

FIELD AT A GLANCE: DANCE EDUCATION

The National Dance Education Organization represents dance arts in K-12 education, private studios/schools of dance, higher education, community centers, and performing arts organizations including over 2,500 dance education professionals around the country.

Dance can have a positive impact on student achievement, teacher satisfaction, and school culture. Examples of the positive impact of dance education in schools include;

- Increases reading and STEM test scores
- Offers neurological benefits, including persistence at task, memory retention, and making cognitive connections
- Develops social and emotional coping skills, including tolerance, focus, and engagement
- Supports integrated teaching practices
- Boosts teacher and school morale

How do we know?

NDEO undertook a review of over 50 studies of how dance impacts K-12 learning and produced a 60-page report, ***EVIDENCE: A Report on the Impact of Dance in the K-12 Setting (2013)*** that summarizes the key findings of the studies. Examples of some of the studies include;

- A 2005-2007 study, wherein students in the Jefferson County, Florida model arts program outperformed other districts in reading and math scores. (Evidence Report, p. 22)
- Cindy Soto's (2001) thesis indicated that students who participated in dance demonstrated more persistence, and had higher grades than those involved in non-academic (and non-dance, such as math club) activities. (Evidence Report, p. 9-10)
- In *How the Arts Develop Young Brains*, David Sousa states: "Brain areas are developed as the child learns songs and rhymes and creates drawings and finger paintings. The dancing and movements during play develop gross motor skills, and the sum of these activities enhances emotional well-being. And sharing their artwork enhances social skills. The arts are not just expressive and affective, they are deeply cognitive. They develop essential thinking tools -- pattern recognition and development; mental representations of what is observed or imagined; symbolic, allegorical and metaphorical representations; careful observation of the world; and abstraction from complexity." (Quoted in the Evidence Report, p. 37)
- 100% of teachers in PS 70 in the Bronx reported that by integrating dance into their classrooms, they gained insight into student capabilities through the arts. They were also able to teach academic subjects in new ways, and they increased their ability to integrate the arts into their teaching. (Evidence Report, p. 24)
- From the reports of the model programs and professional development projects funded by the Arts-in-Education grants under the U.S. Department of Education, dance programs impacted teachers in the following ways (Evidence Report, p. 19-20):
 - Increased teachers' interest in co-teaching
 - Increased levels of authentic instruction
 - Increased transference, deep knowledge, connections to the world beyond the classroom, social support for learning, high expectations, challenging work, and mutual respect
 - Fostered creation of original curricula

The National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) supports research, teaching, and learning in all these vital areas. Continued funding of projects, education, and active support is needed to ensure a vibrant impact on U.S. education for all children.

To download the Evidence Report, please go to www.ndeo.org/evidence.