



PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE ARTS AND ARTS EDUCATION

Americans Speak Out About the Arts in 2018

Americans for the Arts' Public Opinion Poll provides an in-depth look at the perceptions and attitudes about the arts in the United States. Browse more findings from the Public Opinion Poll:

www.AmericansForTheArts.org/PublicOpinion

- 91%: Nearly every American believes the arts are part of a well-rounded K-12 education.
- 94% believe students should receive an education in the arts in elementary school, middle school, and high school.
- 74% agree that the arts help students perform better academically.
- 81% of Americans believe that the arts are a positive experience in a troubled world.
- 71% agree that the arts improve the image and identity of their communities

ARTS AS CORE SUBJECTS AND THEIR IMPACT

Dr. Pam Paulson's Testimony for Rule-making (Excerpted) Academic Standards in the Arts K-12 Before Administrative Law Judge, Jim Mortenson March 2, 2020

The arts have been considered a core content area at the federal level since 1994, when they were included in the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. The term "core academic subjects" covered 9 subject areas at that time, in which students were expected to demonstrate competency over challenging subject matter – including the ARTS.

When Minnesota implemented the Profile of Learning in 1997, the arts were included as one of 10 areas of study required for students' learning. Just a few years later, in 2001, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized and named, *No Child Left Behind, or NCLB*. Within NCLB, under Title IX-General Provisions 11 CORE ACADEMIC SUBJECTS were identified, including the arts.

The first MN standards for dance, media arts, music, theater and visual arts were developed in 2003, after the MN Legislature repealed and replaced the Profile of Learning with state academic standards in math, language arts, science, social studies and the arts. In the 2003 MN arts standards, media arts was added as a fifth arts area at the high school level. Minnesota was the first state to include media arts as one of the core academic subject areas and has been a leader across the country. Today more than half of all states in the country have included media arts as part of their state arts standards.

When the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized in 2015, as the Every Child Succeeds Act, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions released a report to accompany the original ESSA bill that for the first time actually identifies what is meant by the term "the

arts.” The report states the committee intended that the arts “may include the subjects of **dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts**, and other disciplines as determined by the State or local education agency.” (pg 52)

Based on this quick history, it is clear that for a long time Minnesota has defined the arts as core subjects, required for all K-12 students, including a credit in the arts, required for High School graduation. MN has been on the leading edge of arts education ensuring that all students benefit from learning in the arts and demonstrate achievement in the arts as part of a complete education.

The introduction to the 1994 national arts standards describes some of the contributions the arts make : “The arts are one of humanity’s deepest rivers of continuity. They connect each new generation to those who have gone before, equipping newcomers in their own pursuit of the abiding questions: Who am I? What must I do? Where am I going? At the same time the arts are an impetus for change, challenging old perspectives from fresh angles of vision, offering original interpretations of familiar ideas. . . .

For all these reasons and a thousand more, the arts have been an inseparable part of the human journey; indeed, we depend on the arts to carry us toward the fullness of our humanity. We value them for themselves, and because we do, we believe knowing and practicing them is fundamental to the healthy development of our children’s minds and spirits. That is why, in any civilization – ours included – the arts are inseparable from the very meaning of the term, ‘education.’ (pg 5)”

Elliott Eisner, renown arts educator, shared some of the more specific benefits of arts education (not to say that the arts have the exclusive domain of these areas – other subjects may address some of these areas as well.) Eisner says:

- The Arts teach children that problems can have MORE than ONE solution and that questions can more than one answer.
- The arts celebrate multiple PERSPECTIVES. One of their large lessons it that there are many ways to SEE and INTERPRET the world.
- The arts make vivid the fact that neither words in their literal form, nor numbers exhaust what we can KNOW. The limits of our language do not define the limits of our COGNITION.
- And finally, the arts teach students to think through and within a material. All art forms employ some means through which IMAGES become REAL.

Knowing all of these important things that the arts bring to education, excites arts educators to make sure students have opportunities to learn in and through the arts. Again, in the introduction to the 1994 national arts standards it says, “The more students live up to these high expectations, the more empowered our citizenry will become. Indeed, helping students to meet these Standards is among the best possible investments in the future of not only our children, but also our country and civilization.” (pg 9)

ESSA - Federal Education Policy

(from www.AmericansFortheArts.org)

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the previously listed **Core Academic Subjects**, which included the arts, have been replaced by a newly defined list of subjects that are elements of a **Well-Rounded Education, which still includes the arts and now also includes music.**

"The term 'well-rounded education' means courses, activities, and programming in subjects such as English, reading or language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, physical education, and any other subject, as determined by the state or local educational agency, with the purpose of providing all students access to an enriched curriculum and educational experience."

Americans for the Arts

Arts + Social Impact Explorer

https://www.americansforthearts.org/socialimpact?utm_source=MagnetMail&utm_medium=email&utm_term=oddeitz@comcast.net&utm_content=Social_Impact_Explorer_eBlast_10%2E09%2E18&utm_campaign=New%20Arts%20%2B%20Social%20Impact%20Explorer%20Launches

Providing a comprehensive education for our children, both in and outside of school, improves our country. Studies repeatedly show the positive effects on students when the arts are part of a well-rounded education.

