



# CREATING A COMMON VISION

*Issues and recommendations  
for K-12 arts education  
in New Brunswick*



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Prepared by **Agapé Professional Services**

[www.artslinknb.com](http://www.artslinknb.com)



ArtsLink NB is a member-based arts service organization, founded in 2009 to advance the arts in New Brunswick by linking and unifying artists and arts organizations and promoting their value. We represent artists of all disciplines, from all parts of New Brunswick.

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## FOREWORD FROM THE PROJECT CHAIR

From my perspective, the importance of this ArtsLink NB report cannot be overstated. This document articulates the necessity and challenges of re-invigorating accessible K-12 arts education across all anglophone school districts in New Brunswick. It conveys an enormous amount of valuable information, helping all stakeholders to reflect on the cognitive, social, and pedagogical benefits of arts education.

We should recognize the energies and experiences of the many contributors to this report. Through town halls, surveys, meetings, and thoughtful review of relevant literature using best practices and data from across Canada, educators, steering committee members, researchers, and ArtsLink staff have all collaborated to provide a comprehensive topography of arts education in this province. The recommendations chart a path for constructive action by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Minister of Education. Ideally, this path will elevate arts education to the same status as science, math, and technology in the New Brunswick curriculum.

Imagining the future needs of today's student is more daunting than it has ever been. The first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century exemplify the tremendous pace of societal change in which we must prepare young people for success. Arts education develops skills such as critical and divergent thinking, analytical ability, risk-taking, resilience, empathy, problem-solving, and communication. These skills will best position students entering any occupation to innovate and thrive in an unpredictable, rapidly changing economy.

Alternatively, doubling down on the status quo practice of prioritizing science, math, and technology, without the fine arts, fails to prepare K-12 students adequately for today's creative knowledge-based economy. Making the commitments to qualified fine-arts educators outlined in this report, including investment and support equal to other subject areas, should re-direct schools to more positive outcomes for anglophone students across the province.

It is my hope that the spirit of collaboration evident in the commission and creation of this ArtsLink NB report leads to implementation of its recommendations in all anglophone school districts, benefiting student outcomes while enriching the diverse cultural life of New Brunswick.



Erik Edson  
Professor and Head  
Department of Fine Arts  
Mount Allison University



**“Arts education encourages creative thinking, helps students make connections, teaches techniques and aesthetics relevant to the field.”**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Arts education is a pillar of the provincial education system, according to the Province of New Brunswick. However, the current state of arts education in New Brunswick does not reflect that aspiration. Business leaders, economists, and the media have all raised urgent calls for enhancement of arts education to address the 21st-century learner's needs and to impart the creative and critical-thinking skills needed to succeed in the knowledge economy, but there are still growing concerns about the lack thereof. This report is a brief examination of the major issues and trends in arts education distilled from the literature and feedback received from arts educators, organizations, and artists in New Brunswick.

Both educators and the general public reported a lack of awareness about the inherent value of arts education to student learning outcomes in all subjects. Because of this, public perceptions must shift so the benefits of arts education for student learning and social and cognitive development are commonly understood.

Advocates and educators associated with the New Brunswick K-12 school system feel they have to continually justify an equal amount of time and resources for arts education against competing demands for increased math, science, and literacy instruction. This pressure is rising as student performance continues to lag in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) subjects province-wide, but research suggests that a renewed focus on arts education is a vital part of the solution to these poor academic outcomes.

Educators, artists, and community organizations all reported challenges with the amount of funding available for arts education. The limited funding is often difficult to access due to varying application processes that present an additional barrier for teachers, artists, and organizations seeking funding.

The current funding formulas for staffing in school districts hinder the ability to hire arts specialists. Also, there aren't enough qualified arts educators in the province, particularly in rural areas. Statistics reveal this challenge particularly in Anglophone School District North (ASD-N), a largely rural district, where the ratio of students to staff with a fine-arts education is almost double the ratio of other districts (665:1). In addition to the staffing challenges, there are limited professional development opportunities for arts educators in the province. These are often offered concurrently with other relevant professional development opportunities, forcing educators to choose between building their skills in math, social studies, language arts, and sciences, the core subjects prioritized by Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), or fine arts.

Finally, our research identified ongoing challenges with updating fine-arts curricula. Several courses offered in the K-12 anglophone system use a curriculum that is over 20 years old. While EECD consistently works to keep the curriculum updated, the status quo is insufficient.

After identifying the key challenges, we provide strong recommendations for government, educators, and community partners for improving arts education.



## **COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY**

### **We recommend:**

1. Arts organizations collaborate with arts specialists to form a provincial committee on arts and culture in education to advocate with one voice for arts issues across the province. EECD and the Minister of Education should be invited to sit on this committee. There is an existing committee for the francophone school system, so this would be a step towards equitable arts education in both the French and English systems.
2. ArtsLink NB and other community arts organizations pool resources to start a public awareness campaign promoting the benefits of arts education for student learning and social and cognitive development.



## **FUNDING**

### **We recommend:**

3. Arts educators be given a working budget each year to purchase materials to enhance arts education in the classroom.
4. The application process for school-based arts funding programs be streamlined and centralized to make the programs more accessible to all educators.



**“Art is what makes  
a society vital.”**





## HIRING PROCESSES

### We recommend:

5. EECD develop a staffing standard for arts educators to ensure a minimum level of competence and expertise.
6. EECD track which arts educators are qualified and working within their fine-arts specialization. This should include a rural/urban breakdown so districts can be aware of gaps in arts education in these areas.



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### We recommend:

7. EECD support fine-arts educators to attend one day-long professional development session each academic semester. These sessions will address topics of interest to staff and provide opportunities for arts specialists in each district to network. For one of these two sessions, all arts specialists (drama, visual arts, music, and dance) should be brought together so best practices can be shared between districts.
8. EECD share the benefits of and strategies for using the arts to facilitate learning in all subjects with all teaching staff in New Brunswick.
9. EECD and NBTA explore the current model of professional learning for fine-arts teachers.



## CURRICULUM

### We recommend:

10. EECD continue its comprehensive review of the arts curriculum until everything is up to date and inclusive. This will support the education system by aligning with the 10-year education plan.
11. EECD commit to incorporating the arts into other subjects. Research has shown the positive impact of the arts on student achievement in STEM subjects, and this would assist EECD in achieving targeted assessment outcomes in the 10-year education plan. Best practices in curriculum development can be accessed through partnerships with the Toronto District School Board and the Calgary Board of Education.
12. Some interview and survey participants repeated the common phrase, "What's assessed is blessed." We recommend that EECD devote resources toward developing a comprehensive system of assessment for K-12 arts education that accounts for knowledge acquisition, comprehension, creative development, skill development, and application.

Implementing these recommendations can create a roadmap towards achieving the aspirations outlined in the *10-Year Plan: Everyone at Their Best*.



**“Arts education must be considered an integral part of each student’s education, not just an add-on.”**





## ABOUT THIS REPORT

ArtsLink NB is a non-profit service organization for artists of all disciplines, from all parts of New Brunswick, which commissioned a review of the current state of K-12 arts education in the province. It is ArtsLink NB's mandate to link and unify artists, arts organizations, and the province's arts and culture sector in order to foster the sector's contributions to a dynamic and prosperous province. Its main activities are advocacy and professional development. ArtsLink NB has established a network that connects individual artists and arts organizations, fosters public awareness of arts and culture, promotes the value of arts in society, and aims to create a community culture that acknowledges arts professionals and treats them with respect.

This project builds on recommendations from David Campbell's report, *Sustaining New Brunswick's Arts and Culture Workforce*, as well as the province's cultural policy, *Creative Futures*, and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's 10-year education plan, *Everyone at their Best*. This report is intended to contribute to a broader province-wide dialogue on enhancing arts education in the K-12 system.<sup>1</sup>

This review summarizes issues, best practices, and recommendations discussed in the literature across a wide range of disciplines relevant to arts education, including sociology, psychology, and neuroscience. Policy statements and reports produced by organizations in the arts and culture sector also contributed to our recommendations. It is important to note that with the exception of a handful of specialists, largely led by Dr. Rena Upitis from the faculty of education at Queen's University, current published academic research on K-12 arts education in Canada is virtually non-existent. Most current reports have been commissioned by organizations in the United States, Europe and Australia between 1990 and 2005, and they do not address current social and economic realities. In the interest of time, and due to the sheer volume of work on this topic, research focused on reports published after 2000 and utilized findings from an extensive number of literature reviews on the topics examined.

<sup>1</sup> New Brunswick, *Creative Futures: A Renewed Cultural Policy for New Brunswick, 2014-2019* (2014), 13.



## INTRODUCTION

Since the 1800s, various forms of arts education have been included in public school curricula, because educators have known that arts and culture are an important part of a holistic education that brings both individual benefits and broader social and economic benefits to society. New Brunswick's cultural policy *Creative Futures (2014-19)* recommended "a provincial dialogue on cultural education in the anglophone K-12 system with artists, cultural professionals and community stakeholders to provide recommendations for further development and integration of arts, heritage and culture in education."<sup>2</sup> This was followed by New Brunswick's *10-Year Education Plan: Everyone at Their Best (Anglophone Sector)*, which focused on "improving learning in, and application of, the arts, sciences, trades and technology."<sup>3</sup> *Making the Case for Culture*, a 2005 publication by the Creative City Network of Canada, notes that the arts are engaging for youth, contribute to scholastic achievement as well as personal achievement, such as higher self-esteem and leadership development, and ease their transition into adulthood by giving them these skills along with many other in-demand job skills.<sup>4</sup> As this list suggests, enormous expectations have been placed on the arts and culture sector largely as a result of three things: austerity measures in the 1990s, a perceived decline in basic literacy and numeracy skills, and uncertainty following the 2008 economic recession. Currently, the education system has to ensure that children are reaching their full potential and staying away from social ills, while simultaneously learning new technology and dealing with the fact that the public is divided on how valuable the arts really are.

<sup>2</sup> New Brunswick, *Creative Futures: Renewed Cultural Policy for New Brunswick*, 13.

<sup>3</sup> New Brunswick, *10-Year Education Plan: Everyone at Their Best, Anglophone Sector* (2017), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Creative City Network of Canada, *Making the Case for Culture: Personal and Social Development of Children and Youth* (2005), 2.

**“The arts  
are a natural  
and necessary  
part of the  
human condition.”**





## WHAT ARE THE ARTS?

The definition of “the arts,” specifically in the context of school curriculum, is both complex and hotly debated in the literature. When referring to arts education or the creative arts, provincial arts-education curricula, including *The Foundation for Atlantic Canada Arts Education Curriculum*, typically includes classes in the fine and performing arts: visual arts, music, drama or theatre, and dance.<sup>5</sup> In a 2011 report, Guy Bellavance describes tension between proponents of the fine arts and contemporary art forms in “the broader field of ‘visual culture.’” Bellavance describes it as “a hodgepodge of traditional applied arts, more recent audiovisual media and the new ‘creative design.’”<sup>6</sup> New Brunswick’s literacy strategy mandates that students immersed in online content must be able to interpret and analyze a variety of sources. It also advocates for a more modern approach, on the basis that visual and new media arts are crucial tools for teaching media literacy.<sup>7</sup> Researchers who favour a more contemporary focus also argue that modern art forms are more relevant and attractive to students, enabling teachers to create activities that are multicultural and inclusive.<sup>8</sup>

The proliferation of cultural-policy statements, road maps and action plans reflect a growing body of evidence that sees arts education as a vital component of community culture, well-being, identity and connectedness, but it is still unclear how this translates to the classroom.<sup>9</sup> New Brunswick’s renewed cultural policy *Creative Futures* intends to “promote arts and cultural education and learning from early childhood through to post-secondary education” and refers to “arts and heritage education . . . through arts programs, and cultural activities,” but does not actually explain what arts and cultural education are.<sup>10</sup> For Acadian and francophone schools, arts, language, and cultural instruction are integrated as part of a strategy to survive as distinct minority communities in New Brunswick. For example, the francophone strategy stresses the importance of developing “a common understanding and vision of linguistic and cultural development” to be implemented by schools and other stakeholders through “planned, systematic, and coordinated actions designed to ensure the protection, promotion, and transmission of language and culture.”<sup>11</sup> Similar cultural strategies developed by the Acadian community, Indigenous peoples, the Finnish, and Irish can help policy-makers and educators in the anglophone school system articulate a shared vision that is equitable and accessible in a multicultural context.

