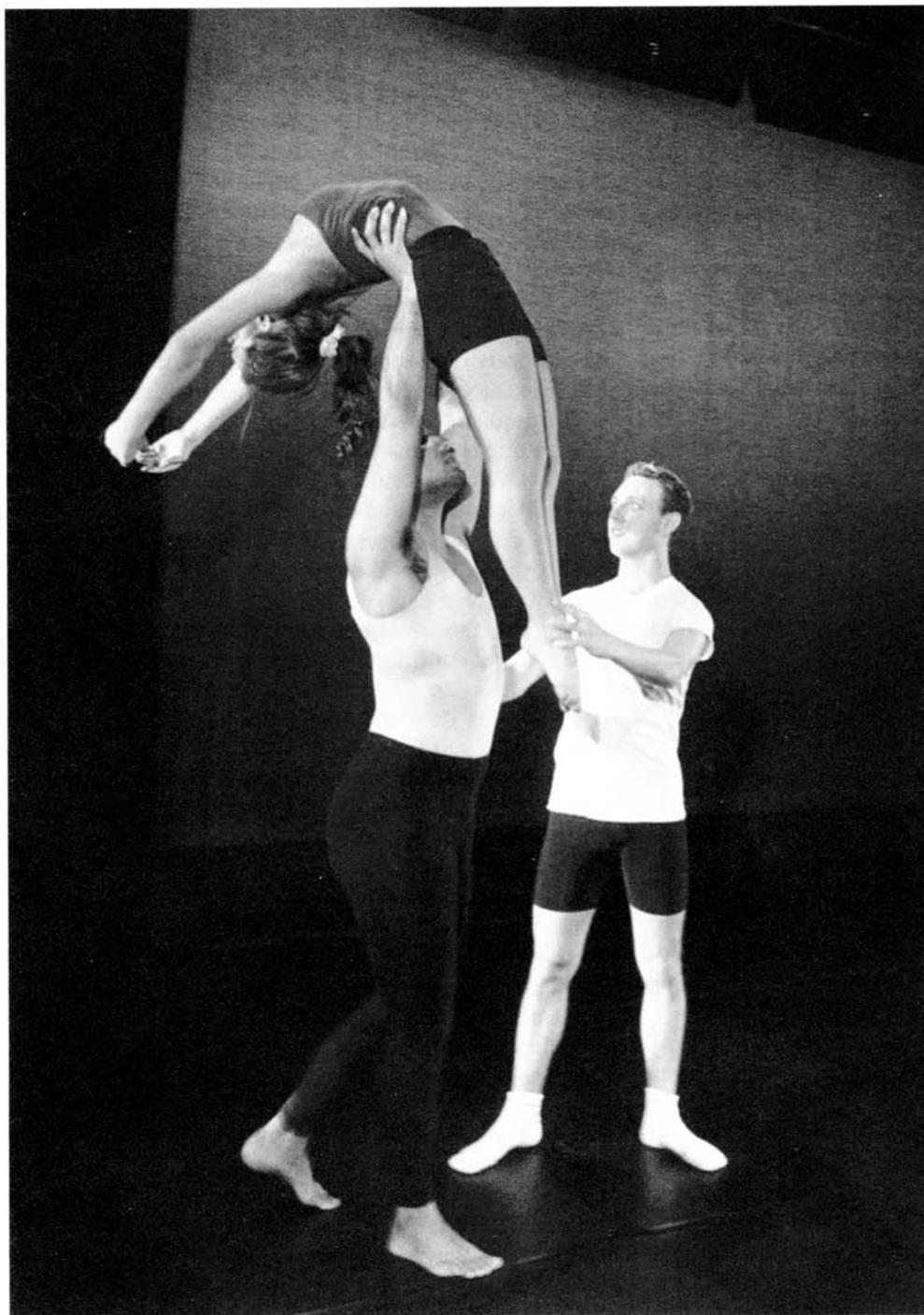


CONNECTICUT'S VISION OF ARTS EDUCATION
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CONNECTICUT'S VISION OF ARTS EDUCATION

Every individual needs and deserves a quality arts education. The arts play a crucial role in our culture, economy and daily lives. State, local and national goals for education, therefore, consistently include the arts among the core subjects in the school curriculum.■

Fundamental Premises

This guide is based on the following premises:

1. Each student has artistic ability in every art form which should be cultivated.
2. A comprehensive education in the arts – dance, music, theatre and the visual arts – is an essential part of every child's preparation for life.
3. A comprehensive arts education prepares students to create, perform and respond to all of the arts, and to achieve advanced skills and understandings which prepare them for active lifetime participation in at least one art form.
4. While education in all four of the arts shares common goals, each art form is a unique discipline, involving a distinct combination of abilities/intelligences, skills and understandings.
5. Learning an art form requires substantive and sequential study with teachers who are expert in that discipline; ideally, this learning should be reinforced by, and connected to, content taught by other teachers.

