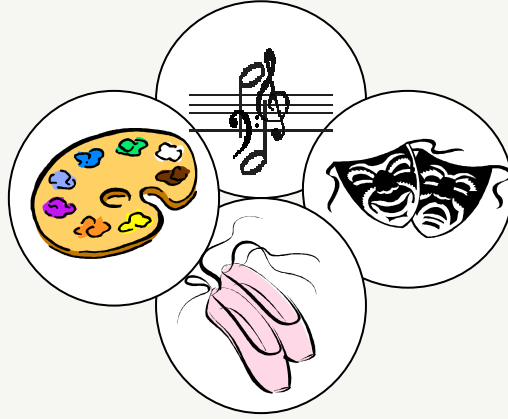


State of the Arts Report 2008-2009



Division of Learning Department of Fine Arts Polk County Schools

<http://www.polk-fl.net/districtinfo/departments/learning/finearts.htm>

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State of the Arts Report

Senior Director's Letter

Senior Director of Fine Arts
Frank R. Howes

Over the years, the Department of Fine Arts has provided our school district leaders an update of arts education in our schools during an election cycle. I am pleased to present this information so that it may stimulate conversation and discussion about the growth and future of the arts in our schools.

I would like to thank Patricia Lamb, Senior Coordinator of Fine Arts, and Beth Cummings, K-12 Music Resource Specialist, for their work in preparing this document. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that all of our students have equitable access to a quality fine arts education in our school system, which is the primary purpose in providing this information for your review.

State of the Arts Report 2008-2009

The State of the Arts Report is intended to provide you with the current status of Fine Arts Programs in Polk County Schools.

School Board Members:

District 1- Frank O'Reilly-eight years of service. Current Chairman
District 2- Lori Cunningham-four years of service.
District 3- Hazel Sellers six-years of service.
District 4- Dick Mullenax-first year of service.
District 5- Kay Fields six-years of service.
District 6- Margaret Lofton-six years of service.
District 7- Tim Harris-two years of service.

Fine Arts Staffing

All 363 of the current fine arts teachers are full-time, certified, highly qualified teachers. **Every** elementary school in the district has a visual arts and a music teacher. The staffing plan calls for **every** elementary student to have art and music a minimum of 45 minutes a week. Ninety-Nine percent of our middle schools have at least one visual arts teacher, a band director, and a choral director who offer a variety of fine arts courses to all middle school students. **Every** high school has visual arts teachers as well as band and chorus directors. Strings instruction taught by highly-qualified, certified teachers, is taught in 59 elementary and 27 secondary schools. Thirteen of our teachers serve as itinerant teachers and teach in 80 schools. Strings instruction is also provided at Lawton Chiles Academy, Bartow High School, Harrison Arts Center, Rochelle School of the Arts, Davenport School of the Arts, and McLaughlin Middle School/Fine Arts Academy. At each of the latter schools, the teachers teach strings as well as other music courses.

Every student in Polk County has the opportunity to participate in fine arts. The fine arts teachers are assigned as follows:

| Discipline | Elementary | K-8 | Middle/Senior | Middle School | High School | Total |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Visual Art | 76 | 9 | 3 | 22 | 31 | 141 |
| Music | 79 | 15 | 9 | 51 | 36 | 190 |
| Theatre | | 7 | | 2 | 6 | 15 |
| Dance | 2 | 6 | | 3 | 6 | 17 |

In addition to these school district employees, we have over a hundred volunteer and contracted artists in residence who visit our schools to teach and perform with our teachers and students regularly.

State of the Arts Report

2008-2009

Instructional Programs

Instructional Programs in Secondary Schools

Secondary students may choose from a variety of fine arts programs offered in Polk County. This chart reflects the current enrollment of fine arts courses during the 2008-2009 school year.

