



THE CENTER FOR ARTS EDUCATION

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The DOE Blueprint: Your questions answered

WHEN the Department of Education (DOE) announced it was going to create a blueprint for the arts, people were excited and curious. Since the *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts* was issued, there have been questions. The Center interviewed teachers, principals, teaching artists, Regional Arts Supervisors, parents and other interested parties. Dr. Sharon Dunn, Senior Instructional Manager at the DOE's Office of Arts and Special Projects, answers the most frequently asked questions. All of Dr. Dunn's answers appear in their entirety. If you still have questions, there is an email address to which they can be directed at the end of the interview.

What is the Blueprint for the Arts?

A sequential approach to teaching and learning in visual arts and music for students from kindergarten through grade 12. A parallel document for dance and theater is underway and will be ready by June 2005.

Whose idea was it and what is its purpose?

Chancellor Klein asked for it to be developed to provide schools with a standardized, high-quality approach to teaching and learning in the arts.

What role did teachers play in its design?

Teachers were involved in the planning and writing of the Blueprint, as well as the design and development of the training program.

How is the Blueprint being introduced to teachers?

Through a comprehensive training program begun in the summer of 2004 and following up with four opportunities throughout the 2004–2005 school year.

How can general classroom teachers (as distinct from arts specialists) make use of the Blueprint?

The Blueprint is designed to focus on the teaching of the art form through five different strands: Arts Making; Literacy in



Photo: Courtesy of The Center for Arts Education

Dr. Sharon Dunn, Senior Instructional Manager at the DOE's Office of Arts and Special Projects.

the Art Form; Making Connections; Community and Cultural Resources; and Careers and Life-long Learning. Classroom teachers can use the Blueprint to connect arts experiences to social studies, science, literacy—virtually every art form. They can do artist studies, examine works of art, music, dance or theater in historical and social contexts. There are many worthwhile connections for classroom teachers to implement.

Will there be a step-by-step procedure for teachers to teach the Blueprint?

There is a plan for ongoing professional development that will support teachers as they work through the Blueprint with their students. It is not a step-by-step approach so much as a sequential set of experiences that students should have over time.

What role did cultural organizations play in its design?

Cultural organizations served in varying capacities, including writing, training and implementation.

How is the Blueprint being introduced to the cultural community?

The cultural community has already been introduced to the Blueprint as contributors, reviewers, trainers and through attendance at the teacher training programs that were offered this past summer.

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The DOE Blueprint: Your questions answered *(continued)*

Were artists involved in its design? How?

Teaching artists representing various arts organizations participated in the development of the Blueprint as well as the training program.

What are the implications for Teaching Artists in implementing this document? Will Teaching Artists receive any training on how to implement the Blueprint?

The Blueprint provides a rich and stimulating approach to the teaching of art and music. Artists can work with arts teachers to share expertise, knowledge and skills in support of the five strands of the Blueprint.

How will the Blueprint help schools that don't have licensed arts specialists on staff?

It will help them understand what they need to implement an effective arts program.

How can parents make use of it?

It can help them understand the requirements for arts education and help guide their assessment of the program being provided in their children's schools.

Were parents involved in its design?

Not to my knowledge.

Does the Blueprint address students with special needs?

The Blueprint can be adapted for students with special needs.

How will arts instruction be monitored and evaluated?

As always, supervised by principals and Regional Arts Supervisors, as well as through a process of self-assessment based on professional development.

What is the difference between this document and the pink and black Learning Standards for the Arts booklet?

The Blueprint incorporates the standards set by NY State and goes beyond it to offer concrete approaches to the teaching of the art form at varying levels. It also requires that schools take advantage of cultural resources, including teaching artists.

What are the incentives for principals and arts specialists to use the Blueprint?

Project ARTS funds, materials, resources, training for teachers and, most of all, benefits for students.

Are there consequences for noncompliance if they don't? How are they being held accountable?

Schools without arts education cannot receive Project ARTS funds.

How can I get a copy of the Blueprint?

The Blueprint is available on the Project ARTS web site, www.nycboe.net/projectarts, under the icon for "Curriculum."

How is the Blueprint being introduced to principals?

The principals have received the Blueprint at their schools. Their arts teachers have been trained in its implementation. In addition, we will be holding citywide forums for principals later this fall.

If I still have questions about the Blueprint, who can I call?

Email your questions to: artsandspecialprojects@nycboe.net 

For more information about The Center for Arts Education, please visit our web site at www.cae-nyc.org