Quality arts programs require all students to become actively involved in "making" (creating and performing) all of the arts, reflecting critically upon and improving their own work, and applying what they have learned by responding with understanding to others' work. Such instruction must be provided by expert teachers under conditions that make learning possible, sometimes referred to as *opportunity to learn*. These conditions include:

- high teacher and community expectations for student learning;
- quality illustrative models that reflect those expectations, including examples of professional quality art work and performances, expert teacher modeling and instruction, and multimedia examples of quality student work;

- time to nurture students' skills and understandings in the arts, including time to remediate student problems and time to assist interested or talented students as they pursue higher levels of achievement; and
- facilities and equipment — including appropriate multimedia technology — that allow students to create, perform, respond and reflect.■

The Arts And Arts Education

For purposes of this guide, *the arts* refers to the four visual and performing arts: dance, music, theatre and the visual arts.¹ When this guide refers to an art form, arts discipline or field, it is referring to one of the visual and performing arts. The terms *art work* and *work of art* refer to created products which fall into one or more of these arts areas.

Each art form is a clearly definable discipline with its own media, techniques, history and literature (repertoire or body of works). Although the arts fulfill similar roles in society, each arts discipline requires and cultivates unique understandings and skills, and each draws on a unique combination of intelligences and talents.²

DANCE includes a wide variety of forms and functions in society, because people dance and view dance for very different reasons. It is a popular social activity and a prime means of expressing cultural heritage and identity. Dance can function as ritual, worship, social celebration, theatrical entertainment, and as a creative, dynamic and continually evolving art form.

As an art form, dance is unique because it uses movement as its medium of expression and needs no other instrument than the dancer's body. Just as painters use paint and musicians use sound, dancers use movement. The art of choreography involves creating dances which communicate symbolically the choreographer's ideas and feelings.

Dance education includes the study of different forms of dance in their cultural and historical contexts. Dance study should enable students to perform and respond to a range of different dance styles and techniques, from traditional folk dances to the highly evolved classical techniques of ballet and Indian or African dance, to popular contemporary forms such as jazz, disco and street dance.

The primary purpose and focus of dance in the school curriculum is the development of each student as an artist/choreographer. As students develop their own movement vocabulary and choreographic and performance skills, they should make regular reference to the work of established and recognized dance-makers from

film, video and live performances, in order to find inspiration and to deepen their understanding of dance.

Children's preparation for dance begins at birth, as they are encouraged to move and to develop a sense of self in relation to the space around them. Young children need opportunities to experience rhythmic movement, such as by being rocked by a parent as songs are sung, and to engage in rhythmic movement themselves, such as by playing "patty cake" or skipping. Parents and preschool teachers should incorporate and move beyond rhythmic activities by encouraging children to engage in expressive movement, such as responding freely to music or imaginatively imitating animal motions, and by modeling such movement themselves.

During the elementary and middle school years dance should be a regular part of physical education and music classes, and should be taught as a discipline in its own right by teachers who are expert in dance and creative movement. Dance also should be incorporated into the regular classroom, for both educational and recreational purposes. At the high school level students should be offered series of elective courses that involve performing, creating and responding to different styles and types of dance.

MUSIC encompasses a broad array of organized expressive sound, both with and without words. Across the centuries and around the world, music has been produced using a wide array of media such as created instruments, including traditional acoustic and electronic sources; environmental sound sources ranging from natural objects, such as logs and rocks, to household utensils, such as spoons and washboards; and the human body, from vibrating vocal cords to stamping feet. The literature of music consists of an enormous range of repertoire from a variety of classical, folk and popular traditions, some of it preserved in notation and much of it passed down through oral tradition.

The purpose of music education is to prepare students for a lifetime of active, satisfying involvement with music in a variety of forms. Contemporary life is filled with musical encounters. Music education should empower students to create, refine and notate their own original music; read, interpret and perform music literature created by themselves and others; and respond with understanding to others' musical works and performances.

Children's capacity to respond to music begins at *least* by birth, and — according to considerable evidence — possibly in the womb. Parents and preschool teachers should sing to, move with and play music for their children. Preschool teachers should incorporate a rich variety of other musical experiences on a daily basis, such as by using music for transitions between activities.