While policy documents stress the importance of the arts as a source of interest, innovation, and job creation, an investigation into the professional status of artists indicates that at all levels, arts and culture are hampered by chronic underfunding and a lack of public support.<sup>12</sup> A 2013 survey conducted by ArtsLink NB showed that many artists and employees in the cultural sector felt they were not treated like other professionals and that “the public and its main institutions are not particularly interested in art and the culture sector.”<sup>13</sup> There’s a perception that arts and culture are the first budget line-items to be cut and the last to be earmarked for investment in light of New Brunswick’s provincial budget deficit. As a report on Acadian arts and culture surmised, while “every generation appreciates music, literature, the visual arts, film, dance and culture, there is a persistent belief that they are not essential, that they are more or less superfluous. However, art is what makes a society vital.”<sup>14</sup>

<sup>5</sup> New Brunswick, *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Arts Education Curriculum*, Department of Education, Educational Programs & Services Branch (Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Guy Bellavance, *The Visual Arts in Canada: A Synthesis and Critical Analysis of Recent Research*, Donald McGrath, trans. (Institut national de la recherche scientifique Centre - Urbanisation Culture Société, April 2011), 3-4. <http://canadacouncil.ca/research/research-library/2011/08/the-visual-arts-in-canada>.

<sup>7</sup> New Brunswick, *Unleashing the Power of Literacy: New Brunswick’s Comprehensive Literacy Strategy*, (2017), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Steve Seidel, Shari Tishman, Ellen Winner, Lois Hetland and Patricia Palmer, *The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education*, (Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2009), 55.

<sup>9</sup> Rachel Bolstad, *The contributions of learning in the arts to educational, social and economic outcomes*, Part 1 (New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2010), 47.

<sup>10</sup> New Brunswick, *Creative Futures*, 13.

<sup>11</sup> New Brunswick and the Action Group for the Commission on Francophone Schools, *Linguistic and Cultural Development Policy* (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2014), 74, 12.

<sup>12</sup> New Brunswick, *Report on the Forum on the Professional Status of Artists in New Brunswick*, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> ArtsLink NB, *Sustaining New Brunswick’s Arts and Cultural Workforce* (February 2013), 12.

<sup>14</sup> États Généraux on Arts and Culture in Acadian Society in New Brunswick, *A Global Strategy for the Integration of Arts and Culture into Acadian Society in New Brunswick* (Association acadienne des artistes professionnel.le.s du Nouveau-Brunswick, Eng. 2010), 67.



Experts disagree as to what extent arts education should be prioritized in the curriculum and whether it should be considered as a leisure or economic activity. As Betty Hanley writes, “we do not have a shared vision of arts education among educators, artists, and the community. Indeed, the three groups often seem to be working at cross-purposes.”<sup>15</sup> Defining what the arts are and what they mean to New Brunswick’s culture and identity, as well as matching that value with the appropriate resources, is one step towards creating a common vision of what arts education is supposed to be and do.

## WHAT IS ARTS EDUCATION?

Arts education can be provided in three ways: “learning in the arts (courses in making art of all kinds); learning about the arts (courses in visual and performing arts history and criticism); and learning through the arts (innovative uses of the arts to facilitate learning in other areas).”<sup>16</sup> There is a growing consensus that integrating the arts into the broader curriculum using the above methods improves student outcomes. Studies from the United States show that integration takes many forms, from arts-immersed schools, in which students must take arts courses, to whole-school models that integrate the arts into all other subjects.<sup>17</sup> Here in Canada, the Calgary Board of Education considers itself a leader in the whole-school approach. It created an art-centred learning program in 1997, which is now offered in several schools from Grades 5 to 12. The Toronto District School Board also has several arts-based schools at the elementary and secondary levels. These schools have completely integrated curricula, and some of them even have intensive art programs, such as cyber arts.<sup>18</sup> However, many of these specialized programs tend to be located in affluent areas and target high-achieving students who already show talent through selective enrollment or admissions requirements, so it’s important to consider equitable access. Integration is also not without its critics, particularly in the visual arts, who fear it devalues art as a standalone subject.<sup>19</sup> Most case studies highlight the whole-school approach described above, but many other programs are interdisciplinary, partnering art with another subject (usually math or literacy). Rena Upitis suggests that arts integration doesn’t need to be an either/or situation, but instead can be “both integrated throughout the curriculum and taught as separate curriculum subjects.”<sup>20</sup>

Arts integration has gained additional steam in the media recently because critics raised concerns about the uncertain needs of the 21st-century creative economy. This was initially the impetus behind a greater emphasis on STEM subjects, but a growing number of researchers in this field believe that true creativity comes from “melding . . . technology and creative thinking through art and design.”<sup>21</sup> New Brunswick and Alberta have redesigned their curriculum to bring art, design, and the humanities into STEM, transforming it to STEAM. This came from the understanding that “participation in the arts, science, trades and technology significantly impacts the development of competencies such as innovation, creativity and critical thinking.”<sup>22</sup> While it makes sense that a STEAM curriculum should begin in the early years and remain consistent throughout the K-12 system, school districts vary widely in curriculum implementation and resources available to students. As is the case

<sup>15</sup> Betty Hanley, “Canadian Arts Education: A Critical Analysis of Selected Elementary Curricula,” *Canadian Journal of Education*, 19, 3 (1994): 210.

<sup>16</sup> ArtsLink NB, *Reviewing K-12 Arts Education in New Brunswick*, (2017), 2. <https://www.artslinknb.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/.../ArtsEdubackground-2017.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Robin Rooney, *Arts-Based Teaching and Learning: Review of the Literature*, (Washington, DC: VSA Arts, May 2004), 3.

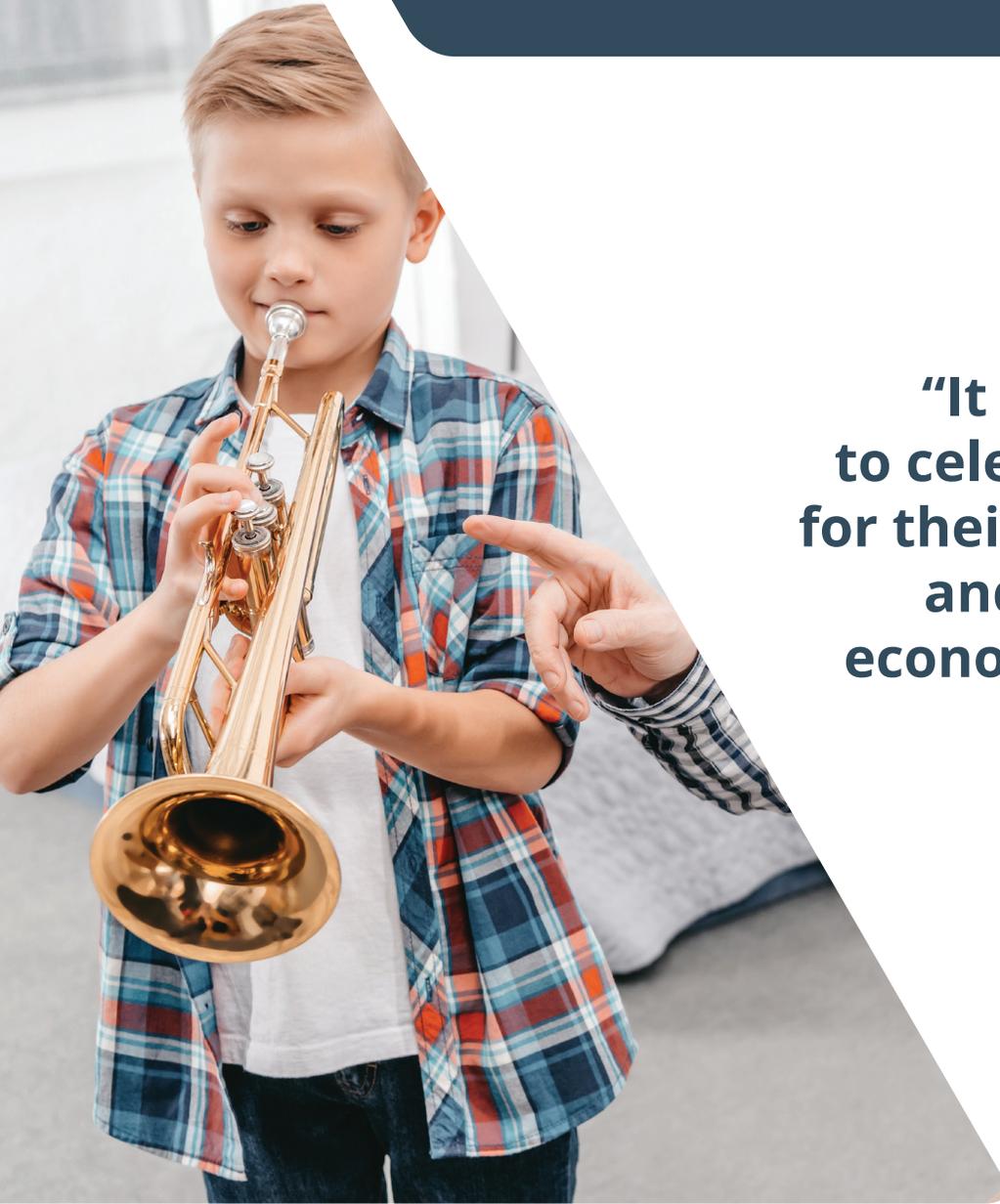
<sup>18</sup> Calgary Board of Education, *Review of Research and Emerging Trends in Arts Education*, (June 2016), 8; Toronto District School Board (TDSB), Specialized Elementary Schools and Programs, <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Find-your/School/Specialized-Elementary-Schools-and-Programs>; TDSB, Specialized Schools and Programs, High-School (both accessed July 2, 2018) <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/High-School/Going-to-High-School/Specialized-Schools-and-Programs>.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas M. Brewer, “Integrated Curriculum: What Benefit,” *Arts Education Policy Review*, 103, 4 (March/April 2002): 31; Karen DeMoss & Terry Morris, “How Arts Integration Supports Student Learning: Students Shed Light on the Connections,” (Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education, 2002), 21.

<sup>20</sup> Rena Upitis, *Arts Education for the Development of the Whole Child*, ii.

<sup>21</sup> Michelle H. Land, “Full STEAM Ahead: The Benefits of Integrating the Arts into STEM,” *Procedia Computer Science*, 20 (2013): 548.

