



# STAGE 3

## ESTABLISHING AN ARTS EDUCATION POLICY

Many districts or counties adopt an arts education policy that clearly anchors the values held by the community. This “best practice” is considered to be a key indicator in the successful delivery and sustainability of the arts. It is recommended that the Arts Team consider the value of policy development and adoption along with the plan.

The first step in policy development is for each team member to gain an understanding of shared values around arts education. It is certainly helpful to review policies developed by others, but ultimately “one size does not fit all.” Making it your own will go a long way to powering the implementation of the plan.

## REVIEWING A SAMPLE ARTS EDUCATION POLICY

The following serve as examples of an arts education policy and an arts education resolution. The “Declaration of the Rights of All Students to Equity in Arts Learning” was developed by CREATE CA and has been adopted broadly across the state. Arts Planning Teams may review both of these approaches, or develop their own custom policy.

An Arts Policy is a statement of belief and a clear declaration that the arts are core curriculum and of intrinsic value. It is important, however, for the Arts Team to carefully work through the process and decide which approach fits and/or adheres to any district or county guidelines. Some districts prefer a narrative format, others bulleted lists. Some have existing policy structures, so that an arts education policy may fit into an existing structure, rather than standing on its own.

## STAGE 3 Arts Education Policy Sample

### ARTS EDUCATION POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes that the arts, including dance, music, theatre, media arts and visual arts, are part of core curriculum for all PK-12 students and that the value and the benefits of receiving arts education has been extensively documented. The Board also recognizes that instruction in the basic skills and content knowledge of the arts develops perceptual abilities that extend to all careers and areas of life. An arts education enables students to develop an appreciation of the arts, critical and creative thinking skills, initiative, self-esteem, wellbeing and confidence. It is also recognized that in our multicultural state, the arts build bridges and help pupils broaden their perspectives and understand their world and the diverse cultural influences that surround them. Communication, imagination, and information are keys to career opportunities, education, and a life-long appreciation of the arts. Therefore: It is the policy of this School District to educate all students so they can experience, perform, produce, and appreciate the arts.

The Board of Education recognizes that a comprehensive curriculum includes sequential PK-12 instruction in the arts for all students in all grades. The arts education program should enable students to achieve the goals outlined in the Content Standards for California Public Schools, which include the Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards. The Board of Education supports the need to provide adequate funding for PK-12 Arts Education and recognizes that, in times of budget cutbacks, reductions must be distributed equitably across subject areas, rather than eliminating arts programs. In order to implement standards-based, sequential PK-12, and comprehensive arts education, with equity and access for all, the Board of Education supports the need to provide the following:

- A standards-based arts curriculum with assessment
- An Arts Coordinator(s) or Arts ToSA (Teacher on Special Assignment) who provides leadership, vision, planning, and resources for the arts
- Qualified teachers in all the arts at all grade levels and in all disciplines, supported by ongoing standards-based professional learning in the arts for classroom and arts teachers
- Opportunities during school hours for arts teachers to collaborate
- Standards-based instructional materials and resources, including, but not limited to, equipment, facilities, textbooks, and technologies that support learning
- Visual and performing arts spaces that are appropriately designed and equipped for the unique requirements of the arts
- Opportunities to showcase student learning/work in across sites and in the community
- Opportunities for students to experience a wide variety of artistic styles, venues, and performances including working with professional artists, community programs, cultural organizations, and field trips
- Opportunities for students in elementary and middle grades to work with and gain exposure to the arts programs at the other schools through school visits, assemblies, workshops, mentoring programs and other such activities
- Community resources, including business as well as parent involvement, partner with schools to provide additional supplemental funds and resources for arts programs, but this does not supplant the need for ongoing sustained, district or county level funding.
- An ongoing, inclusive, system of communications that welcomes the community into engaging in and with the arts at the district or county level.

*The Focused Conversation below is designed as a way to review sample arts education policies.*

### STAGE 3 FOCUSED CONVERSATION | Reviewing A Sample District Arts Policy

- Topic:** To review a Sample Arts Education Policy
- Purpose:** To review a sample policy that highlights the components of a comprehensive arts education system, ensuring that the Board of Education will value and sustain equitable access to the arts over time.
- Context:** We have selected a policy to review. Since we now have a good understanding of the existing arts education programs, we can develop a clear statement of beliefs about the value of, and need for arts education PK-12. Let's take a look at the sample and see where our ideas and beliefs are reflected. First we'll silently review the sample policy. Then we'll discuss what we notice, our reactions, and how the sample policy might inform our own arts policy.
- Facilitator: Use the questions below to guide the conversation. It is not necessary to ask every question, but it is recommended that they be asked in the sequence presented.
- Objective:** Name one topic that the sample policy covers.  
What is one thing you notice about how the policy is formatted?  
How would you describe the way the information is communicated?
- Reflective:** What was your first reaction to this policy?  
Where are you anxious as to whether our Board would adopt it?  
Where are you confident?  
How might the policy be helpful to furthering our goals?
- Interpretive:** What is the importance of adopting a policy?  
What kinds of changes would you suggest in the samples you reviewed?  
What other commitments or beliefs do we need to consider?  
How could we weave some of our own already existing elements into this type of a policy?  
Who do you see represented in this policy? Who is not represented?  
What questions does this raise for you?
- Decisional:** What do you recommend we include in our policy?  
What parts would you leave out?  
How will we make our policy accessible to the greater community?  
What actions will we need to take to move the policy towards adoption?  
Who would like to be on the small group that takes our ideas and writes up a draft?
- Closing:** Thank you for taking the time to review this policy. I believe we can adopt some of this language, add our own, and craft a clear message about the value of arts education in our district or county.