

POSITION STATEMENT

In support of Visual & Performing Arts Consultant at the Nebraska Department of Education

This recommendation is endorsed by the following organizations:

ENDORSEMENTS

Nebraskans for the Arts
Nebraska Arts Council
Nebraska Art Teachers Association
Nebraska Music Teachers Association

Nebraska Speech Communication & Theatre Association
Nebraska State Thespians
UNO Center for Innovation in Arts Education



Background

Since 2003, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) has been without a specialist to provide leadership in the Visual and Performing Arts. The retirement of the former consultant coincided with mandatory budget cuts.

As a consequence of budget cuts, many Nebraska schools reduced the number of hours devoted to the Arts, and the quality of programs were jeopardized. Prior to 2003, this full time consultant provided leadership, technical assistance, and guidance to Nebraska schools, and was an ongoing state supported position for over twenty years.

In 1996, a grant from the US Department of Education provided funds for the creation of Nebraska's Curriculum Frameworks in the Visual and Performing Arts; however this frameworks document has not been updated or implemented since that time.

Rationale/need

► Nebraska's Administrative Rule 10 for School Accreditation *requires* Arts education in grades K-12.

► A survey conducted by the Nebraska Alliance for Arts Education (currently Nebraskans for the Arts) in partnership with the NDE, and the Nebraska Arts Council identified opinions and perceptions regarding the current state of Arts Education in Nebraska as viewed by school district administrators and K-12 Visual and Performing Arts educators.

- 90% indicated that Arts activities have generated positive media coverage for schools and/or the district.
- 67% noted that Arts programs have contributed to a school's ability to attract and retain students.
- 92% responded that Arts activities have drawn support from parents.

Although the survey results garnered a positive perception of the Arts, they also illustrated a great need for coordination in Arts Education at the state level. For example:

- 62% indicated that there is no formal Arts Education policy in place in their district.
- 66% answered that there is no designated Arts Coordinator in their district.
- 41% of the administrators surveyed do not provide opportunities for professional development for Arts Teachers.

Since the majority of Nebraska school districts lack curriculum and staff development resources in the Arts, they look to the Nebraska Department of Education to provide this function for each educational area of study within academic curriculum areas.

► The Arts have become a viable career choice. According to the Creative Industries Report issued by Americans for the Arts, Nebraska is home to 2,934 arts-related businesses that employ 13,066 people.

► There is a necessity to coordinate and support the current Arts programs within the state to create a competitive educational curriculum to prepare students for the current global market place.

Recommendation

On behalf of the arts education community, Nebraskans for the Arts recommends that a Visual and Performing Arts Consultant be reinstated at the Nebraska Department of Education. This consultant will promote the Arts as part of the essential curriculum for all Nebraska students as a member of the NDE's Curriculum and Instruction Team.

- Duties will include development of educational curriculum and standards, technical assistance, and professional development to support statewide implementation of quality Visual and Performing Arts programs in school districts, schools, and classrooms.
- As a member of the NDE's Curriculum and Instruction team, this Director will develop and maintain Arts Education as an academic contact area, as well as, promote the Arts as an essential part of education for all students.