

**SOFA**

Save Our Fine Arts



Music is one way for young people to connect with themselves;  
it is also a bridge for connecting with others.  
Through music, we can introduce children to the richness  
and diversity of the human family and to the myriad rhythms of life.

Daniel A. Carp, Eastman Kodak Company Chairman and CEO.

## **Why should you be Concerned?**

*Alberta Education (Alberta Government)* will be introducing a new proposed framework for Arts Education (music, drama, dance, visual arts) over the next few years. This will affect all students at public, catholic, and charter schools.

One of the main reasons why the changes are being proposed is to reduce the overall cost of education. Alberta's Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system accounts for 17 percent of the overall provincial budget. According to Susan McLeod, Curriculum Manager for Arts Education at *Alberta Education*, "...the revision process for curriculum is not immune to current economic reality. Indeed, all departments in Alberta Education have been affected by economic realities. Arts Education is no exception."

If you are interested in viewing the framework, please type in the following web address:

<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/finearts/program-updates.aspx>.

## **Our Concerns about the Proposed Curriculum Changes**

While the main body of the document lays out the importance and role of Arts Education, the program organization is problematic. Essentially, it presents an opportunity to "dabble" in the arts Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Key areas of concern include:

- To achieve a high level of proficiency in the fine arts, this requires a curriculum that allows for sequential skill development between junior high and high schools. This is not what is proposed by the new curriculum
- There will be an Elementary School focus on "learning through the arts" in an integrated curriculum "accessible to both the specialist and generalist equally". This implies a watering down of mandatory components.
- There will be a junior high school addition of an
  - "Arts Exploration" stream implying project work about the arts rather than active participation in the arts.
  - "Arts Focus" stream with multiple entry points resulting in loss of cohesion, loss of ensemble possibilities and lack of sequential learning.

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- There will be a senior high school focus on choice and flexibility at the cost of rigorous spiral learning and skill development – proposed offering of 25 hour 1-credit mini-courses with no prerequisites at the 10 level. This will result in students with an unmanageable range of experience and skill level.
- It appears to take an academic approach to music, and not necessarily a performance based approach.
- *Alberta Education* is suggesting offering exploratory courses, yet resources and teachers are not available to do so.
- Locally developed programming (i.e. band, choir, dance and drama ensembles) will likely disappear at all schools
- The intrinsic value of arts education will be lost if integrated into other subjects and used simply for academic gains.
- Fine arts do not lend themselves to dabbling, and the development of skill sets and appreciation takes time. A modular approach may provide only a token sampling of the arts experience.

### **Are you willing to get involved?**

Are you concerned about the changes the Alberta Government is considering? Are you interested in becoming more informed? **For the sake of your son or daughter**, are you willing to join a "Call to Action" with thousands of other concerned parents, students, educators, entertainers, and arts industry executive? If so, please consider the following:

- Check out our [www.saveourfinearts.ca](http://www.saveourfinearts.ca) website for regular for updates and register to become part of our "Call to Action".
- Check out the *Facebook* site called "*Petition Against New Alberta Fine Arts Curriculum.*" High School students in Calgary set up this site to keep others informed and they have over 7,000 followers
- We encourage you to pass this information along to other interested parties. These could be members of the community, artists of all kinds, parents in other schools, parents of students who are pursuing other fine arts programs. Please provide them the link above and encourage them to register as well. This way, they will also be kept informed of proposed changes.
- Write letters or emails to government officials. Under the "Call to Action" section of our [www.saveourfinearts.ca](http://www.saveourfinearts.ca) website, you will be able to find an information package, sample letters, and a listing of all relevant email addresses and contact information.
- Tell the Alberta Government what you think of the proposed changes by responding to their survey at the following web address:

<https://phoenix.edc.gov.ab.ca/surveys/web/cgi-bin/qwebcorporate.cgi?idx=Z44JJX>

They will consider responses submitted from parents, teachers, and students **until January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010.**

If you have any questions regarding the above, please send an email to **saveourfinearts@gmail.com**. One of our SOFA (*Save Our Fine Arts*) Committee will respond.

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