

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ACE THEATER TEAMS!



Seven teams from across the state are beginning their second successful year of the Arts Courses for Educators (ACE) Theater Program. The participating teams are:

Buffalo High School, Buffalo (Melissa Bertsch, Team Leader)

Linwood A+ Elementary School, St. Paul (Debi March, Team Leader)

Marcy Open School, Minneapolis (David Bruns, Team Leader)

Montevideo Public Schools, Montevideo (Carol Westberg, Team Leader)

Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet, Rockford (Darren Eliason, Team Leader)

Thief River Falls School District, Thief River Falls (Rosaline Groven, Team Leader)

Wayzata East Middle School, Wayzata (Rachel Schaeffer, Team Leader)

Diane Aldis coordinates the ACE Theater Program, assisted by Virginia McFerran and ACE Instructors Shari Aronson, Ann Kim, Tory Peterson, and Red Eye Collaboration: Steve Busa and Miriam Must.

START PLANNING NOW FOR ACE DANCE

Does your school want to develop its dance curriculum and learn how to integrate dance into other subjects? Arts Courses for Educators (ACE) Dance provides professional development in dance education for K-12 educators. During the two-year program, school teams from across the state attend workshops at the Perpich Center, and receive on-site consulting from experienced dance artist-educators.

Start planning now — think about potential team members and talk to your school administrators about the program. An ACE team is comprised of three or four members, and may be either school or district based. ACE Dance welcomes classroom teachers who are new to dance, as well as experienced dance educators.

The next ACE Dance Program begins August 2007. More information and downloadable school grant applications will be on the PCAE web site after January 19, 2007. **School Application deadline is March 26, 2007.** Participating schools will be selected through a review process and receive a grant to cover expenses associated with the program.

LICENSURE VIA PORTFOLIO

By Risa Cohen

Teaching arts and dance is a true passion in my life, but one full of challenges. My most recent challenge was obtaining my state accredited teaching license through, what some might consider, an unconventional way. Most instructors take college classes leading to a degree in education. Two years ago I learned that the Minnesota Board of Education allows experienced instructors with an extensive history in the arts to file for a license by submitting a comprehensive portfolio detailing their work and passing a series of certification tests known as the 'Praxis Series.' It is via this path that I obtained my teaching license to continue working in a job that I love.

Shortly after I was hired to teach dance at Kennedy High School in



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2002 the then principal, Mr. Donohue, informed me that I would receive a 'Community Expert License', which meant that I had a three-year waiver after which time I had to have a Minnesota professional teaching license in order to retain my post at Kennedy.

At the beginning of my third year at Kennedy, our new principle, Ron Simmons, told me that this would be my last year of teaching without proper licensure. At the time I thought that my only option was to return to school and spend 2 to 3 years taking education classes at a cost of close to \$30,000. Mr. Simmons advised me to talk with the Board of Education. It was the best advice I ever received.

I learned about a new program called 'License via Portfolio.' I contacted the director of this program, Jan Kellner, who explained how the program worked. She showed me the enormous portfolios other candidates had submitted. They were huge books that contained a language and a format that seemed daunting.

I had to complete two portfolios, one in my content area (Dance/Theater) and another for the Standards of Effective Practice in Teaching. I used my past dance and teaching experience to provide evidence that I was fulfilling standards required by the State. The entire process took me 4 months to complete, and I spent hours on them every day. The language felt foreign. Several individuals in my district helped me, including Rich Germenson, who was Director of Professional Development. I am grateful to all of them for the time and assistance they provided me.

After completing my portfolios I received a one-year limited license. My next step was to take the Praxis examinations (Praxis I and II) plus a course in Human Relations for teachers. Preparing for the Praxis and completing the portfolio were especially difficult for me because I have dyslexia, so dealing with text-based portfolios and timed written exams was especially challenging. I hired math tutors and bought as many books on basic education as I could afford. By June of 2006

I had taken the required examinations and passed! Five years after teaching at Kennedy, I am proud to say I now have a teaching license.

LICENSURE VIA PORTFOLIO WORKSHOP

October 19, 2006 9AM – 12 Noon

Minnesota Department of Education in Roseville Designed for individuals interested in adding a field to teaching license, expanding the age level of a teaching license, obtaining an initial teaching license or considering a career change to teaching. (Candidates for Licensure via Portfolio must have a baccalaureate degree and teaching and/or related experience.)

Download flyer and registration form online:

http://children.state.mn.us/mde/Teacher_Support/Educator_Licensing/Licensure_Via_Portfolio/index.html

Or contact Jan Kellner at 651-582-8383

jan.kellner@state.mn.us

SAVE THE DATES!

February 3, 2007

All-State Dance Education Summit

Join dance educators and teaching artists for a day of solid professional development and artistic rejuvenation.

May 5, 2007

Theater Forum

The Theater Forum provides an opportunity for theater educators and artists to gather new ideas on directing and teaching, and to network with others across the state. It is a time to celebrate the good work in K-16 Theater Education!



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