

HIGHER ORDER THINKING SCHOOLS
strong arts arts integration democratic practice



Colored pencils await participants at the 2014 HOT Schools Summer Institute.

WELCOME BACK!

I love the fall – with a crisp newness to the air, children picking apples, fairs to celebrate communities, and school doors around the country open to first steps, new ideas and fresh starts. So much has happened since publishing our last HOT Schools Newsletter. We have received very positive results from consultant Sheila Byrd, studying the alignment between HOT practices and Common Core, we have a calendar of events ready to go for this school year, and we are thrilled to be working closely with the Connecticut State Department of Education as it rolls out its new Arts Education grant program (see pg. 2). You will hear more about these initiatives as the year rolls on. But first, this issue will allow you a peek into the 2014 HOT Schools Summer Institute where we inspired new schools and welcomed educators from as far away as North Dakota. Feel for yourself, the winds of change in thinking and in practice. Be inspired! It's going to be a terrific year!

Bonnie



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New Grant Program to Strengthen Arts in Education

Connecticut State Department of Education
Stefan Pryor, Commissioner
August 19, 2014

(Hartford, CT) — The Connecticut State Department of Education today announced a new grant program to strengthen the arts in education.

The State Department of Education (SDE) has joined with the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), Connecticut Office of the Arts and the Connecticut Arts Council to provide mini-grants of up to \$50,000 for schools to enhance arts instruction through partnerships with local and state arts institutions, organizations, and artists.

“When we expose our young people to the arts, we give them the chance to explore a world far beyond their immediate surroundings,” said Governor Dannel P. Malloy. “These cultural investments will directly enrich lives of students and allow us to preserve and enhance the humanities across Connecticut schools.”

Speaking Tuesday at the state’s annual Back to School meeting for superintendents, Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor announced that up to \$250,000 will be made available to schools statewide in this first round of funding.

“Inclusion of the arts is essential to ensuring a high-quality and well-rounded educational experience for students,” Commissioner Pryor said. “These funds will help schools strengthen their arts programming by encouraging them to form meaningful partnerships with local and statewide arts organizations and institutions.”

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HOT SCHOOLS EVENTS CALENDAR

👉 **OPEN** 👉 to Non-HOT Schools Participants,
Registration Required, **CLICK TO REGISTER!**

WED, OCT 1 **Principal & Site Coordinator Mtg**
9–3:30PM Community Health Center, Middletown

THU, OCT 2 👉 **Fall TAC Planning** 👉
9–3:30PM Long Wharf Theatre, New Haven

THU, OCT 9 👉 **HOT Schools Orientation** 👉
9–3:30PM John Lyman School, Middlefield

FRI-SAT, OCT 24-25 👉 **Mini-Institute** 👉
9AM FRI–4PM SAT Heritage Hotel, Southbury

FRI, NOV 21 👉 **Peer Partner Day—Music** 👉
9–3:30PM Location to be announced

THU, JAN 15 **Site Coordinator Mtg**
9–3:30PM Community Health Center, Middletown

FRI, JAN 30 👉 **Spring TAC Planning** 👉
9–3:30PM New Britain Museum of American Art

WED, FEB 11 **Principal Mtg**
9–3:30PM New Britain Museum of American Art

FRI, MAR 27 👉 **Parent Orientation Day** 👉
10–2PM Hill-Stead Museum, Farmington

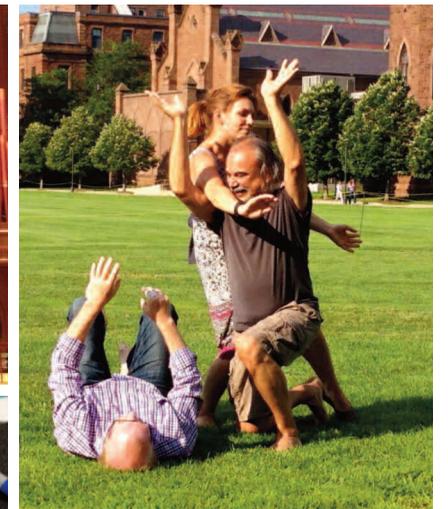
FRI, APR 10 **Peer Partner Day—Library Media**
9–3:30PM Goodspeed Opera House, East Haddam

