



ARTS FIRST

formally came into existence when the Hawai'i State Legislature enacted ACT 80/99 in 1999. The enabling legislation named the arts as a core subject in Hawai'i prior to a national mandate. It also called for Hawai'i's major stakeholders in arts education to revise the State's Fine Arts standards and develop a strategic plan. In 2001, ACT 306/01 was passed into law formally naming the ARTS FIRST Partners and mandating the implementation of the strategic plan.

The Partners

The ARTS FIRST Partners, also known as the Hawai'i Arts Education Partners, are as follows: Hawai'i Department of Education; Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools; College of Arts and Humanities, University of Hawai'i at Manoa; College of Education, University of Hawai'i at Manoa; State Foundation on Culture and the Arts; and Hawai'i Arts Alliance. By their respective legal mandates, the constituencies of the ARTS FIRST Partners collectively represent the people of Hawai'i.

The Strategic Plan

The goals of ARTS FIRST *Hawai'i Strategic Plan for Arts Education 2001-2006* and *2006-2010* are twofold:

1) to guarantee a comprehensive arts education based on the Hawai'i Content and Performance Standards for every elementary student in the State; and 2) to enable every high school student to achieve the standards in one or more of the arts disciplines by grade 12. The plan builds upon four objectives - **Advocacy, Research, Teaching, Standards.**

Accomplishments

The ARTS FIRST project was purposefully designed to strengthen the capacity of each partner so that the vision of every student keenly experiencing a quality arts education is cooperatively realized. In doing so, the Partners continue to address, with great success, the four objectives outlined in the strategic plan. Key accomplishments are as follows:

- Revised the Hawai'i Content and Performance Standards for Fine Arts in 2000. Subsequently reassessed the standards against the legal mandates of the federal legislation, No Child Left Behind;
- Conceptualized, developed, and published its ARTS FIRST Essential Arts Toolkit for K-5, generalist classroom teachers. The *Toolkit* provides a standards-based framework that integrates the arts into curriculum linked with other core subjects such as math, science, language arts, and social studies. The toolkit is organized into three "Big Ideas": 1) How the Arts are Organized (Elements and Principles); 2) How the Arts Communicate (Performance and Exhibits); and 3) How the Arts Shape and Reflect Culture (History and Culture). The assessments components incorporate creating, performing, and responding (Critical Thinking). The *Toolkit*, now in its 2nd edition, has been adopted by the Hawai'i Department of Education and is made available to private schools in Hawai'i;
- Secured funding for 2003-2006 and 2006-2010 from U.S. Department of Education for two arts in education model development and dissemination research projects designed to scientifically evaluate the impact of arts learning using the *Essential Arts Toolkit*;
- Annually offered professional development for classroom teachers and teaching artists through its ARTS FIRST Institutes using the *Essential Arts Toolkit*; and
- Partnered with Apple Computer to develop the Hawai'i Learning Interchange, making arts-integrated curriculum electronically available to educators through the web-based site, apple.com/ali/hawaii. (1 of 5 fully funded National Endowment for the Arts Challenge America Grants).

"Never before has a state invested in training and empowering a group of teaching artists to work with educators, administrators, legislators and the public. As an outsider who has worked with teaching artists in all 48 mainland states, you have something precious: a team that can outmatch any in the country."

Dr. Eric Booth, Artistic Director of Mentoring at Juilliard School, faculty of the Education Department at John F. Kennedy Center of the Performing Arts, and Editor of "The Teaching Artist Journal"
Concluding remarks; Three-day, statewide teaching artist workshop in Hawai'i on the island of Maui - November 2004