



# Fairfax County Public Schools: Visual and Performing Arts

**Coming Next Month:** Summer Activities and Programs

## The Power of Art

"If I were a rich man, ya ha deedle deedle,  
bubba bubba deedle deedle dum."

"If I Were a Rich Man," *Fiddler on the Roof*

A catchy show tune, a mesmerizing photograph, stunning computer graphics, a stirring orchestra rendition, an eloquent pencil drawing, or the graceful movements of a modern dance performance – each has the power to move audiences and transport them to a moment in time.

Whatever the talent or interest, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) provides students with a comprehensive arts education.

Students in grades K through 6 receive music and art instruction taught by certified art teachers. Middle school and high school students may choose to enroll in a variety of elective course offerings in all fine arts disciplines to include dance, music, theatre, and visual art. Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) art classes are offered for students in grades 11 - 12.

Art engages students in a process that helps them develop the self-esteem, self-discipline, cooperation, and self-motivation necessary for success in life.

"Art making involves critical thinking and problem solving to create a product," said Aaron Stratton, art education specialist at FCPS. "In this sense, art is an authentic approach to providing students with essential skills they will need in the 21st century to

develop creative solutions to challenges. Creativity and problem solving are essential components of innovation which will feed the economy and industries of the future."

## Art All Around Us

Students can explore many forms of art including art, music, photography, computer graphics, dance, orchestra, theatre, band, and more. Beginning in elementary school, students are introduced to concepts and processes that nurture creative thinking and problem solving through art and music classes.

"As they advance to the next grade level, students are exposed to recognized works of art and become actively involved in finding connections between images and ideas," said Stratton. "Emphasis is placed on exploring themes and concepts related to family and a sense of place. By participating in real and meaningful art experiences, students increase their understanding of the value of the visual arts to themselves, their family, and to the world in which they live."



## Music to Your Ears

More than 40,000 FCPS students are enrolled in the music elective programs of band, chorus, general music, orchestra, and guitar. The vocal and instrumental ensembles are seen and heard worldwide. Locally, the ensembles perform at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, George Mason Center for the Performing Arts, and the White House among others.

"Music, through its inherent ability to develop intellectual and emotional communication skills, encourages cultural awareness and enriches society," said Tamra Ferreira, fine arts coordinator at FCPS. "The FCPS music curriculum provides opportunities for students to attain the knowledge and skills necessary to become musically literate, well-rounded individuals."

## Let the Shows Begin!

Springtime theatre productions bring performance spaces alive throughout Fairfax County Public Schools. The study of theatre provides students opportunities for personal and academic growth, ways to create bridges to other subject disciplines and other cultures, and the development of skills which provide lifelong enjoyment. In middle school, FCPS students discover and explore the basic elements of theatre, and augment that study with a variety of theatre presentations and special events. At the high school level students develop and expand their knowledge, skills, and resources to create a high level of accomplishment in the classroom and in performance.

Go see a show at a Fairfax County Public School. Many events are free or inexpensive. Find out more at [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu) and click on the blue Events tab.

## Getting To Know Us:

*Herndon High School Theatre Teacher*

**Zoë Dillard**

Zoë Dillard grew up around theatrical personalities, so it was an obvious choice when it came time to decide on a career. Theatre, of course.

Though she initially pursued acting roles, it was a request in 1982 from Falls Church High School to help them choreograph a musical that confirmed her love of working with young people in the theatre.

Today, she serves as the theatre director and teacher at Herndon High School.

Dillard believes theatre offers students a chance to discover themselves.

"High school is all about finding your niche. Some students come into the theatre to see what's

here and what's going on. Once they are here, they realize there are many opportunities," said Dillard. "They can direct children's theatre or participate in improv. They can be part of the ensemble or put their technical skills to work building sets. They can work with 5th and 6th graders in the children's theatre. They can also use their computer graphic design skills for publicity."

"I try to offer students many different kinds of opportunities in the theatre so they will grow," she said. "It's not just about acting."

"I love their energy," she continued. "By the time they are seniors, they've changed and grown. I find that inspiring to watch."

## Did You Know?

More than 33,000 secondary students enrolled in fine and performing arts courses during the 2011-12 school year:

Visual art – 12,400  
Music – 12,600  
Theatre – 2,600  
Dance – 200

## Cappies: Award-Winning Performances



For those who would rather critique than perform, the Cappies, or Critics and Awards Program, is designed for high school theatre and journalism students who are trained as theatre critics, attend shows at other schools, write reviews, and publish the reviews in local newspapers and online. The international program was launched by FCPS in 1999.

Each spring, Cappies critics nominate actors and technicians for Cappies awards, which are presented, along with awards for critics, at the annual Cappies Gala at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

"The Cappies Gala showcases the amazing artistic talents of our high school students," said Judy Bowns, co-founder of Cappies and theatre arts and dance specialist at FCPS. "Student actors, backstage technicians, singers, dancers, and musicians are honored with a Cappie by their peers who acknowledge this excellence by their votes. It's the only student theatre awards program that is student-driven with no awards decided by adults."

The gala draws more than 2,000 theatre students and their families. For more information visit [www.cappies.com](http://www.cappies.com).