FRI, MAY 8 **Site Coordinator Mtg**
9–3:30PM Florence Griswold Museum, Old Lyme

FRI, MAY 22 **Principal Mtg**
9–3:30PM Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury

MON-FRI, JUL 13-17 👉 **Summer Institute 2015** 👉
Location to be announced

THERE IS NOTHING COMMON SCENES FROM THE 2014 ABOUT OUR CORE 21ST ANNUAL HOT SCHOOLS SUMMER INSTITUTE



Summer Institute Opening Remarks

—Bonnie Koba, Director, HOT Schools

The following is excerpted from Bonnie Koba's opening remarks at the 2014 Higher Order Thinking Schools Summer Institute—There Is Nothing Common About Our Core.

It's been a heck of a year for educators. I think one of the most difficult I've known in all 21 years of HOT Schools. We hear from principals and site coordinators and teaching artists – at every turn – how overwhelmed teachers have been this year between Common Core, SBAC, Teacher evaluations, SLO's, and more, and more, and more.

I wish I had a magic wand and could wave it all away for you. But I don't and I can't. Instead I'm going to ask you to embrace the change. Find what's positive in it and figure out how to make it work for you – and for your students. And I'm going to ask you to do it together. This is an incredible learning community. The person sitting to your left and to your right holds extraordinary skills and talents and knowledge. Reach out. Network. Discuss. Explore. Take support from one another when you need it and give it to each other when you can.

It's become a bit of a ritual for me to address this body every July and talk about the year's new shift or new requirement in education – and then to explain – almost as a rite of passage into the “new” thinking – that if we stay true to our beliefs:

- that education in, about, and through the arts helps students develop critical thinking abilities, independent judgment and creative problem solving skills;
- that we value the arts for their intrinsic worth as well as for their ability to impact teaching and learning;

- that HOT practices and strategies stimulate students' curiosity, ignite their sense of wonder, empower students so they feel invested in their school and in their learning, and steer students toward a journey of lifelong learning;

- that the arts and democratic practice provide students numerous outlets for expression and for reinforcement of the intrinsic value of their thoughts;

- and that the marriage of strong arts, arts integration, and democratic practice – the core components of HOT Schools – is a powerful model for preparing students to engage and persevere, work as part of a team, and ultimately, to be successful contributors, communicators, imagineers, creators, and innovators, in this 21st century

...then we know we are on the right track. And must weather the bumps, maybe refit to absorb them a bit – **but stay the course.**

There Is Nothing Common About Our Core.

What does this mean? What is different or uncommon about us? About HOT Schools? What sets HOT Schools apart from myriad other arts focused programs?

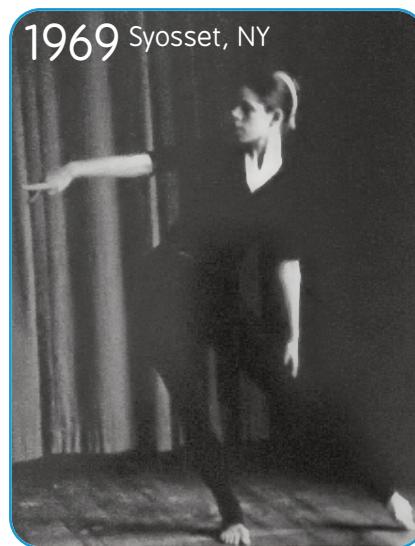
This year, we reinstated the HOT Schools coach facilitator role. Betty Hadlock visited each HOT School and spoke with staff and students. In an interview at Integrated Day Charter School in Norwich one student said, “*We are very integrated with the arts. It's creative and fun with every subject. It would be boring without the arts integration.*” Then the student added,

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Decades of Creative Dance

—L'Ana Burton, Connecticut Office of the Arts Teaching Artist

It has been several weeks since I returned home from the 21st Annual HOT Schools Summer Institute and I continue to feel energized. The Summer Institute was filled with tools for teachers, principals and teaching artists. As it is every year, the week is invaluable. I have been a Connecticut Office of the Arts Teaching Artist since HOT Schools' inception 21 years ago and have taught upwards of 50 arts residencies in HOT schools as well as non-HOT schools throughout Connecticut. Every year, as I depart the 5-day institute, I experience a surge of energy that I harness and reflect upon before I release myself into summer relaxation. This year I found myself reflecting upon when I first discovered, the dance form, Creative Dance. I grew up dancing, but never had heard of Creative Dance until I was 17 years old.



