Art Philosophy

Art is a necessary component of our lives, a vital contributor to our learning, to our well-being and, in essence, to our existence. It helps us develop values, understand the past, and organize the elements of our lives. It enables us to communicate ideas, to express feelings, and to respect the values, attitudes and beliefs of others. It encourages us to develop in both creative and critical thinking. Art is, after all, a combination of perceptual, intellectual, manual and technical skills which can be learned.

The visual impact on the lives of students today is greater than ever before. This bombardment of visual images has a profound effect on the activities in which our young people participate. The Visual Arts teach students to shape and build an aesthetically sound future in a highly technical society.

The essential outcome of the aesthetic experience is a fully developed self whose explorations and growth-personal, social and cultural-result in fulfillment. An aesthetically aware person is, therefore, prepared to contribute positively to society.

Business Philosophy

In accordance with the district's philosophy and goals, the Business Department of Ridge High School prepares students to become contributing citizens. It produces students who are capable of making astute personal and professional decisions: legal, financial, economic, and technological. Learning experiences in the business department prepare students to work productively in any workforce with skills that will enable them to allocate resources: time, money, and materials. They learn to work with others individually and as part of a team. Students learn to process information: acquire, evaluate, organize, interpret and communicate. Understanding systems is taught, including how to monitor and correct performance. And finally, how to work with a variety of technologies: computers and related equipment, understand the intent and procedures for operation of equipment, and to prevent, identify or solve problems.

The subject areas offered by the business department provide knowledge and skills that are valuable for all adults, today, to function effectively in society. This is true whether our students go on to college, technical school, go directly into the work force or marry and raise a family. They must understand basic principles of the laws under which we live. They must be able to access information, whether it is through traditional paper sources, digital sources or the Internet. They must be able to communicate with the world at large. If our students intend to go on to college and attain advanced degrees they will benefit by beginning as early as possible to attain knowledge and skill in the previously mentioned skills. Technology should be used as a means to an end, a tool to explore, not an end in itself. The greater the skills the greater the potential to process acquired knowledge and skills to generate new ideas, to communicate to others and to express one's self.

The technologies taught in the Business Department are truly integrated into all other

facets of the educational process. Whether it is word processing, data organization and processing or mathematical functions, skills are required for Math, Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, Foreign Languages, World History, Physical Education and the Fine and Practical Arts. Business skills are used anywhere that information/thoughts are acquired, organized, processed and/or communicated.

Music Philosophy

Music is an integral part of humankind. No known culture is without some aspect of artistic experience. Music is an important key to understanding our own cultural history and provides an understanding of other cultures. It is an indispensable tool to one who seeks an understanding of the past, the present, and the future. Music can provide the universal communication to overcome the barriers of language, politics, and geography.

Music Education cultivates the whole child, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination, and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication. There is ample evidence that the arts help students develop the attitudes, characteristics, and intellectual skills required to participate effectively in today's society and economy. Music Education teaches self-discipline, reinforces self-esteem, and fosters the thinking skills creativity so valued in the workplace.

From kindergarten through grade twelve, Music Education develops mental discipline through a spiraling sequence of learning experiences. It also nurtures an appreciation of music's aesthetic qualities. At every level, the skills acquired become the means for the expression of music. The realization of the goals, skill mastery, and artistic expression is the commitment of the Music Educators of Bernards Township.

Technology Philosophy

Technology Education is an essential component of the modern comprehensive K-12 education. Technology is defined as "how humans apply knowledge and resources to solve problems, modify the world, and extend their capabilities." The study of technology education is built on this foundation. An effective technology education program offers students the opportunity to apply learned Technical knowledge as well as knowledge from other content areas to actively solve problems, participate in design activities, test and evaluate solutions, and study the designed world as the history and impacts of technology.

It is important to note that although technology education incorporates the use of computers, it not computer education, but rather a program of study about technology in a broader context. Technology Education is a field of study involving the application of learned principles to specific, tangible situations, with the ultimate goal of producing a technologically literate student. The comprehensive Tech. Ed. program is typically broken down into four areas, or systems: Communication, Construction, Manufacturing, and Transportation. With an emphasis on design, problem solving, and critical thinking,

students in the program become involved in the process from a hands-on perspective. Technology education lends itself to a variety of teaching techniques. Students participate in action-based activities on an individual, small group, and a large group basis with the intended outcome of the learner being able to work cooperatively or competitively in a variety of situations and settings.