| Level | Course | Number of Students Enrolled |
|-------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| M/J | Art Appreciation | 4504 |
| | Orientation 2D Art | 99 |
| | Drawing | 432 |
| | Photography | 86 |
| | Graphic Art | 67 |
| | Dance | 827 |
| | Drama/Theatre | 1646 |
| | Band | 5131 |
| | Orchestra | 1330 |
| | Instrumental Technique | 624 |
| | Chorus | 4256 |
| | Vocal Techniques | 159 |
| HS | AP Art | 116 |
| | AP Art 2D | 200 |
| | AP Art/ Drawing | 98 |
| | Art in Other Cultures | 52 |
| | Art History | 18 |
| | Comprehensive 2D or 3D Art | 1243 |
| | Ceramics/ Pottery | 2367 |
| | Computer Graphics | 263 |
| | Drawing and Painting | 2107 |
| | Graphic Design | 229 |
| | Photography | 587 |
| | Portfolio | 212 |
| | Pre-IB Art | 122 |
| | IB Art | 72 |
| | Dance Techniques | 313 |
| | Ballet | 89 |
| | Dance Repertoire/Choreography | 589 |
| | Eurhythmics | 323 |

| Level | Course | Number of Students Enrolled |
|-------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| HS | Drama | 1055 |
| | Theatre History | 94 |
| | Acting | 199 |
| | Stagecraft | 150 |
| | Comprehensive Theatre | 156 |
| | Musical Theatre | 312 |
| | Music Theory | 228 |
| | AP Music Theory | 165 |
| | Pre IB/IB Music | 35 |
| | Intro. To Music | 76 |
| | Music Appreciation | 440 |
| | Guitar | 631 |
| | Keyboard | 588 |
| | Band | 1618 |
| | Orchestra | 570 |
| | Instrumental Techniques | 615 |
| | Jazz Ensemble | 213 |
| | Chorus | 1556 |
| | Vocal Techniques | 512 |
| | Electronic Music | 70 |
| | | |
| | Total | 37,444 |

State of the Arts Report

Budget and
Exemplary Fine Arts Programs

Budget Information

| Budget Amount | Description |
|---------------|--|
| \$759,908,313 | Total current annual operating budget for the school district. |
| \$474,963,824 | Total current instructional budget for the school district. |
| 2.7% | Percentage of annual budget spent on arts teachers' salaries. |
| \$136,500 | Funds provided to schools for capital purchases, such as instruments and fine arts equipment for existing programs. |
| \$1,170,300 | Funds provided to schools for equipment for new fine arts building projects. |
| \$82,581 | To the Polk Museum of Art for classrooms, auditorium and gallery space for exhibitions, services for training and support for visual arts teachers and students. |
| \$63,000 | Transportation for secondary performing groups for district music assessments and for other fine arts trips for elementary schools (Arts for Life). |
| \$47,600 | To secondary schools for repair of instruments and visual arts equipment. |
| \$22,028 | Instructional supplies distributed through the fine arts office. |
| \$46,591 | Contracted consultative services for visual artists and all-county music events. |
| \$64,842 | Professional development funds for fine arts teachers (Title II). |
| \$104,000 | \$2.00 per elementary and middle school student allocated for art program materials provided by the district. |
| \$264,462 | Fine Arts teachers' supplements K-12. |

In addition to these district funds, each fine arts program is provided with materials and supplies from school budgets. Many schools receive additional financial support from local businesses, PTA, booster clubs and other parent support organizations. Some of our teachers have received grants from sources, such as: Best Buy, Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, Airborne, Target, Wal-Mart, Learn and Serve, Southwest Water Management, Teacher to Teacher Grants and numerous other local grants. It is a goal of Polk County Schools for all children to have equal access and opportunity to learn and grow through education in the arts. Although there are some approved fees for the arts in secondary schools, schools waive or provide scholarships in lieu of the fees if a student cannot afford them.

Exemplary Fine Arts Programs

Arts for Life is the newest initiative for Polk County Schools. This year-long celebration of fine arts emphasizes the **vital** impact the arts have during all phases of life. During this year, schools will invite professional artists from all areas of the arts to share with our students their craft and the impact the arts have had on their lives. In addition, teachers are encouraged to continue and carry out their own personal art. As a result, the first Directors' Chorus was formed and debuted on November 18, 2008. In addition, Florida Southern College sponsored the Polk County Teacher's Art show in January 2009. In April of 2009, we will be implementing an articulation progression with 5th grade students and our high school fine arts programs. Every 5th grade student in the district will be transported to a high school to share in their fine arts programs. All transportation is being provided by the district. This event is not intended to be a recruiting venture, but rather to share with 5th grade students where fine arts can take them in high school and beyond.