The arts have intersected with education strongly and inextricably for all of human history. Each of the art disciplines (music, visual art, theater, dance and media arts) can carry forward a civilization's history, teach lessons, and celebrate our individual and collective heritage.

In more recent history, starting with early advocates like John Dewey, both formal and informal education in the United States have demonstrated imagination, better test scores, more civic engagement, public savings, increased lifelong earning potential, better community cohesion, and more.

Arts and youth development also extends beyond the classroom to the domain of what is now called Creative Youth Development, which means the longstanding theory of practice that integrates creative skill-building, inquiry, and expression with positive youth development principles, fueling young people's imaginations and building critical learning and life skills.

The rich and well-documented links between the arts and education, both formal and informal, create a robust case for supporting pro-arts education funding and pro-arts education policy in every community.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ARTS EDUCATION

How Arts Education Supports Social-Emotional Development: A Theory of Action

By Camille Farrington and Steve Shewfelt

The State Education Standard - January 2020, Vol. 20, Issue 1, pages 31-35

“...the value of an arts education goes beyond its artistic purpose. Our research highlighted the distinctive opportunities that arts education affords for arts educators to promote social-emotional growth. Arts education does not magically confer social-emotional competencies, but in the hands of a skilled arts educator who pays close attention to how students are engaging socially and emotionally in the art practices in which they take part, these experiences—even when they are more negative than positive (e.g., not getting a desired role in the play or singing poorly in a public performance)—can lead to social-emotional growth.”

“What makes arts educators particularly well suited to promoting social-emotional growth through their instruction? In part, the answer is that parents, students, educators, and others expect the arts to play a special role in social-emotional development and believe that it can. One of the most consistent elements of effective arts instruction that emerged in our research is the practice of teachers creating a “safe space” in which students can participate in the arts. Many arts educators operate on the premise that participation requires an environment in which students feel comfortable taking productive risks, being challenged, feeling discomfort, and growing emotionally. While there may be no single answer or “key” to how this is done, safe spaces are rooted in consciously and intentionally created environments of trust and tend to play prominently in how arts teachers view their role.”

“Ensure students have access to arts programs. The benefits of developmental experiences only emerge when students have access to a rich and varied collection of such experiences, and our research further highlights the importance and value of ensuring that students have ample access to arts education opportunities in particular. To be clear, this is a position we would likely take regardless of what our research suggested about the relationship between arts education and social-emotional learning. We believe that art—and consequently an education in the arts—matters for its own sake.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROGRAM LEADERSHIP AND CONTINUITY

Reflections from the field, by Stephanie Lein Walseth

- **Social-Emotional Learning**

Research has demonstrated the ways in which participation in the arts, and theater specifically, benefit students in their social-emotional learning (see studies above). This growth and development depends upon the processes inherent in the art forms themselves (create, perform/present, respond, connect), as well as teacher-student relationships based on trust and mutual experience. The kinds of empathy, vulnerability, and bravery required in theater arts requires that students themselves be empathetic, vulnerable, and brave in their development of the craft, and long-term relationships between teachers and students can be the strongest conduit for these abilities to emerge. Furthermore, theater educators across the state of Minnesota can attest to the fact that for many students, their involvement in theater is a lifeline, the only place they can truly be seen and heard in all of their complexity. It is a place for them to reveal and become themselves, a place made possible by teacher/directors whom the students know and trust.

- **Building Disciplinary Skills and Meeting Standards**
Continuous oversight of a program allows theater directors/educators the ability to rigorously scaffold student learning, based on prior knowledge of and experience with students' abilities. It also allows for differentiation based on the various needs, challenges, and capabilities of the vast range of students involved in theater classes and production.
- **High Quality Arts Programming**
Top honors in programs like **Scholars of Distinction in Theater Arts** (an individual student recognition program, co-run by the Minnesota Department of Education and Perpich Center for Arts Education), the Minnesota State High School League's **One Act Play** competition, and the **Hennepin Theatre Trust's Spotlight Education** program (a recognition program with a focus on musical theater), are most often received by students and programs who have benefitted from the continuous vision, direction, and support from those at the helm of their programs. These long-term directors have had the ability to build strong foundations with their students, their families, their communities, and their districts over time, forming distinctive styles and strengths, and most importantly, building trusting relationships with myriad key stakeholders to ensure successful outcomes.

Educational Theatre Association

2016 Opportunity-to-Learn Standards for Theatre Education

- **Staffing 9-12: Teacher Qualification and Load:** A program is "Exceptional" if "One theatre educator or district arts coordinator in every district or school is designated as coordinator or administrator to provide leadership for the theatre program."
- *These grades 6-12 Opportunity-to-Learn (OTL) Standards for theatre instruction have been prepared by the Educational Theatre Association. They identify the resources teachers, schools, and districts need to ensure that students can achieve at or above standard aligned to levels suggested in the 2014 National Core Theatre Standards.*