

to improve the quality or increase the amount of interdisciplinary work in which students engage.

- Students may express a need for different or enriched curricular opportunities.
- Parents and other members of the community may have concerns about levels of student achievement, changes in the scope of the program, or a dearth of arts electives that meet varied student interests.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Information for the needs assessment may be gathered in a variety of ways, including:

- existing documents, such as regular reports to the State Department of Education and the most recent New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) evaluation of local schools;
- districtwide assessments of students' arts achievement, using either locally developed or nationally published standardized measures;
- informal anecdotal reports;
- structured discussions, focus groups and department meetings;
- interviews with, or surveys of, students, teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, parents, board of education members and other members of the educational community;
- existing self-study instruments, such as those distributed by the National Association for Music Education (MENC)¹ and the National Association for Art Education (NAEA)²;
- locally prepared comparisons between the local program and standards presented in key documents such as state and national student standards (see Chapter 3) and the national *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards in the Arts*³; and
- analyses by outside expert consultants.

The final step of the needs assessment is to compare what *should be* with what *is*. Simply put, the committee must identify any differences between its vision and the current reality. This comparison becomes the basis for change. In some cases, it also highlights appropriate alignments and connections.

For example, the Art Department in the Middletown, Conn. Public Schools chose to align its existing goals, which had been based on the four disciplines (areas of emphasis) of discipline-based art education,⁴ with the Connecticut Standards for Arts Education (see Sample Alignment, Appendix D). By doing so, the team was able to demonstrate the comprehensiveness of its program, while identifying important areas that may have been neglected in its previous guide.

At this stage of the curriculum development process the curriculum team should meet with school administrators and other policymakers – such as school board members – to determine the extent to which they will provide the resources necessary to implement the team's updated vision for the K-12 arts program. The curriculum team should continue to collaborate with school administrators as the document is drafted to ensure that the new program design will be implemented.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

NAEA and MENC provide checklists and guidelines that can assist in assessing program objectives and resources.

All Of The Arts

Maryland State Department of Education. *Facilities Guidelines for Fine Arts Programs*. Baltimore, MD: MSDE, 2001. (Call 401-767-0098 to order.)

Worthen, Blaine R. and Sanders, James R. *Educational Evaluation: Alternative Approaches and Practical Guidelines*. White Plains, NY: Longman, 1987. (See especially pages 67, 91, 93 and 180.)

See also Chapter 3 of this guide.

Music

Boyle, J. David. "Program Evaluation for Secondary School Music Programs." *NASSP Bulletin* 76 (May 1992): 63-68.

Boyle, J. David and Radocy, Rudolf E. "Program Evaluation." Chapter 13 in *Measurement and Evaluation of Musical Experiences*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1987.

Geerdes, Harold P. *Music Facilities: Building, Equipping and Renovating*. Reston, VA: MENC, 1987.

¹Music Educators National Conference. *The School Music Program Evaluation (SMPE)*. Reston, VA: MENC, 1992.

²Self-assessment materials for *NAEA Program Standards Award*. Reston, VA: NAEA.

³National Consortium of Arts Education Organizations. *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards for Arts Education*. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association, 1995.

⁴Wilson, Brent. *The Quiet Evolution: Changing the Face of Arts Education*. Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Trust, 1997.

Lehman, Paul R. "Assessing Your Program's Effectiveness." *Music Educator's Journal* 76 (December 1989): 26-29.

Lehman, Paul R. "Curriculum and Program Evaluation." In *Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning*, edited by Richard Colwell. New York: Schirmer Books, 1992, pp. 281-294. (Available from MENC.)

Music Educators National Conference. *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards for Music Instruction: Grades PreK-12*. Reston, VA: MENC, 1994.

Music Educators National Conference. *The School Music Program: A New Vision*. Reston, VA: MENC, 1994.

Woody, Robert H. "Program Assessment: A Tool for Advocacy." In *Teaching Music* 4, No. 5 (April 1997): 40-83.

Visual Arts

National Association for Art Education (NAEA). *School Art Programs: A Guide for School Board Members and Superintendents*. Reston, VA: NAEA, 1992.