<sup>22</sup> New Brunswick, *10-Year Education Plan: Everyone at their Best*, 11-12.



**“It is essential to celebrate the arts for their intrinsic value and recognize economic realities.”**

with integration generally, much is written to promote and encourage the approach, but there aren't very many concrete strategies in the literature, and best practices tend to be limited to a small number of success stories, principally in American cities. These studies suggest that to be successful, whole-school approaches require partnerships with organizations and businesses, parental involvement, specialist teachers, and resources that cannot be coordinated at the classroom level without administrative support.<sup>23</sup>

Researchers unequivocally agree that political and social pressure placed on educators in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom to improve literacy and numeracy have come at the expense of arts education programming. This is concerning, given that New Brunswick's provincial assessments show that almost half of students do not meet grade-appropriate expectations for reading and math. The province's literacy strategy provided additional funding for remedial programs both during and outside of the school day,<sup>24</sup> but they must co-exist with other programs that address issues such as childhood poverty, and mental health, as well as sports and extra-curricular activities that make increasing demands on school budgets and instruction time. Prioritizing the arts in this environment is a front-line issue in education publications, particularly as evidence shows that educational attainment has a direct effect on socioeconomic outcomes, anti-social behaviour, and happiness, health, and well-being.

<sup>23</sup> Rooney, *Arts-Based Teaching and Learning: Review of the Literature*, 6, 8, 11.

<sup>24</sup> Sean Previl and Andrew Cromwell, "Literacy strategy launched by New Brunswick to improve rates," CBC News, February 27, 2017, <https://globalnews.ca/news/3275779/literacy-strategy-launched-by-new-brunswick-to-improve-rates/>; Robert Jones, "Grade 6 students miss targets in science, math and reading," CBC News, January 19, 2018.

## WHAT CAN ARTS EDUCATION DO?

As the New Brunswick provincial art curriculum acknowledges, the benefits of the arts are largely internal and personal.<sup>25</sup> According to Ellen Dissanayake, who writes from an anthropological point of view, “the arts are a natural and necessary part of the human condition,” and exist “to make socially significant experiences memorable and pleasurable and to make otherwise unbearable experiences bearable.”<sup>26</sup> According to a report from researchers at Project Zero, an interdisciplinary research centre focused on arts education at Harvard University, arts education encourages creative thinking, helps students make connections, teaches techniques and aesthetics relevant to the field, facilitates student engagement, allows students to express themselves, and fosters individual development.<sup>27</sup> While a significant group of researchers and educators believe that we need more studies to understand how the creative process works,<sup>28</sup> the evidence in the interim is more than sufficient to demand that students receive a quality arts education from kindergarten to grade 12.

### THE ARTS AND BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Because they appeal to different learners and use multiple methods of transmitting knowledge (visual, kinesthetic, and auditory), the arts play a significant role in childhood development. Recent studies show that the arts stimulate all areas of learning in the brain (emotional, social, cognitive, physical, and reflective) and, through experiential learning, impart skills related to visual problem-solving and the interpretation of abstract symbols and ideas.<sup>29</sup> Several studies utilizing magnetic resonance imaging show that areas of the brain that were previously thought to be compartmentalized are actually connected by neurotransmitters and that participation in activities like music and dance stimulates and improves the pathways between them. Exposure to different forms of learning creates more neural pathways, which improves focus, memory, and retention.<sup>30</sup> Since evidence on early childhood development identifies the years before age five as crucial for learning, the earlier children are exposed to diverse stimulating experiences, the better.

Researchers and neuroscientists caution that in the absence of further study, it is difficult to apply neuroscientific evidence to specific classroom strategies. In the meantime, several studies conducted in United States and anecdotal evidence show a correlation between exposure to the arts and increased brain function in memory and recall, which leads to academic and behavioural improvement.<sup>32</sup> In Canada, one such study is the Learning Through the Arts study. It was conducted over six years with elementary students in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Windsor, Cape Breton, and Corner Brook. The study noted substantial improvements in student engagement and no decline in math and literacy scores when integrated arts programming was introduced.<sup>33</sup> In fact, many researchers believe that the potential for arts education to improve engagement and behaviour may have the greatest benefit for at-risk and socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

<sup>25</sup> New Brunswick, *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Arts Education Curriculum*, 13.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Rena Upitis, “What is Arts Education Good For?,” *Education Canada*, 43, 4 (2010): 24-27.

<sup>27</sup> Seidel et al, *The Qualities of Quality*, 18-27.

<sup>28</sup> National Endowment for the Arts, *How Creativity Works in the Brain* (July 2015), 23.

<sup>29</sup> Shelley Robinson, *Promising Practices and Core Learnings in the Fine Arts* (Alberta Education, 2008), 9; Rooney, *Arts-Based Teaching and Learning*, 9.

<sup>30</sup> Amy Duma & Lynne Silverstein, “A View into a Decade of Arts Integration, Journal for Learning through the Arts, 2014,” *Journal for Learning through the Arts*, 10, 1 (2014): np.

<sup>31</sup> Renate Caine & Geoffrey Caine, *Making Connections: Teaching and the Human Brain* (Alexandra, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1991), vii.

<sup>32</sup> Mariko Nobori, “How the Arts Unlock the Door to Learning,” *Edutopia.org*, (accessed June 18, 2018) <https://www.edutopia.org/stw-arts-integration-reform-overview>.

<sup>33</sup> Upitis, *Arts Education for the Development of the Whole Child*, 13-14.



## THE ARTS AND DIVERSITY

Arts and culture are important social determinants of health, and francophone, Indigenous peoples, Acadian, and other groups such as the Māori perceive the artistic process as vital to fostering a sense of identity and as protection against assimilation by the dominant culture. Recently, Indigenous communities in New Brunswick contributed to an Indigenous visual-arts curriculum, which has been shared with educators. This is a positive step, but this curriculum is merely supplemental and will be applied in varying degrees across the province. Because of this, we should measure the frequency, efficacy, and impact of this supplemental fine-arts curriculum in classrooms across New Brunswick. Evidence from art therapy studies and other cultural programs aimed at addressing Indigenous residential school trauma in Canada support the links between art and culture, self-esteem, health, and well-being.<sup>34</sup>

## THE ARTS AND THE ECONOMY

ArtsLink NB and other organizations are mandated to ensure that future artists and cultural-sector workers see New Brunswick as a desirable place to live and work. A large body of research shows that vibrant cultural sectors in many cities contribute direct and indirect benefits to the economy in the form of increased taxes, employment, consumer spending, and property values.<sup>35</sup> New Brunswick, and by extension, the provincial arts and culture sector, were hit particularly hard by the 2008 recession and subsequent public and private spending cuts. In 2016, the provincial arts and culture economy continued to shrink by 2.3 per cent to \$543.2 million. The sector contributes 1.7 per cent to the provincial GDP, an increase of 3.4 per cent; however, visual and applied arts declined by a shocking 29.6 per cent, the largest decline Statistics Canada saw in culture domains in 2016. Despite the decline, the sector employed 8,469 people in the province in 2016, a 2.2 per cent increase over 2015 and higher than the overall employment increase of 0.9 per cent.<sup>36</sup> A growing number of researchers suggest the arts and culture sector should be a key part of Canada's economic development and global competitiveness strategy.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, if New Brunswick's arts community is to continue to grow and thrive, it seems crucial to ensure that the curricular goals of arts education align with cultural policy statements and investments in the cultural sector.

## THE ARTS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Educators are under enormous expectations to produce graduates with the kinds of high skills demanded by the new creative economy. Media continually report a shortage of skilled workers, but there is little precise data on both the labour market and the workforce needs of the arts and culture, high-tech, and knowledge sectors. In terms of employment-specific programming, "research has demonstrated that participation in arts activities at school can develop transferable skills for the workplace, but there is little evidence on the actual employment effect."<sup>38</sup> It seems obvious that students in the arts engage in activities requiring focus, team work, and problem-solving, but it's less clear how student experiences in the arts translate into real-world job skills<sup>39</sup> and whether they even should. Recent anecdotal evidence suggests some positive correlations. For example, Memorial University of Newfoundland has discovered that "musical background is a good predictor of success" in its medical program. As a result, the school is increasingly recruiting graduates from music programs into the school of medicine.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Bolstad, *The contributions of learning in the arts to educational, social and economic outcomes*, 39; Linda Archibald, *Dancing, Singing, Painting, and Speaking the Healing Story: Healing through Creative Arts* (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2012), 7.

<sup>35</sup> Conference Board of Canada, *Valuing Culture: Measuring and Understanding Canada's Creative Economy*, (August 2008), foreword; National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), *How Art Works: A Five-Year Research Agenda with a System Map and Measurement Model* (September 2012), 24-25.

<sup>36</sup> Statistics Canada, "Provincial and Territorial Culture Indicators, 2016," *The Daily*, February 27, 2018.

<sup>37</sup> Richard Florida, Shade Shuttles & Greg Spencer, *Pathways to Ontario's Knowledge Economy: A System for Identifying Existing Regional Strengths and Future Prospects* (Martin Prosperity Research, Rotman School of Management, June 2016), 3, 14-15. Janet Ruiz, *Literature Review of the Evidence Base for Culture, the Arts and Sport Policy* (Scottish Executive Education Department, February 2004) 4.

<sup>38</sup> Janet Ruiz, *Literature Review of the Evidence Base for Culture*, 5.

<sup>39</sup> Creative City Network of Canada, *Making the Case for Culture*, 6-7.

<sup>40</sup> Peter Jackson, "From musician to physician: Why medical schools are recruiting for musical ability". CBC News August 6, 2018: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/medicine-music-connection-1.4770372>

In a publication authored by Canadians for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning and Innovation (C21), "multi-literate, creative, and innovative people are now seen as the drivers of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the prerequisites to economic success, social progress and personal empowerment." C21 identifies seven skills: creativity; innovation and entrepreneurship; critical thinking; collaboration; communication; character, culture, and ethical citizenship; and computer and digital technologies.<sup>41</sup> Essential graduation learnings and outcomes from most jurisdictions, including New Brunswick, Maine, and Alberta, offer similar variations to this.<sup>42</sup> STEM employment is one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy, and stimulating student interest in those subjects is of urgent concern to STEM/STEAM proponents.<sup>43</sup> Research on the current state of the arts and culture workforce in New Brunswick suggests precarious employment, low wages, and out-migration are hampering efforts to grow that sector of the economy. It seems plausible that some of these issues could be ameliorated in the future with arts integration and by having STEM proponents, the arts community, and educators work together.