State of the Arts Report

Exemplar Programs

Ukulele and Guitar This year will mark the third annual “Uke Day” where area elementary schools bring their students together for a mass concert of ukulele music. Local businesses sponsor the event and provide t-shirts for the students. May 2009, will bring the first annual “Guitar Day” where elementary and middle school guitar students from across the district perform selections together from the popular “School of Rock” guitar program created by one of our teachers. In addition, at the secondary level, the fine arts department has provided guitars and extensive specialized training in order to begin guitar programs at ten middle and high schools, specifically targeting students who do not participate in the traditional (band, chorus, orchestra) performing groups.

Unique Ensembles *Drums at Eastside*-This famous 4th and 5th grade ensemble performs for community events. It began over a decade ago when old drums were donated to this Title I School. *Panamaniacs* from Davenport School of the Arts is renowned throughout the state for its outstanding performances with its “one of a kind” elementary and middle school steel drum bands. The district’s *Orff and Recorder Ensembles* are representative of 4th and 5th grade students from all over the district who perform annually at the Elementary Showcase, an all-county elementary music event. *McLaughlin Mariachi*, a unique addition to the fine arts academy, is based on the criteria as set by the National Association for Music Education (MENC). This group performs regularly in the community.

Arts Infusion/Integration Academic teachers are trained to use the arts to teach their academic subjects and collaborate with the arts teachers to create infused lessons. Some topics this year have included Drama/Language Arts, Dance/Science, Math/3D Art and Math/Orchestra. Arts infusion/ integration is being practiced at McLaughlin Middle School and Fine Arts Academy and training has taken place at Davenport SOTA and Jewett SOTA. At McLaughlin, arts integration in math has shown a 7.9% gain schoolwide in Kaplan testing in the fall 2008 semester.

Digital Art Digital programs are in place at nine schools in the district. Students are taught to use technology and cameras to address the visual arts. Students will have a completed digital portfolio when they leave the class.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses AP music theory, art history, and studio art are offered at twelve high schools. Polk County visual arts students have been recognized by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) for their outstanding achievement in studio art. Student work from Polk County has been selected for use in the teaching resources offered internationally by the College Board.

Summer Band Twelve of our secondary (middle and high school) band programs annually hold summer band camps. This past summer over 1,100 students participated.

Performing and Visual Arts Schools *Rochelle School of the Arts* (magnet school), *Jewett School of the Arts* (choice school), and *Davenport School of the Arts* (choice school) These K-8 schools provide intense instruction in: dance, drama, instrumental music (band, orchestra, hand bells, steel drums, digital keyboard), vocal music, visual arts (2D and 3D) and graphic arts components. *McLaughlin Middle School and Fine Arts Academy* is a school within a school and is the first of its kind in central Florida. Their arts offerings include: dance, drama, guitar, music theory/technology, piano keyboarding, chorus, band, strings, 2D art, 3D art and graphic arts with digital photography.

State of the Arts Report

Exemplar Programs (Continued)

Eighty percent of *McLaughlin's* students are enrolled in one or more fine arts courses. This school is also an arts infused school promoting arts education in academic and arts disciplines. The art gallery provides dedicated space for student art to be showcased. The black box theater and main stage provide performance venues for the various performing arts. The fine arts staff is augmented by guest artists and consultants who provide additional depth. Through a partnership with the Lake Wales Arts Center, students also receive exposure to additional artists.

Harrison School for the Arts (Grades 9-12) Harrison Arts Center, which opened in August 1989, draws its student population from all communities throughout Polk County. Harrison graduates are prepared to enter college programs in the arts, pursue a professional career in the performing or visual arts, or may undertake another academic field of study at the college or university level. The strong arts foundation received at Harrison enables them to display and exercise a wide variety of skills including time management, goal setting, and self-discipline, as they pursue their goals of various careers in the arts and higher education. The total scholarship amount awarded to the ninety-two seniors in the Class of 2008 was \$4,050,530.00. The arts program features: visual arts (2D, 3D and Graphics), instrumental and vocal music, theatre (performing and technical), musical theatre and dance. Students have master classes with professional performers and artists throughout their four years of enrollment. In addition, they are supplied some private instruction in various arts disciplines. The annual schoolwide musical is legendary in the area and an exclusive performance is provided for area middle school students. The Harrison Orchestra recently performed at the International Mid-West Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, Illinois. The Harrison Singers performed at the Kennedy Center under the direction of Dr. Andre Thomas in 2008. Two of the musical theatre alumni are currently performing in "West Side Story" on Broadway. Visual arts students have been recognized by the Educational Testing Service for their achievements in Advanced Placement Studio Art Portfolios.

