

P.L. 1996, CHAPTER 117, *approved September 16, 1996*  
Assembly, No. 1739

1 **AN ACT** establishing an arts based curriculum pilot program in the  
2 Department of Education and supplementing chapter 54 of Title  
3 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
6 *of New Jersey:*

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8 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Arts Create  
9 Excellent Schools (ACES) Pilot Program Act."

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11 2. The Legislature finds and declares that:

12 a. Although there currently exists support for the arts in education  
13 within the public schools of this State, there is a vast difference in how  
14 local school districts implement arts education and a significant  
15 number of students graduate from New Jersey schools without any  
16 exposure to the arts;

17 b. The Literacy in the Arts Task Force, created in 1987 by the  
18 Legislature to examine the state of arts education in New Jersey,  
19 recommended that schools include both intensive arts experiences and  
20 integration of the arts across an interdisciplinary curriculum and urged  
21 districts to adopt a curriculum framework using the arts as a means of  
22 providing all students the tools for an effective and more enriched  
23 learning experience;

24 c. Since the Literacy in the Arts Task Force completed its work,  
25 there have been a number of other developments at the State and  
26 national level which have affirmed the value of incorporating the arts  
27 into the school curriculum as a strategy to engage and challenge  
28 students and thus advance their motivation and level of academic  
29 achievement;

30 d. The value of infusing the arts into the public school curricular  
31 core has been supported and advanced through the revision of New  
32 Jersey's State Goals for Education in 1992, the Department of  
33 Education's draft of Core Curriculum Standards, the Department of  
34 Education's Strategic Plan for Systemic Change, and the national  
35 education reform effort embodied in the Goals 2000: Educate America  
36 Act, all of which have pointed to the arts as a mechanism to improve  
37 the ability of students to think critically and to solve problems; and,

1 e. In an era in which states and the federal government are  
2 searching for ways in which to advance the educational achievement  
3 of at-risk students, research has indicated that an arts-based  
4 curriculum offers a powerful tool to effectuate student academic  
5 achievement by increasing the motivation of students who may be  
6 disaffected from the learning process. There is empirical evidence that  
7 academic disciplines such as reading, writing, languages, social  
8 studies, science and math are reinforced through an arts-infused  
9 curriculum.

10 The Legislature further finds, therefore, that a program which  
11 provides for the development of arts-infused model schools can serve  
12 an important public policy function by determining if the strategies  
13 utilized by the model schools are effective and can be successfully  
14 replicated in districts throughout the State to enhance overall student  
15 performance.

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17 3. There is established in the Department of Education the "Arts  
18 Create Excellent Schools (ACES) Pilot Program" to be administered  
19 by the Commissioner of Education pursuant to the provisions of this  
20 act. The department shall consult with the New Jersey State Council  
21 on the Arts in the Department of State in the operation and  
22 administration of the program. The program shall provide for the  
23 development of three model schools which incorporate an innovative  
24 arts-infused curriculum into the student learning process. The model  
25 schools, which shall be developed through organizational partnerships  
26 including State and local government agencies and the private sector,  
27 shall have the following goals:

28 a. to prepare students for educational achievement by developing  
29 imagination, reasoning, judgment and the critical thinking skills  
30 necessary for problem solving and decision making;

31 b. to develop an arts-infused curriculum based on interdisciplinary  
32 and thematic units;

33 c. to broaden the role of the teacher through staff development to  
34 include such diverse roles as instructor, coach, mentor and exemplar;

35 d. to improve student performance as determined by standard  
36 measures and alternative assessment strategies;

37 e. to enhance student self-concept as determined by measures of  
38 self-esteem;

39 f. to encourage understanding of traditional, local and diverse  
40 cultures;

41 g. to integrate school activities with professional and community  
42 based arts organizations; and,

43 h. to further evaluate and research arts education.

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45 4. The Commissioner of Education shall forward a request for  
46 proposals for the development of ACES schools to local school

1 districts. Each school district shall disseminate the request for  
2 proposals to all schools within the district. A school which wants to  
3 participate in the pilot program shall, upon securing the approval of  
4 the board of education, submit a proposal to the commissioner. The  
5 proposal shall outline the school's plan to infuse the arts into all  
6 aspects of the curriculum to enhance academic excellence, student  
7 motivation and self-esteem. The proposal shall include, but not be  
8 limited to, the following information:

9 a. the specific mechanisms which will be used to integrate the arts  
10 within all academic disciplines offered in the school's curriculum;

11 b. the utilization of technology within the school to advance  
12 student levels of organizational ability, critical thinking, problem  
13 solving and creative skills; and

14 c. the manner in which professional development experiences in the  
15 arts will be factored into the school design to assist the teaching and  
16 administrative staff to define and implement the teaching strategies  
17 necessary to achieve the educational goals of an arts-infused  
18 curriculum.

