

Art Education Advocacy Statement

by

The Pennsylvania Art Education Association

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Art education, like other curriculum areas, prepares individuals for life-long learning and is an essential component for all students in educational programs. The Pennsylvania Art Education Association believes that quality art education allows students to acquire knowledge, skills, and appreciation in the visual arts. Schools and school districts have the responsibility to hire highly qualified and certified visual arts teachers to develop and maintain programs that help students understand and use the visual arts through (1) studio production; (2) historical inquiry; (3) critical interpretation and evaluation of works of art; (4) application of aesthetics and philosophy to the study of the visual arts; and (5) study of the visual arts within the local and global community from social, psychological, and multicultural perspectives.

School and district administration must provide strong support for visual arts programs and teachers through positive, ongoing and involved supervision, adequate resources, and sound budgeting. Support of the cultural life in the community is essential to quality art education as are partnerships between school programs and the visual arts community.

The Pennsylvania Art Education Association recommends the following elements as essential to quality art education programs.

I. CURRICULUM — Every school district in Pennsylvania should have a balanced, sequential, and articulated early childhood through grade 12 visual arts planned program of instruction based on the following objectives:

- A. To understand the visual arts through studio production skills and processes.**
 - Understanding and evaluating the artistic process; the development, refinement and execution of ideas and application of objective and aesthetic criteria to decision-making.
 - Understanding and manipulation of the elements, processes, and materials which are essential to expression and communication of thoughts, feelings and ideas.
 - Participation in critical and creative problem-solving in the visual arts through interdisciplinary applications.
 - Mastery and refinement of technical skills in the visual arts.
 - Development of self-esteem with successful involvement and communication through studio production.
- B. To understand the visual arts through historical inquiry.**
 - Understanding and applying skills of art historical inquiry.
 - Identification and analysis of historical periods and multicultural influences as reflected in artistic expression.
 - Interpretation and analysis of multidisciplinary influences on the development of art through history.
- C. To understand the visual arts through the critical interpretation and evaluation of works of art.**
 - Development and application of effective analytic thinking, writing and speaking skills in the visual arts.
 - Understanding and evaluating influences of literature, ethnic traditions and other art forms in shaping our global visual heritages.
 - Development of supportive interdisciplinary and interpretive information as a part of the critical process.
 - Description, analysis, interpretation and evaluation of works of art.
- D. To understand the visual arts through philosophical inquiry.**
 - Realization that experiences in the visual arts can bring clarity and meaning to life.
 - Development and application of philosophical reasoning skills.
 - Engagement in philosophical inquiry to clarify and further develop one's beliefs about the nature of art, aesthetic experience, beauty and critical response to art.
 - Development of appreciation for the value of philosophical inquiry.
- E. To understand the visual arts through a study of works of art from social, psychological, and cultural perspectives.**
 - Appreciation of the accomplishments and contributions of individuals and cultural groups within the visual arts.
 - Recognition of career possibilities in the visual arts.
 - Appreciation of involvement in the visual arts as a life-long learning process.
 - Recognition of the importance of the promotion and preservation of the visual arts in the local and global community.

II. TIME AND SCHEDULING

The requirements for time and length of instructional blocks will vary according to grade level and the nature of the activity. Minimum guidelines are set below for the different levels for direct instruction by certified visual art teachers.

Integration of visual art learning into other areas of the curriculum should be given separate consideration with regards to time and scheduling. The art teacher must be given adequate flexible time in each scheduled day for involvement in meaningful integration of curriculum.

A. Early Childhood — The visual arts are catalysts for much of the learning that takes place in early childhood. Early childhood teachers should have regular and direct contact with the building's certified art teacher. Direct weekly instruction by the art teacher is highly recommended.

B. Elementary — Every elementary school child should participate in regularly scheduled discrete art instruction by a certified art teacher for at least 60 minutes per week.

Through the cooperative efforts of the classroom teacher and art teacher all children in the elementary school should receive approximately 3 hours of art instruction per week or 90 hours per school year. Some art activities should be integrated into other content areas. Each classroom should also have facilities for working on art projects.

C. Middle School/Junior High — Every middle school/junior high school student should participate in regularly scheduled visual arts instruction as defined in the planned course from certified arts teachers for at least 90 clock hours per course per year. Extended periods ranging from 50-60 minutes are recommended.

Every student should have art for a minimum of three periods per week for each entire school year or five daily periods per week for one semester during each year of middle/junior high school attendance.

Art teachers at this level must be given flexible time in their schedules for working with teachers in other curricular areas for integration of visual arts learning. Time must also be provided for special projects.

D. High School — Every high school student should be required to take at least one course in the visual arts. It is recommended that courses focusing on both studio and non-studio areas be available to students to accommodate different needs.

III. PERSONNEL AND SPACE

A. Elementary — In the elementary school one certified art teacher should be provided for every 350-400 students. Each elementary building should have a specially equipped art room.

B. Secondary — In the middle and high schools there should be at least one certified art teacher for every 25 scheduled periods per week. Every secondary school should have at least one general art room. Schools with more than 500 students should have one or more additional rooms for studio specialization.

IV. EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Program — The success with which the visual arts programs in schools and school districts achieve their objectives should be assessed regularly. Visual arts curriculum should be reviewed and revised by the art staff under the leadership of an art supervisor/curriculum coordinator whenever possible at least once every five years and should consider, where appropriate, contemporary art education philosophies. Building and district administrators should be aware of and involved in the curriculum process.

Art teachers should be involved in the establishment of appropriate assessment tools to evaluate their teaching and should have regular opportunities for professional growth and relevant in-service programming.

Art teachers should have opportunities annually for conference attendance especially at the PAEA State Convention and Professional Development Conference. Opportunities should be made available for attendance at the National Art Education Association annual convention.

Student Learning — Systematic assessment and evaluation of student learning and progress should be an ongoing part of the visual arts program in each school and school district. Holistic evaluation of the creative process, knowledge and understanding, interpretation and judgment should be focused upon, rather than trivial disjointed information that could potentially lead to superficial and inadequate assessment.

Portfolios of students' works should be collected systematically and used as the basis for evaluating progress over a year or several years. Portfolios should include students' writing about works of art and art issues as well as personal observations. Portfolio assessment may be accompanied by attitude and belief inventories and questionnaires as well as by tests developed by or deemed appropriate by the art teacher.

V. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Art and the Community — Art is a life-long activity and should relate to the total community of which the school is an essential part. Community art resources that reflect the uniqueness of each community can be found near schools in both rural and urban settings throughout the Commonwealth. Students should have opportunities for active involvement in the preservation and promotion of cultural traditions and works of art in the local community.

School and Community Art Learning — Art teachers should be provided time, resources and encouragement to establish educational relationships with visual arts institutions, museums, galleries, centers and agencies. These may be artistic, historical, or cultural in nature.

Schools should provide students with opportunities to work with practicing artists-in-residence in schools and communities. Students should also have opportunities to attend arts performances, events, and exhibitions.