

# POSITION STATEMENTS

## Arts in Education

The languages of the arts are universal and elemental parts of the human experience. Arts education is imperative as a fundamental component of a well-rounded education for every Alabama student. Through participation in a high-quality, comprehensive arts education program, students engage in a variety of activities that address diverse learning styles, cultivate multiple intelligences, develop higher-order thinking skills, and build confidence to pursue lifelong learning.

## Safety and Adequacy

The arts require specialized facilities and class size limits for the activities and equipment involved in the safe production and presentation of works of art. Arts facilities must comply with local and state building codes and safety requirements; must be accessible to all students, including those with special needs; and must provide adequate space for the learning and teaching of the arts. At the most basic level, musical rehearsal and performance spaces should be designed with sensitivity to acoustics and soundproofing; dancers must have appropriate flooring for safety and responsiveness; actors in theatrical productions must have preparation areas for rehearsal, costuming, set construction, and storage; technical theatre students must have adequate rigging to support hands-on career practice of stage mechanics (lighting, sound, rigging, etc.); media artists must have access to industry-standard equipment and software, adequate space, and safety equipment for student work; and art studios must include production and storage spaces for equipment, supplies, and works in progress, including electrical, water source, and custodial services. Access to the specialized equipment essential to the production of works of art should also be part of each arts education facility. The use of personal devices and the recording of student images and work need to conform to district privacy and technology policies.

## Technology

Technology is an integral part of the arts education classroom, enhancing the curriculum and providing avenues for creative self-expression. Technology continues to develop at a rapid pace, and the arts are strong stakeholders as both teachers and students use advancing technological tools that interest, engage, and motivate students to explore the arts. Access to technology varies throughout the state; therefore, standards in this document are not dependent on a particular technology, but may be met through available local resources. However, access to current technology is recommended if students are to have opportunities for achieving arts literacy, the goal of the arts education program. Technological equipment and resources available for teacher and student use industry-standard technology and software for research, assessment, and instruction that incorporates multiple ways for obtaining information and enhancing creative expression serves to better prepare Alabama's students to achieve excellence through arts literacy. Technology, itself, is a medium for creative expression, leading to innovation in artistic processes and products, thus putting Alabama students at the forefront in college and career readiness.

## Assessment

While some aspects of the arts can be adequately measured by traditional paper and pencil tests, most others assessments require open-ended instruments such as performance-based assessments. Assessment should incorporate a broad range of performance tasks, including adjudicated competitions, performances and exhibits, portfolios, written responses, interviews, and observations. These assessments provide for demonstration of student learning and also furnish valuable feedback to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and policy-makers regarding student achievement and information useful for program growth and development. The value of the arts for individualization and differentiation of student learning cannot be measured through standardization.

## Accessibility and Equity

The arts offer powerful opportunities for reaching, motivating, and teaching all students. Therefore, local school systems are strongly encouraged to make the arts accessible to all students in all grades.

Regardless of background, talent, or ability, all students deserve access to an education in, and an understanding of, the arts. While comprehensive arts education programs benefit all students, they are particularly helpful to those who have difficulty learning in the traditional classroom. Arts education programs provide all students with opportunities to develop visual, verbal, and fine motor skills, regardless of their level of ability, and to mine their talents to be college and career ready.

## Culture

An understanding of the arts enables students to reach across social boundaries and gain insight into the values of other cultures, which is a valuable asset in the global society of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The cultural diversity of Alabama's population necessitates the learning and celebrating of many cultural traditions. Classroom experiences in the arts, therefore, should include opportunities for students to study a variety of cultures and become familiar with their artistic expressions to increase their understanding of various cultural groups. Cultural insights are broadened when students have opportunities to view exhibits in museums and art galleries; to attend dance, musical, or theatrical and media performances; and to work with artists, musicians, and performers who are invited to their schools.

## Curriculum and Program Development

The arts education curriculum should be balanced, rigorous, and sequential, and should include all five arts disciplines—dance, media, music, theatre, and visual arts. Each local school system should adopt a local arts education curriculum guide that addresses the minimum required content contained within the 2017 *Alabama Course of Study: Arts Education*. Local systems may add other standards or courses that address local needs and interests.

Some schools or school systems offer arts courses only in Grades 9-12. Specialized public arts-themed schools may offer Levels I and II in the elementary and middle grades and Levels I, II, and III in high school. School systems selecting the latter type of scheduling may develop other high school courses that provide additional arts education options for students in those grades, and systems may also expand the content and rigor of Level III in any of the arts disciplines. All school systems should provide adequate supplies, materials, and equipment that support arts education courses to ensure quality outcomes are achieved and students are college and career ready.

## Professional Development

Content standards in this course of study demand highly trained and qualified classroom teachers and certified arts specialists to design, develop, and deliver effective instruction in the arts. Reasoning skills required for mastering the rigor contained in these standards can most successfully be modeled for Alabama's students by teachers who have developed a strong pedagogical foundation in their college programs. Local school systems should provide support and encouragement for arts education teachers to continue their professional development by becoming active members in local, state, and national arts organizations, as well as serving as mentors to those new to the profession. Alabama students deserve outstanding, certified arts educators, who are well trained, highly qualified, and committed to continuing their professional growth throughout their careers.

## Role of the Audience

Although not all students will choose to pursue professional careers in the arts, many will choose to remain lifelong participants, advocates, and learners in the arts. One role that every student should play is that of appreciative, responsive audience member. This responsibility has lifelong value to the learner, as well as to the performer and the community at large. Learning appropriate audience behavior is an integral component of all of the arts education areas. Positive audience qualities are part of the overall goal of *Arts Literacy--Inspiring and Engaging Lifelong Learners*.