



# POSITION PAPER – ARTS EDUCATION

The *Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented* supports arts education as a crucial element in our Colorado schools.

The talent development of students gifted in the arts is critical to our nation’s cultural and intellectual well-being. According to NAGC (2014), “Only through the arts can we successfully integrate our cognitive and affective selves and provide a pathway to generative learning, a pathway to creating optimal selves; namely the creation of artists. The arts should be an integral part of gifted education programs and services, regardless of the age of the learner, his or her special aptitudes, or the core subject matter of the curriculum.”

<http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/Position%20Statement/Arts%20Education%20and%20Gifted%20and%20Talented%20Students.pdf>

The arts: music, dance, theater and the visual arts are recognized as “core academic subjects” in Federal law as well as state statutes (NCLB, 2001). The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) states in its Position Paper, Fine Art Education (2014) states, “Schools with well-supported arts education also report enhanced reading, writing, and math skills; improved critical and creative thinking; and increased commitment to learning, and heightened multicultural understanding.”

According to Van Tassel-Baska, et al., (2009), “The arts provide direct opportunities for rich differentiation for gifted students. They focus on higher level thinking and feeling; they are open-ended, allowing for creative response. The arts also are challenging in respect to their complexity and invitation to go into greater depth in one’s exploration of any given art form. Finally, they are conceptual and encourage meaning-making for performer and audience alike.”

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) supports arts education through the Colorado Academic Standards in the Arts – music, dance, theater, and the visual arts. Under the Colorado Exceptional Children’s Education Act (ECEA), Gifted Education, Administrative Units must identify and program for students with exceptional abilities and talents in the arts. (ECEA- Rule Section: 2220-R-12.00 revised 2008).

Recent studies on the allocation of (school) instructional time suggest that the arts have been reduced 16% in time allotment in the majority of schools nationwide over the past 6 years (Center on Educational Policy, 2008). Yet, “studies have shown that the arts can significantly advance gifted students’ academic and creative abilities and cognitive functioning (Hetland, 2000; Seely, 1994; Walders, 2002; and Willet, 1992 as cited in Center on Educational Policy, 2008)”.

Eisner (2002) wrote “10 Lessons the Arts Teach,” which have been adopted by the National Art Education Association. These lessons provide insight into the importance of arts education for all students, our gifted students included:

1. The arts teach children to make good judgments about qualitative relationships. Unlike much of the curriculum in which correct answers and rules prevail, in the arts, it is judgment rather than rules that prevail.
2. The arts teach children that problems can have more than one solution and that questions can have more than one answer.
3. The arts celebrate multiple perspectives. One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to see and interpret the world.
4. The arts teach children that in complex forms of problem solving purposes are seldom fixed, but change with circumstance and opportunity. Learning in the arts requires the ability and a willingness to surrender to the unanticipated possibilities of the work as it unfolds.

5. 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.
6. The arts teach students that small differences can have large effects. The arts travel in subtleties.
7. The arts teach students to think through and within a material. All art forms employ some means through which images become real.
8. The arts help children learn to say what cannot be said. When children are invited to disclose what a work of art helps them feel, they must reach into their poetic capacities to find the words that will do the job.
9. The arts enable us to have experience we can have from no other source and through such experience to discover the range and variety of what we are capable of feeling.
10. The arts' position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults believe is important.

## REFERENCES

Eisner, E. (2002). *The arts and the creation of the mind*. Yale University Press. Center on Educational Policy (2008). [www.cep-dc.org](http://www.cep-dc.org)

National Association for Gifted Children (2014), Position Paper, *Fine arts education*.

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Van Tassel-Baska, J., Cross, T. L., Olenchak, F. R., (2009), "*Social-emotional curriculum with gifted and talented students*" Prufrock Press, Waco, Texas.

[www.coloradogifted.org](http://www.coloradogifted.org)

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