Establish a New Jersey Arts Education Partnership using the Arts Education Theme Team as a possible model for regular convening and ongoing communication.
- Endorse, promote, interpret and disseminate the results from the New Jersey Arts Education Census Project.
- Establish, share, and acknowledge best practices.

3. Document and promote the educational benefits and impact of the arts, specifically the contribution they make to student achievement, work skills, individual fulfillment, a stimulating learning environment and a civilized, sustainable society.

- Recognize schools that have demonstrated best practices in the arts, giving them visibility through an awards program and sharing descriptions of their activities with other schools.
- Identify and encourage existing models of school reform through the arts such as ACES (Arts Create Excellent Schools). Assist these schools in sharing their models with others and in serving as mentors for other school districts.
- Encourage NJSCA and NJDOE to continue to develop and establish model programs and arts education research projects akin to the New Jersey Arts Education Census.
- Encourage the inclusion of arts instruction in all four disciplines as criteria for NJDOE Star School Status.
- Identify and disseminate existing research that demonstrates how the arts can contribute to closing the achievement gap for students, and encourage additional New Jersey-based research.
- Encourage *New Jersey Monthly* magazine to add an Arts category to its annual report on the best New Jersey schools.
- Promote awareness of the annual Governor's Awards in Arts Education to honor and recognize student achievement in the arts. Honor and recognize the leadership of the teachers, administrators and corporate and private foundation representatives who contribute to student achievement in and through the arts in New Jersey schools.

4. Develop support structures, policies and incentives for all regions of the state that emphasize the lifelong learning value of the arts, and that lead to high quality arts education programs and services for people of all ages and abilities.

- Identify and convene lifelong learning providers, including senior resource centers, continuing education programs in higher education settings, community adult education programs, parks and recreation, and arts organizations. Use opportunities to discuss how to strengthen the state of the arts in the educational field and how to reach out and assist other entities to establish quality arts programs.

- Research and share new, non-traditional funding sources to support quality arts programs in community, social service and healthcare settings.
 - Promote high quality, in-depth arts education programs that utilize teaching artists in after-school programs and community arts programs for citizens of all ages.
 - Identify, establish and encourage model after-school arts programs that are linked to the school curriculum. Engage communities in developing after-school arts programs for children.
 - Involve social service organizations in collaborations with arts organizations.
 - Partner with the New Jersey Department of Transportation to address transportation barriers that impede full participation in arts education opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.
 - Promote awareness and utilization of school-based tools and resources to inform and benefit arts education programs in out-of-school settings.
 - Establish training strands for teaching artists and arts administrators to learn how to work with organizations in community, social service and healthcare settings.
 - Establish training strands for the staff of community, social service and healthcare settings to learn how to partner with teaching artists and arts programs.
 - Encourage intergenerational and intra-ability arts education programs to support, honor and learn from artist mentors of all ages and abilities.
- 5. Create and strengthen partnerships involving higher education, preK-12, arts communities, and state and local agencies to renew and expand programs that offer standards-based training for educators, arts educators, artists and teaching artists.**
- Ensure that teacher preparation in the arts reflect the state's core curriculum content standards.
 - Convene regular forums that bring arts educators, teachers, administrators, teaching artists, schools and arts organizations together with higher education representatives to discuss teacher training that advances their shared work.
 - Establish a continuum of professional development and other services to support pre-service, new, and mid-career teachers in the arts.
 - Encourage and support NJDOE in developing a consortium of New Jersey colleges to address issues in teacher training in the arts,

including alternate certification routes and the shortage of music and dance specialists.

- Encourage higher education to utilize arts education organizations and teaching artists in preparing teachers to integrate the arts and artist residencies into the school environment.
- Spotlight existing model partnerships for professional development in the arts, including the Artist/Teacher Institute.
- Encourage the establishment of arts professional development schools in community-based higher education satellite programs, such as those sponsored by Rowan University in Camden, that incorporate teaching artists in teacher training.

Resources Needed to Achieve Objectives

The Arts Education Working Group also identified numerous resources that might be tapped to pursue the strategies they suggest.

