

This paper has been approved by
the executive boards of the
six sponsoring organizations:
SCAEA, SCDA, SCDEO,
SCMEA, SCTA, SCAAE
and endorsed by the
South Carolina Arts Alliance
and
South Carolina District Arts Coordinators

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where
we
stand
on arts education

The South Carolina Art Education Association
the South Carolina Dance Association
the South Carolina Dance Education Organization
the South Carolina Music Educators Association
the South Carolina Theatre Association
and the South Carolina Alliance for Arts Education
present a position paper

to encourage
continued exchange
among a broader constituency
on critical issues regarding
education reform and
to achieve
a shared vision for
arts education

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our Mission

The mission of the professional
arts education associations is to
promote arts education
through professional development,
advocacy and leadership
throughout South Carolina schools.

To this end, South Carolina's
professional arts organizations
have a proven record of providing
professional development
opportunities for arts specialists,
general classroom teachers, and
administrators.

Further, the associations have
**defined the content and
standards of excellence**
for the field of arts education.

The professional arts education associations have made, and continue to make, significant contributions to education reform.

Among the most significant

accomplishments of the arts education community

to date are the following:

- the definition of the arts as dance, music, theatre and visual arts
- the establishment of the Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Project
- the establishment of model sites (schools and districts with arts-centered curricula)
- categorical funding for arts education including the Education Improvement Act (EIA), Arts Curricular grants, Goals 2000 and No Child Left Behind
- certification requirements for specialists in dance, music, theatre and visual arts
- the development and State Board of Education adoption of the South Carolina Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum Standards 2003
- the development of arts education summer institutes for arts teachers funded by the SC Department of Education
- inclusion in the South Carolina School Report Cards
- the development of the South Carolina Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum Guides and companion document
- the development of the South Carolina Arts Assessment Project

what we Believe

It is widely acknowledged that arts education is integral to educational excellence. While recognized as essential fields of learning in and of themselves, the arts can deepen and enliven learning in all subject areas. **Education in the arts provides significant opportunities for critical thinking, creative problem solving, skill development, collaborative learning, autonomous judgment, and meaningful community involvement.** The arts provide knowledge of our own cultural heritage and enlighten us about other cultures, past and present. Moreover, the arts enable students of all ages to address fundamental human issues such as values, feelings, ethics, standards, and social or environmental concerns.

our Vision

The South Carolina education reform movement has created new challenges and opportunities. These include regulation rollback and increased flexibility at the local level, increased emphasis on accountability both state and nationally, and the development and implementation of academic achievement standards. South Carolina professional arts education associations have collaborated to address and clarify their positions on a number of current issues. The following statements outline the associations' shared beliefs and vision for arts education in our state.

All students should have **access to a balanced, comprehensive, sequential education in the arts** (dance, music, theatre and visual arts) based on the South Carolina Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum Standards.

Instruction in the arts should be **delivered by arts specialists**. Arts specialists are teachers appropriately trained and licensed and certified by the state of South Carolina to teach dance, music, theatre or visual arts. The work of arts specialists may be **supported by artists and community arts resources**, but these cannot substitute for arts specialists. It is important to maintain the appropriate licensure/certification for dance, music, theatre and visual arts education as currently defined.

Programs of study, from pre-K through high school, should be implemented as outlined in the **South Carolina Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum Standards**. The South Carolina high school diploma requirements should include at least one unit in the arts (dance, music, theatre, visual arts).

The arts should be credited on the same basis as other courses in the secondary school. Grades earned in dance, music, theatre and visual arts courses should be considered in determining the grade point average and class rank of students. Colleges and universities should include arts credits earned in secondary school when calculating the grade point averages (GPAs) of applicants for admission.

Career Preparation Programs such as The Education and Economic Development Act (Pathways to Prosperity) should **include courses of study that sanction career opportunities in the arts and include the arts as elective choices in all programs.**

In light of the authentic education and real life learning experiences afforded by the arts, the opportunity for students to gain valuable experiences beyond the traditional school day must not be limited. **Regulations governing participation should enable students to experience the full range of arts activities that augment learning.** Decisions regarding academic participation requirements should be based on the merits of the activity in supporting the instructional program.

the Challenge

As education reforms are created, the professional arts associations recognize the importance of reviewing programs and activities to ensure that arts education is a vital part of this process. To this end, the arts education community seeks the support and strength of a collective voice that includes students, parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, artists, other arts professionals, legislators, and the business community. The challenge is to address issues concerning arts education in a decisive manner and to provide the best quality, comprehensive arts education for all South Carolina students.

Please lend your voice in support of arts education.