As a child, I studied ballet under the tutelage of Madame Vera and Serge Vladimiroff in Glen Cove, Long Island. Later as a high school senior, I commuted to New York City to study at the Joffrey School of Ballet and at the American Ballet Theatre. I soon realized that I would not fit into the very profession that I had practiced for and longed to be a part of. The reason: my body and my spirit did not flourish within the rigidity of ballet. Undaunted, I sought out other opportunities for dance and expression through movement.

It wasn't long after this realization that I attended a workshop at Adelphi University, instructed by Merce Cunningham Dance Company member Bruce King (1925-1993). It was there that I discovered something that changed everything for me. During the workshop Bruce led a class for pre-school children while the workshop participants, myself included, observed his method and style. As Bruce instructed, I was able to observe the children's joy—and it was a pure, unadulterated joy—as they ran and leapt and made shapes, created tunnels, bridges and roads with their bodies. Bruce was teaching Creative Dance.

With a flash of insight, I knew that this was to become my pathway to discovering one's own movement and to instructing others to discover their own individual, and therefore personally meaningful, movement vocabularies. I discovered a new form of dance. Rather than mastering the inspired technique of Martha Graham, or the precise and disciplined technique of ballet, I realized that this form of dance, Creative Dance, was for me. And from that day onward I knew that I should refer to myself, and every student I would ever meet, as a dancer. The year was 1969.

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Next Issue: Don Cooper sounds off on HOT

HOT SCHOOLS DIRECTORY

Alcott Elementary School
Wolcott

Columbus Magnet School
Norwalk

Gaffney Elementary School
New Britain

High School in the Community
New Haven

Integrated Day Charter School
Norwich

Jack Jackter Intermediate School
Colchester

John C. Daniels School
New Haven

John Lyman Elementary School
Middlefield

Kinsella Magnet School
Hartford

Lincoln Middle School
Meriden

Martin Elementary School
Manchester

Pleasant Valley Elementary School
South Windsor

Samuel Staples Elementary School
Easton

Worthington Hooker School
New Haven

Bonnie Koba
Director

Amy Goldbas
Associate Director for Programming

Christopher Eaves
Associate Director for Professional Development

The World's Biggest Thank You

—Geoff Ponticelli, GR K–2 Teacher, Gaffney Elementary

Following the Summer Institute we receive thank you's from teachers, principals, artists and parents talking about the great experiences they had, how impactful certain sessions were, how they plan to use what they learned, and how eager they are for the new school year to begin. The following 2-part contribution from Gaffney Elementary School's Geoffrey Ponticelli is a thank you he wrote the day after the Institute and a follow-up note telling us how things are going 2 weeks into the school year. Geoff was one of an 11 member team to attend the Institute from Gaffney this year. His enthusiasm is contagious and his colleagues are catching it!

Dear Bonnie and Amy,

I can't thank you enough for this truly amazing and wonderful experience I was able to have during the HOT Schools Summer Institute. Every year Friday comes, and we get to share our experiences on stage as a school. It is a bittersweet moment. I get to share what I've learned and that makes me happy, but I know when the last act is over it is time to say goodbye. I worked very hard this past year at Gaffney – to get the staff as well as the students, to engage more fully in the HOT Approach. We are not there yet... but we are getting closer. I truly can't thank you all enough. The countdown is on for Summer 2015... see you all in 354 days!

From Celeste's class, which took me completely out of my comfort zone to Sanna's class where I was given my first true visual arts lesson in my life to Nancy's class where I learned so many new ideas and techniques surrounding Democratic Practice... there wasn't a moment that I would change. It was a week I won't forget!