Florida Department of Education Music Demonstration Schools *Polk County is proud of their two music demonstration schools— Rochelle School of the Arts and Davenport School of the Arts.* The purpose of this project is to identify, recognize, and promote statewide school music programs at the elementary, middle/junior, and high school levels that balance diversity, high performance standards, and instructional quality in music education.

Arts Achieve! Model Schools *Our two model schools-Harrison School for the Arts and Davenport School of the Arts- set the standard for other schools in the state.* Arts Achieve! Is an extensive awards program from the Florida Alliance for Arts Education to recognize exemplary school-based programs of arts education, which serve as models of excellence for all schools.

Middle/High School Enrollment Award Presented by FMEA to secondary schools who have more than 35% of their total school enrolled in music. We had seven 2008 recipients of this award: Blake Middle Academy, Mulberry Middle School, Bartow Middle School, Jewett Academy, Southwest Middle School, and Boone Middle School, Three schools will be recognized in January 2009: Crystal Lake Middle School, Dundee Ridge Middle School and Union Academy. Schools are eligible for the award every three years.

State of the Arts Report

Exemplar Programs (Continued) and Professional Development

All-County Music The Fine Arts Department contracts notable guest clinicians who work with each component music group (elementary, band, chorus and orchestra). Annually, more than 1,100 students who have been selected as all-county musicians work with these clinicians to make extraordinary music. The clinicians provide our teachers with fresh ideas and rehearsal strategies that help them become more effective in the classroom. These events have changed the lives of students, parents and teachers alike.

All-County Dance is in its second season. This fine arts sponsored, teacher run event brings first class dance educators from outside our schools to work with our finest dance students. This provides teachers with fresh ideas and strategies with dance opportunities not available elsewhere.

All-County Visual Art The Fine Arts Department, in association with the Polk Museum of Art, sponsor seven juried art shows. Students have the opportunity to submit work for judging. These shows are not only extraordinary learning experiences, but they also provide teachers with exemplars of age appropriate work.

Professional Development for arts teachers

The Fine Arts Department is dedicated to providing professional learning opportunities specifically designed to increase student learning and participation in the arts. Teachers are regularly surveyed for their professional needs and desires. In-services are offered regularly throughout the year. The following describes some of the additional major forms of professional development.

Mentoring Special assistance and attention is provided for beginning and struggling teachers. The district fine arts staff spends many hours visiting schools and consulting with the arts teachers and their administrators to lend support and aid. Each new teacher is provided a mentor. Title II funds are provided for substitutes in order to allow the new teacher to observe their mentor and visa versa.

Clinic/Conferences The state conferences for Dance, Theatre, Art, and Music are well attended by our arts faculties. The fine arts department provides financial assistance through Title II grant money to encourage participation. These conferences help to provide diverse learning opportunities as well as networking possibilities.

Online Learning Community A new professional learning opportunity this year is the online learning community via the Blackboard program in our district. This program allows teachers to connect from all parts of the district in order to share ideas, lesson plans, and concerns in a professional environment. Currently, there are twenty-one elementary music teachers participating in this year-long learning.

Summer Institute The Department of Fine Arts provided summer institutes for 138 arts teachers covering the following topics: Advanced Placement Art, best practices, hands-on development of lesson plans and techniques in printmaking, landscapes, sculpting, photography, choral conducting, band techniques, guitar, music technology and elementary music methods.

State of the Arts Report

Community Collaborations

Professional Artists-Specific Visual Arts In-Services The Fine Arts Department contracts with professional artists to provide in-service opportunities for visual arts teachers. These expert professional artists share their knowledge to promote creative approaches and to provide new instructional techniques and strategies. The Polk Museum of Art partners with the school district to host in-service opportunities including a teacher's reception before several major shows each year.

