

TO MOVE FORWARD

An Affirmation of Continuing Commitment to Arts Education

**Consortium of National Arts Education Associations
International Council of Fine Arts Deans
Council of Arts Accrediting Associations**

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Dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts are essential parts of a complete education. Study of one or more art forms develops the intellect, provides unique access to meaning, and connects individuals with works of genius, multiple cultures, and the contributions of history.

Rigorous, sequential pre-K–12 arts education that achieves these goals is available to a significant number of students now. But it must be available in all schools if all students are to benefit. Expansion of opportunity is the next step. Higher education and pre-K–12 education are critical to this expansion. They must continue working together to:

- Promote the value of education in and through the arts.
- Increase arts education opportunities for all pre-K–12 students.
- Pursue policies and content that both encourage and produce quality arts education.

The organizations signing this statement serve professionals with lifelong commitments to teaching the arts. Throughout the twentieth century, these professionals and their predecessors have delivered arts education throughout the nation, often against great odds. This statement identifies accomplishments in a number of areas and suggests a reasonable number of next steps to advance student learning. Taking these steps will move arts education forward.

I. The Arts and College/University Admissions

Accomplishments:

- Thousands of high school students complete units of study in the arts as part of their curricular work.
- Many high schools include course work in the arts when calculating grade point averages, class rank, and other aspects of student profiles.
- Colleges and universities routinely require course work in the arts for completion of an undergraduate degree.

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- All K–12 schools include and give equal weight to arts courses when calculating a student's grade point average.
- All colleges and universities require evidence of curricular work in one of the four major art forms taught in the schools—dance, music, theatre, visual arts—as part of their admissions process.

II. National Standards

Accomplishments:

- In 1994, the largest consensus development project on study of the arts at the K–12 level culminated in publication of the *National Standards for Arts Education*.
- These standards describe what students should know and be able to do at grades 4, 8, and 12 in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts.
- The *National Standards for Arts Education* have been adopted or adapted in 47 states. They have been endorsed or supported by 80 national organizations, including those signing this statement.
- These student-learning standards are consistent with and supported by other national standards for teacher preparation developed and improved for decades by arts specialist teacher organizations and arts accrediting agencies. The *National Standards for Arts Education* articulate goals for accomplishment long sought by teachers of the arts at all levels of education.

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- Pre-K–12 arts education leaders in the community and arts administrators on campuses make all faculty at all levels aware of the purposes and content of the *National Standards for Arts Education*.

- The *National Standards for Arts Education* are used as a critical reference document (a) in developing, revising, and evaluating curricula preparing specialist arts teachers at the undergraduate level, and (b) in meeting arts accreditation standards and certification requirements for teacher-preparation programs in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts.
- The student learning called for in the *National Standards for Arts Education* is the primary goal of K–12 and higher education leaders in the arts as they influence local and regional policies on arts education. Promotion of study and learning needs to intensify.

III. Teacher Credentials

Accomplishments:

- Throughout the nation, there are examples of state certification requirements for specialist teachers in dance, music, theatre, or the visual arts.
- Specialist certification is intended to indicate that individuals engaged in standards-based arts programs or in sustained curricular implementation in one of the arts are qualified in the art form and competent to teach it. Over the years, certification, where present, has maintained a baseline for quality.

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- State and local leaders in pre-K–12 and higher education work together to ensure that all states have specialist teacher certification in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts. Significant effort in many states is required to secure certification in dance and theatre.
- Certification requirements are aligned with expectations for K–12 student learning in the *National Standards for Arts Education* and in standards for teacher preparation addressing the same content developed by accrediting agencies and other professional groups in the arts.
- All states adopt reciprocity that recognizes qualified teachers, regardless of when or where certification was earned.
- Leaders in arts education at all levels work together and with other decision-makers to ensure that alternative methods of certification to teach the arts are as rigorous as traditional procedures.

IV. The Generalist Teacher

Accomplishments:

- Generalist teachers, especially at the elementary level, have tremendous influence on their students. Many are interested in introducing their students to the arts or using elements of the arts in their classrooms.
- Higher education has the resources in personnel and expertise to orient general classroom teachers to the arts and provide them with fundamentals that can bring substance to their presentations in or about the arts.
- In educational circles, there is national understanding that generalist teachers should not be the sole providers of arts instruction unless they have professional qualifications in the art forms they are teaching. The signers of this document agree with this position, primarily because it is the only position that will enable K–12 students to meet the *National Standards for Arts Education*.

To move forward:

- All higher education curricula preparing generalist teachers include basic preparation in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts and develop knowledge of how the arts can enhance learning in other subject areas and engage students with the cultures of the world.
- All general teachers have instruction and experience in how to collaborate effectively with arts specialists and vice versa.
- Administrative leaders of the arts in higher education make a special effort to engage students preparing to be generalist teachers with exhibitions, performances, guest lectures, and elective course work in the arts.

V. Specialist Arts Teacher Preparation

Accomplishments:

- Specialist teachers in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts are prepared by the thousands in hundreds of colleges, universities, conservatories, and art schools.
- Over the last century, these institutions have built faculties and supporting resources to prepare teachers with expertise in an arts discipline and with the knowledge and skills necessary to teach that discipline in pre-K–12

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settings. Within institutions, these programs are usually administered either in a college of the arts, a college of arts and sciences, or a college of education. Whatever the administrative arrangements, the most effective programs demonstrate thoughtful collaboration among those responsible for the art forms themselves, for general education, and for teaching methodology.

