

Letter from the Director

Happy New Year and welcome to the very first newsletter from the Office of Arts Education. Now completing its first year of existence as a K-12 curricular office at Chicago Public Schools (CPS), the office is staffed by curriculum supervisors in four arts disciplines - visual arts, music, dance, and theater/ literary arts. Additional staff manages the office business and develops grant opportunities.

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Our purpose is to serve as a resource for the district to provide more students with access to a quality arts education, establish appropriate arts discipline-based learning strategies and increase the amount of funding for arts education within CPS. Currently, a dedicated Office of Arts Education website, communicating arts program information, is in construction. Arts curriculum mapping teams are convening. Current office-produced special projects include the annual All-City art exhibition, the 45th year of the All-City performing ensembles program, the 83rd year of the Citywide Music Contest (a solo and ensemble assessment and evaluation program), a poetry slam contest held on-line between three Chicago and three New York City schools, the third year of the "Having a Ball" ballroom dance program, and more.

A Chicago "Blueprint for the Arts" curriculum mapping project is now underway. Utilizing educators from within the schools as well as teaching artists, and encompassing teaching approaches ranging from "arts integration" to more "discipline-based" (i.e., art on its own terms), the Blueprint will eventually serve as a guide for professional development around teaching to national, state, and local arts standards.

Moreover, our idea of standards requires a paradigm shift to include the latest research on studio structures in the arts. The ability of teachers to model habits of mind, leading to the real education of more engaged students, may become the antidote to the narrow band of evaluation and assessment mandated by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) testing that has left nearly every child's arts education behind for the past seven years.

It's time for a change in the way we deliver arts education. Even the original proponents of NCLB understood the value of the arts in teaching for understanding by designating it as the fifth core curricular subject area. High-stakes testing and the deeper learning involved in developing habits of mind through studio work and performance are mutually exclusive. Unfortunately high-stakes testing and the metrics of quantitative data collection have the upper hand in defining success or failure in the public school sector. But learning in the arts, developing the complex self-discipline to overcome inhibitions to express emotions through sensory media, results in happier, more productive students....and schools. It needs validation through practice and experience.

The Office of Arts Education, a partnership between CPS and many non-profit arts partners in Chicago, is an office established to help bridge the gaps and model deeper educational goals. Please call on us for assistance in designing the arts education programming at your schools. Thank you.

David Roche

Save the Date!

Please mark your calendars for the **April 29, 2008** Office of Arts Education signature event at the Chicago Cultural Center. Intended for principals, AIOs, arts coordinators, and other senior staff, this will be a chance for you to learn what you can do to enhance arts education at your school. Activities will take place between 8:00 a.m.—2:30 p.m. and may include workshops on how to access new resources, demonstrations, and speakers. More details are coming soon!

Office of Arts Education Website

The Office of Arts Education official website is scheduled to launch in late April 2008. The site will serve as a resource and hub of communication for CPS teachers, arts partners and the public to access information about arts education. A temporary site is available here: http://www.cps.k12.il.us/AboutCPS/Departments/OIDA/Arts_Education/index.shtml

Dance Highlights

CPS is pleased to announce that this year's *Having a Ball* ballroom dance program began in 25 schools in December and will continue through the end of May. Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the program is able to include all 5th grade students at each school and has increased in duration from 10 to 20 weeks. We look forward to an exciting year with all of the participating schools!

Music Highlights

The annual Midwest Clinic, a band and orchestra conference held in Chicago at the Michigan Avenue Hilton and other hotels, took place in December. Over 12,000 music directors and student musicians from the USA and abroad attended, making it one of the largest gatherings of its kind in the world. Lincoln Park High School performed as the rehearsal lab band and a CPS panel discussion, "Surviving the First Five [Years]," was offered as part of the activities, all of which were free of charge.

Theater and Literary Arts Highlights

In addition to visiting a number of CPS drama programs in both elementary and high schools, the Office of Arts Education has also been working with arts partner organizations to facilitate their connections with schools. Several initiatives in the area of theater are currently underway including a partnership with the Office of eLearning on the Global Writes Poetry and Videoconferencing program, a partnership with the Auditorium Theater on the educational outreach efforts connected with the *Margaret Garner* opera, and the development of a pilot storytelling program that will provide innovative professional development opportunities. The office is also pleased to be participating in the Kennedy Center's National Partnership program with Urban Gateways. Please call our office if you are interested in theater related professional development opportunities or to connect with an arts partner.

Visual Arts Highlights

The CPS All-City High School Art Exhibition is the largest competition and exhibition of high school artistry in the Midwest. Art competitions are scheduled to begin with artwork submittals on Wednesday, January 23, 2008. Artworks selected from approximately 2500 pieces submitted are placed on exhibition at both the Museum of Science and Industry and the Museum of Contemporary Art from April 4 – May 4, 2008. All-City Art Exhibition Handbook Guidelines have been sent to high school art teachers; however, staff can also access this information online by [clicking here](#).

Elementary schools are invited to participate in the "Sweet Home Chicago" thematic art program that will culminate with an exhibition at the Gallery 37 Center for the Arts from April 18 – May 18, 2008. Participating schools will receive program guidelines and students will be encouraged to create art focusing on Chicago residents and neighborhoods.

Kudos to the Oppenheimer Family Foundation!

The 2008 Teacher Incentive grants were awarded November 29, 2007 to 445 teachers leading 181 projects. Thanks to Ted Oppenheimer and the Oppenheimer Family Foundation for providing \$225,000 worth of grants to so many worthy projects, many of them arts-discipline projects based in the fine and performing arts. Special congratulations to 2008 "Oppy Award" winner, Tracy Van Duinen, visual arts teacher at the School for Social Justice High School in Little Village for "giving voice" to kids and communities over the 11 years of his tenure with the Chicago Public Schools. For a list of this year's winning projects and more information about the Oppenheimer Family Foundation, go to <http://www.offtiq.org>

January 2008: Select Events and PDs

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23 CPS Artwork Submittals	24 CPS HS Vocal Contest Registration Due	25 Adventure Stage PD; Joffrey Ballet PD	26 CPS Piano Solo Contest
27	28	29	30 eta Creative Arts Foundation Luncheon	31 Steppenwolf Workshop	Feb 1	Feb 2 Chicago Shakespeare Theater Wrksp

Special Opportunities

Northlight Theatre is currently offering a FREE professional development workshop! "Theater in the Classroom" a toolbox of exercises, methods, ideas and plans to bring excitement to the existing curriculum. Contact Lynn Baber at lbaber@northlight.org or 847-679-9501 for more information.

Looking for a theater trip? Steppenwolf presents "Harriet Jacobs" based on [Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl](#) by Harriet Jacobs, February 5—March 29. For details please contact Audience Services at 312-335-1960.

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