



Teach the Arts for a Well-Rounded Education!

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**Testimony for the House Education and Career Readiness Committee
Senate Bill 216 (M. Huffman)
Tim Katz, Executive Director
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Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee:

The Ohio Alliance for Arts Education (OAAE) appreciates this opportunity to present our continuing concerns in response to Substitute Senate Bill 216 (Huffman) the Ohio Public School Deregulation Act.

We recognize and are grateful for your work to pass Amendment 1962X2 (Topic: Multi-age Area Specific Teaching Licenses) on May 23rd of this year which directly addresses concerns of many regarding the security of the multi-age preK-12 teaching license.

The issue that remains of great concern to our statewide board and membership has to do with what general educators, licensed under SB216's proposed new preK-5 grade band, will be certified to teach. More specifically: Will the preK-5 license certify elementary school general classroom teachers to teach the arts (defined in Ohio as music, visual arts, theatre/drama, and dance) in the way that the current preK-3 license does? We would be strongly opposed to such an arts certification for preK-5 classroom teachers. To date there has been no response to nor resolution of this potentially significant problem. This issue is not mitigated by the May 23rd amendment mentioned above.

The important point to note is: Currently generalist elementary school classroom teachers with the preK-to-grade 3 license (and those teachers with the "grandfathered" K-8 license; there are fewer of these remaining) are considered "certified" to teach the arts under Ohio Administrative Code rules. Course requirements for teaching the arts under the preK-to-grade 3 license are extremely minimal when compared to someone earning the multi-age preK-to-grade 12 license to teach the arts specifically.

At Kent State University, for example, the only arts requirements to earn a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education to teach all subjects, including the arts, in grades preK through grade three, are a 3-credit course, “Music and Rhythms in Preprimary Education,” and 9 credit hours of “Humanities and Fine Arts.”¹ We believe the standard may be even lower for some other universities’ education degree programs.

Again, there are many implications here in the areas of pre-service teacher training in university degree programs, teacher hiring practices, and most important, the quality of teaching at all grade levels aligned with Ohio’s Fine Arts Content Standards. We believe a preK-to-grade 5 license that allows general teachers to teach the arts would seriously undermine the quality of standards-based arts education in Ohio.

The OAAE requests that a provision be added to SB216 specifying that all courses in the arts at all grade levels be taught by a teacher with a multi-age, preK-12 license in a specific arts discipline of dance, drama, music, or visual art, or an equivalent license in a specific area. A similar provision in Ohio law exists for the teaching of physical education, and this should be done for arts education as well.

The OAAE believes that teachers with the multi-age license in the arts will best provide age appropriate instruction, content knowledge, and professional expertise to guide students to achieve at the highest levels in the arts, a subject area now clearly recognized for the direct development in students of key attributes sought by employers in the 21st century marketplace, including design thinking, cooperation and collaboration, effective communication, problem solving, and leadership.

Thank you for considering our comments and recommendations.

¹ Kent State Course Requirement Catalog at <http://catalog-archive.kent.edu/archive/catalog/2016/eh/ug/ecde6614.html?requirement=ecde-BSE-progreq>
<http://catalog-archive.kent.edu/archive/catalog/2016/info/courseinformation/kent-core.html#Humanities>