

Letter from the Director

Welcome back to the first day of the rest of your lives. Well, not exactly that dramatic, but here it is, the beginning of the new school year 2008-09 and we at the Office of Arts Education are poised to help. Many of you attended our first annual "Arts on the Agenda" programs – for principals back on April 29th and for arts teachers (all disciplines) on August 29th – and we're looking forward to continuing to serve your needs as we set about our task of providing greater arts education opportunities to the students of CPS and greater service to educators in the years ahead. Welcome aboard.

We take seriously the idea that arts education is a curricular area. Nothing against terms like "enrichment," or "electives," or even "prep time," or "art-on-a-cart," but we mean business. In a public school system situated in one of the most diverse and culturally rich cities in the world it would be criminal not to take advantage of such resources! And this is the year to bring arts education to bear on the idea of whole school transformation, whether your arts programming happens before, after, or during "school." We fully embrace the idea of the school as a community center, regardless of its program designation and funding stream. A school is a social institution and one of the anchors for public culture in most neighborhoods.

We believe that dedicated and accomplished arts teachers (in all the arts disciplines) plus motivated students learning the skills necessary to master techniques that free the imagination, fuel the interpretation, and motivate the body and spirit, equals students loving learning and coming to school happy and confident. A system-wide graduation rate hovering around 50% is unacceptable and the arts can have so much more to do with keeping students on track than what might show up in the usual data collection categories. "Saved by the arts" is not just happy talk but a fact for so many of us and our students, past and present. You've heard those stories.

And maybe, come January 21, 2009, we, as a nation, can begin to think about a new federal education law that helps all kids, regardless of economic circumstance, to get a real-world, 21st-century education that "...includes the arts and physical fitness, emphasizes critical thinking, and teaches the value of active citizenship." (quoted from the "Learning Matters" blog, 8/5/08, Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers, United Federation of Teachers).

Thanks for joining us online at the Office of Arts Education and joining us in action as we discover the ways-and-means to increase high quality arts education opportunities at the third largest public school system in the United States. Have a great and joyful year of teaching and learning in the arts.

Sincerely,

David Roche

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Special Event for Teachers!

Teachers, save Tuesday, September 16 for an exciting arts opportunity! Please join OAE staff for a *Chicago Guide to Teaching and Learning in the Arts: A Teachers' Forum* from 4-6:30 p.m. on the 16th at Manuel Perez School. Dance, Music, Theater and Visual Arts teachers are invited to participate in this discussion of the Guide, a PreK-12 curriculum framework currently under development, which will include a briefing on what has been done so far and further input on how this resource can help teachers in their work.

Refreshments, CPDUs and Extended Day Pay (for the first 120 registered teachers) will be provided. Please RSVP by email only to artseducation@cps.k12.il.us by Friday, September 12. Space is limited.

Dance Highlights

OAE is pleased to be able to offer a small lending library of resources for dance specialists and teachers interested in incorporating dance in their classroom. The Dance Express Library currently includes a selection of dvds and books that are available for check out. For more information please email madiemer@cps.k12.il.us.

Visual Arts Highlights

It has been a busy summer for visual arts programs with professional development opportunities including the Rediscovering Chicago School Murals Project (July 9-10th) and OAE printmaking workshops (July 15, 16, 17th) at Anchor Graphics. Art teachers can still sign-up to participate in another two-day fall workshop for the Rediscovering Chicago School Murals Project on October 10th (9am – 3pm) and 11th (9am – 12pm). Workshop participants will receive CPDU's, a revised CPS Mural Curriculum Guide with companion supplement and a guided tour of Hidden Treasures: The Lane Tech Murals exhibit at the Chicago Cultural Center.

Music Highlights

OAE is proud to announce the audition dates for the 2008-2009 All-City Performing Groups:

Dance Ensemble, Elementary School Concert Band and Jazz Ensemble, Elementary Youth Chorus, High School Jazz Ensemble and String Ensemble audition dates are September 27, October 4 and October 11 beginning at 9:00 a.m. Location varies by group.

High School Concert Band audition dates are September 27 and October 4 beginning at 9:00 a.m. and October 8 beginning at 3:30 p.m.

High School Chorus audition dates are September 27 and October 4 beginning at 9:00 a.m. and October 7 beginning at 4:30 p.m.

Symphony Orchestra audition dates are September 27 and October 4 beginning at 9:00 a.m. and October 9 beginning at 3:30 p.m.

For more information about these auditions or the All-City Performing groups please email wbmcclellan@cps.k12.il.us or call 773-553-2236.

Visit Us on the Web!

Our website will be launching Monday! In just a few days you'll be able to visit us at www.cpsarts.org and learn more about our office and what is going on in the arts at CPS. We hope our site will be a useful resource and communication hub. cpsarts.org begins with features like an events calendar, searchable database of arts organizations and what services they provide, information about our programs including downloadable forms, information about professional development offerings and links to other online resources. In the future we plan to include online galleries of art work, photographs, and videos related to the programs run by our office. We look forward to your feedback about other ways we can serve you. Be sure to let us know if you have something you'd like to share.

Upcoming Opportunities

The Lou Conte Dance Studio Fall Open House is Sunday, September 14 from 11 a.m.—3 p.m. The day includes free introductory classes in ballet, jazz, modern, African, hip-hop, pilates and tap as well as a performance by Hubbard Street 2. For more information visit www.hubbardstreetdance.com or call 312-850-9766.

DanceAfrica Chicago Educator's Open House is coming soon! Wednesday, September 17 at 5 p.m. join DanceAfrica for this special event and learn how to integrate West Africa into your curriculum. The evening includes an overview of West African history, a live dance demonstration and a curriculum guide. Registration is required. Visit www.dusablemuseum.org/events or call 773-947-0600 for more information or to register.

Hubbard Street Dance Chicago After-School Partnership Application is due October 1! The free after-school program will select three schools in low-income Chicago communities for this year. Utilizing a creative movement curriculum, students will create original movement-based works with the assistance of HSDC's professional artists. The program also includes 20 sessions of dance curriculum, twice or three days a week during the winter (January-March 2009), an HS2 in-school performance and tickets to a performance at the Harris Theatre for Music and Dance in the spring. For more information visit www.hubbardstreetdance.com or call 312-850-9744.

For more information about the Office of Arts Education or items featured in this newsletter please contact artseducation@cps.k12.il.us or call 773-553-2170.
www.cpsarts.org