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20 5. The commissioner shall select three schools to participate in the  
21 program based upon the commissioner's evaluation of the school's  
22 ability to successfully implement a model arts-based curriculum. In  
23 selecting the schools to participate, the commissioner shall seek a  
24 cross section of schools from urban, suburban, rural and  
25 State-operated school districts with equal consideration given to  
26 schools located in the north, central and southern geographical regions  
27 of the State. The selection process shall include visits to potential  
28 model schools to ascertain the administration and faculty commitment  
29 and ability to adopt an arts-based curriculum.

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31 6. a. The commissioner shall provide for the inclusion of an  
32 evaluation component within the ACES program which shall be both  
33 formative and summative in nature. The assessment methods designed  
34 to evaluate the model schools shall be appropriate for assessing  
35 student educational outcomes and teacher development and shall place  
36 emphasis on student progress in problem solving, comprehension,  
37 critical thinking and reasoning.

38 b. During the initial four years of the ACES program each model  
39 school shall undergo an annual evaluation conducted by the  
40 Department of Education pursuant to subsection a. of this section.  
41 After the program's fourth year, the commissioner shall submit to the  
42 Governor and Legislature an evaluation of the ACES program and a  
43 recommendation on the advisability of its continuation and expansion  
44 to other schools within the State.

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46 7. The State Board of Education shall adopt, pursuant to the

1 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et  
2 seq.), the rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions  
3 of this act.

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5 8. This act shall take effect immediately.

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#### STATEMENT

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10 This bill establishes the "Arts Create Excellent Schools (ACES)  
11 Pilot Program" in the Department of Education (DOE). The ACES  
12 program is designed to incorporate the ideas on arts education  
13 advanced by the Literacy in the Arts Task Force and incorporated  
14 within New Jersey's State Goals for Education in 1992, the  
15 Department of Education's draft of Core Curriculum Standards, the  
16 Department of Education's Strategic Plan for Systemic Change, and  
17 the national education reform effort embodied in the Goals 2000:  
18 Educate America Act. The DOE is to consult with the New Jersey  
19 Council of the Arts in the Department of State in the administration of  
20 the program.

21 The ACES program will be a pilot program designed to implement  
22 the research that has found that an arts-based curriculum can serve as  
23 a powerful tool to achieve educational improvement by increasing the  
24 motivation of students who may be disaffected from the learning  
25 process, in addition to reinforcing progress in academic disciplines  
26 such as reading, writing, languages, social studies, science and math.

27 Under the provisions of this bill, the Commissioner of Education  
28 shall select three schools to be developed as models which will  
29 incorporate an innovative arts-infused curriculum into the student  
30 learning process. A school which wants to participate in the pilot  
31 program shall, upon securing the approval of the board of education,  
32 submit a proposal to the commissioner. The proposal shall outline the  
33 school's plan to infuse the arts into all aspects of the curriculum to  
34 enhance academic excellence, student motivation, and self-esteem.  
35 The proposal shall include, but not be limited to: the specific  
36 mechanisms the school will employ to integrate the arts within all  
37 academic disciplines; the utilization of technology to advance student  
38 levels of organizational ability, critical thinking, problem solving and  
39 creative skills; and the manner in which professional development  
40 experiences in the arts will be factored into the school design to enable  
41 teachers to effectively implement the strategies of the arts-infused  
42 curriculum.

43 The schools shall be selected to participate based upon the  
44 commissioner's evaluation of the school's ability to successfully  
45 implement a model arts-based curriculum. The commissioner shall  
46 seek a cross section of schools from urban, suburban, rural and

1 State-operated school districts with equal consideration given to  
2 schools located in the north, central and southern geographical regions  
3 of the State. The selection process shall include visits to potential  
4 model schools to ascertain the administration and faculty commitment  
5 and ability to adopt an arts based curriculum.

6 Finally, the ACES program shall include an assessment component  
7 designed to evaluate the model schools' progress in advancing student  
8 educational outcomes and teacher development. The assessment shall  
9 place emphasis on student progress in problem solving,  
10 comprehension, critical thinking and reasoning. During the initial four  
11 years of the ACES program each model school shall undergo an annual  
12 evaluation conducted by the DOE. After the program's fourth year,  
13 the commissioner shall submit to the Governor and Legislature an  
14 evaluation of the ACES program and a recommendation on the  
15 advisability of its continuation and expansion to other schools within  
16 the State.

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21 Establishes "Arts Create Excellent Schools (ACES) Program" in DOE.