Collaborations with the Community

Fine Arts Festival In its third year, the Fine Arts Festival is a collaboration of music and art, which features high school and middle school jazz bands, show choirs and student visual artists. Business partners for this free public event include the City of Lakeland, Mid-Florida Credit Union, and Carlton Music. This is rapidly becoming a premier event for the community. It is recorded by the school district and portions have been broadcast over the school board television channel.

Lake Wales Arts Center The center sponsors a visual arts student exhibition and a music competition. The Lake Wales Arts Center buses groups of students to its exhibitions in a joint effort with Progress Energy. Students tour the exhibition and the facility that is housed in a historical landmark building. In addition, LWAC has sponsored guest artists, such as the Amani Winds, who provided concerts and master classes for area students. Resident performing artists include the Lake Wales Chorale and the Lake Wales Children's Chorus.

Imperial Symphony Orchestra (ISO) A long time supporter of music in our schools, the ISO provides programming aimed at school-age children. Many of our teachers perform with the symphony. Each year, they honor Polk County student All-State musicians at their Young Artist Concert in February. In addition, the ISO recently sponsored Mark O'Conner (Grammy award winning violinist) as he conducted incredible master classes at area schools.

Ridge Art Association (RAA) The Ridge Art Association partners with schools to exhibit student work in their *Young Artists* show each year. In addition, elementary art is displayed in the student gallery. RAA also sponsors the annual Winter Haven Art Festival that highlights student artwork.

Barrage The international violin group *Barrage* was our guest this past spring. Our teachers and students were immersed in the excitement that playing with this world-renowned group brings. String students from all over the district participated in master classes given by the artistic director. Every student who attended the master classes performed a portion of the two-hour concert on stage with Barrage.

Sister Hazel Students from Harrison Arts Center rehearsed and performed on stage at the House of Blues in Orlando with this popular singing group. They incorporated student vocalists and orchestral students into their show.

State of the Arts Report

Community Collaboration
(Continued)

Florida Southern College (FSC) and Southeastern University (SEU) The congenial working relationship with our local colleges illustrates that teaching and learning are collaborative efforts. Future teachers from both institutions frequent the music and art classrooms of our district to observe and to be trained. Both colleges provide a variety of fine arts opportunities for our students. FSC hosts a student art show that offers \$1,000 in awards. In addition, the college sponsors a band day especially for middle school band students. The second annual Middle School Band Symposium brought performing groups from around the state for our teachers to observe, critique, and to learn from as they observed master clinicians. FSC also provides facilities as the host for each of the four all-county music events during the year. SEU has adopted area schools and provides student aids as well as financial support.

Polk Museum of Art Fifth grade students in the school district travel to the Polk Museum of Art at the expense of the school district. In this annual trip, the children view the collection with docents and answer questions from a curriculum packet designed in conjunction with Polk County schools. For many children in our district, this is their first experience in an art museum. The museum has a permanent student gallery where K-12 artwork is exhibited on a rotating basis. The museum also houses many of the visual arts courses for Harrison and offers courses for students and teachers alike. Teachers may earn in-service credit through the school district for courses taken at the museum. Our students may visit the museum at no cost as part of academic research trips. The museum actively partners with the school district to provide opportunities for teachers and students to enrich their experiences in the arts.

Local Community Theaters The School Board has a collaborative relationship with the Lakeland Theatre, the Opera Theatre of Lakeland, and the Theatre Winter Haven. Each year, the School Board provides funding for middle school students to see “The Gift of the Magi” performed by the Lakeland Theatre. Polk County Public Schools and Theatre Winter Haven (TWH) have worked together on dozens of projects over the past 20 years, bringing the arts into the lives of Polk County students. On average, 3,200 students in grades K-12 see these performances each year. The Opera Theatre of Lakeland has formed a new partnership with the schools this year and takes professional opera singers out to schools eight times a year.

Polk County Kids Tag Art Project Students in the fifth grade design specialty license plates that are sold to provide added funding for visual arts. Last year over 1200 tags were sold with the proceeds going to elementary art programs. In 2008, 62 schools participated. This unique project is made possible by a partnership between the School Board, the Polk County Tax Collectors Office, Central Florida Eurocars, Douglass Screen Printing, Polk Museum of Art, Ridge Art Association, and the Junior Women’s Club of Lakeland.