## WHAT DOES SUCCESSFUL ARTS LEARNING LOOK LIKE?

According to Harvard's Project Zero, achieving quality arts education depends upon answering four fundamental questions:

1. *Who should teach the arts?*
2. *Where should the arts be taught?*
3. *What should be taught and how?*
4. *How should arts learning be assessed?*

However, answering these questions is easier said than done. Reports highlight a number of challenges educators face in providing quality arts education but acknowledge they can offer few concrete solutions. This is because people who are far removed from the day-to-day realities of the classroom are generally the ones making crucial financial and policy decisions.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, parental and administrative support, as well as socioeconomic factors and partnerships with the broader arts community, can affect the kind of arts education students receive, and these factors can vary dramatically between individual schools and districts. Despite this, experts note that schools most often face similar challenges. In Manitoba, for example, these include insufficient instructional time, underfunding, small staffs, multi-grade classrooms, declining enrolments, a lack of fundraising time, a generalists' lack of expertise in the arts, a lack of arts valuing by the school community, and a reduction of music specialist time.<sup>45</sup> Based on qualitative feedback, New Brunswick is facing most of these same challenges. Conversely, some of the elements of an ideal arts education system include qualified teachers, effective partnerships, supportive school leadership, experiential learning opportunities, adequate resources, and integration of the arts into other subjects.<sup>46</sup>

### ESSENTIAL ARTS CORE CURRICULUM

New Brunswick's cultural policy recognizes the importance of improving communication and sharing best practices in arts and heritage between the anglophone and francophone school systems. This is outlined in the *Cultural Development Policy and Strategy for the Integration of Arts and Culture into Acadian Society in New Brunswick*. To date, however, this appears to be a work in progress and key resources in each language still await translation.<sup>47</sup> While most provinces have updated (or are in the process of updating) their arts policies and curriculum, strategic implementation plans at the local board and school level must "connect . . . philosophy

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Calgary Board of Education, *Review of Research and Emerging Trends*, 6.

<sup>42</sup> New Brunswick, *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Arts Education Curriculum*, 5; Maine, Department of Education. *Learning Results, Parameters for Essential Instruction: Visual & Performing Arts* (2007), 5. <http://www.maine.gov/doe/arts/standards/index.html>; Calgary Board of Education, *Review of Research and Emerging Trends*, 7.

<sup>43</sup> Land, *Full STEAM Ahead*, 547.

<sup>44</sup> Seidel et al, *The Qualities of Quality*, 50 & 63.

<sup>45</sup> Francine Morin, *A Study of Arts Education in Manitoba Schools*, Manitoba Education research network (MERN) Monograph Series, issue 3, Spring 2010, 82.

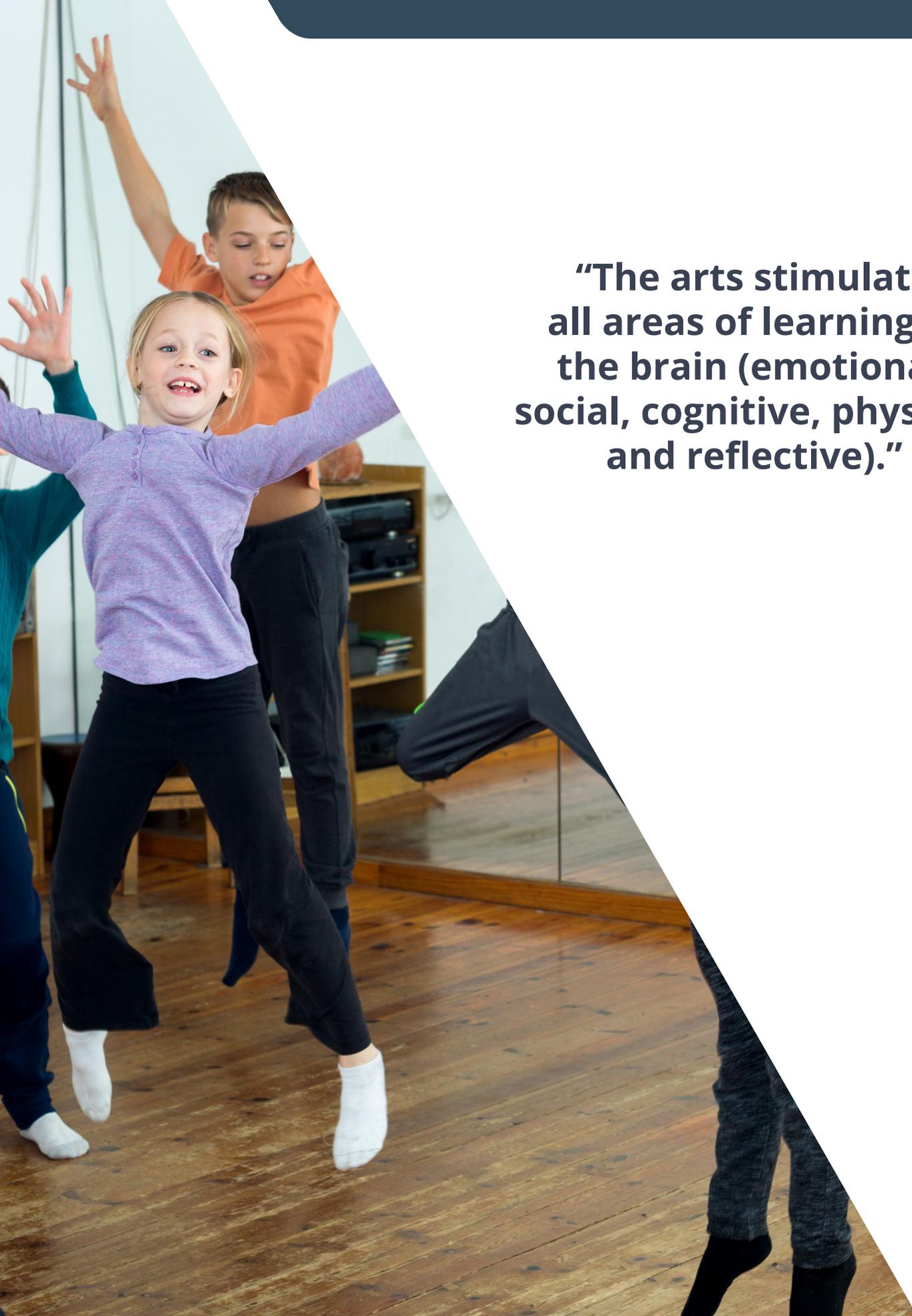
<sup>46</sup> Center for Arts Education, *Expanding Arts Education in your Child's School*, Parent Advocacy Toolkit, 2015.

<sup>47</sup> New Brunswick, *Creative Futures*, 10-12.

<sup>48</sup> Morin, *A Study of Arts Education in Manitoba Schools*, 114.



**“Multi-literate, creative,  
and innovative people  
are now seen as  
the drivers of  
the 21st century.”**



**“The arts stimulate all areas of learning in the brain (emotional, social, cognitive, physical, and reflective).”**



and practice more directly.”<sup>48</sup> This is challenging, as many policy documents are long and complex and intended to be implemented over an extended period of time. Additionally, while many stakeholders are interested in implementing the curriculum and supporting arts and culture broadly, how they are to be included is seldom explained. According to recommendations contained in a report commissioned by the State of California, the kind of cross-curricular learning needed to impart complex skills required in the workplace is highly dependent upon creative partnerships with business, industry, media, organizations, and STEM/STEAM advocates.<sup>49</sup>

As one of many subjects taught in the New Brunswick public school system, art classes must address essential learning outcomes related to technology, communication, personal development, critical thinking, citizenship, and aesthetics. Several studies cited by Ruiz show that youth will rarely participate in arts or cultural events and are likely to stay disengaged as adults, unless they are engaged early on. To fully gain appreciation and benefit, experts agree children should be introduced to arts and cultural activities as early as possible.<sup>50</sup> The United States National Core Arts Standards recommends elementary and middle school students spend 15 per cent of their instruction time on the arts. While a minimum number of arts courses are required at the high school level, critics complain that they become optional in higher grades. As already mentioned, increasing the number of required arts courses isn't the same as creating an integrated curriculum, but students in both systems are expected to cumulatively acquire more complex knowledge of each art form as they progress from kindergarten to grade 12.<sup>51</sup> Arts instruction should focus on teaching skills, knowledge, and appreciation of a particular discipline, but that's not all it should do. The Maine Department of Education's *Visual and Performing Arts Standards* also requires arts instruction to: connect with other subjects; involve creating, performing, and problem-solving; teach criticism, aesthetics, history, and culture; and provide career information and opportunities for personal growth.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, experts on creative thinking in education agree that in practice, arts curricula should be interdisciplinary and utilize different kinds of thinking (analysis, synthesis, pragmatic, or realistic). It should teach the creative process, have students problem-solve and pursue their own knowledge and interests, use a variety of assessment methods, teach entrepreneurial and business skills, and address career options in the arts.<sup>53</sup>

“Creativity and innovation”<sup>54</sup> are repeatedly identified as skills students need to thrive in the knowledge economy, and experts agree that it's a huge research priority to both define creativity as a curricular objective and study the processes of cultivating creative thinking through the arts if Canadian children are to have the skills to compete in a global employment market.<sup>55</sup> Upitis identifies the elements of creativity as fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration, metaphorical thinking, observation, visualization, patterning, empathy, play, tolerance (particularly of change), open-mindedness, risk-taking, patience, a non-judgmental attitude, resiliency, high-level problem-solving, analytical ability, humour, independent thinking, precision and accuracy, and curiosity.<sup>56</sup> Divergent thinking, a critical element of creativity, is the ability to think about problem-solving in new and unique ways by combining different kinds of knowledge, experimenting with plausible solutions, and communicating them to others. STEAM advocates cite the numerous advantages of combining and applying divergent skills learned through the arts with convergent skills (factual/analytical) traditionally learned in science and math.<sup>57</sup> Cognitive scientists and psychologists who study how creativity works in the brain note that brain-based learning is an extremely complex process that students develop over time.<sup>58</sup> Most note that simply mandating more arts courses is insufficient to provide the kind of creative experiences and interdisciplinary connections necessary for this kind of learning; this is where arts integration comes in.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>49</sup> California, *Joint Art Education Task Force Report* (California Department of Education, 2013), 13-16.

<sup>50</sup> Ruiz, *Literature Review of the Evidence Base for Culture*, 25, 29.

<sup>51</sup> Seidel et al, *The Qualities of Quality*, 57.

<sup>52</sup> Maine, Department of Education. *Learning Results, Parameters for Essential Instruction: Visual & Performing Arts*, 2007.5. <http://www.maine.gov/doe/arts/standards/index.html>.

<sup>53</sup> Karlyn Adams, *The Sources of Innovation and Creativity*, National Centre on Education and the Economy, September 2005, 50-52.

<sup>54</sup> ArtsLink NB, *Sustaining New Brunswick's Arts and Cultural Workforce*, 15.

<sup>55</sup> Rena Upitis, “Creativity; The State of the Domain,” in *Measuring What Matters*, People for Education. Toronto: November 8, 2014, 6-7 <https://peopleforeducation.ca/report/creativity-the-state-of-the-domain/>.

<sup>56</sup> Upitis, “Creativity; the State of the Domain,” 6-7.

<sup>57</sup> Land, “Full STEAM Ahead,” 547.

<sup>58</sup> Caine & Caine, *Making Connections*, viii, 3.

<sup>59</sup> Michele Root-Bernstein & Robert Root-Bernstein, “Do Arts Teach Creativity? Learning creative process takes more than a regular art class,” *Psychology Today*, April 30, 2011, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/imagine/201104/do-arts-teach-creativity>.

