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# The Arts are Essential



Lauren King, "Lightbulb Sunset"  
Superintendent's Choice Award Winner, 2020



Washington Office of Superintendent of  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

*I support providing a well-rounded education for our students: the arts are an essential part of this. The arts teach to the whole child, engage all learning styles, and lead to the development of powerful learning habits that include such essential 21st Century Skills as creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. The arts also provide our students with keys to understanding the world around them and an array of strategies for learning, interpreting, and expressing their thoughts.*

– Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**The Arts** are part of [basic education](#) under Washington state law and a requirement for high school [graduation](#). The Arts are part of a [well-rounded education in Federal law](#).

## The Arts Promote Student Engagement & Well-Being

- [Integrating Social Emotional Learning \(SEL\) into arts education](#) is a researched practice that can be expanded to ensure well-being, academic progress and student engagement.
- *All* students should have access to quality arts education. [Reach out and support students and families furthest from educational justice](#).
- [A student developed survey](#) (650+ respondents) reports that students overwhelmingly consider arts education essential to their well-being.

## The Arts Create a Passion for Learning

- [Research](#) supports that rigorous, standards-based learning in and through the arts provides unparalleled opportunities for growth and achievement.
- Arts instruction is uniquely suited to develop the [whole child](#) and build [21st-Century Skills](#).
- The arts promote [project-based learning](#), interdisciplinary studies, and opportunities for meaningful engagement with families and the community.

## The Arts Can be Delivered Safely and Effectively

- Arts classes can be delivered safely with appropriate modifications aligned with [Washington State Department of Health guidelines](#).
- Arts classes (dance, media, music, theatre, visual arts) may look different this year, particularly the performing arts, with an emphasis on the [artistic process](#) over arts performances and exhibitions.
- Arts educators are an asset in planning and scheduling, they bring knowledge of students and facilities, which can enable the development of creative solutions.

## Specific Considerations By Arts Discipline (Not Listed Above)

<b>DANCE</b>	<p>Dance education provides essential physical activity through a creative lens, which is crucial for student physical, social, and emotional health.</p> <p>Dance instruction, both in-person and virtual, provides opportunities for learning and creative problem solving through multiple intelligences in a variety of content areas.</p> <p>Dance explores self/social identity, spatial relationships, non-verbal communication, cultural awareness, and current collective experiences relevant to students.</p>
<b>MEDIA</b>	<p>Immersed in a digital media culture, students show high interest and engagement in learning the media arts, a technology-driven art form that satisfies the human need to tell stories and explore ideas and emotions through communications, technologies, and digital formats.</p> <p>The media arts offer students choice and provides them a platform to elevate their voice.</p> <p>Fundamentals of media literacy and digital design can be taught with varied levels of technology available; from paper and pencil to digital tools and media.</p>
<b>MUSIC</b>	<p>Music classrooms create a compelling sense of community and shared self-worth.</p> <p>Stringed instruments and percussion instruments will be played wearing masks.</p> <p>Wind instruments will be played following health department guidelines and current research.</p> <p>Singing will be done following health department guidelines and current research.</p> <p>In person or virtually, music learning emphasizes musicianship, the role of music in human culture, listening, theory and composition.</p>
<b>THEATRE</b>	<p>Theatre can uniquely respond to current culture and amplify marginalized voices.</p> <p>Collaboration, student leadership, and complex problem solving are inherent to theatre.</p> <p>Theatre provides students a safe emotional outlet and develops human empathy.</p> <p>Process and conversation can be the focus, rather than emphasizing a finished performance.</p> <p>Theatre can be safely produced through online productions, radio dramas, and devised works.</p> <p>Skills that can be developed virtually include voice, acting for the camera, and self-reflection.</p>
<b>VISUAL ART</b>	<p>Visual art challenges students to envision their physical and imagined world in new ways, observe emotions, create, connect, and express their own stories. It connects us to each other, our past, and our future.</p> <p>Visual art's multi-sensory experience supports understanding of all other content areas.</p> <p>Visual art's methods and assessments work in synchronous and asynchronous environments.</p> <p>Culturally responsive and trauma-sensitive art instruction develops student voice.</p>

This document was developed by a Statewide Arts Advisory Team to emphasize the importance of the arts in a COVID-19 environment.