NAEA. *Design Standards for School Art Facilities*. Reston, VA: NAEA, 1993.

NAEA. *Purposes, Principles and Standards for School Art Programs*. Reston, VA: NAEA, 1994. ■

Step 4: Developing A Philosophy

IMPORTANCE OF PHILOSOPHY

A well-written philosophy serves as the basis for planning, implementing and evaluating the program. Hence, agreeing on a common philosophy is essential before developing goals, objectives and other aspects of the program.

CONTENTS OF A PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy for an arts education program usually begins with a rationale for arts education, which describes why learning in and about the arts is important for every child. Then, based on the rationale, the philosophy usually describes – in very general terms – what an appropriate arts education program should be. Philosophies provide concise answers to such important questions as the following:

- Why learn the arts?
- What are the principles that guide a quality arts program?
- What are our core beliefs about the nature and importance of an arts program?

The answers to these questions provide guidance to faculty members when making program decisions, and a foundation for explaining how children benefit from an arts education to a public which does not always readily understand or value those benefits.

Most curriculum development teams will want to conduct some research into contemporary arts education philosophy as part of the writing process, in addition to identifying and drawing on their own beliefs. One of the challenges in writing the philosophy is to synthesize a large body of resources and ideas into concise prose. To assist school districts in this process, Section 2 of Chapter 1 provides an overview of key resources and ideas. Although the local philosophy necessarily covers a range of ideas, it is best limited to no more than one page in length.

QUALITIES OF A WELL-WRITTEN PHILOSOPHY

The following are qualities of a well-written philosophy.

Accuracy

- The claims that the philosophy makes for arts education are supportable.
- The philosophy makes an educationally appropriate case for the role of the arts in the K-12 curriculum for all children.

Linkage

- The arts program philosophy is consistent with the school district's philosophy of education.
- The district's arts teachers are sincerely committed to each belief outlined in the philosophy.

Breadth And Depth

- The philosophy includes the most important rationales for arts education.
- The philosophy provides a sound foundation for comprehensive K-12 arts program goals and programs.

Usefulness

- The philosophy is written in language that is clear and can be understood by parents and other non-educators.
- The philosophy includes the unique contributions of arts education to the curriculum.

- The philosophy provides a clear and compelling justification for the program.

Curriculum development teams may appropriately choose to write either a common philosophy for all of the arts or a separate philosophy for each arts form. Examples of both common philosophies and discipline-specific philosophies are provided in Appendix C. Work sheets to facilitate the process of developing a local philosophy are provided on pages 172-176.

PHILOSOPHY-DEVELOPMENT STEPS

The following is a process for writing a philosophy in departments that DO have an opportunity to meet as a group.

- Step 1:** Either before or at the beginning of the meeting, each member of the department spends 5-10 minutes individually listing in bullet form what he or she believes are the most important reasons why every student should receive an arts education.
- Step 2:** Department members break into groups of three or four to compile, discuss and refine their ideas. When their list is complete, they write it in bold print on chart paper and hang it on the wall. Members then circulate to read other groups' lists.
- Step 3:** Two or three members are designated to act as editors for the philosophy. Each group presents and concisely explains the key points on its list. The entire group helps the designated editors look for beliefs common to more than one list.
- Step 4:** After the meeting the editors work together to combine related ideas and make necessary changes to create a concise draft master list of the key beliefs of department members.
- Step 5:** The editors circulate the draft master list to all department members, asking them to rate each belief on a five-point scale from "very important" to "should be omitted." The editors then edit the original draft based on these ratings, prioritizing the list by placing at the top those which were deemed most important, and listing at the bottom those which might be deleted.
- Step 6:** The editors circulate the revised list for review and responses, and make appropriate changes. (Optional: The entire committee devotes a

portion of a meeting to discussing and reacting to the prioritized list.)

