



The OAAE Advocacy Network

The Ohio Alliance for Arts Education (OAAE) Advocacy Network consists of the 1) OAAE Executive Committee, 2) the Advocacy Committee of the OAAE Board of Directors, and 3) grassroots support in schools and communities. Members of the Advocacy Committee represent a variety of geographic areas of Ohio, and work with colleagues, parents, members of communities, and arts organizations to advocate for arts education. These regional advocates make up the grassroots support for the OAAE. The OAAE staff supports the Advocacy Network by providing information and technical assistance.

When the OAAE needs to take action on an issue affecting arts education, the Executive Committee determines the appropriate response, and notifies the Advocacy Committee through e-mail, fax, or phone. Members of the Advocacy Committee then notify school and community advocates in their region. The following actions might be taken: making a phone call; sending a letter to legislators or the State Board of Education about a particular issue; sending a “letter to the editor”; or requesting a meeting with a policy maker. The purpose of the Advocacy Network is to maximize grassroots response on an issue, so that decision-makers are informed and responsive to OAAE concerns.

What Do You Need to Advocate for Arts Education?

An advocate for arts education enjoys the arts, studies the arts, is informed about the arts, and supports the arts in a variety of ways. The following are some suggestions for becoming an effective advocate for arts education:

MESSAGE: Know what you want to accomplish. Make your message clear and direct. Use the OAAE Advocacy Goals on page 2 to align your message with other arts advocates in Ohio. Develop a plan to accomplish your goals.

INFORMATION OR SUPPORTING FACTS: Know the background information and the impact of your message. Use *Arts on Line* and the OAAE newsletter to stay informed. Use the “Eight Reasons to Support Quality Arts Education,” to support your message.

OPPORTUNITY: Know where, when, and how to advocate. Create opportunities by networking and meeting with policy makers to implement your plan.

PERSISTENCE: Don’t give up. Advocacy is an ongoing process. There will be setbacks, but the players are always changing, so everyday is a new opportunity.

Advocacy Agenda - Your Message

The Ohio Alliance for Arts Education’s “Advocacy Agenda” was developed through a comprehensive process in 1998, and is regularly reviewed by the OAAE Board of Directors. The Advocacy Agenda outlines goals and objectives to improve arts education in Ohio for all students, and is based on *Ohio’s Academic Content Standards for Fine Arts*, which were adopted by the State Board of Education in December 2003, and *Operating Standards for Ohio’s Schools*, revised by the State Board of Education in December 2006. The Advocacy Agenda calls for the OAAE to take a leadership role to accomplish the following:

Goal 1: The arts are included in Ohio’s “core” curriculum.

Objectives:

- a. The State Board of Education adopts academic content standards and a curriculum model for fine arts preK-12.
- b. Districts comply with state *Operating Standards for Ohio’s Schools*. Operating Standards call for a course of study for all subjects taught. The course of study should be guided by Ohio’s or other curriculum models. The course of study must also specify learning and performance objectives, establish scope and sequence of knowledge and skills, and provide a way to assess student progress and the need for intervention.
- c. Ohio students graduate with high school credits in the arts.

Goal 2: All students have access to quality preK-12 arts education programs.

Objectives:

- a. Arts education programs in Ohio’s schools are aligned with state academic content standards for fine arts.
- b. Schools and districts provide students with sufficient time and opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills to meet local performance requirements and objectives in fine arts.
- c. Appropriate assessments implemented by trained teachers are used to measure student performance in the arts, and identify students who are gifted in the arts.
- d. Arts education programs are supported with appropriately licensed teachers trained through quality institutions of higher education, appropriate facilities, adequate supplies and materials, appropriate professional development opportunities, and supervisors for fine arts programs.

Goal 3: The arts are included in statewide efforts to improve student achievement.

Objectives:

- a. Arts education programs are recognized as an instructional method to increase student achievement, increase student attendance, reach at-risk students, and develop skills for the workplace and life.
- b. Arts education programs are included in school and district continuous improvement plans.
- c. Performance indicators for arts education programs are developed and included on district and school report cards.

What is the Status of Arts Education in Ohio?

The status of arts education programs in Ohio is assessed every five years through a survey of public schools conducted by the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education, the Ohio Department of Education, and the Ohio Arts Council, with financial support from the Kennedy Center. The results are published in the *Status of Arts Education in Ohio's Schools*. The following are highlights from the results of the latest survey, which was updated in 2004:

- **Lack of sufficient time for instruction.**

Most districts reported providing between 31-60 minutes per week of instruction in visual arts and music in grades K-6. Few districts reported providing instruction in dance or drama in grades K-6. One percent of districts reported that they provide 91 to 120 minutes of instruction per week in visual art and music in grades K-6.

- **Lack of professional opportunities and support.**

34 percent of respondents reported that there are no regularly scheduled district-wide arts faculty meetings, and 60 percent of respondents reported having no curriculum supervisor for the arts in their district.

