



BELIEF STATEMENTS ABOUT THE ARTS

The arts are necessary in our schools because they:

- Teach us divergent, rather than convergent thinking.
- Develop craftsmanship and the ability to apply aesthetics.
- Introduce us to perceptions and understandings we could not acquire in any other way.
- Provide us with insight and wisdom that enlighten our understanding, making it deeper and more comprehensive.
- Facilitate human communication within and across cultures.
- Help us define who we are and how to articulate our own special sense of being.
- Distinguish our relationship to time by showing us as we were yesterday, as we are today, and as we can be tomorrow.
- Chronicle through the visual image, music, dance and drama of the moment, some of humankind's greatest achievements
- Replenish our spirit and, by nurturing, consoling, and inspiring it, restore our humanity.

– Charles Fowler

For each arts discipline, the National Standards for Education in the Arts promote both work *in* the art form and work *about it*. Work *in* the art form means making new things or making things new. Work *about* the art form involves learning how the art form works and what happened in its development; it also involves exploring what the art form and its body of works mean in various contexts. The ability to do work *about* an art form supports the ability to work *in* it, and vice versa.

– Samuel Hope, "Making Disciplinary Connections," *Perspectives on Implementation: Arts Education Standards for America's Students*. Washington, DC: Music Educators National Conference, 1994.

Students cannot fully understand or appreciate the arts without personally experiencing the creative and expressive processes of making original art or performing existing works of art. Students are expected to use materials and learn the technical aspects of different art forms, to apply the discipline of practice and experimentation, to understand and make use of vehicles for expression, and to gain a respect for their own work and the work of others.

– *A Summary of State Arts Education Frameworks*, National Council of State Arts Education Consultants, 1992.

The arts distinguish themselves from other domains in that they are concerned with expressive characteristics of otherwise usual phenomena. The nature of the arts differs in many ways from the humanities tradition and breaks conventions in the use of language and other expressive modes, specifically images and sounds. Therefore, gaining literacy involves learning to use the unique communication language of the arts themselves. Students should develop:

- An understanding and appreciation of the arts as pragmatic elements of everyday life.
- Knowledge of the processes of creating works of art and the role of the individual artist in those processes.
- Ability to use the skills, media, tools and processes necessary to create or communicate art forms.
- Knowledge of historical development of art forms in various cultures.
- An understanding of the aesthetic qualities of individual art forms.

These are elements that define the domain of education in the arts and, subsequently, what it means to be education in the arts.

– *Arts Education Principles/Standards: An ICFAD Position*, International Council of Fine Arts Deans in cooperation with the American Council for the Arts. 1993.

Creation is the act of invention, of producing new ideas to touch individuals through experiences such as those found in music, theatre, and the visual arts. This process, if done seriously, requires thought, organization, and, above all, imagination. The process must be engaging, substantive, and fun. Most important, it must immerse the students in the process – not for success or failure, but to experience the texture of creation.

There is an important thread of commonality between creation and performance. Both creators and performers must grapple with the same materials; they must make their ideas come alive. Above all, our students must understand how to become communicators. Their task is not to reproduce efficiently, but to energize their commitment to the experience – to personalize their view of art and present it effectively to others.

– Joseph W. Polisi, “Achieving Consensus – Balancing the Elements of Arts Literacy,” *The Vision for Arts Education in the 21st Century*, Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference, 1994.

Students need to become both culturally literate and critically literate, able to understand their own and other cultures to understand the similarities and differences. Students need to be able to honor their own and other people's voices.

- Lin Wright, "Achieving Clarity – Writing Standards for Theatre," *The Vision for Arts Education in the 21st Century*, Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference, 1994.

Arts education gives our young people a sense of civilization. American civilization includes many cultures. The great works of art of these parent civilizations, and of our own, provide the guideposts to cultural literacy. Knowing them, our young people will be better able to understand, and therefore build on, the achievements of the past; they will also be better able to understand themselves. Great works of art illuminate the constancy of the human condition. The schools already teach the vocabularies and ideas of good writing by including great literature in English studies. But great works of art also communicate in images, sounds, and movements. The schools need to teach the vocabularies of these images, sound, and movements.

- *Toward Civilization: A Report on Arts Education*, Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 1988.

When we talk about the nature and value of the arts, we're talking about aesthetics. The reason that aesthetics is so important as part of arts education is that it pretty much weaves art history and art criticism together in a way that is comprehensive and understandable. As we try to embrace more works of art from non-Western cultures, aesthetics takes on even greater importance because it gives us the foundation from which to look at those cultures.

- Leilani Lattin Duke, "Achieving Consensus – The Place of the Arts in the Curriculum," *The Vision for Arts Education in the 21st Century*. Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference, 1994.

The ability to make qualitative judgments in the arts is dependent upon the quality of one's perception and the application of a set of qualitative criteria. The criteria, developed personally or held commonly by a culture, constitutes a belief system or philosophy. Participation in a range of artistic experiences enables students to develop an understanding of different cultural philosophies or belief systems and differing criteria used in considering and making judgments about the quality of works of art. These experiences are critical to the development of a personal philosophy of art and aesthetic sensitivity that focuses thinking about the nature, meaning and value of the arts as a human activity.

- *A Summary of State Arts Education Frameworks*, National Council of State Arts Education Consultants, 1992.