## FINE-ARTS TEACHERS: SPECIALISTS OR GENERALISTS?

Evidence is contradictory when it comes to the benefits of having specialized art teachers, generalists, or professional artists teach students. According to one analysis, current pedagogical trends that emphasize artistic processes and art appreciation over talent and product allow non-specialists to teach in many arts disciplines,<sup>60</sup> and a research bulletin by the Ontario Association of Deans of Education presents strategies regular teachers can use to integrate the arts into the classroom.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, in jurisdictions like Ontario, where budget cuts eliminated arts and music teachers in some schools, experts stress that specialists are particularly necessary in the visual arts, music, and dance.<sup>62</sup> Uptis suggests it is unrealistic to demand multi-subject expertise from teachers and stresses that teachers must be practitioners of the subject they teach. In her opinion, the arts are not prioritized enough in teacher-education programs<sup>63</sup> or in career development curriculum at critical junctures between high school and post-secondary. This results in artists who do not become teachers and teachers who do not major in the arts. Some fear that cuts to arts education budgets not only eliminate potential jobs for often precariously employed professional artists but further discourage teacher candidates from specializing in the arts as a teachable subject. Arts integration in Nova Scotia employs a “family of schools” model, where approximately 10 specialists assist classroom teachers in 40 schools on a rotational basis.<sup>64</sup> While there are plans to increase the number of specialists, there appears to be no money in the system to incentivize artists to earn teaching degrees or encourage arts-education graduates to relocate to rural and under-served areas. Bridging professional competencies between teachers and artists and increasing access to professional development for both groups are issues discussed at length in the literature. The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) has a partnership with the Alberta College of Art and Design (ACAD) where the CBE receives access to the college’s faculty, courses, and studio space in exchange for classroom teaching and residency opportunities for ACAD graduates,<sup>65</sup> but it is difficult to determine how common these kinds of capacity-building partnerships are. In New Brunswick, teacher hiring policies limit the ability for artists, who are generally more educated than the average population, to teach in the classroom. The existing policy requires all teaching staff to possess a bachelor’s degree in education, which limits most artists’ participation in the education system to that of artists-in-residence or guest performers rather than educators.

The employment conditions of arts teachers aren’t often discussed in the literature, but several reports indirectly suggest that inadequate resourcing pressures teachers to perform a disproportionate amount of unpaid labour such as fundraising, grant-writing, partnership development, and extra-curricular supervision (i.e. band, choir, and theatre programs). At the classroom level, curriculum design has become more complex and labour intensive due to trends in arts education,<sup>66</sup> such as open and individualized exploratory learning for students of differing abilities. At the same time, prep times have been reduced in many jurisdictions. In a compendium of surveys published by the Canadian Teachers Federation, teachers cited increased expectations, workloads, and the inability to meet their students’ complex needs as primary sources of workplace stress and attrition.<sup>67</sup> While many studies associate arts-based learning with improved student engagement and academic outcomes, expectations must remain realistic and adequate resources must be deployed to address issues that the arts and arts teachers cannot.

<sup>60</sup> Hanley, “Canadian Arts Education: A Critical Analysis of Selected Elementary Curricula,” 210.

<sup>61</sup> Christine L. Cho and John L. Vitale, “Cultivating Student Engagement through Interactive Art Strategies,” Research Monograph #53, Ontario Ministry of Education and the Ontario Association of Deans of Education, (August 2014), <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/whatWorks.html>.

<sup>62</sup> “Some Ontario schools go silent as music programs are defunded,” *CBC News*, May 15, 2017, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-schools-music-education-1.4114622>.

<sup>63</sup> Uptis, *Arts Education for the Development of the Whole Child*, 48 & 51.

<sup>64</sup> Stuart Peddle, “Arts being expanded, not cut, says HRCE,” *Chronicle Herald*, May 13, 2018, <http://thechronicleherald.ca/metro/1570325-arts-being-expanded-not-cut-says-hrce>.

<sup>65</sup> Calgary Board of Education, *Review of Research and Emerging Trends*, 10.

<sup>66</sup> See Robinson, *Promising Practices and Core Learnings in the Fine Arts*.

<sup>67</sup> See various surveys contained in the Canadian Teachers’ Federation, *National Research Project* (October 2011) [https://www.ctf-fce.ca/Research-Library/TeacherVoice2011\\_EN\\_WEB-2ed.pdf](https://www.ctf-fce.ca/Research-Library/TeacherVoice2011_EN_WEB-2ed.pdf).



## ARTISTS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

In jurisdictions where retaining specialists is difficult, having professional artists work with teachers is recommended, as it exposes students to the arts in practise. Unfortunately, data from both Statistics Canada and ArtsLink NB shows that many artists in New Brunswick are struggling to practise their craft in a stagnating labour market.<sup>68</sup> Both anglophone and francophone artists share similar difficulties promoting themselves in a global market and managing other aspects of business operations.<sup>69</sup> Additionally, an inquiry into the professional status of artists in New Brunswick identified low-paying, precarious employment as an urgent concern for the artistic community. If they subsist only on their artistic endeavours, artists tend to live below the poverty line, and contract employees and self-employed artists are ineligible for many social programs, health benefits, and pensions.<sup>70</sup>

**Table 1: Average annual income in the arts (2016)**



Occupation	Average Annual Income <sup>71</sup>
Creative and performing artists	\$20,436.00
Photographers, graphic arts technicians and technical and coordinating occupations in motion pictures, broadcasting, and the performing arts	\$23,963.00
Announcers and other performers	\$27,552.00
Creative designers and craftpersons	\$26,258.00
<b>Basic needs poverty line (family of four)<sup>72</sup></b>	<b>\$26,619.00</b>

Given that entrepreneurship is prioritized in the anglophone global competencies, it is important that arts curricula empower students with business development knowledge and tools to navigate a creative economy dominated by digital technology and precarious employment. According to New Brunswick's *2017 Grade 12 Exit Survey*, 75 per cent of students reported grades of 80 per cent or more in visual arts and music but still did not see the arts and culture as viable career options, primarily because they lacked career development information.<sup>71</sup> Several reports express concern with a lack of data on youth participation in arts and culture activities, and ArtsLink NB's study states that future workforce growth requires "clear data on the creative and performing arts and crafts, and the occupations related to them."<sup>72</sup> Further research is required to explore other factors that prohibit students from pursuing careers in the arts.

## RESOURCES AND FUNDING FOR ARTS EDUCATION

Project Zero's report on quality in arts education includes a substantial infrastructure wish list, which includes networked computers loaded with appropriate software and projection capabilities, dance studios, theatres, soundproof music rooms, and gallery space.<sup>73</sup> Ideally, arts education would depend upon minimum levels of physical and technological infrastructure, but few schools meet Project Zero's criteria, especially at the primary level. Common struggles include having to choose economical options, such as choir over resource-

<sup>68</sup> ArtsLink NB, *Sustaining New Brunswick's Arts and Cultural Workforce*, 6.

<sup>69</sup> ArtsLink NB, *Sustaining New Brunswick's Arts and Cultural Workforce*, 12; États Généraux, *Global Strategy*, 30.

<sup>70</sup> New Brunswick, *Report on the Forum on the Professional Status of Artists in New Brunswick*, 2013. 21.

<sup>71</sup> New Brunswick, *2017 Grade 12 Exit Survey* (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2017), 5, 31-32.

<sup>72</sup> ArtsLink NB, *Sustaining New Brunswick's Arts and Cultural Workforce*, 19.

<sup>73</sup> Seidel et al, *The Qualities of Quality*, 51-52.

intensive bands and orchestras, and worries about disturbing other classes, especially in the performing arts. Unfortunately, there isn't enough evidence to determine the differences between needs and wants or what impact each of these improvements would have on arts learning. Some sources stress the importance of experiential opportunities like tickets to performances and exhibitions, co-ops, field trips, and artists in the schools, but these are difficult to prioritize when even basic necessities vary between schools. Information and communications technology and electronic portfolios have been shown to improve engagement, accountability, and academic performance,<sup>74</sup> but some jurisdictions lack access and teaching capacity in the newest technologies. At the same time, teachers appear to spend an inordinate amount of time researching and securing additional funds to provide students with opportunities. An analysis of arts education in Manitoba recommends that arts education programs receive at least 9 per cent of a school's budget and a dedicated staff to research and apply for funding opportunities,<sup>75</sup> but a new report in Ontario shows there are staggering differences in the quality of education as a result of fundraising and fees.<sup>76</sup> Though they remain under-studied in the literature, opportunities to raise additional resources through grants, fundraising, fees, or in-kind support can have a significant impact on arts education.

As long-term operational funding becomes increasingly rare, teachers, artists, and organizations are forced to dedicate more time and resources in search of short-term project-specific grants. In addition to numerous non-profit organizations, the New Brunswick Arts Board (artsnb) lists dozens of federal, provincial, and municipal organizations that offer programs and services to the arts community. While artsnb acts as a clearinghouse for information and applications for government grants, these are relegated to grants accessible to individual visual artists. With the exception of the New Brunswick Visual Arts Education Association (NB VAEA), there is little information to help teachers and educators navigate the funding system, forge partnerships, and access information. The NB VAEA is a non-profit organization that provides free access to directories, connections, and resources for teachers and other stakeholders in the visual arts in New Brunswick,<sup>77</sup> but other disciplines are served by a number of additional organizations. In terms of programs, the province has art programs such as *VanGO!* which showcases art from the province's art bank in schools, and an artist-in-residence school program held in partnership with the Department of Tourism, Heritage, and Culture. Grants are also available through *ArtsSmarts* — a grant program for schools and communities — for projects involving teachers, artists, and students that integrate arts learning into the standard curriculum.<sup>78</sup> Other programs require research, applications, and reporting that tax already scarce resources and deter eligible applicants.<sup>79</sup> For teachers, artists, and arts organizations, short-term funding prohibits the development of long-term strategies. There's also a lot of overlap between programs. By creating a centralized hub for arts education resources and research, ArtsLink NB would facilitate more efficient networking and information-sharing between funders, artists, organizations, and educators.

## WE RECOMMEND

***EECD streamline and centralize the application process for school-based arts funding programs to make them more accessible to all educators.***



<sup>74</sup> Uptis discusses this extensively in *Arts Education for the Whole Child*.

<sup>75</sup> Morin, *A Study of Arts Education in Manitoba Schools*, 115.

<sup>76</sup> Max Antony-Newman, *Fundraising and Fees in Ontario's Schools*, People for Education, 2018, <https://peopleforeducation.ca/report/fundraising-and-fees-in-ontarios-schools/>.

<sup>77</sup> New Brunswick Visual Art Education Association (NB VAEA), <http://nbvaea.ca/>.

<sup>78</sup> ArtsSmarts, McConnell Foundation, (accessed June 15, 2018) <https://mccconnellfoundation.ca/initiative/artsmarts/>.

<sup>79</sup> ArtsLink NB, *Sustaining New Brunswick's Arts and Cultural Workforce*, 9-10.

## PARTNERSHIPS AND CONSULTATION

The premise of Upitis's review of best practices is that "a blend of true partnerships between generalist teachers, specialist teachers, arts subjects, and art-makers of all kinds . . . is most likely to yield the richest arts education for the developing child."<sup>80</sup> The community and school have a reciprocal relationship when it comes to supporting the arts, and partnerships between the two are another cost-effective way for schools to enhance arts integration. From an organizational perspective, there is an extensive body of literature offering general advice on building effective community partnerships. This advice includes doing research, communicating, sharing goals and responsibility, having partners buy in, keeping student learning at the centre, and evaluating partnerships for success.<sup>81</sup> Local government can play a direct role in this by allowing artists and students to access public spaces when they are not in use.<sup>82</sup> The francophone policy recognizes that to reap the greatest benefit from partnerships, schools and the community must work together to break down institutional barriers and create programs in the best interests of children and youth.<sup>83</sup>

At present, partnerships are limited and circumscribed to specific stakeholders already involved in the arts and culture ecosystem. For this reason, we need a strategy to engage businesses and philanthropists, employers and labour organizations, trade and professional associations, and other nontraditional arts education supporters. Engaging the public is a daunting but worthwhile task and usually involves several years of consultation, committee meetings, and public town halls. More than 130 educators in the arts and 6,000 reviewers were involved in creating the National Core Arts Standards, and the creators believe they can "prompt a rich dialogue between students, educators, administrators, policy makers, parents, and community members about access and advocacy for the arts to ensure artistic literacy for all."<sup>84</sup> Both the *Report on the Forum on the Professional Status of Artists* and New Brunswick's cultural policy recommend adopting a similar approach to that of the *Global Strategy for Integrating the Arts and Culture into Acadian Society in New Brunswick* to involve artists, the public, and every sector of society in the formation of arts policy and education.<sup>85</sup> Veterans of the process unequivocally agree that consultation, in whatever form it takes, should be recognized as a start rather than an end and that all agreements reached during the process should be viewed as living documents to be revisited and re-evaluated on a regular basis.



