

## VAHPERD

### Position Statement for School Dance Education

Comprehensive K-12 dance instruction is an essential part of every student's total education. Unique in its capacity as a medium for communication, collaboration and self-expression, dance education provides growth while developing an understanding of the essential components of history and human experience.

- Dance at an early age nurtures children's natural desire to express themselves through movement, while enhancing physical, social and emotional growth. Dance develops kinesthetic sensitivity and self-awareness which, in turn, develops into an awareness of others.
- Dance in elementary schools should include a wide variety of dance experiences, which inspire creativity, and promote divergent thinking, and the search for values. Through dance, connections to science, social studies, mathematics, and other art forms may be discovered.
- Dance for the middle school is the vehicle for the development of self-image, social skills, and peer relationships. Dance provides important understanding of the structure and function of the human body.
- Dance in the high school develops awareness of individual capabilities and talents. Dance education builds respect for the body and an understanding that dance is a product of intentional and intelligent physical action. Dance education makes significant contributions to the understanding of culture while fostering personal creativity and expressiveness through guided movement experiences. At this developmental level, dance is a vehicle for making major life choices, developing observations and analytical skills, appreciating history and cultures. and exploring career possibilities.
- Special populations benefit from dance that meets their needs and allows them to fully participate in the art form. Dance programs directed exclusively to or including students with special needs can break down barriers. As these individuals fully participate in society and culture, they find value in themselves in the world.
- Dance is approved by the Vermont Board of Education as an instructional curriculum. Whether dance is offered for physical education or fine arts credit, a certified dance teacher should be provided for grades 7-12. In grades k-6 an elementary movement education specialist, with a minimum of 12 credits in dance, is essential.

Dance has existed throughout human history as a way of knowing self, others, and the world. Dance involves exploration, sensing, concentration, focus, projection and commitment. Dance is an academic discipline, which is essential to the total growth, development and education of all children. The opportunity for dance education should be a part of every student's education at all levels of schooling.