



Joint Finance Committee Public Education Hearings

Delaware Arts Alliance

Wednesday, February 18th, 2015

1:00 PM

**Record of Public Comments Representing the Delaware Arts Alliance
Presented by Thomas Dean Teacher from the Brandywine School District
and Matt Coyle, Graduate Mount Pleasant High School**

Thank you Senator McDowell, Representative George-Smith and the members of the Joint Finance Committee for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Tom Dean. I am the Audio Engineering Teacher at Mount Pleasant High School, Technology Chair and Past President of the Delaware Music Educators Association, National Executive Board Member and Past President of the Eastern Division of the National Association for Music Education. I am the 2015 Brandywine School District Teacher of the year and a member of the Delaware Arts Alliance. Accompanying me is a former student and current University of Delaware Student Matt Coyle.

We are here today to ask you to help us keep the arts as a core part of all school curriculum so that our sons and daughters will be competitive in increasing globalized markets.

A year ago Rep. George-Smith asked during Hearings about the extension of art programs in the state as means to alternative solutions for challenged students. We did some research and can summarize that the Public School Arts Education Programs in Delaware (2013-2014) has 524 certified art educators, and 167,378 students enrolled in arts education courses in the state with some having more art classes than others. As impressive as the numbers sound, it does not reflect the impact that art classes have in terms of university readiness and career fulfilment. The fundamental question is if Delaware is educating the workforce of the future.

Secretary, Arne Duncan, who is visiting Wilmington tomorrow, indicated in a speech to congress few weeks ago on the anniversary of No Child Left Behind legislation the following:

*I believe education cannot and should not be boiled down just to reading and math. **I believe the arts** and history, foreign languages, financial literacy, physical education, and after school enrichment are as important as advanced math and science classes. Those are essentials, not luxuries.*

His comments reveal the need of an education where the arts confer the competitive advantage our students will need to become the workforce Delaware needs. I would like to continue and expand upon that - but with a new twist - a new way to think about Arts Education and why the inclusion of the arts does make a difference.

I have taught in Delaware now for 31 years. Over that time I have taught multiple courses - from large ensembles, 31 years as a choral director), to more traditional classes. 7 years ago, I was given the opportunity to do something vastly different. I was approached by the Career and Technical Education Coordinator in my school who knew of my interest in and work in the audio area to create a new course in the area - Audio Engineering. The course I teach has allowed me not only to connect, but truly integrate technologies with Math and Science using the principals of Engineering all wrapped in a complete infusion of the Arts so that the students truly begin to see them all as one. Why are the Arts so important in this process?

A talented workforce is locally developed when students learn about the arts alongside math and sciences. A recent report published by the Institute for the Future does an outstanding job of identifying the key work skills and capabilities needed in the next few years; sense making, social intelligence, novel & adaptive thinking, cross-cultural competencies, computational thinking, new media literacy, transdisciplinarity, design mindset, cognitive load management, and virtual collaboration. It is clear that to educate the workforce of tomorrow, Delaware requires creativity and innovation embedded in those key work skills needed. The future will certainly combine the work of humans and the work of machines. While machines and computers can work quite effectively in the venue of logic and algorithms, only humans can provide creativity and innovative thinking. Science and

Technology married with Arts and Sciences will prove to be most successful. Matt Coyle will make evident how an arts infused curriculum can eventually provide meaningful employment. Matt...

Good afternoon members of the Joint Finance Committee! My name is Matt Coyle. I am currently studying Criminal Justice, with a minor in theatre production at the University of Delaware. Just a few years ago, I was able to enroll in this fairly new class, Audio Engineering, and now as I undertake practicum hours in the professional theatre on campus, I am able to relate to people who have been in the profession for 20 years or more. These professionals can see that I have an understanding, and interest in their field! Skills acquired at the class have been carried over into other jobs, where I have been sought out for my audio engineering abilities, where I routinely reflect, and pull from knowledge I have been taught in the program. My experience in the field of Criminal Justice has not been spared from the benefits of this special program. Audio engineering has taught me ways to analyze, critically think, develop conclusions and solutions to problems I face. I do not think I would be where I am today or have the skills that benefit me every day, if it were not for this program.