## WE RECOMMEND

***Arts organizations collaborate with arts specialists to form a provincial committee on arts and culture in education to advocate for arts issues across the province as one voice. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Minister of Education should be invited to sit on this committee.***

<sup>80</sup> Upitis, *Arts Education for the Development of the Whole Child*, i.

<sup>81</sup> 2010 Legacies Now & Creative City Network of Canada, *Cultural Planning Toolkit* (2010).

<sup>82</sup> Calgary Board of Education, *Review of Research and Emerging Trends*, 11-13.

<sup>83</sup> New Brunswick and the Action Group for the Commission on Francophone Schools, *Linguistic and Cultural Development Policy*, 159.

<sup>84</sup> National Core Arts Standards, (accessed July 3, 2018) <http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/content/national-core-arts-standards>.

<sup>85</sup> New Brunswick, *Report on the Forum on the Professional Status of Artists in New Brunswick*, 10.

## MEASURING SUCCESS: TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

As Van Eman explains, high-stakes testing has taken a toll on curriculum implementation. The overwhelming majority of researchers in the arts oppose testing methodologies and other back-to-basics measures that have been implemented by school boards across North America since the 1980s.<sup>86</sup> Even though the arts are not typically assessed through standardized tests, the tests are still perceived by many to be a threat to arts education. Because test scores are seen as the primary marker of achievement in learning, tested subjects (literacy, math, and science) receive instructional time and resources over arts education (teaching to the test rather than teaching for learning). This places the arts at a disadvantage because skills nurtured through creative endeavours cannot be measured through standardized tests alone, so the arts struggle to prove achievement, merit, or value using the discourse of ranked test scores.

Standardized tests are ideal for evaluating knowledge acquisition and analytical thinking but are unable to assess the kinds of skills developed through creative thought processes. There is creativity or divergent skills testing, which claims to capture elements of creativity such as self-confidence, willingness to work with others, risk-taking, or the ability to create new ideas, but for critics, these tests simply measure novelty and non-conformity and cannot determine individual levels of creativity, predict who will be creative, or show how the arts increase creative thinking in any scientific way.<sup>87</sup> Despite these limitations, assessment is necessary to monitor student progress, improve pedagogical practices and improve our understanding of arts and learning. While the individual merits of each form of testing are debated in the literature, sources suggest the most accurate results are achieved by using a variety of testing methods at different stages of student development.<sup>88</sup> Some of the most pressing needs in arts education involve closing testing gaps and improving creativity tests with practices based on neuroscience and psychology. Jensen recommends that until then, arts courses should be pass/fail with a focus on portfolio development, but other experts suggest using gain scores to measure student achievement year over year.<sup>89</sup> For now, in addition to provincial standardized tests, the Canadian Network for Arts and Learning recommends educators rely on a combination of formal and informal evaluations including surveys and interviews, assessments (teacher, peer, and self), focus groups, student observation, work samples, performances and presentations, tests, portfolios, and journals.<sup>90</sup>

An overwhelming amount of research suggests strong correlations between arts integration and improvements in academic performance, although causality cannot be established. Several studies cite survey data showing that most stakeholders, including parents, students, and educators, already consider the arts to be important to individuals and society.<sup>91</sup> One way to increase our understanding of the challenges and benefits of arts education is to ask these kinds of questions in parent and student exit surveys. Qualitative findings and self-reporting suggest that definitions of success vary greatly between learners, particularly for struggling and at-risk students who may have mediocre test scores but make progress in immeasurable areas. As Upitis writes, "While teachers yield considerable influence on the success of their students, it is not the methods they employ alone that engender success. Rather, successful school experiences and high student achievement are a combination of strong teaching methods along with high student expectations and the creation of positive student-teacher relationships."<sup>92</sup>

In New Brunswick, the 10-year education plan acknowledged the need to integrate arts education with sciences, trades, and technology to improve provincial assessment results in science and increase career interest in those subjects. Interestingly, there were no defined levels of achievement for arts education, which may limit

<sup>86</sup> Linnea Van Eman, Jerilyn Thorman, Diane Montgomery, Stacy Otto, "The Balancing Act: Arts Integration and High-Stakes Testing," *Journal of Learning Through the Arts*, 4, 1(2008), <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7wk3v3b0>

<sup>87</sup> Upitis, "Creativity; the State of the Domain," 17-19.

<sup>88</sup> Caine & Caine, *Making Connections*, 155-157.

<sup>89</sup> See Jensen, *Arts with the Brain in Mind*, 114; Rooney, *Arts-Based Teaching and Learning*, 18.

<sup>90</sup> Ann Patteson & Stephen Campbell, *Creative Insights: A Handbook for Assessing the Impacts of Arts and Learning* (Canadian Network for Arts and Learning, 2015), 19.

<sup>91</sup> Kelly Hill, *Making a Holistic Case for the Arts*, 10.





**“Schools and the broader community must work together to break down institutional barriers and create programs that work in the best interests of children and youth.”**



**“Students who continued to pursue the arts throughout their educations tended to perform better academically than those who did not continue beyond the mandatory years.”**

the success of this plan. This is connected to the lack of universal arts-assessment tools within the current provincial education system. EECD acknowledged that arts education is inconsistent throughout the province. It has pledged to increase access to the arts for students in their early years and utilize arts education to build the creativity and problem-solving skills necessary in the science and technology fields.<sup>93</sup> The success of this pledge depends greatly on creating a universal assessment to track student progress in fine arts. Harvard’s Project Zero provides a starting point by highlighting the four most prominent arts assessments movements in the United States: National Arts Standards, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Arts Assessment, International Baccalaureate, and Advanced Placement.<sup>94</sup> New Brunswick should draw on these best practices to develop arts assessments that are “authentic, informative, public, and carried out not only by the teachers but also by the students, who engage in self-assessment.”<sup>95</sup>



## ***WE RECOMMEND***

***EECD devote resources toward developing a comprehensive system of assessment for K-12 arts education that accounts for knowledge acquisition, comprehension, creative development, skill development, and application.***

<sup>93</sup> <sup>93</sup> New Brunswick. *10-Year Education Plan: Everyone at Their Best*, August 2016.

<sup>94</sup> Seidel et al, *The Qualities of Quality*, 57-59

<sup>95</sup> Seidel et al, *The Qualities of Quality*, 57.



## ENSURING EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

A quality arts education requires adequate “space, time, and resources,”<sup>96</sup> and there are many systemic barriers to equitable access. Over 50 per cent of New Brunswick’s population is rural, and while this has an obvious impact on the delivery of arts education in the province, one study of two rural communities in Canada shows that these obstacles can be overcome. In this study, the curriculum emphasized on place-based learning, which included having a culturally relevant repertoire, allowing room for improvisation, and opening the community to involvement in the program. This enabled teachers to secure appropriate instruments and supplies, respect traditional values, and introduce students to diverse experiences through field trips and different music styles.<sup>97</sup> Indigenous arts are almost wholly absent from the non-visual arts curricula, and this approach was particularly successful for an Indigenous community included in the study. These studies show that while provincial standards are important, arts education curriculum at the school level must also consider local context, cultures, values, needs, and goals.

## CREATING A COMMON VISION

Prioritizing an expanded arts program requires that advocates better communicate the value (both intrinsic and extrinsic) of integrated arts education based on the best evidence available. There are many reasons for the connection between the arts and enjoyable learning experiences. The arts are social, embodied, play-based, and experiential, and they give students more choice and control over their own learning. Experts overwhelmingly agree that we lack considerable knowledge about how the brain learns and how arts education facilitates learning. The fields of cognitive science and psychology are beginning to address this deficit, but there are still substantial research gaps. According to a UNESCO report, there are many under-researched topics, including the state of arts education and how it is taught in various jurisdictions; the links between arts education and creativity, improvements in social behaviour, and citizenship; methodologies for assessing students, evaluating programs, and identifying benefits; teacher education and professional development; and the effects of external culture and media on children.<sup>98</sup> Ultimately, until proven otherwise, a majority of studies suggest that students benefit most from a combination of instructional methods and recommend a balanced approach to subject integration.

It is essential to celebrate the arts for their intrinsic value *and* recognize economic realities. As illustrated in a graphic produced in the Lambton County cultural policy (see appendix A), there is immense economic and social potential for creative expression. Despite this potential, virtually every report discussed a chronic lack of funding and coordination for arts education in schools, which directly led to a devaluing of arts and culture in society. According to ArtsLink NB, the province lags behind the rest of the country in cultural funding, and recommendations that led to the creation of the Premier’s Task Force on the Status of the Artist have only been partially implemented.<sup>100</sup> While increasing public awareness of the arts community is an urgent priority, it is hampered by an inability to measure the creative economy and a lack of common terms of reference for proponents in education and the arts and culture sector.<sup>101</sup> Policy documents often define terms such as “culture,” “heritage,” and “identity” vaguely and use “cultural economy,” “arts and culture sector,” and “creative economy” interchangeably. Studies showing a correlation between creative sector growth and increased social capital (civic engagement, pride, pro-social behaviours) have difficulty quantifying the role the arts play in this process, which makes it difficult to isolate best practices and nurture them in other jurisdictions. As recommended by Bellavance, given the dearth in statistical information, it may benefit the New Brunswick arts

<sup>96</sup> New Brunswick, *10-Year Education Plan: Everyone at Their Best*, 12.

<sup>97</sup> Julia Elaine Brook, *Rural Routes: Place-Based Music Education in Two Rural Canadian Communities*, PhD Thesis, Queen’s University, (August 2011).

<sup>98</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Road Map for Arts Education: Building Creative Capacities for the 21st Century*, Lisbon, (March 2006), 13.

<sup>99</sup> New Brunswick, *Report on the Forum on the Professional Status of Artists*; [http://www.aaapnb.ca/autresinitiatives/files/autresinitiatives/wf/wfRapport\\_forum-Statut-Professionnel-Artiste-2013\\_En.pdf](http://www.aaapnb.ca/autresinitiatives/files/autresinitiatives/wf/wfRapport_forum-Statut-Professionnel-Artiste-2013_En.pdf)

<sup>100</sup> ArtsLink NB, *Sustaining New Brunswick’s Arts and Cultural Workforce*, 8-9.

<sup>101</sup> Conference Board of Canada, *Valuing Culture*, ii.

community to work with relevant government departments such as Statistics Canada and Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada, and universities, businesses, and other stakeholders to build an Atlantic Canadian research model for the arts sector.