If someone was to tell me 2 weeks ago, I was going to incorporate dancing in my lessons each week; I would have thought they were crazy. Yet, I just spent the past 2 days writing lesson plans geared towards teaching categories to Kindergarten and First grade students (foods, furniture, modes of transportation, colors, etc.) through dancing! I was taught that anyone can dance. "Dance is movement with intent." I was petrified walking into a dance studio for the first time. I was petrified, unsure, scared. It completely removed me from my comfort zone and with that feeling I knew how my students feel everyday when a lesson taught to them is too hard, too challenging, or too stressful. I teach students in Kindergarten, First and Second

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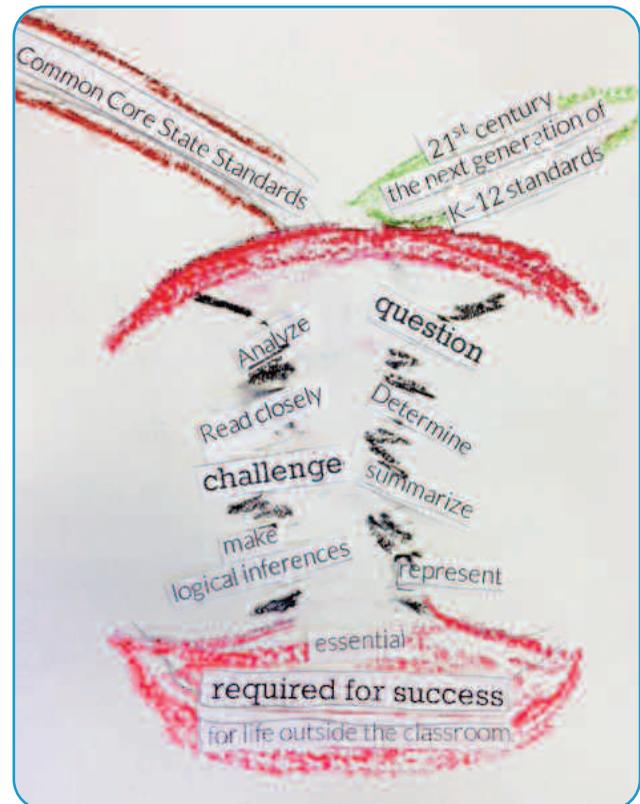
To the “Core” of CCSS

—Katie Belden, Reading Consultant,
Pleasant Valley Elementary School

As a reading consultant, I support students and teachers alike. A favorite aspect of my job is instilling a love for reading. And, my job does not stop with igniting the literacy spark but also includes keeping it brightly burning, especially as text complexity is at the forefront of literacy education. As a former special education teacher, I was always looking for ways to make the curriculum accessible for my students. As a reading consultant I continue to strive for such accessibility.

In the wake of CCSS, teachers continue to be challenged daily with engaging their students, crossing curricular areas and steadily raising the bar in order to ensure their students are college ready. As HOT Schools educators, we seek experiences that students will remember both inside and outside of the classroom. Integrating the arts into the curriculum is a way for teachers to reach all types of learners and is practically guaranteed to make learning a more meaningful experience.

In July, I attended the 2014 HOT Schools Summer Institute. My first of two sequential learning tracks was entitled *Arts, Literacy, and Common Core*. As Louise Pascale and Lisa Donovan, our instructors, handed out the materials for our opening task I immediately got a pit in my stomach similar to the one that students might experience when given a text and the instruction, “Read this.” For us, “this” was a series of multi-paged, lengthy articles about the common core. Immediately, I thought of how students sometimes sit in front of us, feeling helpless and defeated after being asked to complete a task that they clearly believe is too challenging for them. However here, Louise and Lisa provided the group with a strategy, a plan of attack one might say, as we set out to tackle the texts. The strategy, referred to as a “found poem”, enabled me to read the texts in a different way—one that I was



Understanding text as a “found poem” at the 2014 HOT SI

not used to. For me, it took the term “close reading” to a whole new level. By being able to manipulate the text in a way that demonstrated my understanding, I was able to get to the “core” of what the articles were about. As I was nearing completion of the task, a sense of relief came over me. I did it. I experienced the sense of pride that comes with trying something new and outside of my comfort zone.

