



**TO:** Higher Education Committee and Cultural Education Committee

**FROM:** John L. D'Agati

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**SUBJECT:** The Arts in Elementary Education Preparation

**DATE:** October 2, 2012

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**

Issue for Discussion

This item is presented for discussion and information.

Reason(s) for Consideration

For Discussion.

Proposed Handling

This Item will come before the Higher Education Committee and Cultural Education Committee at its October 2012 meeting for discussion.

Procedural History

In 1996, the Board of Regents adopted the State Learning Standards, which included The Arts as one of the seven broad learning standard areas. In 2004, the Board discussed and then adopted new requirements for the preparation of teachers to ensure that teachers were prepared to teach to the Learning Standards.

Background Information

Prior to 2000, preparation in "the arts" was not a New York State requirement for childhood (elementary) education candidates. Some teacher preparation programs may have included the arts as part of good practice to prepare the candidate for the scope of responsibilities for a "common branch teacher." For example, a program may have

required three credits in music, theater and/or art as a college program requirement, not a State requirement. Common branch subjects are defined in Part 80 1.1(b)(11) of the Commissioner's Regulations as any or all of the subjects usually included in the daily program of an elementary school classroom such as arithmetic, civics, visual arts, elementary science, English language, geography, history, hygiene, physical activities, practical arts, reading, music, writing, and such other similar subjects. However there was nothing in regulation requiring specific curriculum in the arts for elementary teacher education candidates.

In 1996, the Board of Regents adopted the current 28 State Learning Standards in seven broad areas of knowledge; one area was The Arts. There are four Arts standards including responding to and analyzing works of art, knowing and using art materials and resources, understanding the cultural dimensions and contributions of the arts and creating, performing and participating in the arts. In 1998 the Board of Regents adopted a new teaching policy to strengthen teaching and learning, *New York's Commitment: Teaching to Higher Standards*. The revised Regulations were adopted in 1999 with new requirements for programs preparing classroom teachers for the new teaching certificates that SED would begin to issue in 2004. It was at this time that "the arts" was formally introduced to teacher preparation programs as a program registration requirement.

By 2004, teacher preparation programs were revised and reregistered. The purpose of the new requirements was to ensure that teachers would be well prepared to teach all children in their classrooms according to the State Learning Standards.

The revised and reregistered teacher education programs require that:

- All candidates complete a general education core in the liberal arts and sciences;
- The pedagogical core be more comprehensive, requiring all teachers to be prepared to teach all students in their classes and include specified study, field experiences of at least 100 hours, and student teaching at two grade levels totaling at least 40 days;
- Childhood education teacher candidates are required to complete a major or concentration of at least 30 semester hours in one or more of the liberal arts and sciences. The major in combination with other required study shall ensure that the candidate has a knowledge base for teaching to the State Learning Standards for students in the elementary grades, as prescribed in Part 100, and includes, but is not limited to, the State Learning Standards for the arts.

In total, over 3,500 modified programs were submitted to SED, reviewed by Department staff, and re-registered based on written descriptions of compliance with the new standards so they could continue to operate.

State Education Department (SED) staff reviewed the applications to ensure some coverage of the arts was included in the programs. Evidence of this requirement could range from one art course to a list of electives in the visual arts, to a required (by the program) course on art history or a method of teaching music and art to elementary children.

In February 2004, all candidates recommended, or applying, for Childhood Education certification had to take the new State exams, which consisted of the following: Liberal Arts and Sciences Test (LAST); Assessment of Teaching Skills – Written (ATS-W); and the Multi-Subject Content Specialty Test (CST). The Multi-Subject CST assesses, among other subjects, knowledge of the arts.

### Other States

New York State is not alone in requiring elementary teachers to have a knowledge base to teach a wide range of subject matter including the arts. Like New York State, the other states provide that there be coverage of the subject area, but not a prescriptive credit requirement.

### **Massachusetts**

Massachusetts includes in an approved elementary teacher education program: Reading theory, research, and practice; English; Mathematics; History and Social Science; Science and Technology/Engineering; Science laboratory work; Child development; instructing students with disabilities; principles and concepts in each of the following; visual and performing arts (art, music, drama/theater, dance), physical education and personal and family health. Many of these subject areas are tested in the state certification tests, however not visual and performing arts.

### **California**

California requires study in the visual and performing arts for elementary teachers. Study must include basic knowledge of the subjects commonly taught in elementary schools including: literature and language studies; mathematics; visual and performing arts; physical education; history and social studies, science; as well as human development. The California Multi Subject Assessment for Teacher exam tests for knowledge in the visual and performing arts.

### **Illinois**

Illinois defines the content knowledge required of elementary teachers as study in English language arts, mathematics, science, social sciences, physical development and health. A section on Art, Health and Physical Education is included on the Illinois test for teacher certification.

## **Florida**

Florida lists the following competencies and skills as required for teacher certification K-6: language arts and reading, social science, music, visual arts, physical education, and health, science and technology and mathematics. These topics are included on the Florida test for certification.

## **Recommendation**

Not Applicable