ARTS IN BASIC CURRICULUM PROJECT (ABC)

Summary
The mission of the ABC Project is to provide leadership to achieve quality, comprehensive arts education (dance, music, theatre, visual arts and creative writing) for all students in South Carolina.

The Arts In Basic Curriculum (ABC) Project is a statewide collaborative initiative begun in 1987 and is cooperatively directed by the South Carolina Arts Commission, the South Carolina Department of Education, and the College of Visual and Performing Arts at Winthrop University. The ABC Project blueprint is founded on the premise that the arts are an indispensable part of a complete education because quality education in the arts significantly adds to the learning potential of our students. Arts education complements learning in other disciplines and establishes a foundation for success in school and lifelong learning. The ABC Project also provides a forum for the development of strategic arts initiatives, and serves as the foundation for a broad advocacy coalition for arts education reform in South Carolina.

Demographics
- **Target Settings**: Rural, urban, suburban; special outreach to schools in rural areas and schools with high poverty populations.
- **Target Groups Served**: All students deserve equal access to quality, comprehensive, standards-based arts education, which is essential to the educational promise and social well-being of South Carolina’s children. Based on research, we know the arts:
  - help students understand and be understood
  - the arts define and sustain community
  - the arts foster the creativity, critical thinking, self-discipline, work ethic, and problem-solving skills necessary for success.
- **Districts Served**: All South Carolina public schools are invited to apply to be Arts in Basic Curriculum Advancement Sites.

Research and Evaluation
*What national or other research was considered during the development of this program/initiative? Describe the evidence that shows the program/initiative works.*

The Arts in Basic Curriculum Project (ABC) began with a grant to the South Carolina Arts Commission from the National Endowment for the Arts that supported planning to connect artists-in-schools programs to schools’ visual and performing arts curriculum. Significantly, the grant required collaboration among state arts agencies, state departments of education and higher education. In this way, this grant and the subsequent planning work brought together the three main partners of ABC: the South Carolina Arts Commission, the South Carolina Department of Education and Winthrop University. The ABC Steering Committee, created at the same time by the Arts Commission, involved many more stakeholders who had an interest in the arts or education in South Carolina. In this way, the ABC Project set a precedent early in its history that it sought the involvement and engagement of a broad group of South Carolinians to support arts education in the state.

**Evaluation:**

- The Arts in Basic Curriculum Project: Looking at the Past and Preparing for the Future by Michael A. Seaman, Associate Professor of Educational Research College of Education University of South Carolina 1999
Arts in Basic Curriculum  20-Year Anniversary Evaluation conducted by the IMPROVE Group: At their 20-year anniversary, the Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Project can look back on many accomplishments and innovations that have helped the Project make progress on its goal to ensure that every student in South Carolina has access to a quality, comprehensive arts education. 2007

Resources
• **Annual Cost**: available on request
• **Funding Sources**: South Carolina Arts Commission Winthrop University
• **Staffing Needs**: Project director, field services specialist, office administrator
• **Infrastructure/Equipment Needs**: Funding is needed to bring in nationally know arts education and arts integration specialists to provide on-going professional development for the arts teachers and classroom teachers with special focus on the changing world of technology and STEM programs (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) to integrate the arts creating STEAM programs.
• **Partner Organizations**: South Carolina Arts Commission, South Carolina Department of Education, Winthrop University

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