Step 7: The editors make further changes based upon committee members' responses, and write a first full draft of the philosophy, which expands the department's list of key beliefs into paragraph form. This draft is circulated to department members, who are asked to submit their comments and suggestions in writing. (Note: It is inefficient to do detailed editing in full department meetings. If necessary, a subcommittee can be assigned to work with the editors.)

Step 8: Repeat Step 7 until department members are happy with the product.

QUESTIONS FOR FACULTY, TEAM

Members of the school faculty and the curriculum development team might begin the brainstorming process by individually answering, then discussing, important questions such as the following:

Personal Questions

- What do the arts mean in your life?
- How have the arts helped you understand your own culture and the cultures of others?
- How have the arts enabled you to gain a better understanding of your own potential?
- In what ways are you personally involved with the arts: creating, performing and/or responding?

General Questions

- What is the creative process?
- What contributions do the arts make to society?
- What kinds of knowledge and skills do artists have?
- What kinds of arts involvement do you hope your students will have during their adult lives?
- What important information about the value of arts instruction needs to be part of the curriculum guide?

RATING FORM: CONTRIBUTIONS OF ARTS EDUCATION

The curriculum development committee could consider whether any of the following contributions of arts education should appear in its philosophy statement. Alternatively, department members could be asked to rate the importance of each point on a scale from "very important" to "not important."

Arts Education	Curriculum Committee Comments
1. provides essential ways to understand and express life experiences	
2. develops deep understanding of past and present cultures/peoples	
3. prepares students for active participation in creating the culture of the present and future	
4. develops imagination	
5. enables students to make informed aesthetic choices	
6. provides a creative, motivating vehicle for mastering technology, including multimedia	
7. helps develop the full range of students' abilities	
8. prepares students for enjoyable recreation and leisure time	
9. prepares students for success in a wide variety of careers	
10. develops self-discipline and focus	
11. develops the capacity to refine work, aspiring to high quality standards	
12. fosters creativity and independence	
13. develops the ability to solve complex, often ambiguous, problems	

(continued)

RATING FORM: CONTRIBUTIONS OF ARTS EDUCATION (continued)

Arts Education	Curriculum Committee Comments
14. creates a positive, inclusive school atmosphere	
15. develops teamwork	
16. enhances self-esteem	
17. increases learning in other subjects	

(Note: For more background on the above rationales, please refer to Chapter 1 of this guide.)

STEPS WHEN GROUP MEETS INFREQUENTLY

The following is a process for writing a philosophy in departments that have little opportunity to meet as a group.

To facilitate creation of the philosophy, committee members may want to follow these steps:

