

Kentucky Board of Education  
Mr. David K. Karem, Chair  
500 Mero Street  
Frankfort, Ky 40601

Chairman Karem and Members of the Kentucky Board of Education,

The Kentucky Coalition for Arts Education (KCAE) is a new organization that represents Kentucky's professional arts education organizations. Together we represent thousands of arts educators in music, dance, drama/theatre, and visual arts all across Kentucky from primary grades through college and university levels. We have plans to visit your meeting on December 8th to introduce our organization during the public comment segment of your meeting.

We are excited about the opportunity to provide grass roots support and a unified voice for arts education in Kentucky. In anticipation of attending the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) meeting and the discussion on program reviews, we have been reviewing the agenda and the Staff Note: "Program Review Update." The Staff Note has revealed new considerations for including World Languages in the Arts and Humanities Program Reviews. This has caused great concern to the Coalition and leadership of all four state arts education associations.

KCAE and its four state association members are opposed to the concept of combining or embedding world languages in the arts and humanities program review. While we acknowledge the importance of world languages in a balanced curriculum that will prepare our students for the challenges of a global economy; we suggest that a world languages component embedded or attached as a part of the Arts and Humanities Program Review to be misplaced and counterproductive to improving either arts programs or world languages programs.

The confusing inclusion of the word "humanities" in the title of the Arts and Humanities Program Review" might be used as a rationale for "finding a place" for accountability in world languages; however, we submit that the sole content in the Kentucky Program of Studies for the Arts and Humanities is focused on the four visual and performing arts disciplines. The humanities component in the Kentucky Arts and Humanities Program of Studies relates directly to how the arts have been impacted by time, place, and culture.

Although the "letter of the law" in Senate Bill 1 (SB1) identifies the review as the "Arts and Humanities Program Review," we believe that the spirit of the law was to ensure that the removal of the "Arts and Humanities Test" (which included only visual and performing arts content) and its replacement with the Arts and Humanities Program Review would result in the development and maintenance of strong, artistically-engaging arts programs in our schools. We believe the Kentucky General Assembly further emphasized this strong intent with the addition of a *seventh* Kentucky Learner Goal:

**KRS 158.6451 Legislative declaration on goals for Commonwealth's schools --  
Model curriculum framework.**

- (1) The General Assembly finds, declares, and establishes that:
- (a) Schools shall expect a high level of achievement of all students.
  - (b) Schools shall develop their students' ability to:

***7. Express their creative talents and interests in visual arts, music, dance, and dramatic arts.***

The Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 language also supports our position that the arts need to be considered separately for accountability purposes, as evidenced in the second Kentucky Learner Goal:

**KRS 158.6451(1)(b)**

2. "Students shall develop their abilities to apply core concepts and principles from mathematics, the sciences, the arts, the humanities, social studies, practical living studies, and vocational studies to what they will encounter throughout their lives."

The strategic placement of the commas in this list implies a list of distinct disciplines. We believe the intention of the law was to separate the arts from the humanities, not to make all the disciplines which comprise the humanities inclusive in the visual and performing arts framework.

SB1 as well as No Child Left Behind identify "the arts" as one of the "core subjects." SB1 also requires that new standards be developed in the arts. Just as math tests will measure student progress on the new Common Core Standards in math, and other specialized test will measure progress in their specific content areas; program assessment in the arts must not be diluted or compromised by adding other core content areas to its program assessment.

The upcoming revision of the **National Standards for Arts Education** will include only standards for the art forms of music, dance, drama, and visual art. If Kentucky plans to adopt those national core standards in the arts (advisably they would do so), our Program Reviews need to reflect that content. There will be no distinctive humanities or world language standards embedded in those national arts standards. The standards will include historical and cultural components within each art form that are only relevant to the arts and do not extend into the realm of the many disciplines which fall under the "humanities" umbrella (e.g. English, History, Philosophy, Religion, Legal Studies, Military Science, Sociology, etc).

To our knowledge, no other arts content standards or curriculum frameworks in the nation utilizes the term *humanities* in its visual and performing arts standards and/or frameworks. It is time for Kentucky to shed this misnomer which is repeatedly problematic.

Our membership suggests that the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) create a totally separate program review for world languages. We ask that you not combine it with –or embed it in-- the arts program reviews. Any such combination will dilute the effectiveness of either review and make meaningful interpretation for informing program improvement extremely difficult at best.

We further suggest that board make part of its legislative agenda for revising SB1 language to include revision of the Arts and Humanities Program Review title to better reflect the true intent of the legislation. Visual and performing arts seems to be the accepted, most frequently used terminology for identifying the arts. Our suggestion would be *Visual and Performing Arts Program Review*.

The elimination of the Arts and Humanities statewide test has created a tenuous situation in many schools systems in the Commonwealth. Where arts education is not fully supported, we have witnessed arts programs being compromised as a result of the vacuum. The Arts Program Review holds promise for maintaining students' access to visual and performing arts instruction and encouraging the development of engaging arts programs in our schools. However, it must be singular in purpose, send a clear message of expectation to all stakeholders, and hold schools accountable for ensuring that all students have opportunity to reap the direct benefits and positive intellectual and social by-products of arts study in our public schools.

Kentucky's four arts education associations and the Kentucky Coalition for Arts Education stand ready to provide service to the KBE and KDE in facilitating the effectiveness of Program Reviews. We thank the KBE for your commitment to the balanced education of Kentucky's children.

Respectfully,

The Kentucky Coalition for Arts Education (KCAE) Representing:

The Kentucky Arts Education Association (KyAEA)

The Kentucky Association for Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (KAHPERD)

The Kentucky Music Educators Association (KMEA)

The Kentucky Theatre Association (KTA)