Walt Disney World High school choruses from many of our schools audition and perform with the Walt Disney orchestra and Voices of Liberty in the annual Candlelight performances.

Arts on the Park This local group of artists sponsor a juried high school show each year as part of their rotating exhibitions. Students and their parents are honored at an opening reception where cash awards are presented to outstanding students.

State of the Arts Report

Assessments

Assessments

The ultimate goal of the Fine Arts Department is to ensure that **all** of our students have equitable access to a quality fine arts education. It is an expectation that every elementary student receive at least 45 minutes per week of instruction in art and in music. At the secondary level, all students have access to rigorous and relevant fine arts curriculum. The curriculum for fine arts courses is strictly aligned with the Florida Sunshine State Standards. Copies of the curriculum are found on our district web site. In addition to school based performances and art shows, the following assesses our arts courses:

The Essential Criteria (EC) is a teacher developed list of skills and knowledge that students are expected to master by the time they finish a fine arts program in Polk County. The EC was adopted by the School Board as part of the Polk County Student Progression Plan and is monitored by the Fine Arts Department. The dual purposes are to (1) ensure that program curricula are equitable throughout our large and diverse school district and (2) to focus teaching and learning on essential fine arts skills and knowledge. The EC is utilized for visual arts, music, theatre, and dance. A two year comparison is provided on the enclosed CD.

Music Performance Assessments (MPA) affords students an opportunity to perform in a concert setting before adjudicators for ratings and/or written comments through FMEA/FSMA sanctioned events. This experience promotes the development of musicianship and artistry in students and provides motivation and guidance for directors to improve their professional and musical effectiveness. All secondary schools participate in these assessments. In 2008, sixty-two secondary performing groups received superior ratings at the district level. For a comprehensive record of MPA assessments for Polk County (District 12) visit: <http://flmusiced.org/fsma/mpa/index.html>.

Third Grade Music Test In April, all of our third grade students are tested on specific elements of music through a countywide music assessment. The test has been designed to assist the music teacher and the school's administration in evaluating their music program.

Juried Art Exhibitions assess individual student achievement in visual art. K-12 students submit artwork to be adjudicated and selected by judges for exhibition. Judges' comments are given to teachers for the express purpose of program improvement.

Florida Thespian Festival demonstrates student achievement in theatre through adjudicated performances in which our theatre students participate.

All-State Music Student Performers and **State K-12 Art Exhibition** acceptance are also indicators of the high caliber teaching and learning that takes place in Polk County. Each year, many individual students are recognized for their achievement at the state level. In 2009, 163 music students were All-State students.

State of the Arts Report

School Board Support

The following enumerates the contribution of the School Board to arts education:

- endorsing and supporting K-12 fine arts curriculum based on the Sunshine State Standards as policy
- endorsing fine arts as a core curriculum subject
- including the Essential Criteria as part of the Student Progression Plan
- providing funding for fine arts curriculum writing teams
- supporting the purchase of K-5 music and art state-adopted materials for all our students and schools
- supporting the development of four distinct arts schools and a fine arts academy
- supporting fine arts capital projects (rebuilding and renovations) as part of the long range planning for the school district
- supporting monetary supplements for fine arts teachers K-12
- attending gallery openings, all-county performances, and local school arts events throughout the district.

Dr. Gail McKinzie– Superintendent of Schools

“We are proud of our students’ achievements and opportunities in the arts, but we are confident that their achievements are only just beginning. The arts open children’s minds and encourage the exploration of creativity, self-expression and self-confidence and our school board has made the inclusion of the arts a priority throughout the district. When children are engaged in learning, their academic performance soars along with their imagination.”

Frank O’Reilly – District 1– Chairman

“I have always supported arts education and the funding required to support the many, many programs taking place not only at our performing arts schools but at all of the schools in Polk County. My family regularly attends the various events sponsored by the Polk Museum of Art, as well as the numerous musical and performing arts performances taking place in our schools.”