Many times, our students are asked to do things that are outside of their comfort zones. It is our responsibility as educators to help them feel safe and secure enough to take those risks—to move out of their comfort zones and toward new achievement. For me, being put in the same position as my students made me more aware of their experiences. How and what we ask our students to do directly impacts their performance. Arts integration is a way for teachers to engage, inspire, and cultivate a love of learning in their classrooms. Integrating the arts clears a path for student success.

Teaching Arts Feeds Creativity, Connection

—Gina Barreca, English Professor at the University of Connecticut, Feminist Scholar, Author



"I WAS INSPIRED—and that's exactly the right word; I'm really not overstating it—to emphasize the need for arts in our schools by the creative, dynamic and dedicated teacher/artists I met at the HOT Schools Summer Institute. Their enthusiasm for working with students in order to help children and teens achieve all kinds of excellence was a tonic; their energy, expertise and drive confirmed for me that art is at the heart of any useful and genuine educational experience."

We need to keep teaching the arts in our schools.

If art weren't important, all kids' backpacks would be gray.

If understanding that colors have names and learning how lines and dots can turn into pictures isn't crucial to the development of imagination in childhood, then why aren't classroom walls blank?

If learning about music at a young age weren't important, would so many of us still only be able to recite the letters of the alphabet by singing the little song in our head? (Could you really tell what letters come before or after "O" without the song?)

If theater, movement and performance weren't important, why would we look forward to watching "Fantasia," "Downton Abbey" or "Get On Up"? Why else mourn the deaths of Robin Williams and Lauren Bacall—many of us feeling these losses were personal—if not for the fact that great performers use their voices, faces and gestures to hold a mirror up to life so that we might see ourselves more clearly?

Charles Dickens talked about the need for "fancy" and not only "facts" brilliantly throughout "Hard Times," his novel about education. Only by nurturing and invigorating the imagination, Dickens tells us, can schools permit a young mind "the wild escape into something visionary."

Classes in the arts are where kids learn that they can improvise and by making something up, make something new and better. The word "disrupt" is not exclusively synonymous with misbehavior but is used the way scientists as well as artists use it: to believe that a confident, often playful idiosyncrasy lies beneath the best inventions and creations.

As a child you meet yourself instinctively in the arts: in the finger-paints, in the glue, in the chorus, in the dance. The arts are tactile, auditory and sensory where many other subjects are simply mandatory.

Through the arts, kids who are bewildered and frustrated in other classroom settings can become not only intrigued but remarkably articulate in the forms of expression permitted them through non-linear and non-verbal communication.

It's not surprising, then, that as a nation increasingly wary of justifying any educational opportunity that can't be measured by a standardized test, we're in danger of underfunding one of the most essential aspects of our children's collective experience. To balance schoolwork that's competitive, repetitive and derivative, we need to offer our students something apart from lunch and gym as the only alternatives.

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Notes on My Role as a HOT Coach

—Betty Hadlock, HOT Schools Coach
and Facilitator



As a HOT School Coach and Facilitator, I have the charge to make a site visit to each HOT School to observe, listen, and learn in order to see how the HOT Schools model unfolds and works in different settings with different school populations and then share ideas and help to guide future growth. One of the great strengths of the HOT Schools Program is that the core components of Democratic Practice, Strong Arts and Arts Integration are not “one-size-fits-all,” cast in cement. It is the prerogative of each school community to embrace the concepts and make their school HOT in a way that best serves the learners, both child and adult, in their building.

As I visit, observe and witness good practice and new ideas, I am working to share them across schools and classrooms – to “cross-pollinate ideas” as I move from school to school. From the student ambassadors in some schools to well developed HOT Blocks between classroom and discipline based arts specialists and long standing ECHOs in others, as well as prominently displayed HOT School information that both celebrates and communicates the HOT School program, there are a multitude of great things happening. I want to be able to have more “HOT conversations” with teachers about these ideas and practices so as to discuss ways to implement those that may fit in and compliment their current programs, instruction and practice. As an observer, I am listening, looking and learning. And as I reflect on all that, I am able to determine areas of strength in a school and make recommendations for growth that include ideas garnered from other HOT Schools and my own experiences in the classroom as an educator in a HOT School for over 20 years.

