

Enriching Lives



SANTA CLARA COUNTY
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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**ONLINE, INTERACTIVE HANDBOOK
PIONEERS NEW APPROACH TO
ARTS EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

*“Designing the Arts Learning Community” is the
first arts education professional development tool to reflect national best practices,
features 50 model programs from across the country.*

The Los Angeles County Arts Commission, San Francisco Arts Commission and Santa Clara County Office of Education have launched ***Designing the Arts Learning Community: a Handbook for K-12 Professional Development Planners***. The handbook represents a move away from the one-day workshop or summer course to a systemic, ongoing collaborative approach that yields powerful results for students’ learning in the arts. It demonstrates how to establish, grow and sustain a learning community that comes together to improve arts instruction. The online, interactive tool can be found at <http://handbook.laartsed.org>.

The handbook has a national perspective, drawing on the experiences of arts education professional development programs from across the United States. It is designed to be used online but offers options to print out sections or the entire handbook.

Designing the Arts Learning Community was researched and written by Dawn M. Ellis, President of Dawn M. Ellis & Associates, LLC. Among her many credits, Ms. Ellis served as primary researcher for *Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from Districts That Value Arts Education* (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, Arts Education Partnership 1999). Dawn Ellis and her team scoured the country for exemplary professional development programs in arts education to inform the content of the handbook and create a searchable database of 50 model programs. The handbook is both a guide and a reference resource for arts coordinators, principals, superintendents of instruction and anyone who designs professional development for K-12 arts education. It synthesizes documents, interviews, responses from outstanding practices in the field as well as literature regarding professional development and arts education. The programs profiled, which cover a wide range of partnership types, were selected because they

- Address the scale, scope, or perspectives of school districts
- Provide evidence of evaluation, research, and/or reflective practice
- Provide insights into approaches relevant to a variety of communities, students, and arts disciplines, or
- Involve education reform that includes a strong arts component

The sponsors of the handbook – the Los Angeles County Arts Commission in partnership with the Los Angeles County Office of Education, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (which adopted the former Creative Education Program of Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley) and the San Francisco Arts Commission – coalesced around the project because are all involved in ambitious strategic initiatives to create systemic change to restore dance, music, theatre and visual arts to all students attending public school in their respective communities. A critical factor to the success of school districts in implementing sequential arts education is the ability to provide high-quality professional development in dance, music, theatre and visual arts for teachers throughout the district.

In addition to the handbook sponsors, the development of *Designing the Arts Learning Community* was supported by funding from Boeing, the Flora Family Foundation, Target and the Walter & Elise Haas Fund.

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A **biography of Dawn M. Ellis**, who researched and wrote *Designing the Arts Learning Community*, can be found at <http://handbook.laartsed.org/handbook/index.ashx?pg=117>

The **Los Angeles County Arts Commission**, Laura Zucker, Executive Director, provides leadership in cultural services of all disciplines for the largest county in the United States, encompassing 88 municipalities. The Arts Commission, in addition to providing leadership and staffing to support *Arts for All*; administers a grants program that funds more than 300 nonprofit arts organizations annually; oversees the County's Civic Art Program for capital projects, funds the largest arts internship program in the country in conjunction with the Getty Foundation, programs the John Anson Ford Theatres and supports the Los Angeles County Cultural Calendar on ExperienceLA.com. The Arts Commission also produces the L.A. Holiday Celebration broadcast nationally and a year-round music program that funds more than 50 free concerts each year in public sites. The 2008-09 President of the Arts Commission is Betty Haagen.

The **San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC)** is the City agency that champions the arts in San Francisco. We believe that a creative cultural environment is essential to the City's well-being. Established by charter in 1932, SFAC programs integrate the arts into all aspects of City life. Programs include: Civic Art Collection, Civic Design Review, Community Arts & Education, Cultural Equity Grants, Public Art, SFAC Gallery, Street Artists Licensing, Summer in the City Concert Series. The agency's core values are anchored to all residents having equal access to arts experiences in all disciplines, that programs are provided comprehensively and evenly throughout the City, and that they are innovative and of the highest quality.

The **Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE)** Visual & Performing Arts program builds school, district, and community expertise and resources to advance arts learning for all students. Program services include school and district arts strategic planning; standards-based curriculum development and assessment in arts integrated instruction; professional development for educators, administrators, arts specialists and teaching artists; and program design and evaluation with collaborative approaches to school improvement. The SCCOE is a lead agency in the new Arts Education Initiative for Santa Clara County, a master plan that sets forth a vision and goals for quality arts education for all students with innovative collaborations among educational institutions, government, arts organizations, business, parents, and the community.