

Toronto District School Board

Policy P.005 CUR:

Arts Foundation

Statement

The Toronto District School Board believes that all of the arts—dance, drama, music and visual arts—are essential to a complete education for all students.

There is compelling evidence showing that student achievement is heightened in schools that provide high-quality arts education. Dance, drama, music and visual arts allow students to incorporate skills, knowledge and values into their everyday lives. Through the arts, students learn to think imaginatively, identify and solve problems, empathize with others, think critically, assess the quality of their surroundings, communicate effectively and appreciate the skills and accomplishments of others. The arts give students tools for understanding, expressing, representing, creating and communicating with others. In schools, the arts teach higher level thinking skills by providing students with learning experiences that engage their hearts, minds and bodies.

Beliefs

The Toronto District School Board believes the following:

- (a) That the arts help students explore, represent and think critically about ideas and concepts and that as students gain knowledge of and experiment with the elements of dance, drama, music and visual arts, they become creators and learn to appreciate and to apply both the meaning and the aesthetics which are inherent in artistic representations.
- (b) That the arts are inclusive, that learning in and through the arts can help all students be successful in school, and that students across the spectrum of ability, achievement and interest benefit from involvement in the arts. This belief is based on research that states that when the arts are an integral part of the school environment, students come to school and stay in school.
- (c) That the arts develop skills that can be transferred to other areas of the curriculum. This Belief is based on research that shows that arts education programs result in measurable gains in student motivation and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- (d) That the arts connect learning experiences to the world of work and that students in the arts develop higher level workplace skills such as creativity, problem-solving, teamwork and divergent thinking. The Board believes that the ability to generate ideas, to bring them to life and to communicate them in unique ways contributes to workplace success.
- (e) That the arts teach self-discipline, that students in the arts are motivated to identify and find workable and creative solutions to problems, and that as students learn how to

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sustain a focus over time in order to create something meaningful, they become aware of the persistence and hard work that are required to create a work of art.

- (f) That the arts teach students how to interact with one another and work effectively in groups based on the fact that students learn the skills of working in a group as they face artistic challenges, negotiate for meaning, take judicious risks and create together: for example, when students speak, write and create as people in imagined contexts, they learn about the world from a multitude of perspectives.
- (g) That the arts build students self-confidence as when they learn to play a musical instrument, sing a song, participate in a drama, create a dance, design a Web site or compose a painting, they gain a sense of accomplishment and a greater feeling of self-worth.
- (h) That the arts teach empathetic responses to others and help in the understanding of and a respect for a multitude of cultural traditions and values and because of this contribute to safe, orderly environments in schools and the community, and prepare students to imagine, visualize and shape a better world.

Expectations

All arts programs are based on the expectations outlined in the elementary and secondary school Ontario Ministry of Education policies.

The Toronto District School Board will strive to ensure that arts programs:

- (a) have knowledgeable teachers to provide a high quality level of arts education for all students;
- (b) include a variety of assessment and evaluation strategies that are an integral part of all classroom activities;
- (c) provide new challenges through teaching strategies that allow students of varied abilities and learning styles to experience success;
- (d) use teaching methodologies that build positive relationships among all students, teaching staff, parents and other members of the school community;
- (e) are enhanced by professional development opportunities for staff;
- (f) engage students in a wide range of current media arts technologies and processes through which artistic expression is achieved;
- (g) are enriched with centrally supported programs that support the arts curriculum through interaction with artists in the classroom, gallery visits, theatre and dance performances, concerts and interaction with local artistic communities;
- (h) are conducted in adequate facilities with consideration for the health, safety and emotional well-being of all participants;
- (i) are shared with parents and the community;
- (j) honour and celebrate the richness and diversity of our multicultural community.

The Toronto District School Board is committed to awarding arts education a central position in the educational experience of elementary and secondary school students and to ensuring that opportunities are created for every student to participate in and to develop an appreciation of all the arts.