

Mason School District

Fine Arts Council

The Fine Arts Council was in place upon my arrival in the district 8 years ago and had been for some time, but it has evolved into something stronger and more active. I credit that to the body of members and their desire in promoting the arts in Mason's community.

The Council is composed of all K-12 Art, Music, Drama educators, a general ed. teacher and an administrator. We have tried to recruit parents in the past, but have not had overwhelming success with retaining a participant. The council meets roughly 6 times per school year, more when we have an initiative. Our goals/accomplishments are and have been:

1. Alignment and renewal of the Fine Arts curriculum:

Each Department has updated and aligned their curriculum within the past 5 years. It is our goal to continually update and evaluate the curriculum regularly to meet student needs and keep in step with the changes in state standards and technologies. We report our changes to the council, make recommendations and promote open discussion on how to better serve our students' needs within the curriculum. Currently our Music program is reviewing a common assessment policy and looking at ways to align our curriculum between buildings in a streamlined manner to insure greater success as students move through their grade levels in the music program. The visual Arts program completely changed the course offerings at the High School level 5 years ago to better meet college entrance requirements and prepare students for portfolio reviews. Visual Art classes at Mason were offering 5 course choices in 2003. We currently offer 10 including an Art History course.

2. Calendar Preparation:

The Fine Arts Council Meets annually to work out a District Calendar which outlines activities in Music Art and Drama. The calendar is then placed on our school website, and is published in a pocket form and distributed to parents, students and community members at open houses, orientations and conferences. This calendar is designed to avoid conflict with building usage and also allows families with children at multiple grade levels to avoid conflicts with Fine Arts events.

3. Program Promotion Advocacy:

As a council we are committed to promote the Fine Arts programs and to use whatever means we can to bring to light the offerings and events in which our students are participants. Beside the calendar, we have secured funding to send out a promotional flyer to all households in the district outlining what Mason Fine Arts programs have to offer. The full color "flyer" featured Mason students and listed the various offerings at our schools. We also actively address our school board as needed to keep them aware of our program successes and changes.

4. District hiring/staffing issues:

Whenever we have the opportunity, the council helps with staffing decisions. We have helped to secure consistent offerings from K-12 and have worked hard to close curriculum gaps in the programs because of a lack of an instructor/teacher at various levels. We strive to work in harmony with our administration, school board and community to make them aware of the needs and also finding viable solutions to fill those positions.

5. District Unification:

Perhaps most important is the desire to stay connected with our Fine Arts staff. We feel it is important to be aware of the progress and curricular issues facing all levels of our district. The council allows us time to share successes and ideas for moving our programs forward.

We are very proud of the accomplishments and unity we share with our council members and feel many other districts could benefit from this type of organization.

Information gathered from:

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