Beginning at the middle school level, all students participate in multiple Technology Education courses, which serve to introduce the concepts of technology, design, and problem solving. Students at this level develop a basic understanding of the components or systems of Tech. Ed. and begin to develop confidence in their respective ability to work safely with tools, equipment, and materials. These introductory courses also give the students the opportunity to recognize their own skills and interests. By the eighth grade, students begin to participate in their own choice of classes from a wide variety of available elective courses and programs. These electives allow students to build on what was previously learned and allow interested students to study technology in greater depth in their own areas of interest. The availability of elective courses continues at the high school level with an even wider range of content areas for the learner to explore. The curriculum is geared towards all students, whether they are college preparatory, in preparation for technical school, or intent on pursuing a vocation. The curriculum also adds a vocational component to the student's repertoire.

Throughout the student's educational career, Technology Education provides the opportunity to develop basic technical skills and understanding and to expand on this knowledge to become a well-rounded, technologically literate young adult. Whether seeking post-secondary education, or entry level employment, the Technology Education program provides the student with the tools needed to be an effective problem solver, well versed in the design, application, outcomes, and impacts of technological systems.

Dance Philosophy

The Art of Dance uses movement to communicate meaning about the human experience. Movement is as natural and as an important to human life as breathing air. Dance is far more than exercise or entertainment. It is a powerful medium that expresses our values, our thoughts, our aspirations, and our fears about lives we live and the world we live in. Dance speaks in a very special universal language, both to the performer and the observer. It speaks of the things "read between the lines," things that are impossible to put into words.

Education in the Art of Dance develops the whole child. Dance education:

- Unlocks and opens a student's mind and body
- Is more than steps and technique
- Explores and experiences vulnerabilities
- Allows students to reach within themselves to do better, to dream the impossible, and strive for the unthinkable
- Enables each student personally, intellectually, and socially

- Fosters collaboration, cooperation, communication, problem solving, conflict resolution skills, accountability, self-discipline, self esteem, and mutual respect

These skills will enable students to become productive members of society. An education in the arts is an essential part of the academic curriculum for the achievement of human, social, and economic growth.

Theater Philosophy

Through the study of and participation in theatre, students gain an education far beyond the performance space. They are exposed to real history as they discover how others have lived in other times and places. They come to realize society's impact on their lives. They learn how adversity, tragedy, opportunity, and humor are all part of the human experience.

The skills developed through the study of theatre are ones that students will carry with them far into the future: voice production, intonation and inflection, posture, poise, working in cooperation with others, the creative process, exploration of the text, use of technology, and regard for the audience.

Most importantly, through the study of theatre, students gain knowledge on how their individual performance positively or negatively impacts the success of a group effort. The study of theatre works all aspects of the brain. It requires both sequential, creative thinking, and problem solving. Its study requires a full range of thinking skills, synthesis, and analysis. Lastly, theatre offers interdisciplinary opportunities from factual knowledge to all of the arts. It is always relevant because it is the study of real life, yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

In grades 9-12, students view and construct dramatic works as metaphorical visions of life that embrace connotative meanings, juxtaposition, ambiguity and varied interpretations. By creating, performing, analyzing, and critiquing dramatic performances, they develop a deeper understanding of personal issues and a broader worldview that includes global issues. Since theatre in all its forms reflects and affects life, students should learn about representative dramatic texts and performances and the place of that work and those events in history. Classroom work becomes more formalized.

The course is designed for grades 9-12 and addresses all aspects of theatre arts: Theatre as an art form, the designer, actor, director and the production process. It poses the essential questions: What is theatre? Who makes theatre? What is an actor? And how is theatre created?

This course has been designed to provide students with a well-rounded introduction to theatre based upon the NJCCCS for Visual and Performing Arts in the area of Theatre. The Drama course will expose students to the broad spectrum of arts involved in theatre. Students will experience theatre through the eyes of the audience, the dramaturg, the

playwright, the director, the actor, the reviewer, and the designer. Through cooperative efforts they will discover, create, analyze, and problem solve to complete common goals. Students will also enhance their powers of observation, perception, imagination, interpretation, and communication. Throughout this course, students will gain a deeper appreciation of not only the world of Theatre, but also its relationship to their contemporary world, their cultural influences, and themselves.