## Statewide Arts Education Advisory Team

Name	Title	Organization
Amada Lang	K-5 Visual Art Educator, NBCT	North Thurston School District
Ann Medellin	K-12 Music, NBCT, WASTA, WMEA, NAFME CMPL	Vancouver Public Schools
Barb Holterman	K-8 Visual Art Educator, NBPTS	Battle Ground School District
Benjamin Bouton	Choir Educator	Vancouver Public Schools
Camomile Swarts	Visual Art Educator	Vancouver Public Schools
Carol Pederson	K-12 Visual & Performing Arts Coordinator	Spokane Public Schools
Christopher White	Coordinator, Arts, World Languages, Health & Physical Education	Kent School District
Ciara McCormack	President	Dance Educators Association of Washington
Courtney Clark	Co-Executive Director	ArtsEd Washington
Dallas Myers	Language Arts/Theatre Arts Teacher	Olympia School District
David Bentley	Fine Arts Coordinator, Band Director	Mercer Island School District
Deborah Montague	District Music Coordinator, DMA	Northshore School District
Don Pearce	Choir Educator	Omak School District
Donna Schou	Photography Educator, CTE, NBCT	Edmonds School District
Erik Smith	K-5 Music & Visual Art Educator	Vancouver Public Schools
Gail Sehlhorst	Visual & Performing Arts Manager	Seattle Public Schools
Gretchen Nordleaf-Nelson	Theatre Educator, State Board Member, WA State Thespians	West Sound Academy, Poulsbo
Hannah Knauss	Student	Tahoma High School
Jackie Sacks	Dance Educator	Vancouver Public Schools
James Miles	Executive Director	Arts Corps
Jeanette Perry	K-5 Music Educator	Nooksack Valley School District
Jessica Holloway	K-12 Visual Art Curriculum Developer, NBCT	Bellevue School District
Kristina Cummins	Co-Director / Theatre Educator	Washington State Thespians / Olympia School District
Lea Mitchell	K-12 Visual Art Educator	Olympia School District
Linda Wear	K-5 Music Educator	Vancouver Public Schools
Linda Wilson	High School Ceramics	Vancouver Public Schools

Name	Title	Organization
Mac Buff	Assoc. Director of Education	Tacoma Art Museum
Manny Cawaling	Executive Director	InspireWA
Mari Atkinson	Lead Instructor, M.Ed, NBCT	Shack Art Center
Mark Moody	Visual and Media Arts Instructor, NBCT	Issaquah School District
Matt Brown	Instrumental & Choir Director	Manson School District
Maya Soto	Immediate Past President	Dance Educators Association of Washington
Mimi Katano	Executive Artistic Director	Youth Theatre Northwest
Pamela Ivezic	K-12 Instructional Services Music Coach	Seattle Public Schools
Pamelia Valentine	Visual Art Educator, NBCT, EAYA, CTE	Shelton Public Schools
Philip Denton	Choir Educator	Vancouver Public Schools
Rebecca Broyles	K-12 Visual & Media Arts Educator, NBCT	Battle Ground Public Schools
Roger Garcia	District Music Coordinator	Walla Walla School District
Sara Coiley	Theatre Educator, State Board Member, WA State Thespians	Everett Public Schools
Scott Ketron	Executive Director	Washington Music Educators Association
Scott Le Duc	IB Arts and Technology, CTE, NBCT	Olympia School District
Steve Okun	Visual Art Educator, NBCT	Lake Washington School District
Suzanne Hanson	Elementary Music Coordinator	Lake Washington School District
Susan Z. Johnson	Middle School Science, High School Digital Art, Film, NBCT	Coupeville School District
Sydney Baird	Theatre Educator, State Board Member, WA State Thespians	Central Valley School District
Tamar Krames	Arts in Education Program Manager	ArtsWA
Tracy Fortune	Co-President	Washington Art Education Association
Wendy Thompson	Movement Specialist	Vancouver School District

## For More Information:

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