- Political support from government agencies like the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), the New Jersey State Council on the Arts (NJSCA), the Governor, and State Legislature is crucial. So, too, will be support from county arts agencies, “NJ After 3,” the Department of Transportation, and state and local agencies who are involved with healthcare, aging, juvenile justice, and the disabled community – the latter including New Jersey’s Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and Division of Youth and Family Services.
- Advocacy assistance should be sought from the full educational community, including higher education, the New Jersey Education Association, community colleges, New Jersey schools (both public and private), school-based after-school programs, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, NJ Music Educators, Arts Educators of NJ, Music Administrators of NJ, Arts Administrators of NJ, Head Start, Very Special Arts NJ, the Matheny School, and parent groups. Unions that represent the various arts disciplines, Boy and Girl Scouts, AARP, NJ United, the New Jersey School Age Coalition, other boys and girls clubs, and the Arts Education Working Group itself might all be called upon, as well.
- Partner support from nonprofit arts organizations and existing arts-in-education or arts and access partnerships should be sought to identify and share existing model programs, and develop new ones. Among them: ArtPRIDE New Jersey, the New Jersey Theater Alliance, Dance New Jersey,

the Arts Education Partnership, New Jersey's performing arts centers and museums, New Jersey arts education organizations and arts organizations, folk art centers, and the Trenton Education Dance Institute. Particularly important partners in any endeavor should be members of the Arts-in-Education Consortium (NJSCA, Young Audiences of New Jersey, Arts Horizons, and the Institute for Arts & Humanities Education); the New Jersey Arts Education Collective (AIE Consortium, the Arts Council of the Morris Area, State Theater, American Repertory Ballet, Appel Farm Arts & Music Center, Artsgenesis, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Perkins Center for the Arts, and Playwrights Theater of New Jersey); the New Jersey Writer's Project (NJSCA and Playwright's Theater); the New Jersey Arts Education Census Project (NJSCA, NJDOE, the Dodge Foundation, Music for All Foundation, and Playwright's Theater); the Artist Teacher Institute (NJSCA, Arts Horizons, William Patterson University and Rutgers University, Camden); and the New Jersey Arts Access Task Force.

- Financial support. Financial resources cited by the Arts Education Working Group include the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers, state and regional foundations, small businesses, and corporations.
- Expertise. As useful references, the Working Group began generating a list of resources, sources, and links to which others should add suggestions. Theirs include the Arts for Everykid Handbook, the Family Arts & Creativity Handbook, and the Literacy in Arts Taskforce Report; the Chamber of Commerce's Kids Count Program, the Core Curriculum Content Standards, and the Arts Education Advocacy Summit Report, which summarizes discussions held in March 2004 at the meeting convened by NJSCA.

Readiness to Address Objectives

The Arts Education Working Group pointed to major progress on a number of fronts: the Core Curriculum Content Standards in the Visual and Performing Arts have now been formally adopted as a mandate; high school graduation requirements now include a credit requirement in the arts; for the first time the state has defined the arts as dance, music, theatre and visual arts; the state has identified specific licensing requirements in each of the arts disciplines; there are professional development requirements for both teachers and administrators in all of the core curriculum content. All of this, they note, is a big change from the time the last Arts Plan NJ was drawn.

The New Jersey Arts Education Census and Mapping Project was cited by the Working Group as major progress and a model partnership project. This project has just been launched by the partnership of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the New Jersey Department of Education, the Music for All Foundation, Playwrights Theatre and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. It will provide the first comprehensive survey of arts education in NJ that will provide a three-dimensional landscape to help direct programs, services and resources in the state. To build on this progress and create an environment in which the refreshed objectives they outline can be achieved, the Art Education Working Group identified other essential partnerships that must be cultivated early on. They include liaison between institutions of higher education and school districts, and collaboration among institutions of higher education, school districts, the NJ PTA, and art organizations. State agencies should look to the model cited above, and be encouraged to explore common concerns. Health care agencies, senior resource centers, and arts organizations should likewise consider *their* shared interests. The working group especially cited and encouraged the ongoing collaboration of the NJDOE and the NJSCA.

Promoting the Plan

It is crucial that both the purpose of the new Arts Plan NJ and the successes, outcomes, and impact of the *last* Arts Plan NJ be widely reported and discussed to stimulate buy-in, investment, and participation going forward.

To assist in this effort, the Arts Education Working Group described a number of possible vehicles for getting the message out, including radio and television, the Internet, web-based media, local access cable stations, New Jersey newspapers and other publications. Also cited were organizations like Discover Jersey Arts and the New Jersey Network (Classroom Close-up and State of the Arts) that might serve as conduits. The Working Group also noted a variety of organizations that might be helpful, including downtown development organizations and chambers of commerce; the League of Municipalities and municipal councils; houses of worship; realtors and small businesses; senior resource and community centers; and community organizations.