

Visual and Performing Arts

Visual Arts, Vocal and Instrumental Music

The goal of the Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum is to provide all students at the elementary level with experiences in all four arts disciplines: visual arts, dance, music and theater. A well-balanced arts education contributes to the development of the individual, the community and society as a whole. The development of critical thinking and problem solving skills, creative expression of ideas and feelings, exploration and appreciation of other cultures and traditions and the use of technology are significant outcomes of a well-balanced arts education program.

An education in the arts provides opportunities to:

- Enhance student potential for creative decision-making;
- Utilize a wide range of skills applicable to different aspects of personal life and the workplace;
- Provide various means of expressing thoughts and ideas as individuals and as members of different groups;
- Understand the influence of an increasingly complex technological society;
- Increase awareness of human experience across history, including the artistic contributions of people from different ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds;
- Create, redesign and appreciate personal and community environments;
- Enhance the quality of life for all.

The New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for the Visual and Performing Arts cover five broad strands:

- (1.1) aesthetics
- (1.2) creation and performance
- (1.3) elements and principles of art
- (1.4) critique
- (1.5) historical, cultural and interdisciplinary

An arts education strengthens student appreciation of the world around us. The acquisition of knowledge and skills that contribute to aesthetic awareness of visual arts, dance, music and theater improves student understanding and interpretation of history and culture. It enhances self-esteem and impacts their ability to be creative and inventive decision-makers. In today's society, students face a constant media barrage of images, music and dramatic performances; education in the arts helps students to understand and appreciate these arts experiences. The ability of arts education to bind students together in shared experiences is unique because it helps students develop individually while simultaneously revealing the common bond of all humanity. Teaching in and through the arts within the context of the total school curriculum, especially during the formative years of an elementary K-5 education, is key to maximizing the benefits of the arts in education.