This paper has been approved by the executive boards of the six sponsoring organizations: SCAEA, SCDA, SCDEO, SCMEA, SCTA, SCAAE and endorsed by the South Carolina Arts Alliance and South Carolina District Arts Coordinators.

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The South Carolina Art Education Association
the South Carolina Dance Association
the South Carolina Dance Education Organization
the South Carolina Music Educators Association
the South Carolina Theatre Association
and the South Carolina Alliance for Arts Education present a position paper to encourage continued exchange among a broader constituency on critical issues regarding education reform and to achieve a shared vision for arts education.

The mission of the professional arts education associations is to promote arts education through professional development, advocacy and leadership throughout South Carolina schools. To this end, South Carolina’s professional arts organizations have a proven record of providing professional development opportunities for arts specialists, general classroom teachers, and administrators.

Further, the associations have defined the content and standards of excellence for the field of arts education.
The professional arts education associations have made, and continue to make, significant contributions to education reform. Among the most significant accomplishments of the arts education community to date are the following:

- the definition of the arts as dance, music, theatre and visual arts
- the establishment of the Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Project
- the establishment of model sites (schools and districts with arts-centered curricula)
- categorical funding for arts education including the Education Improvement Act (EIA), Arts Curricular grants, Goals 2000 and No Child Left Behind
- certification requirements for specialists in dance, music, theatre and visual arts
- the development and State Board of Education adoption of the South Carolina Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum Standards 2003
- the development of arts education summer institutes for arts teachers funded by the SC Department of Education
- inclusion in the South Carolina School Report Cards
- the development of the South Carolina Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum Guides and companion document
- the development of the South Carolina Arts Assessment Project

The South Carolina education reform movement has created new challenges and opportunities. These include regulation rollback and increased flexibility at the local level, increased emphasis on accountability both state and nationally, and the development and implementation of academic achievement standards. South Carolina professional arts education associations have collaborated to address and clarify their positions on a number of current issues. The following statements outline the associations’ shared beliefs and vision for arts education in our state.

All students should have access to a balanced, comprehensive, sequential education in the arts (dance, music, theatre and visual arts) based on the South Carolina Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum Standards. Instruction in the arts should be delivered by arts specialists. Arts specialists are teachers appropriately trained and licensed and certified by the state of South Carolina to teach dance, music, theatre or visual arts. The work of arts specialists may be supported by artists and community arts resources, but these cannot substitute for arts specialists. It is important to maintain the appropriate license/certification for dance, music, theatre and visual arts education as currently defined.

Programs of study, from pre-K through high school, should be implemented as outlined in the South Carolina Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum Standards. The South Carolina high school diploma requirements should include at least one unit in the arts (dance, music, theatre, visual arts).

The arts should be credited on the same basis as other courses in the secondary school. Grades earned in dance, music, theatre and visual arts courses should be considered in determining the grade point average and class rank of students. Colleges and universities should include arts credits earned in secondary school when calculating the grade point averages (GPAs) of applicants for admission.

Career Preparation Programs such as The Education and Economic Development Act (Pathways to Prosperity) should include courses of study that sanction career opportunities in the arts and include the arts as elective choices in all programs.

In light of the authentic education and real life learning experiences afforded by the arts, the opportunity for students to gain valuable experiences beyond the traditional school day must not be limited. Regulations governing participation should enable students to experience the full range of arts activities that augment learning. Decisions regarding academic participation requirements should be based on the merits of the activity in supporting the instructional program.

Please lend your voice in support of arts education.