My visits could lead to meetings with grade level teams and arts specialists to examine curriculum and figure out ways to incorporate more HOT practice – take what is there and reinvigorate and adjust the current practice so that the HOT School concepts are routinely an integral part of planning and instruction. HOT practice needs to be a natural way of thinking as teachers look at how the school day is structured and what is to be taught. The more we talk, share, and work together, the richer the HOT School journey becomes.

[New Grant Program](#) *continued*

The Office of the Arts, which administers the nationally recognized Higher Order Thinking (HOT) Schools model, offers expertise in arts integration in schools. Applicant schools will be asked to identify their place on a scale of need for support with arts access, connection or integration, as defined in the HOT Schools model.

"DECD is excited by the potential of this partnership to strengthen the integration of arts, artists and arts organization into our public schools. In addition to nurturing the next generation of creative minds, art and culture in our schools is essential to the creation of well-rounded students prepared to lead rich and rewarding lives," DECD Commissioner Catherine Smith said.

Successful applications will include plans for how the funding will help the school deepen and sustain their arts programming in concert with a partner institution or artist. Winning applicants will also demonstrate how they will share with other districts and schools the best practices they have developed. Applications that include parent and/or civic engagement will receive preference. Schools may use the money for supplies, technical assistance, professional development, stipends for teaching artists, professional facilitation with arts institutions, and more. Applications will be due in October. More information will be available on the State Department of Education's Web site.

Opening Remarks *continued*

“We just don’t integrate the subjects. We integrate the people and kids – it’s community building for the future and the real world.”

It’s community building for the future and the real world. There Is Nothing Common About Our Core.

Arts education unfolds in a complex social milieu that involves multiple stakeholders. We know that making the arts a central part of education involves building a culture in each school that recognizes the critical role of the arts in student, teacher, and administrator growth. We know the most viable strategies for advancing the role of the arts in education, to develop, deepen and expand effective practices in arts education, arts integration, school culture change, and leadership development – are to provide educators with vital professional development, resources, and tools to do so. And here we are.

When the Common Core hub-bub first began – I was excited. They were asking kids to think, and to reason, and to analyze. To make connections among subjects and between learning and life, and asking students to apply knowledge in new ways. I thought, “My gosh! They’re finally catching up with us! This stuff is HOT!”

And I still believe that’s true. The skills that Common Core aspires for students to master are right on. It’s the testing that’s off.

So Where Does the Trail Lead?

A colleague described the HOT Approach, noting *“The foundational components of Strong Arts, Arts Integration and Democratic Practice provide each school an opportunity to participate at their own level of readiness. The HOT Schools Approach is not a template. It is a framework within which each participating school can find its strength and build a bridge to its weaknesses.”*

Democracy and the arts are inextricably linked. Both fundamentally involve expression. Both demand active participation in the social sphere. By demonstrating to students that they can communicate powerfully through words, images, movements, and sounds, we enhance their sense of social efficacy. There Is Nothing Common About Our Core.

A former HOT School principal writes: *“The HOT Schools democracy model is what sets HOT Schools apart from other arts integration models. Amazing things happen when children are given an opportunity to have a say in how their day is organized! It is such a joy to see the growth in confidence and personal esteem that comes to members of a vibrant community when the arts have a legitimate place as core curriculum.”*

HOT Schools wasn’t designed to support Common Core or myriad initiatives that have come before, nor those that are yet to be. HOT Schools works because it develops good solid teaching practices which educators use to engage students in meaningful discovery and deep understandings, and to empower students as confident, motivated, responsible learners.

HOT Summer Institute events and activities should reinforce your belief in yourself as an educator and your ability to make a big difference in this world – one child at a time. That’s where the trail leads.