Quality arts education exists in many forms. As Project Zero concludes, “high quality arts programs can exist in or out of schools; they can be taught by teaching artists, art teachers, non-arts teachers, or volunteers; they can focus on production or perception; and they can be integrated with academics or taught as separate subjects; and there is no single recipe for achieving quality.”<sup>101</sup> Despite these conclusions, polarized debates between proponents of particular pedagogies, approaches, disciplines, and methods make it incredibly difficult for arts organizations, school boards, parents, artists, and other stakeholders to create a common vision for arts education. Based on recommendations highlighted in this report, to reach a common vision about arts education in New Brunswick, it will be necessary to prioritize the arts in society, explore diverse ideas, adequately fund initiatives, and engage in a process of ongoing consultation with all stakeholders, in which arts education programs are evaluated, held accountable, and re-evaluated for their impact.

## THE NEW BRUNSWICK CONTEXT: QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

In addition to reviewing the arts education literature, the research team also conducted interviews with 15 individuals to hear their perspectives on arts education in New Brunswick. These individuals consisted of fine-arts subject coordinators, teachers, and those from community organizations in New Brunswick, as well as one representative from the state of Maine. ArtsLink NB also distributed an anonymous survey to its membership and the attendees of seven town halls, which took place in early 2018. In total, 59 unique respondents completed the survey.

### EMERGING THEMES

The themes and recommendations emerging from these interviews and surveys are timely and specific to New Brunswick. We strongly urge EECD to develop a plan of action for implementing these recommendations. As demonstrated in the literature and through this qualitative feedback, arts education must be considered an integral part of each student’s education, not just an add-on.

*“They [arts specialists] feel completely isolated, and they feel like every other subject takes over in a school and they are always left behind.”*

*“And so that opportunity you might have to bounce ideas off a colleague [is] limited if you're the only music teacher in the school, so it gives them an opportunity to dialogue with their colleagues throughout the district.”*

*“I really think that the more communication that happens between specialists throughout the district, the more extra-curricular programs will develop and flourish.”*

#### INCREASED COMMUNICATION

The most common theme revolved around the need for increased communication among teaching staff. Participants, specifically subject coordinators and teachers, said there were few opportunities for arts educators to brainstorm and share best practices with colleagues. Many arts teachers and specialists are siloed in their schools with little or no opportunity to network with others in their field.

The participants spoke about how more opportunities for dialogue and sharing would benefit in-class arts education as well as extra-curricular programming.

<sup>101</sup> Conference Board of Canada, *Valuing Culture*, ii

## TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

In addition to communication, participants discussed the need for additional professional development opportunities to build their skills as arts educators.

While these sessions can be held at a district level, some participants see value in bringing together all arts educators from across the province for professional development opportunities.

The desire for province-wide professional development stems from the inequitable teaching capacity in each school district. In comparison to the rest of the province, the Anglophone North School District has a limited number of degreed arts educators. Arts teachers currently without formal arts education in ASD-N, and in other districts, would benefit immensely from province-wide professional development sessions.

Data from the 2017-18 school year also shows the lack of arts education backgrounds for teachers in every school district. At best, in Anglophone East, there is one teacher with a bachelor's degree in fine arts or music for every 348 students (see below). This gap in the arts education of teachers within the system could be addressed partially through professional development sessions and improved hiring processes that prioritize arts backgrounds.

Holding provincial professional development sessions for arts educators would apply a proven practice to New Brunswick. In Maine, arts educators attend quarterly conferences to share best practices, learn from experts across the country, and grow as teachers. This is a part of mandatory professional development for teachers in Maine and has been well attended. New Brunswick could also consider a province-specific approach to professional development for arts educators, especially given the geographic challenges and differentiated arts education opportunities within the province. Sharing best practices would provide a more consistent level of arts education across all four school districts.

*"I can't even tell you who teaches music in other schools in this district because we never get together."*

*"At professional learning events . . . we're able to have a professional learning day, or half day, where specialists can get together and talk to one another and share what's working well in their building. So much good comes from that, from comparing notes and sharing successes."*

*"So, something at the provincial . . . You know, if teachers were pulled to Fredericton and a big session was given to them, you know, something like that."*

*"Money is great. Access to art is great. Access to artists is great. All these things are great, but what I really need is time to work with my teachers. I have no doubt that if they had that, they would go back energized and they would teach better, specialist or not."*

**Table 2: Teachers with a Bachelor of Fine Arts and/or Bachelor of Music**

District	Number of Teachers	% of Teachers within the School District	Pupil/Teacher Ratio <sup>104</sup>
ANGLOPHONE EAST SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-E)	45	3.8	348.0
ANGLOPHONE NORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-N)	11	1.7	665.2
ANGLOPHONE SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-S)	50	3.0	461.4
ANGLOPHONE WEST SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD-W)	39	2.3	583.3





## **WE RECOMMEND**

*EECD create a day-long professional development session each academic semester for educators in fine arts. These sessions should address topics of interest to staff and provide opportunities for all arts specialists in each district to network. For one of these two sessions, bring together all arts specialists (drama, visual arts, music, dance) so best practices can be shared between districts.*

*EECD and NBTA explore the current model of professional learning for fine-arts teachers.*

*EECD share the benefits of, and strategies for, using the arts to facilitate learning in all subjects with all teaching staff in New Brunswick.*

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING EXPECTATIONS OF ARTS EDUCATORS

Participants also stated the need for arts educators to have relevant education in the subject they are expected to teach, such as a degree in visual arts or music. This would look similar to the professional expectations for math, science, and language-arts teachers. Having education and training standards for K-12 arts educators in New Brunswick would incentivize students to specialize in arts education during their B.Ed. degree rather than focusing on core subjects for the sake of job security.

Unfortunately, this aspiration is limited by staffing deficiencies, particularly in smaller schools.

School administrators reported having trouble finding qualified arts specialists in rural areas, although there are no specific statistics to show this challenge.

Some participants were grateful that some arts education was getting into the schools, even if the teacher was not necessarily trained in the subject; but others expressed concern that students could be turned off of the fine arts by an unqualified teacher.

Arts educators are the key to successful arts education. Professional standards of education and training should be established across the province.

*"I never hire anyone without an art degree, a fine-arts degree, (that is, in high school) or visual-arts degree. That's very important. You know, if you're going to teach music or art, you have to have that specialty. You can't really go below that at the high school level."*

*"Essentially, it would be no different than other subject areas. It [fine arts] should be taught by qualified, trained teachers."*

*"There are people who are made to teach in these areas [fine arts] because there's no one else to do it and it's a really small school."*



## WE RECOMMEND

***EECD track which arts educators are qualified and working within their fine-arts specialization. This should include a rural/urban breakdown so districts are aware of gaps in arts education in these geographic areas.***

### STAFFING

The current funding model for staffing in schools is a challenge. For every 10 teachers in a school, there is one full-time equivalent position funded for non-core subjects, such as music, physical education, and guidance. School administration determines how this position is utilized based on their staff specializations and school culture, meaning fine-arts education is often passed over in favour of subjects like physical education. While other subjects are important, participants felt that increasing the funding for staffing non-core subjects would improve arts education, although this point was tempered by the discussion of the lack of qualified arts specialists in the province. Universally, participants felt that increasing the number of staff would result in drastic improvements



*"We do have people who, you know . . . they are designated as the music or art teacher, but there aren't a whole lot of them . . . so the teachers who teach art, a lot of them, it's art in addition to other subjects that they teach."*

in arts education and in cross-curricular outcomes from kindergarten to grade 12. This would also have a positive impact on student behaviour, creativity and problem-solving, critical thinking, communication skills, and cooperative learning.

## **WE RECOMMEND**

***EECD develop a staffing standard for arts educators to ensure a minimum level of competence and expertise.***



*"There's no budget for fine arts. So, even if I wanted to take teachers out, I don't think I could, because there's no money. You know, there would be no money to cover their supply teachers."*

### **FUNDING**

The training and staffing improvements mentioned above will require significant financial investment. The funding formula for staffing arts educators is a major flaw in the current system, and it contributes to a lack of professional learning opportunities for teachers, limiting their effectiveness and professional growth.



Funding is also a challenge for fine arts educators who wish to purchase materials for their classrooms and extra-curricular programs. Community arts organizations also identified funding as a barrier to student attendance at arts programming events, because of the high cost of transportation and tickets. While organizations are creatively fundraising to reduce these costs, it remains a major barrier to equitable access. While funding is an ongoing challenge, teachers reported that current programs, including ArtsSmarts grants, artist residencies, and VanGO! were useful and enhanced their students' educations. Community arts organizations are also trying to fill funding gaps through their own programs, although the consensus was that these funds are insufficient to meet the needs of all students. Programs, like Sistema, directed at students from low-income families, have received some attention in the news media, but participants reported that they impact a minority of students.



## **WE RECOMMEND**

***Arts educators be given a working budget each year to purchase materials to enhance arts education in the classroom.***

### **PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE BENEFIT OF AND NEED FOR THE ARTS**

In addition to the need for enhanced professional capacity and funding within the system, educators and community organizations spoke of the need to raise awareness among the general public about the benefits and importance of arts education in New Brunswick. Many participants cited studies showing links between brain development and the arts but said that most people don't know about these links. A continual public awareness campaign that reaches teachers, administrators, parents, and politicians is needed to counteract the view that fine arts are trivial in comparison to STEM subjects.

There was also a reported correlation between academic achievement and arts education. Students who continued to pursue the arts throughout their educations tended to perform better academically than those who did not continue beyond the mandatory years. In one high school, enrolment in arts courses fell from 100 per cent in grade 9 to 10 (when it is mandatory) to 38 per cent in grade 11, and to just 15.4 per cent in grade 12. Overall, only 28 per cent of the students in this school selected a fine-arts credit as one of their electives in grades 11 and 12. If parents and students were made aware of the benefits of arts education, this ratio would rise.

***"We know the connection between music and math. That's been a little pounded out. We know that it improves long-term memory, offsets Alzheimer's, creates increased neuroplasticity — it just makes you smarter. Instrumental music makes you smarter for life. The neuroplasticity's never lost. And the thing they now understand is that you can build neuroplasticity at any point in your life. They didn't used to think you could do that, and so, you know, we're using instrumental music to repair brain damage in adults now, so it's brilliant."***

***"We don't hear of it in the news, fine arts. It's just one of those things . . . It doesn't have a prominent place anywhere."***



*"If we want this to be important, then the public has to say that it's important and that they want it in schools, and I believe that the government will respond to the people. It does. But that's not what people are upset about right now. [They are upset about] math, science, literacy. I need a public mandate that the public wants this and cares about it being done well."*

learning outcomes in STEM fields, little political pressure is applied to enhance arts education. This is despite evidence showing that the psychological benefits of arts education have a positive impact on learning outcomes in STEM subjects. Survey participants felt that public pressure to expand arts education would increase once these benefits were commonly known.

### **PUBLIC VOICE AND INVOLVEMENT**

Increased public awareness of the social and scientific benefits of arts education should also lead to increased advocacy in the education system and society. If the public does not value the arts, then government decision-makers will not pursue initiatives that support arts and culture. While the public is constantly pressuring the provincial government to increase

## **WE RECOMMEND**

***ArtsLink NB and other community arts organizations pool resources to undertake a continuous public awareness campaign to promote the benefits of arts education for student learning and social and cognitive development.***



## CURRICULUM

Participants in the surveys and interviews identified several areas where the arts curricula could be improved to enhance fine-arts education. Principally, participants expressed the need for cross-curricular arts education that incorporates fine arts into core subjects. One participant advocated play-based fine-arts learning specifically in STEM subjects to increase their appeal and accessibility to all learners.