Elementary and middle school children should receive comprehensive instruction in music by expert

teachers at least twice per week as well as experience music in their regular classrooms, such as by studying the music of various cultures in social studies classes or responding to music as a writing prompt. During the upper-elementary grades interested students should have opportunities to begin participating in chorus and to begin the study of band and/or stringed instruments. (Ideally, string instruction should begin as early as kindergarten.) During middle school, if not before, all students should have opportunities to compose music using electronic technologies, and to study a harmonizing instrument such as the guitar or keyboard, as part of their required general music courses. In addition to this core musical study, they should have opportunities to participate in choral and instrumental ensembles. High schools should offer students sequential elective courses in vocal and instrumental ensemble (traditional, jazz and other ethnic forms), music composition (using electronic and other means), and harmonizing instruments (guitar, keyboard). Advanced and highly motivated students should have opportunities to elect Advanced Placement courses, such as music theory.

THEATRE is a collaborative art form which combines words, voice, movement and visual elements to express meaning. The field of theatre encompasses not only live improvised and scripted work, but also dramatic forms such as film, television and other electronic media. Due to the increasingly pervasive influence of contemporary theatrical media, theatre has enormous importance in citizens' lives. It is not possible for students to achieve media literacy without understanding and having hands-on experience with theatre. Theatre is about the examination and resolution of fundamental human issues, and is built on understanding and presenting interactions between people.

Theatre work provides a vehicle for students to reflect on important aspects of life, in the process developing their sensitivity to and deepening their understandings of others' points of view. The broad, worldwide base of theatrical literature or repertoire ranges from classical forms such as Japanese Kabuki and Shakespeare, to folk forms such as traditional puppetry, to contemporary forms such as animated cartoons and movies. Quality theatre education is similarly broad-based, extending beyond the teaching of acting to develop students' abilities in areas ranging from technical theatre to directing, and from researching the cultural and historical context of repertoire to creating their own improvised or scripted works.

Theatre is an integral part of language arts as well as the performing arts, so the foundation for theatre begins at birth as children develop personal communication skills. Parents and preschool and elementary teachers should encourage imaginative play and role-playing, both for their own sake and as important components of the learning process across the curriculum. All students

should study creative writing, improvising and writing scripts; expressive public speaking, media literacy, theatrical production and interpretation; and other key communication skills as part of their basic K-12 language arts curriculum, and should deepen and apply these skills in formal theatre experiences under the guidance of expert theatre teachers. Secondary schools should incorporate theatre courses into their required language arts sequence, and also offer sequential elective courses in areas such as acting, technical theatre, script writing, animation and video/film.

The **VISUAL ARTS** include a wide array of media, tools and processes. The areas most citizens associate with the visual arts include drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture and photography. There are, however, many other areas which fall entirely or partially within the visual arts, ranging from design areas such as architecture and the built environment, fiber and clothing to the folk arts, and from crafts to video animation.

One of the challenges to art educators as they design local curriculums is to select appropriately among the many media available, choosing those that provide the best vehicle for their students to meet local program goals and objectives by creating and responding to art. In other words, curriculum objectives should drive the choice of media, rather than vice versa. Students need breadth, through experiencing and working with a variety of media, *and* depth, through mastering at least a few media sufficiently that they are able to use them to express or communicate their ideas and feelings. Through those experiences, they also need to gain insight into the enormous body of visual work that has been created throughout the centuries, from early cave paintings to the present.

Parents, preschools and elementary schools should offer young children opportunities to experiment with and develop skills in using a variety of materials to create visual images. Children in Grades K-8 should be encouraged to use and extend their visual imaginations through creating their own art work and studying others' work, in required art classes under the guidance of expert art teachers. All teachers should encourage students to draw on the skills they develop in art classes to express their ideas in visual form, such as by illustrating whole-language books, designing figures and illustrations to enhance their social studies or science presentations, and designing and decorating their classrooms and school environment. Students should be encouraged to apply their visual understandings across the curriculum as well, such as by identifying and interpreting the wealth of visual symbols encountered in their daily lives. By the time their required art sequence ends in Grade 8, all students should be able to communicate effectively

through a variety of two- and three-dimensional art media, including electronic. High schools should offer elective sequences that continue growth in those media, as well as Advanced Placement courses in areas such as studio art and art history for advanced and highly motivated students.