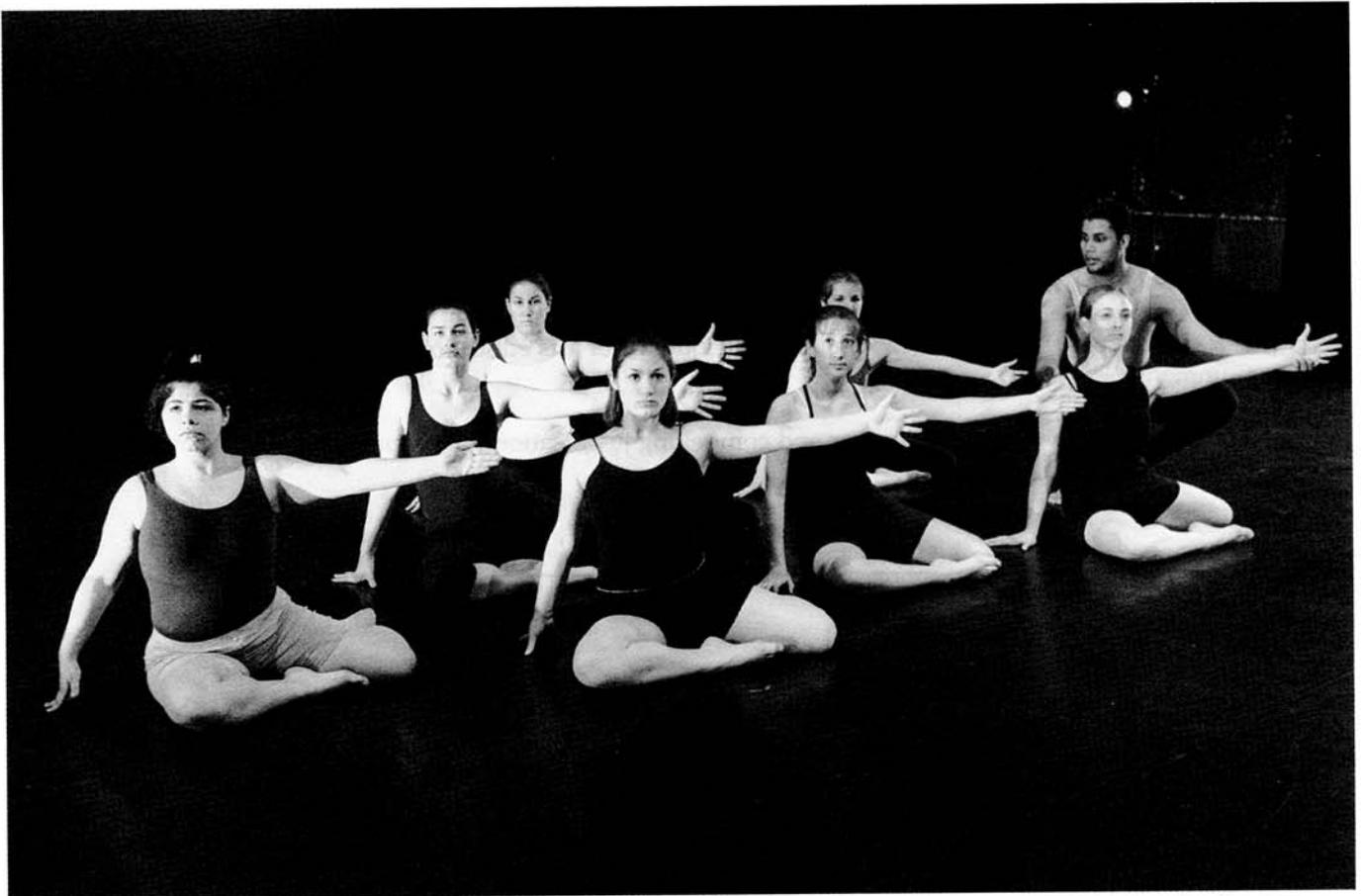
- Step 1:** Each member of the committee writes one paragraph discussing each of the philosophical principles which he or she feels are most important.
- Step 2:** Copies of these paragraphs are disseminated to all committee members.
- Step 3:** Paragraphs that are similar in nature are grouped together.
- Step 4:** Two or three members act as editors and have "license" to combine ideas and make necessary changes so that a rough draft of key principles represents the overall beliefs of committee members.
- Step 5:** The full committee reacts and discusses the initial draft of the principles.
- Step 6:** The editors make further changes, based upon committee recommendations.

For those committee members who want a structure to help them construct their paragraphs, the following format is useful.

Name of committee member:

I feel that the following principle is important to include in our philosophy:

This principle is important for students because:



FORM FOR EVALUATING A DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

This work sheet can serve as a checklist and comment form for evaluating a draft philosophy.

A. Accuracy

1. The claims that the philosophy makes for arts education are supportable.
Comments:
2. The philosophy makes an educationally appropriate case for the role of the arts in the K-12 curriculum for all children.
Comments:

B. Linkage

1. The arts program philosophy is consistent with the school district's philosophy of education.
Comments:
2. The district's arts teachers are sincerely committed to each belief outlined in the philosophy.
Comments:

C. Breadth And Depth

1. The philosophy includes the most important rationales for arts education.
Comments:
2. The philosophy provides a sound foundation for comprehensive K-12 arts goals and programs.
Comments:

D. Usefulness

1. The philosophy is written in clear language that can be understood by parents and other non-educators.
Comments:
2. The philosophy includes the unique contributions of arts education to the curriculum.
Comments:
3. The philosophy provides a clear and compelling justification for the program.
Comments: