

ARTS EDUCATION POLICY

Introduction

The arts – inclusive of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts – are central to the education of the whole student. The arts are a language with greater meaning than just words; they speak to the student who experiences life and expresses his/her own ideas and feelings through all senses. Education is most effective when active and participatory. Different students learn through different media.

The arts teach ideas and concepts that could not be taught any other way. They are revelatory and enlightening. They articulate our own sense of being and promote self-expression. They teach us how to be empathetic and compassionate. They connect us to others who are different from ourselves and to times and places that are both historical and contemporary. They develop critical-thinking, problem-solving and group cooperation skills, all critical in other disciplines and in the workplace of the future. Students acquiring knowledge in and about the arts learn to express meaning, understanding and communicate with others through an “artistic literacy”, the ability to use and understand symbols and structures of dance, music, theatre and visual arts.

All teachers should employ the arts as a natural enhancement to learning. Arts education expands students’ ability to think creatively and encourages cross-cultural understanding. Rich and deep involvement in arts education provides students with understandings and competencies in issues involving musical, visual, kinesthetic, verbal and other intelligences that contribute to a meaningful contemporary life.

The following assumptions are cornerstones of the Boston Public Schools’ Arts Education Policy:

- All students should have access to a rigorous, engaging arts education.
- Students with particular aptitudes and interests in the arts should be provided expanded opportunities to pursue them.
- The arts and humanities reflect culture and should be used as a core element of efforts to bring a diverse, multi-ethnic instructional focus to teaching across the curriculum.
- The Boston Public Schools acknowledge the rich and diverse arts and cultural community in the Greater Boston Area and wish to collaborate with and provide opportunities for participation with these community arts organizations and institutions to enrich the BPS standards-based, sequential arts curriculum for Boston Public Schools’ students.

Policy Outline

The Arts Education Policy has been developed to complement the expectations and responsibilities set forth in the Citywide Learning Standards and Promotion Policy and as a guide to teachers, administrators, parents and the arts community to initiate, improve and support arts education in the Boston Public Schools. This policy:

- Requires the implementation and maintenance of the Boston Public Schools Citywide Arts Standards and Course Descriptions in Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts to insure rigorous, sequential, standards-based instruction;
- Defines and supports sequential and integrated arts instruction;
- Defines and supports time-on-learning requirements;
- Endorses schools participation in all city, state and national exhibitions and festivals;
- Establishes the arts as a core subject to be included in the instructional materials adoption rotation;
- Establishes an appropriate per student arts supply expenditure;
- Establishes the inclusion of the arts in the unified district professional development plan;
- Establishes a process for initiating and executing special student initiatives such as exhibits, festivals, workshops, master classes, internships and scholarships with local cultural agencies, colleges and universities and artists that are aligned with standards-based instruction;
- Ensures the maintenance of a system-wide inventory of music instruments, large arts-related equipment, and a score/script library; and
- Supports an administrative structure to initiate, coordinate and execute system-wide arts initiatives and curriculum.

Requirements

I. The arts are an essential part of the core curriculum, PreK-12. Support and enact the current K-12 BPS Citywide Arts Standards and develop site-based and system-wide arts curricula and activities that address the following areas of competence: creating, performing, and exhibiting; perceiving and analyzing; and understanding the cultural and historical contexts in which art is created. Seniors graduating from the Boston Public Schools should demonstrate the following competencies set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Education/Arts Curriculum Framework:

- communicate fluently and effectively in at least one artistic discipline;
- apply both imagination and rational thinking to the making of art;
- understand the value of reflection and critical judgement in creative work;
- present and perform art publicly, with confidence, pride, and distinction;
- use artistic literacy as a natural enhancement to learning other subjects;
- understand how world cultures have been historically influenced and shaped by the arts; and
- understand the ways in which the arts contribute to contemporary life.

II. All schools will employ sequential and integrated arts instruction.

- **Sequential arts instruction** – standards-based arts instruction that develops a student’s knowledge base, skills, understandings and competencies in one or more of the arts disciplines.
- **Integrated arts instruction** – students will utilize dance, music, theatre and/or visual arts content, vocabulary and strategies, in tandem with other subjects, to think, see connections and correlations, develop and reinforce concepts, synthesize ideas and demonstrate understandings.

III. All schools will maintain minimum time-on-learning expectations in the Arts.

The following are **minimum** time allocations for arts instruction:

High Schools: Every student should pass one full year or two half year courses of the arts for graduation.

One elective in at least three different art forms (dance, music, theatre, and/or visual arts) should be offered each year.

Middle Schools: Every student should receive the equivalent of 135 minutes per week throughout middle school in dance, music, theatre, and/or visual arts.

Every student should receive dance or theatre instruction during their middle school experience.

Elementary Schools: Every student should receive the equivalent of 90 hours of arts instruction each year or 120 minutes per week in dance, music, theatre, and/or visual arts.

- IV. All schools will participate in curriculum-appropriate city, state and national exhibitions, festivals, and other initiatives to offer students the opportunity to perform and exhibit in intense and accelerated learning environments with artistic peers.**
- V. All schools and Central Office will maintain a minimum budget for arts instructional materials, resources, equipment, maintenance and repair.**

The arts (dance, music, theatre and visual arts) will be included in the instructional materials adoption rotation, with central funding every five years, beginning in SY 2002. Schools will be responsible for replacement costs in the intervening years.

The following formula should be used by schools to provide a minimum site-based allocation for the replenishment of arts materials, supplies and transportation:

- Elementary - 14% of per pupil supply expenditure
- Middle School – 15% of per pupil supply expenditure
- High School – 16% of per pupil supply expenditure

If more than one art form exists in a school, the minimum allocation should be divided among the arts teachers based on the number of students served by each respective teacher.

- VI. All schools and Central Office will include the Arts in the unified district professional development plan.**
- VII. All schools and Central Office will maintain system-wide and site-based partnerships and pursue new partnerships with the arts and cultural community.**
- VIII. Central Office will coordinate and maintain a system-wide inventory of musical instruments, large equipment and score/script library.**
- IX. Central Office will maintain a support structure for administration of arts curricula, activities and initiatives, teacher and student opportunities, dissemination of abstracts of successful programs and curricula, coordination of system-wide partnerships and workshops, evaluation of curricula, programs, professional development and partnerships, and celebrations of student and teacher accomplishments.**

Accountability

Site-based accountability will be monitored yearly. A survey will be completed in tandem with the spring Massachusetts Department of Education Arts Education Survey to keep site-based reporting to a minimum. Equipment and textbook inventories will follow previously designed and enacted accountability systems.

Waivers

Schools may propose alternative implementation strategies to the Arts Education Policy which meet the spirit, but not necessarily the letter, of the existing Arts Education Policy. Alternative proposals must be submitted to the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Practices. Waivers will be granted in writing and reviewed by a committee including central and school-based personnel.

