



Position Paper

Dance: Within the Context of Physical Education Programs in Alberta Schools

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The following is a position paper prepared for the Health and Physical Education Council of The Alberta Teachers' Association. The position was accepted at the 1978 Annual Meeting of the Council.

Purpose of the Paper

1. To provide a unified base for dance as part of well-balanced physical education programs in Alberta schools.
2. To provide guidance for Council representatives to the Alberta Steering Committee on Dance in the following activities:
 - a) clarifying deliberations,
 - b) forming policy,
 - c) structuring a constitution.
3. To articulate the need for dance in the curriculum.
4. To provide a frame of reference for identification and resolution of problems concerning teaching dance in the schools.

Introduction

Dance is a physical activity that is universally accepted as part of life and culture. It ranges from the traditional to contemporary forms – tap, square, social, folk, ballet, jazz, creative, modern and others. It can be recreational, educational, artistic, cultural, competitive or a mixture of any of the above.

Dance complements, stimulates, and interrelates with other components in the curriculum.

Learning of skills and appreciation occurs best during the child's school years, thus the responsibility for dance remains with the schools where exposure to dance can occur.

Position

The position of the Health and Physical Education Council is stated in the following general terms:

1. A variety of dance forms, as part of a broad, balanced, physical education program, should be included in the school curriculum.
2. Dance could be extended in the curriculum and beyond the classroom into clubs and other extra-curricular activities, guided by the interest of the learners and the expertise of the teachers.

Rationale

The Health and Physical Education council of The Alberta Teachers' Association has been concerned with the lack of dance instruction in schools. Very few teachers include dance in their programs, and those who do so offer it as a minimal exposure.

The Council executive has indicated a need for various source and resource through which teachers can receive information and instruction to gain more confidence in their own dance experience and expertise.

The full potential of dance needs recognition. Dance is a valuable social and individual life-long activity through which skill, fitness, and relaxation can be achieved, culture preserved, aesthetic appreciation developed, and creative expression allowed to emerge.

The need for dance in education has been expressed in the following studies, professional development activities, and meetings conducted at local, provincial, and national levels:

1. LOCAL

- a) The 1975 Physical Education Evaluation Report (PEER) submitted to the trustees by the Department of Physical Education, Calgary Board of education, contained the recommendation that “. . . broad movement experience related to several fields of physical activity: games, gymnastics, aquatics, dance et cetera” be included in the school program.¹
- b) A survey conducted by the Separate Catholic School Board in Calgary on physical education programs (CAL-SEP-PEP) in 1975 showed a

¹ Calgary Board of Education, Physical Education Department, *Physical Education Evaluation Report* (Calgary, Alta.: The Board, 1975),: pp 13-14

need for balanced physical education programs in which dance was included.

2. PROVINCIAL

- a) On October 24 and 25, 1976, citizens of Alberta concerned with all dance forms met in Red Deer to discuss mutual problems. They considered dance sufficiently important when they appointed a steering committee to pursue the topic in the interests of dance in education, performing arts, folk and ethnic societies, and dance studios.
- b) Southern and northern Alberta dance committees of the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (CAHPER) are attempting to promote dance.
- c) The Health and Physical Education Council of The Alberta Teachers' Association has been conducting drive-in workshops on dance and featuring dance at its annual conferences.
- d) Dance courses are included in the physical education degree programs in Alberta universities.

3. NATIONAL

- a) The Dance Committee of the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, in the *CAHPER* Journal, has published two statements:
 1. A statement of concerns and beliefs regarding the status of dance in Canadian education.²
 2. A statement on the values of creative modern dance in Canadian elementary education.³
- b) An educators' forum has been organized within the Dance in Canada Association, reiterating the need and concern for dance in Canadian schools.
- c) The National Report on New Perspectives for Elementary School Physical Education Programs in Canada (CAHPER) contained this quotation, emphasizing participation in a range of physical activities:

² CAHPER, Dance Committee, "Dance in Canadian Education," *CAHPER* Journal, Jan.-Feb., 1976, pp 17-19.

³ CAHPER, Dance Committee, "Creative Modern Dance in Canadian Elementary Education," *CAHPER* Journal,

Nov.-Dec., 1976, pp 15-20.

Good programs provide maximum active participation in a wide range of movement experience which include creative, expressive, and functional activities.⁴

The activities are specified as:

. . . games, gymnastics, dance, aquatics and outdoor pursuits.⁵

Local, provincial, and national studies, activities, and statements on dance support the Health and Physical Education Council position. Dance, in all its forms, adapted to the needs of a particular age group, has inspirational potential for educational and human values.

Do the young people in Alberta schools have the right to learn to dance? Council members believe that they do.

Council recommends that dance, within the context of a well-balanced physical education program, be an integral part of the school curriculum.

⁴ CAHPER, School Physical Education Activities Committee, "National Report on New Perspectives for Elementary School Physical Education in Canada." Vanier City, Ont.: The Association, December 14, 1976, p.5 (pamphlet)

⁵ Ibid.

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