Another respondent advocated for STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, math). They stated, “Arts is the difference between producing lab technicians and scientists.” The STEAM movement is driven by proven links between the arts and student success in the sciences. Experts have suggested that enhancing arts education can show results in unexpected places by producing better scientists, doctors, and even politicians.

While cross-curricular arts education is an admirable goal, it will take time. Most arts curricula require updating and the EECD has initiated some changes. The department should continue to dedicate funding and time to comprehensively overhaul arts education with the intent of integrating it into all subjects.

Cross-curricular arts education has merit, but some participants expressed trepidation. Integration of the fine arts into other subjects should not replace standalone arts courses, and all teachers need to receive training to effectively implement arts into their other courses.

Community organizations have also enhanced their programming to make curricular connections. Many performances available for students have study guides and in-class activities that extend the learning process beyond the event. Unfortunately, respondents suggested these curricular supports often went unused, even when teachers attended performances with their students. This suggests that arts education could be improved by simply maximizing the use of existing resources and programming, rather than catering to what one participant described as “the entertainment factor.”

Overall, participants repeatedly expressed frustration with the provincial government’s lack of meaningful investment in the arts curriculum.

Participants from EECD stated that all curricula are reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis. However, it is currently a lengthy process, in some cases taking over two years, and at that rate, it is impossible to keep everything current.

*“One of the teachers wrote me and said, ‘[The arts curriculum is] totally outdated. Like, just old.’ I’m looking at Fine Arts 110. It’s from 1991.”*

*“One thing I think that is moving in the right direction is the revision of curriculum documents to incorporate more flexibility. It incorporates different styles and different preferences, different experiences, and that you can accomplish the same learning goals in a variety of ways, and that’s reflected in the curriculum outcomes in the newer documents. Some of them still require revision to that end, but I think that’s moving in the right direction.”*

*“While integrating arts with other subject areas can be powerful and effective, without sufficient knowledge and experience, the arts become merely a resource or adornment rather than fully integrated into the planning and implementation.”*

*“In short, EECD has to demonstrate REAL valuing and support for arts education by truly including it in our schools’ curriculum. For the last 35 years they have paid lip service on a consistent basis. Projects and events that attract positive attention are supported, but many of these things are not part of the curriculum.”*



**Table 3: Fine-arts curriculum updating timeline**

Subject	Year written	Year revised
<b>Music</b>		
Music 113	1993	
Music 122	1994	2018
Music 120	2000	
Music 111/112	2001	
High School Guidelines (9/10 & 11/12 electives)	2002	
K – 5	2004	
Grade 6	2004	
Grade 7	2008	
Grade 8	2009	
<b>Visual art</b>		
K – 8 Outcomes	1995	
Graphic Art & Design 110	1998	2018
Grade 9/10 Visual Art	2009	
Grade 6	2012	
Grade 3	2012	
K – 2	2014	
Visual Art 110	2014	
Visual Arts 120	1994	
<b>Drama/theatre arts</b>		
Theatre Arts 120	1985/ 1990 (revised)	2018
<b>Fine arts</b>		
Fine Arts 110	1991	



## WE RECOMMEND

*EECD continue its comprehensive review of the arts curriculum until it is up to date and inclusive. This would support the education system in aligning with the 10-year education plan.*

*EECD commit to effectively incorporating the arts into other subjects. Research has shown the positive impact of the arts on student achievement in STEM subjects, and this would assist them in achieving targeted assessment outcomes in the 10-year education plan.*

### MENTAL HEALTH

Several participants also spoke about the mental health benefits of fine-arts education for students of all ages. One participant stated that their creative-arts programming was the only reason some students with behavioural and mental-health challenges came to school. Another participant spoke of the need to reintroduce joy into education through fine arts.

The collaborative nature of fine arts and music builds friendships and self-confidence and helps students overcome social anxiety. With the prevalence of mental-health challenges in the education system, a renewed focus on fine arts can ease the strain on resources by helping students build their own coping strategies.

*"There's the curriculum and there's all the meaningful reasons I gave you about skills . . . but what about joy during the day? . . . What if we put that aside and say, 'Maybe every day, kids at school get to have some minutes of pure joy.' Wouldn't that make a difference to all curriculum areas?"*

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon reviewing best practices in arts education in the literature and in other jurisdictions and capturing feedback from arts educators, artists, and parents, the following recommendations emerged to enhance arts education and achieve the goals outlined in the 10-year education plan:



## COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

### We recommend:

1. Arts organizations collaborate with arts specialists to form a provincial committee on arts and culture in education to advocate with one voice for arts issues across the province. EECD and the Minister of Education should be invited to sit on this committee. There is an existing committee for the francophone school system, so this would be a step towards equitable arts education in both the French and English systems.
2. ArtsLink NB and other community arts organizations pool resources to start a public awareness campaign promoting the benefits of arts education for student learning and social and cognitive development.



## FUNDING

### We recommend:

3. Arts educators be given a working budget each year to purchase materials to enhance arts education in the classroom.
4. The application process for school-based arts funding programs be streamlined and centralized to make the programs more accessible to all educators.



## HIRING PROCESSES

### We recommend:

5. EECD develop a staffing standard for arts educators to ensure a minimum level of competence and expertise.
6. EECD track which arts educators are qualified and working within their fine-arts specialization. This should include a rural/urban breakdown so districts can be aware of gaps in arts education in these areas.



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### We recommend:

7. EECD support fine-arts educators to attend one day-long professional development session each academic semester. These sessions will address topics of interest to staff and provide opportunities for arts specialists in each district to network. For one of these two sessions, all arts specialists (drama, visual arts, music, and dance) should be brought together so best practices can be shared between districts.

8. EECD share the benefits of and strategies for using the arts to facilitate learning in all subjects with all teaching staff in New Brunswick.

9. EECD and NBTA explore the current model of professional learning for fine-arts teachers.



## CURRICULUM

### We recommend:

10. EECD continue its comprehensive review of the arts curriculum until it is up to date and inclusive. This would support the education system in aligning with the 10-year education plan by:

- Building a culture of belonging
- Valuing diversity
- Improving learning and application of the arts, sciences, trades and technology
- Nurturing healthy values, attitudes and behaviours
- Fostering learner leadership, citizenship, and entrepreneurial spirit.

11. EECD commit to incorporating the arts into other subjects. Research has shown the positive impact of the arts on student achievement in STEM subjects, and this would assist EECD in achieving targeted assessment outcomes in the 10-year education plan. Best practices in curriculum development can be accessed through partnerships with the Toronto District School Board and the Calgary Board of Education.

12. Some interview and survey participants repeated the common phrase, “What’s assessed is blessed.” We recommend that EECD devote resources toward developing a comprehensive system of assessment for K-12 arts education that accounts for knowledge acquisition, comprehension, creative development, skill development, and application.

<sup>102</sup> New Brunswick, *10-Year Education Plan: Everyone at Their Best*, 5.

# APPENDIX

## A) Economic and artistic opportunities in the creative economy



Source: Lambton County, Building a Creative Economy, Hume Communications & AuthenticCity Inc., July 2011, 7.

## B) Arts and culture ecosystem from a New Brunswick perspective

# CULTURAL SECTOR ECOLOGY New Brunswick



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**aesthetics** the philosophical theory or set of principles governing the idea of beauty at a given time and place.

**anglophone school district** the school district that governs all English-language schools in the province of New Brunswick.

**Art Bank** a permanent collection of the visual arts in New Brunswick. Established in 1968, the Art Bank celebrates the province's excellence in the contemporary visual arts.

**ArtSmarts** a grant program for schools and communities to enhance artistic activities linked to educational outcomes in subject areas other than music, visual art, drama, and dance. The desire is to encourage students to develop their intellectual skills through active participation in the arts. The program links students with local artists, integrates arts into subjects not related to arts, and increases critical thinking skills through participation in artistic activities.

**Artist-in-Residence** a school program that funds art projects that are based on fine-arts curricular outcomes and are a collaboration between one or more teachers and one or more artists.

**assessment** the evaluation (systematic determination) of a subject's merit, worth, and significance, using criteria governed by a set of standards.

**creative economy** dealing with the interface between economy, culture, technology, and social aspects.

**cross-curricular** a type of planning, teaching, or assessment strategy. It occurs when various curricular learning outcomes become connected and understood in meaningful ways by both the teachers and students.

**Creative Futures— A Renewed Cultural Policy for New Brunswick** the guiding document for the Province of New Brunswick's cultural strategies.

**curriculum** the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program.

**EECD** Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Government of New Brunswick.

**equitable access** the notion that any student in any school has access to the same opportunities to learn and succeed.

**fine-arts specialization** the specialized study in one area of fine arts. For example, formal education in music leading to a Bachelor of Music or Bachelor of Music Education.

**global competencies** statements describing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes expected of all students who graduate high school. They provide a consistent vision for the development of a coherent and relevant curriculum and offer students clear goals and a powerful rationale for school work. They help ensure that provincial education systems' missions are met by design and intention. These competencies describe expectations not in terms of individual school subjects but in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed throughout the curriculum. They confirm that students need to make connections and develop abilities across subject boundaries if they are to be ready to meet the shifting and ongoing demands of life, work, and study today and in the future.

**interdisciplinary** combining or involving two or more academic disciplines or fields of study.

**knowledge economy** an economy in which growth is dependent on the quantity, quality, and accessibility of the information available, rather than on the means of production.

**learning in the arts** learning the elements of art subjects.

**learning through the arts** weaving arts into all classroom learning.

**learning about the arts** learning the context of art subjects.

**media literacy** the ability to identify different types of media and understand the messages they're sending.

**NB VAEA** the New Brunswick Visual Arts Education Association. An organization which provides a means for visual-art educators to share information, expertise, and ideas with others working in a variety of venues including public schools, private institutions, galleries, museums, and government programs.

**NB Arts Board** artsnb is the provincial funding body for professional artists.

**NBTA** New Brunswick Teachers' Association.

**elective subjects** in elementary and middle school, the subjects which are not provincially assessed. In high school, the subjects selected by students rather than those which are mandated as part of the graduation requirements.

**PD or PL days** professional development and professional learning days. These days are spread throughout the school year.



**professional artist** an artist who has specialized training, actively practises an art, and offers services in exchange for remuneration in one or more of the following disciplines: theatre, dance, music, visual art, literary art, and media arts.

**Premier's Task Force on Status of the Artist** a collaborative working group of government partners and sector stakeholders established to explore measures to address socioeconomic conditions of professional artists in New Brunswick.

**STEAM** an educational approach to learning that uses science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking.

**STEM** an educational approach to learning that prioritizes science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as subjects of study.

**socioeconomic** of, relating to, or signifying the combination or interaction of social and economic factors.

**specialist** a person with great knowledge or skill in a particular field. There is no formal acknowledgement of specialized training for teachers other than in the area of guidance.

**Global Strategy for the Integration of Arts and Culture into Acadian Society in New Brunswick** a report based on principles that promote cooperation and cross-sectoral, multidisciplinary collaboration, conditions which are essential for ensuring that art and culture remain at the heart of the evolution of Acadian society in New Brunswick.

**VanGO!** an exhibition of art works in the New Brunswick Art Bank on tour to anglophone schools.

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