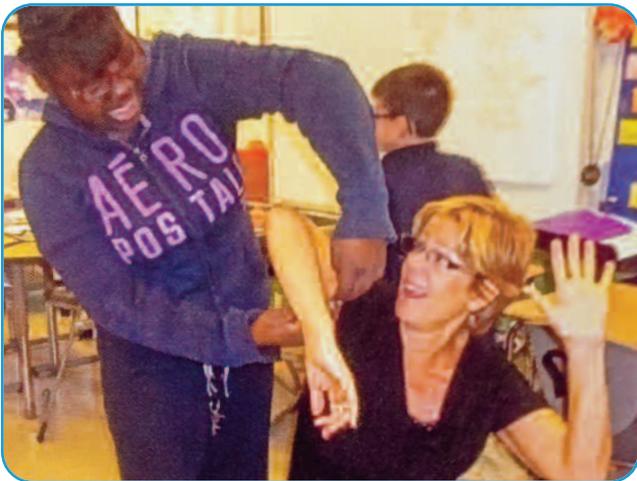
Because after all... *“We just don’t integrate the subjects. We integrate the people and kids – it’s community building for the future and the real world.”*

There Is Nothing Common About Our Core.

Decades of Creative Dance *continued*

Creative Dance opens doors for people of all ages to discover the dance within them. Creative Dance does not teach steps. Creative dance teaches concepts. It provides the opportunity to explore and play.

I had already been teaching Creative Dance for years when in 1994 I was first trained by the State of Connecticut to instruct Creative Dance for HOT Schools. I was thrilled, although not surprised, to find that Creative Dance fits like a glove upon the Higher Order Thinking Schools philosophy. Implicit in the art of Creative Dance is the act of Democratic Practice. In Creative Dance we encourage individuals to speak and be heard. Creative Dance champions leadership and full community participation—it strives to foster student connection.



L'Ana leads a TAC at John C. Daniels, New Haven, CT, 2012

The Creative Dance teacher is a facilitator for collaborative voice and action, teaching the technique and vocabulary of dance. Just as HOT Schools advocates that the arts are rigorous academic subjects each with its own sequential curriculum, Creative Dance holds true that dancers and dances are enriched from exposure to poetry, theatre, music and visual art. HOT Schools invites artists of all disciplines to bring their passion and skill and vision to their teaching, allowing students to have a range of experiences to enrich their learning and their lives. I'm honored to bring Creative Dance into the mix.



L'Ana teaching pre-school students, Garden City, NY, 1969

99% of the students I've taught have been immediately comfortable with Creative Dance because, I believe, the Creative Dance learning process is a personal one and individuals are therefore able to be authentic. No one has to memorize a particular step or do it in any particular way. No one person is perceived as better or worse than another. No one comes to the front of the class to demonstrate how the movement should look. No comparisons or judgments are made. The words clumsy and awkward are not used because such words have no use in Creative Dance.

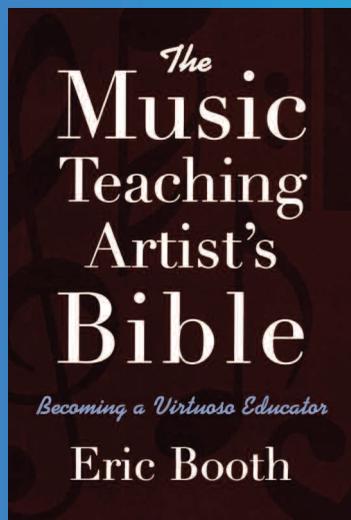
The notion that one is not meant to be a dancer because of height, weight or range of motion does not apply. Everyone belongs. Everyone dances. Everyone learns. Everyone feels good. Democratic Practice is always at work in a Creative Dance whether it takes place in a private studio or in a HOT Schools classroom.

With Creative Dance the learning "how to do" organically links to the curriculum so that the Creative Dance-making happens fast. And the reason, I believe, this happens quickly is because that with Creative Dance the students are the creators of the dance vocabulary and instead of proficiency, experimentation is the goal.