Lori Cunningham – District 2

“As (former) chairman of the Polk County School Board, I passionately support arts infused education to engage children in lifelong learning and an appreciation of the visual and performing arts. I continue to support arts education as a founding member and Board of Director of the Polk Arts Alliance. Additionally, I was a catalyst behind bringing the Lakeland Florida Dance Theatre ballet and jazz dance programs to the community of Lake Wales. I have been an advocate and a strong supporter for the creation of an arts academy at McLaughlin Middle School. I support increasing the amount of offerings of performing, visual, music, and dance programs in the Polk County School District, and I am willing to support the funding of those programs when they come before the School Board. Prior to my tenure on the School Board, and as executive director of the Haines City Chamber, I wrote letters and gained community support for Davenport Elementary School when it applied to become Davenport School of the Arts. My family and I enjoy attending dance, music, band, orchestra, art shows and festivals, visual art exhibitions, etc. throughout Polk County in support of the visual and performing arts.”

Hazel Sellers – District 3

“We have supported reform through advocating the issues on our various platforms through legislative efforts at the state and national levels. At the local level, our support is obvious as we not only support strong curriculum for the arts at all schools, but have supported four schools of the arts at different locations throughout the county. We continue to strive to bring not only quality arts programs to all our students but we also are dedicated to providing equitable access to arts programs to all our students. My support for the arts comes through voting to approve curriculum and expanded programs for the arts throughout the district.

State of the Arts Report

School Board Support

Hazel Sellers (cont.)

Even in times of scarce resources I have supported the addition of a new school of the arts, the expansion of our strings program so that students across the county can participate, and even the expansion of Harrison School for the Arts for our high school students. My support also includes continuing our partnership with the Polk Museum of Art, where we lease space so that some of our Harrison students can actually take art classes at the museum. For me, a school system that strives for national prominence must have a strong, integrated arts program at all levels.”

Dick Mullenax– District 4

“Having been raised in a community that had very little access to the arts, I really have a deep understanding of the true value the arts have on a person as well as a community. That is one reason I agreed to serve on the board of directors of the Imperial Symphony Orchestra for three years. My wife and I have presented a scholarship each year for the past 13 years at Harrison School for the Arts. We also gave financial support to a capital campaign recently held at Harrison. Each year we attend several arts related events in our community for the arts. Emily, my wife, taught at Jewett School of the Arts for 14 years and we often discussed the value of arts in the lives of the students. It allows them to bring out the creative expression of their inner self in a positive way.”

Kay Fields – District 5

“Both of my daughters attended Rochelle School of the Arts. I was able to be involved directly as a parent and advocate for the arts and I am able to share first hand how the arts benefited both my daughters. I served on the school advisory council and am a strong advocate for the school. Since my tenure on the School Board, I have supported all of the art initiatives that have been presented to the Board and understand, appreciate, and celebrate all of the wonderful opportunities that the arts provide to our children.”

Margaret Lofton – District 6

“Every child should be given the opportunity to dream, to create, to sing, to dance, to feel passion, to love and be loved, to feel self-worth, to experience success. Only through the study of the rich and varied arts curriculum offered in all K-12 Polk County schools can a student experience the sheer joy of self discovery through the development of their innate creative abilities. Our strong academic curriculum is second to none, but our arts curriculum is simply the best to be found anywhere in the country.” In the words of a talented fifth grade student who attends Davenport School of the Arts, ‘Give me a chance...to dance...to cry...to love...to laugh.’ My goal ... is to ensure that every student has a chance. The poet, Thomas Gray, wrote, ‘Perhaps in the neglected spot is laid some heart once pregnant with celestial fire; Hands that the rod of empire might have sway’d, or wak’d to ecstasy the living lyre.’ Gray mourned the loss of potential talent and greatness of a past generation. We owe our students who are our future generation a chance. As educational leaders we must never mourn lost opportunities for our students because of our lack of action. My goal is to turn my passion into reality for every student.”

Tim Harris – District 7

“I am of the opinion that instruction and participation in the arts is a positive way for children to express their creative side while acquiring skills in problem solving, team work and mathematical reasoning. Children have different learning styles and motivations; keeping arts instruction in the public school classroom is imperative to making sure no child is overlooked in their educational needs.”