ARTS EDUCATION: AN AMERICAN TRADITION

In the early 1820s, education innovator William Fowle introduced drawing and music into several schools in Boston. The arts have been a part of public education ever since. The first data about arts education in America was collected in 1837 while Martin van Buren was President. Studies as far back as the 1930s indicated that students who studied the arts had higher achievement levels than those who did not.

The arts have been core subjects as a matter of federal law since 1994, through the Goals 2000 Education Reform Act (carried forward in No Child Left Behind and the Elementary and Secondary Act reauthorization) and in New Jersey since 1996, with the adoption of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.

Beyond the law, compelling recent research has shown that study in the arts makes vital contributions in a student's journey toward a purposeful, successful and fulfilling life. More than an American tradition, arts education is truly a modern necessity.

STUDY IN THE ARTS CONTRIBUTES TO COLLEGE/WORKFORCE READINESS

Preparing for College
An analysis of 10 years of SAT data revealed that students who took four years of arts courses in high school earned the highest scores on both the verbal and math SAT, but overall, students taking any arts courses scored significantly higher than students who took no arts courses.

Essential Skills for the Workforce of the 21st Century
Creativity and innovation are the currency of the future and particularly important to the US economy.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, a national organization that is built on partnerships with the business community, advocates for 21st century readiness for every student. The framework that P21 and its members have developed fuses the 3Rs and 4Cs -- Critical thinking and problem solving, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity and innovation.

In a study of superintendents who educate future workers and employers who hire them, both agree that creativity is increasingly important in the U.S. workplace and that arts training is crucial to developing creativity. Educators and employers both feel they have a responsibility for instilling creativity in the U.S. workforce (83 and 61 percent, respectively).

Employment Opportunities in the Creative Industries
In an economic impact study, Americans for the Arts demonstrates the nonprofit arts and culture industry supports 5.7 million jobs, representing $104.2 billion in household income.

As of January 2012, New Jersey is home to 25,097 arts-related businesses that employ 87,203 people. The creative industries account for 4.32 percent of the 580,994 total businesses located in New Jersey and nearly 2 percent of the over 4.5 million people they employ. The number of arts-related businesses has increased by more than 25% since 2010, and the number of people employed by those businesses has increased by more than 5% during same time period the nation was experiencing an economic recession.

AND A MODERN NECESSITY

STUDY IN THE ARTS CONTRIBUTES TO STUDENT SUCCESS IN SCHOOL

Arts Study Prepares Students to be Better Learners
The ability to pay attention is essential to school performance. Early childhood training in instrumental music improves abilities in visual focus, active listening and staying on task, while continued music education throughout adolescence reinforces and strengthens these assets.

Arts Study Helps Students Perform Better Academically
Students who participate in arts learning often improve their achievement in other realms of learning and life. In a well-documented national study using a federal database of over 25,000 middle and high school students, researchers found that students with high arts involvement performed better on standardized achievement tests than students with low arts involvement.

Ten weeks of in-class drama coaching in a remedial third and fourth-grade classroom helped the teacher and students transform their approach to reading and improve the students' attitude about and success in reading.

Musical training develops the region of the brain responsible for verbal memory — the recall and retention of spoken words — which serves as a foundation for retaining information in all academic subjects.

In an experimental research study of high school age students, those who studied dance scored higher than students who did not study dance on measures of creative thinking, especially in the categories of fluency, originality and abstract thought.

Positive Benefits for At-Risk Students
Students of low socioeconomic status (SES) who participate in arts learning academically outperform comparable students who have no or low arts involvement.

A recent far-ranging study showed multiple positive outcomes among students of low SES. Eighth graders who had high levels of arts involvement throughout elementary school showed higher test scores in science and writing than students with low levels of involvement.

In high school, students who had arts-rich experiences attained higher overall GPAs and were far less likely to drop out of school before graduation than did students who lacked those experiences.

This academic success continued into college where students who had arts involvement in high school were three times more likely to receive a bachelor's degree than students with low arts involvement.

IN SUMMARY

Throughout history, an education that includes the arts has been essential to a student's successful journey toward a purposeful and fulfilling life. This is the promise of arts education. This is a promise made to our students in New Jersey. It is worth asking the question: "Are we keeping the promise of the benefits of arts education for all our students?" This is the very purpose of this report.

"It is clear from the research the arts provide the type of emotional, creative and expressive development that students can benefit from throughout their lives. If we as a nation are serious about building a road to success for every student we must include the arts in curricular planning from the elementary through college levels."

~Dr. Nancy Rubino, Senior Director in the College Board's Office of Academic Initiatives

A detailed list of research studies on arts education can be found at ***www.artsednj.org****.*

ARTS EDUCATION AND THE LAW:

Beyond the established traditions and the stacks of research showing that arts education is an important part of human development, there are also New Jersey statutes that describe the role and scope of the arts in public education.

Arts education in New Jersey is a basic educational right for all New Jersey children -- not just the gifted, or the talented, or the economically advantaged. It has a very strong grounding in state administrative code and even in the state Constitution itself. Based on current law, arts education for our students is a fundamental right anchored in the New Jersey Constitution.

