

6. POLICY POSITION

SUPPORTING ARTS EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH

BACKGROUND

The arts and their role in American education have been heralded, celebrated, overlooked, and ignored at various times throughout history. An arts education program encompassing all the art forms, provided by appropriately certified teachers and in safe and suitable facilities has been a luxury, afforded only by a small number of school districts. Arts education must recognize differing cultural heritages, promote visual literacy and aesthetic discrimination and develop in each of us the knowledge and skills to consume and use art in our daily lives. Ignoring the arts deprives individuals of means of expression and societies of creative development. For many educators and education-advocates, arts education is secondary.

It should be recommended that all students study the arts to discover how human beings use nonverbal symbols and communicate not only with words but with music, dance and the visual arts. The goal of arts education programs is to provide a basic, balanced, well-rounded education in the arts. A well-rounded education in the arts fosters and develops student creativity, problem-solving, production, criticism and evaluation skills as well as historical/cultural knowledge. The traits of flexibility and persistence must be developed to support those abilities. Arts education includes music, dance, the visual arts creative writing.

RECOMMENDATION

The Southern Legislative Conference recognizes the invaluable role of an arts education program in a well-rounded school curriculum and urges adoption of the following goals, strategies and objectives:

By the Year 2000, all students shall have sufficient instructional time in the arts, ...

Objective One (Curriculum)

By the year 2000, all students shall have sufficient instructional time in the arts, sequentially organized (pre K-12), developmentally challenging, and reflecting cultural inclusiveness. This should occur in all of the arts with an in-depth experience in at least one art discipline.

Objective Two (Delivery)

By the year 2000, all students shall have access to regularly offered quality arts instruction by qualified teachers.

Objective Three (Resources)

By the year 2000, each state and community shall provide access to environments and resources which promote and support lifelong learning and participation in the arts for all students.

Adopted by the Southern Legislative Conference, July 23, 1991.