

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

There has been a flurry of questions recently around professional development in the arts in the light of the 2006-2007 new state arts education budget funding. As with professional development in the other content areas, math, writing, the teachers and administrators of arts instruction must also have opportunities to engage in high quality professional development. The professional development must be grounded in the needs of teachers, their students, the content knowledge and pedagogy of the arts, be on-going and over time, build sequentially, have on-going and cumulating evaluation, and be grounded in the Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards.

Teachers of the arts, single subject arts teachers, generalist or multiple subject teachers, and administrators have varying professional development needs. Before engaging any professional development services, it is recommended that a needs assessment of the various professional development needs is completed, and a professional development plan, which reflects the needs of specific types of teachers as well whole school or district needs, is developed. The process of needs assessment and plan development can become a professional development activity itself if embedded and designed to further the participants' knowledge about standards-based arts instruction as reflected in the Visual and Performing Arts Framework. The professional development plan should reflect the content knowledge, pedagogy, and learning environment needs of the teachers while also identifying other areas of professional development needed to improve the teaching of the arts such as evaluation of instruction, development of arts education plan, development of new courses, or the writing of arts curriculum.

The state's SEA (State Education Agency) for arts education professional development is The California Arts Project (TCAP), a state subject matter project for visual and performing arts made up of a statewide network of six regional sites located on universities within California. TCAP works in partnership with K-12 schools, districts, and county offices of education to design and provide professional development focused on improving the teaching and learning in the visual and performing arts as well as arts education program evaluation, plan development, curriculum development and assessment. TCAP offers professional development services and technical assistance that meet NCLB requirements through both on-going programs and customized programs to meet schools' and districts' needs. TCAP's Executive Director is Kris Alexander kalexand@csusb.edu. TCAP may be contacted through the Leadership and Development Center, 909 537 – 7542 or through its regional site, www.tcap.net.

Many county offices of education coordinate or collaborate to offer professional development in the four arts disciplines. Contact your County Office of Education or contact Sarah Anderberg of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) at sanderberg@ccsesa.org for references to county CCSESA project work. Universities may also provide opportunities for teachers of the arts. There are outside agencies that may be able assist with the professional development through partnering with the district, county offices of education or with TCAP. The Community for Arts Education Project (CAEP) guideline, offered by the PTA as part of its SMARTS: Bring Back the Arts work, may provide additional guidance. That guide is available at <http://www.capta.org/sections/programs-smarts/index.cfm>.

Should you have questions, please contact your Visual and Performing Arts Consultant at the California Department of Education, Nancy Carr at ncarr@cde.ca.gov.