The New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, State Graduation Requirements and the Administrative Code all contain benchmarks that pertain to arts education. The New Jersey Arts Education Census Project compared the results of their research to these benchmarks, in addition to other data, to assess the performance of schools in arts education. The understanding that arts education is a necessary component of whole-child education runs through New Jersey's standards, requirements and codes.

Here is some of the background about how the laws evolved and where they stand today:

THE UNDERSTANDING THAT ARTS EDUCATION IS A NECESSARY COMPONENT OF WHOLE-CHILD EDUCATION RUNS THROUGH NEW JERSEY'S STANDARDS, REQUIREMENTS AND CODES.

ARTS EDUCATION AND THE NEW JERSEY CONSTITUTION: A THOROUGH AND EFFICIENT EDUCATION

New Jersey is a state with a 120-year-old constitutional guarantee that regardless of residency, its children will receive a "Thorough and Efficient" education.

To be clear, the Constitution states:

"The Legislature shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of free public schools for the instruction of all children in the State between the ages of five and eighteen years."

New Jersey Constitution, Article VIII, Section IV, paragraph 1

How Are the Terms "Thorough and Efficient" Defined for Our State?

In May of 1997, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Abbott v. Burke* on the two main parts of the Comprehensive Education Improvement and Financing Act (CEIFA) signed into law in December of 1996 by Governor Whitman. CEIFA was comprised of two parts: the core curriculum content standards and a school funding formula. Justice Adam B. Handler, writing for the majority, upheld the previously authored Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS), commenting in his decision that they "are facially adequate as a reasonable legislative definition of a constitutional thorough and efficient education." (Source: *Abbott v. Burke*)

It is this, and subsequent rulings by the State Supreme Court that have codified the CCCS as the definition of a "thorough and efficient" education as guaranteed by the state constitution.

[1]The complete Standards can be reviewed or downloaded at: **http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/standards/1/index.html**

[2]The complete high school graduation requirements can be viewed at: **http://www.state.nj.us/education/aps/info/grad.htm**

A CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT FOR ALL STUDENTS

THE NEW JERSEY CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS

The Core Curriculum Content Standards were first developed in 1996 as an attempt to define the "Thorough" in "Thorough and Efficient education" as required by our state's Constitution. Standards, by their very nature, describe what all students should know and be able to do upon completion of a thirteen-year public education (K-12). Standards are not a curriculum. They define the results expected but leave the process for achieving these results up to local school districts.

Core Curriculum Content Standards for the Visual and Performing Arts

The revised 2009 Core Curriculum Content Standards[1] identifies essential core learning in the arts, defined as Dance, Music, Theater and Visual Art. The CCCS states:

Equitable access to arts instruction is achieved when the four arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre, and visual art) *are offered throughout the P-12 spectrum. Thus, the goal of the standards is that all students have regular, sequential arts instruction throughout their P-12 education.*

- *The expectation of the New Jersey arts standards is that all students communicate at a basic level in each of the four arts disciplines by the end of fifth grade, using the vocabularies, materials, tools, techniques, and intellectual methods of each arts discipline in a developmentally appropriate manner.*
- *Beginning in grade 6, student instruction in the arts is driven by specialization, with students choosing one of the four arts disciplines based on their interests, aptitudes, and career aspirations.*
- *By the end of grade 12, students are expected to communicate proficiently in one or more arts disciplines of their choice.*

These standards explicitly state that equitable access to arts instruction can only be achieved if the four arts disciplines (Dance, Music, Theater and Visual Arts) are offered throughout the P-12 spectrum. By the time students reach the 5th grade, it is the expectation that they are given arts instruction as well as opportunities for participation in each of the four art forms. In grades 6-8, they should gain greater depth of understanding in at least one of those disciplines. And in grades 9-12, it is the expectation that students demonstrate competency in at least one arts discipline. These expectations translate into curricular requirements for schools.

Districts are expected to provide opportunities for learning in ALL four arts content areas using sequential instruction taught by highly qualified teachers. This means the arts programs must have the same level of academic rigor and educational validity as any other core subject such as language arts literacy or math.

The 2009 revision of the standards in the visual and performing arts must be in place in all schools by September of 2012.

High School Graduation Requirements in the Arts

The New Jersey Administrative Code requires that, in order to successfully complete high school, students must meet the states Graduation Requirements[2], including 5 credits (1 year) in Visual & Performing Arts for High School graduation effective with the 2004-2005 ninth grade class (graduating class of 2008). (NJ Administrative Code 6A 8-1.1)

ARE WE "KEEPING THE PROMISE"?

In 2006, the first New Jersey Arts Education Census Project established baseline data to see if the reality of arts education in the state met the legal standards and the public's expectations. Five years on, the Census Project has now been updated and the most recent data can be compared to the baseline to gauge progress.

The following pages are a summary of that data, with highlighted information that will be helpful for the educational community and policymakers to judge if we truly have been "Keeping the Promise."