Students also benefit from **integrated arts experiences**, i.e., those that involve more than one art form. Each of the four arts disciplines at least occasionally occurs in combination with each of the others. Dance is usually accompanied by music, and is often inspired by a particular piece of music. Visual artists work with producers to develop costumes and scenery for works of theatre. There are various genres of musical theatre, such as opera and American Broadway musicals, that combine all four art forms. Performance art usually blends visual arts elements with theatre, and often incorporates music and dance. Likewise, video, film and animation — while most often placed within the disciplines of theatre or the visual arts — often incorporate music and dance. Some arts teachers make reference to other art forms for instructional purposes. Music teachers often use creative movement to teach or assess rhythmic concepts, or to determine whether students understand the expressive shape of a particular passage. Drama teachers may have their students refer to art work to establish the tone and setting of theatre from different cultures and historical periods. Creators of original art work in one discipline often are inspired by work in another. For example, many works of dance choreography or music composition were inspired by the visual arts or theatre. Such connections provide rich opportunities for helping students understand the connections among the four arts disciplines, both during the learning process and when presenting multi-arts work.

The various components of multi-arts work must be developed through sequential, discipline-based instruction. For example, the leads in a musical show must go through a process of voice training similar to singers performing South African folk music in a concert choir and a process of acting training similar to actors performing a Tennessee Williams play. It would be unthinkable to begin the leads' vocal training during the rehearsal for the musical, keeping stage hands and orchestra members waiting while the fledgling vocalists explore their singing voice; furthermore, it is usually easier for students to learn to sing when they do not also have to act at the same time, and vice versa. Whether teaching the arts separately or bringing them together in the creation and performance of multidisciplinary works, schools still must provide expert instruction to develop the skills and understandings of each of the diverse component disciplines. ■

TOWARD A PHILOSOPHY OF ARTS EDUCATION

In the early dawn of civilization, our first parents used sticks and stones and grunts and groans to convey feelings and ideas. The words were formed, a vocabulary took shape by written symbols, making it possible to send messages from place to place and transmit them from one generation to another.

But even with the beauty and the power of the written and spoken word, our miraculous use of language was incomplete. For the most intimate, most profoundly moving universal experiences, we needed a more subtle, a more sensitive set of symbols than the written word and the spoken word.

And this richer language we call the arts. And so it is that men and women have used music and dance and the visual arts to transmit most effectively the heritage of a people, and to express most profoundly their deepest human joys and sorrows and intuitions, too.³

– Ernest Boyer, former U.S. Secretary of Education, former President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

The Role Of The Arts In Society

The arts play a critical role in our culture, in our sense of community, in our communication, in our personal decision making and in our economy. They permeate virtually every aspect of our daily lives.

The arts are a cornerstone of our culture. In fact, the very concept of *culture* is meaningless without the arts. The cultured individual is one who understands and participates in the arts. Since the beginnings of recorded history, societies have been remembered through their arts. Much of the legacy we will leave for our grandchildren will consist of the new art work and performances we create.

The life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction in the life of a nation, is very close to the center of a nation's purpose – and is a test of the quality of a nation's civilization.⁴

– President John F. Kennedy

The arts are primary links to our past and essential vehicles for understanding our present. At a time when improved transportation and communication have

made cross-cultural understanding more important than ever, the arts provide us with a vehicle for understanding our global neighbors. Throughout history the arts have always provided societies with essential means of expressing and reflecting on their experiences and feelings. Every important civilization has told stories and recorded daily life through the visual arts; composed and performed music and dance for celebration and worship; created theater that tells important stories and provides metaphors for key social principles; and designed buildings, spaces and cities that reflect the lifestyles, values and aesthetics of the times.

As the unity of the modern world becomes increasingly a technological rather than a social affair, the techniques of the arts provide the most valuable means of insight into the real direction of our own collective purposes.⁵

– Marshall McLuhan,
Canadian communications theorist

The arts play a key role in developing and maintaining a sense of community, bringing and holding societies together through shared cultural experiences. From the community orchestra to the quilting bee, from the church choir to the square dance, and from Woodstock to urban Puerto Rican festivals, America's citizens have always come together through the arts. Now, as longer work days and passive, isolated forms of recreation, such as watching television, undermine the social traditions of American communities, arts participation and performances provide constructive opportunities for people to work and play together.

The era of prose, of written language, as the primary means of communication has ended. We're in the era of images, sound and movement – the domains of the arts.⁶

– Arnold Packer,
U.S. Department of Labor

Humans are distinguished from other animals not just by their capacity for language, but by their capacity to synthesize, summarize and symbolize ideas in a *variety* of forms or media. Language always will play an important role in human communication, but language is only one of the essential ways in which communication occurs. The United States, indeed the world, is rapidly becoming a multimedia society. This fact has profound implications for traditional educational priorities. The arts must be taught not just for their aesthetic value, but for their importance as critical forms of communication.

For tens of thousands of years, from the earliest cave paintings, the arts have been important means of