- Most institutions with arts specialist teacher-preparation programs have gathered faculties in the arts disciplines who are able to lead students to a high competence in an art form. The presence of such expertise, and the ability to combine it with other expertise in the sciences, humanities, social sciences, and education, is one of the great achievements of American higher education.
- This achievement is in place partially in recognition of the fact that students preparing for careers as pre-K–12 specialist arts teachers must be able to apply well-developed artistic knowledge and skills if they are to be successful as educators.

To move forward:

- Campus leaders in the arts and in education work together to ensure that all faculty understand that teacher preparation is an all-faculty and all-campus responsibility.
- Special attention is given to ensure that arts, education, and other faculties work collaboratively to strengthen the preparation of both arts specialist and generalist teachers year after year.
- Sufficient programs and resources are provided to prepare the number of teachers that will be needed. If all K–12 students are to meet the *National Standards for Arts Education* in all the arts, expansions will be necessary, especially in theatre and dance.
- Arts specialist teachers become more proficient in communicating about their art form, in relating it to other art forms and subject areas, and in using their art to engage students with the cultures of the world.
- Arts specialist teachers gain higher mandates and capabilities to provide collegial leadership for generalist teachers and others working with curricular and other arts issues in schools.

VI. Professional Development

Accomplishments:

- Professional development is deeply ingrained in educational policy at all levels. Changes in the educational environment coupled with traditional commitments to improvement have brought new and positive urgencies to this arena.
- Institutions of higher education have and use vast resources to deliver and support professional development for specialist arts teachers and for generalist teachers interested in the arts.
- Many experienced arts teachers are capable of self-directing their own professional development and, with proper support, are able to bring their experience and expertise to advancements in research and many other areas of arts education.

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- Professional development for new teachers includes mentoring by experienced teachers.
- Specialist arts teachers in pre-K–12 settings have parity with teachers in other academic areas with respect to opportunities and support for professional development.
- Arts leaders in pre-K–12 and higher education intensify their promotion and operation of programs for quality professional development that:
 - continue throughout the teaching career;
 - have a logical sequence;
 - enable the development of K–12 student competencies consistent with the *National Standards for Arts Education*;
 - develop advanced competencies in the art form—creation, performance, history, analysis, etc.—as well as in teaching methodology;
 - broaden general knowledge and develop intellectual skills;
 - are based on research and knowledge of successful practices;
 - enable teachers to create unique approaches for unique circumstances based on mastery of an array of knowledge and skills in their art form and in teaching.

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VII. Research

Accomplishments:

- Research has demonstrated that study of the arts leads to competence in the arts. Research has also indicated correlations between arts study and generating a shared culture; promoting a creative, imaginative work force; and building knowledge and skills that support work in other areas. It is also evident that study increases the joy and personal satisfaction that comes from participating in the arts.
- Pre-K–12 and higher education are so interwoven in American life that each is significantly impacted by societal, economic, and cultural changes. Positive connections between education and society have been built over decades of effort. Research and policy analysis have been crucial in almost all of these connections. They have warned of real and potential danger; developed new knowledge, ideas, and products; and worked to keep education playing its important individual-development role.
- In the arts, higher education and organizations of pre-K–12 specialist arts teachers have provided decades of support for research that promotes understanding of and work in pre-K–12 instruction. Basic traditions and structures are in place to continue and expand this effort in the future.

To move forward:

- Increasingly, pre-K–12 arts education needs to make decisions in its many areas of responsibility based on excellent policy analysis and research that produce hard facts and evaluate various options for their long-term effects. Research and analysis become more critical as education and society become more complex and as purposes suggested for arts education in the public arena become more numerous.
- A comprehensive research agenda for pre-K–12 arts education is promoted and supported. It should include but not be limited to:
 - reviewing content—curriculum, lesson plans, student work, etc.—against purposes consistent with goals for learning outlined in the *National Standards for Arts Education*;
 - investigating how and why learning takes place in the arts and how arts learning relates to other kinds of learning;
 - assessing student learning, program effectiveness, and faculty performance;
 - studying structural, content, and professional issues that affect teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention;
 - examining and projecting the effects of changes—demographic, technological, economic, cultural, educational, philosophical, and so forth—on the delivery of sequential arts education;
 - considering contextual factors—national and state initiatives, relationships with the larger arts community, and the relationships among what we teach, who we teach, where we teach, and who teaches;
 - developing and interpreting national longitudinal databases in basic areas such as K–12 enrollment, time on task in the arts, teaching loads, content taught, knowledge and skills expectations, etc., in order to speak and act with authority about what is happening now and how the arts education field has evolved.
- As the primary supporters of research and analysis, pre-K–12 specialist teacher organizations and higher education (a) encourage and support present research and (b) explore the development of capabilities in research areas important to teaching and decision-making that are not now receiving sufficient attention.

Next Steps

The organizations signing this document understand their responsibilities to pursue the goals outlined in this statement, both goals held in common and those pertaining to specific areas of responsibility. The organizations agree to make all their members aware of this statement and to pursue research and analysis that can be shared and evaluated. The signers are also pledged to review and revise this statement as information, analysis, or contextual changes so indicate. We are confident that these efforts will move pre-K–12 arts education forward by improving access to quality programs for all students in our schools.

Consortium of National Arts Education Associations
American Alliance for Theatre and Education
MENC—The National Association for Music Education
National Art Education Association
National Dance Education Organization

International Council of Fine Arts Deans
Council of Arts Accrediting Associations
National Association of Schools of Art and Design
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National Association of Schools of Music
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