

# SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### SENATE, No. 1071

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 24, 1996

The Senate Education Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1071.

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

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

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

The schools shall be selected to participate based upon the commissioner's evaluation of the school's ability to successfully

implement a model arts-based curriculum. The commissioner shall seek a cross section of schools from urban, suburban, rural and State-operated school districts with equal consideration given to schools located in the north, central and southern geographical regions of the State. The selection process shall include visits to potential model schools to ascertain the administration and faculty commitment and ability to adopt an arts based curriculum.

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