There has also been a decrease in support for arts education personnel to attend professional development opportunities since 2000. This includes a 21 percent decrease in release time; a 20 percent decrease in paid substitutes; and a 19 percent decrease in covering room and board.

- **Inadequate working conditions and facilities.**

55 percent of respondents reported that all schools in their district have an appropriate room for visual arts. 60 percent reported that all schools have an appropriate room for music.

The Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy found in their survey, "Determining the Cost of an Adequate Education: A Failed Attempt," April 2001, that 63.3 percent of "successful" schools reported inadequate facilities for teaching visual arts, and 51.9 percent reported inadequate facilities for teaching music.

- **Lack of participation in decision making and improvement activities in schools.**

60 percent of respondents reported no school improvement initiative that included the arts or the integration of arts with other academic subjects in their districts. 56 percent of respondents reported that their arts education programs are not aligned with their school's continuous improvement plan. 12 percent reported that the arts were included in district strategies and activities to improve student performance. 6 percent reported that their district included performance indicators for the arts in their district improvement plan. 78 percent of respondents reported that no supplemental information regarding the arts was included on the Local Report Card.

What is Your Comfort Level for Advocacy?

Level I - Average

- I stay informed about school, district, state, and national initiatives and research on arts education.
- I inform colleagues, parents, neighbors, family members, friends, etc. about the importance of arts education and national, state, and local initiatives. I distribute, for example, copies of *Arts on Line*, OAAE newsletters, or press releases from the Kennedy Center.
- I invite policy/law makers, the media, and supporters to attend performances and events.
- I recognize the contributions policy/law makers have made to my school/district.
- I send policy/law makers copies of newsletters, press releases, and articles about arts education.
- I thank policy/law makers for their support.

Level II – Advanced

- I join a professional organization, local arts council, coalition, or local arts organization to network and share information about arts education.
- I volunteer to work on a national, state, college, or university initiative in arts education.
- I join an advocacy network for the arts, and respond to action alerts.
- I phone, write, or e-mail policy/law makers regarding arts education issues.
- I identify one parent or community member who will also write letters, articles, or make phone calls supporting arts education.
- I make personal contacts with my legislators, members of the State Board of Education, and other policy makers in my community or in Columbus.

Level III - WOW!

- I accept a leadership role to advocate for arts education.
- I recruit other arts advocates in the community or profession.
- I reach out to those who do not support arts education.
- I establish professional, ongoing relationships with policy/law makers, reporters, editors, and producers.
- I write letters and articles for my local newspaper on a consistent basis.
- I appear on radio and TV talk shows to promote arts education.
- I meet or contact policy/law makers on a consistent basis.
- I testify before legislative committees or at State Board of Education meetings.
- I work at the national level on arts education policy issues.

Talking Points for Arts Education Advocates

What do we mean by arts education?

The arts include the disciplines of dance, drama/theater, music, and visual arts. Arts education teaches students to use acquired knowledge and skills to respond to works of art (describe, analyze, and interpret), perform existing works in the arts, and create original works in the arts.

Who supports arts education?

Many prominent national leaders agree that arts education is the key to developing creativity, knowledge, and skills for work and life in the 21st century. All major educational organizations, including the National PTA, National School Boards Association, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Endowment for the Arts, Americans for the Arts, and other organizations support arts education.

The National Conference of State Legislatures emphasized the importance of arts education in their publication *Reinventing the Wheel: A Design for Student Achievement in the 21st Century*, 1992. The National Association of State Boards of Education recommended ensuring a place for the arts in America's Schools in a study called *The Complete Curriculum*, which was released in 2003. The arts are included in the core curriculum outlined in the "Goals 2000: Educate America Act," in the "Improving America's School Act" approved by Congress in 1994, and in the "No Child Left Behind Act" 2001. All states have adopted or are planning to adopt state academic standards for the arts, and some states assess achievement in the arts, and thirty states, including Ohio, now require students to complete semesters in the arts to qualify for high school graduation. According to President George W. Bush, "From music and dance to painting and sculpting, the arts allow us to explore new worlds and to view life from another perspective. They also encourage individuals to sharpen their skills and abilities and to nurture their imagination and intellect."

How can arts education be improved in Ohio?

The arts are an essential component of a general education of high quality. The OAAE is working to provide the leadership to raise expectations for arts education for all students, promote learning opportunities in the arts, and improve arts education programs in Ohio. The following are some activities that arts education advocates can do to support achievement of OAAE goals:

- Make personal contacts with policy makers and elected officials to promote high quality arts education programs in your schools and communities.
- Build support for the arts with colleagues, parents, and community organizations, and recruit spokespersons for arts education from these groups.
- Write editorials for local newspapers that support the development and implementation of state academic content standards for the arts and adequate resources and facilities for arts education programs.
- Respond immediately to action alerts forwarded through the OAAE list serve regarding legislative and policy initiatives that may affect arts education.

For more information contact the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education at 614.224.1060 or by email at dcollins@oaae.net Visit the website at www.OAAE.net