

Where's The Art?

'555'

555: that's the mean teaching load per week for public elementary visual arts teachers during the academic year 1999-2000. Further, 49 percent of the elementary art teachers teach in two or more schools according to the National Center for Education Statistics "Survey of Elementary School Visual Arts Specialists," NCES 2002-131.

About half of of the nation's elementary schools have full time art teachers. When children do not master basic visual arts knowledge and skills in their elementary schooling, it may be caused by the lack of substantive, standards based art instruction. As a result, students enter middle, junior and senior high schools with first and second grade art skills.

They become *remedial* art students. Thus students—and their teachers, play catch up for their remaining years of schooling. Without art study, large and important legacies of art and culture go unseen, unheard, unread, unstudied, and unlearned, and many of our children are being left behind.

Learning requires sustained effort—studying a subject over time, building on knowledge in a sequential fashion, gaining a historical perspective, and developing a certain level of subject mastery such as those recommended in state and local art curriculum frameworks.

We need better arts education policies for our children!

What Can Parents Do?

- *Encourage the press/media to generate public understanding of the importance of art education policies that lead to student learning in art.*
- *Encourage your school board to support better policies for art education programs that lead to student learning in art.*
- *Discuss/recommend improved art education policies with your child's school principal.*
- *Devote time at a PTA meeting to review how art education policies can enhance the quality of art education for all students. Develop support activities through the PTA.*

SUPPORT IMPROVING ART EDUCATION POLICIES.

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