Children begin applying their new dance tools to the curriculum without being encumbered by the

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HOT Resources

The Music Teaching Artist's Bible*Becoming a Virtuoso Educator***Eric Booth**

Filled with practical advice on the most critical issues facing the music teaching artist today—from economic and time-management issues of being a musician and teacher to communicating effectively with students—*The Music Teaching Artist's Bible* uncovers the essentials that every musician needs in order to thrive in this role.

www.amazon.com

Decades of Creative Dance continued

dance itself. As they think about the curriculum that they are learning they find comfort in playing with dance to demonstrate their knowledge. The curriculum always comes to life in a HOT Schools Teacher Artist Collaboration (TAC). I have witnessed again and again how kinesthetic learning engages students who might feel otherwise lost—learners who more easily understand concepts and solve problems through physical movement.

As a recent TAC came to a close, a 5TH grade boy wrote in his thank you letter, “I didn’t know dance was like this. I could be a dancer. Thank you for bringing this dance to our school. I will never forget our time with you.” I believe that he felt something similar to what I did when I observed Bruce King teaching Creative Dance over 45 years ago.

The World's Biggest Thank You continued

grade inclusion. I felt how they felt. I lived how they lived. Now, I am able to teach knowing not to fear the unknown – instead to embrace it and find a way to make all of these children succeed.

These were lessons that I learned at the HOT Summer Institute. Thanks again for all that you do to make this the best week ever for so many educators across not only Connecticut, but the nation!

—Geoffrey

Hello Bonnie,

It's now been 2 weeks since the start of the school year. My students dance around my room on countdown of 8-4-2-1-1 – the strategy taught by Celeste. We dance to different categories. They are showcasing achievement through the arts – our school's theme. It's something

amazing to see. I've visited classes during my planning time to show techniques learned to different teachers who didn't have a chance to attend this summer.

I set up my classroom this year in an arts infused way. Vivaldi is playing while we are learning. There are opportunities to dance and sing (even though the students say Mr. P – you don't have to sing!) There are areas where we paint, draw, and color to show that we can tackle the common core while infusing the arts.

The kids have found a new excitement – a love of learning through the arts. I want Gaffney Elementary School to be the HOT School others are striving to be. I promise I will get us there. I will keep you updated on our progress throughout the year.

—Geoffrey

Teaching Arts Feeds... continued

Not every moment of education needs to be based solely on the simple accumulation of information and not all learning should be based on moving children in the same direction at the same pace by using the same materials toward the same goal, which is then measurable only by one instrument.

Art makes many of us nervous because we aren't sure how to tell what's good from what's awful

even outside of a classroom; we question the value of art because we fear our own ignorance. But acting out of ignorance isn't exactly the best way to construct educational opportunity, is it? Yet isn't it great when folks who can make a difference step up and do just that, as the CT State Department of Education just did when they partnered with the HOT Schools program to strengthen the arts in education? When we can all work together, at all levels, the arts — and our lives — will flourish.

The arts are an important part of the curriculum precisely because they are different from other classes: They encourage curiosity over mastery and creativity over proficiency.

And when it comes to special needs children or those struggling with anxiety, depression, attention deficits and autism, the arts are particularly valuable. According to Bonnie Januszewski, a socialization specialist who practices on Long Island, "Creating the opportunity for my kids to make art is like giving them permission to speak another language." Explains Bonnie, who's had real success in her 35 years of intensive engagement with children and teens, "Art turns your soul inside out — in a good way. It helps you figure out how to be a part of the world."

Discoveries aren't made only through microscopes and telescopes and it's not only equations and algorithms that will improve the way we live.

The intimacy of art — connections forged between people who would otherwise remain strangers — is why Hippocrates declared "Ars longa, vita brevis": art is eternal even though individual human lives are brief. Art isn't an outlet that simply discharges energy but one that channels it, permitting a child to plug into a universal and timeless current that illuminates the world and non-verbal communication.

HOT SCHOOLS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr. William D. Breck

Connecticut Association of School Superintendents; Executive Coach, Connecticut Association of Schools

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Cathy Lechowicz (rotating)

Director, Office of Community Service, Green Street Arts Center, Wesleyan University

Sara MacSorley (rotating)

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Kim Fox Santora

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