

Summit Hill Elementary School

Nancy J. Murphy, Principal _ Don Webb, Assistant Principal

Dear Parents:

Art Education in Fulton County Schools is based on an approach known as *Discipline-Based Art Education* (DBAE). Locally adopted instructional materials support our elementary art education curriculum and we have access to hundreds of supplementary resources through the Art Education Department. I would be pleased to show you the materials and resources we use!

It is important to understand that we *do not* grade children's artwork, rather, we grade children's *art learning*. We will explain what we learn in art, that is, what we mean by "art learning." Discipline-based art education draws its content from *four* areas of instruction, as follows:

1. *ART PRODUCTION (making art)*

Purposeful hands-on experience, using ideas, art tools and materials, is very important to our art education program. However, art making is placed into a broader context by a DBAE approach.

2. *ART HISTORY (exploring the artistic heritage of many cultures)*

The study of art works, artists, styles, and the events that influenced them connect art to historical and cultural understandings. In every culture across space and throughout time art is a revealing and significant achievement of humankind. As our student population is made up of many ethnic groups, art history helps us appreciate diversity and the multi-cultural society in which we are participants.

3. *ART CRITICISM (analyzing the qualities and features of art)*

As students learn the language of art and how to critique art, they learn to support and defend their likes and dislikes with *reasons* rather than opinions – *reasons* that are based on knowledge and understanding.

4. *AESTHETICS (thinking about art and making well-reasoned judgments about art)*

When children learn, think, and talk about aesthetics questions they begin to understand and generate their own ideas about art, culture, and the human condition. An example of an aesthetics question: "Why do you think so many people love and even fight wars about the *Mona Lisa*?" There are rarely "right" answers for questions like that, but talk involves challenging levels of thinking.

Evaluating progress in art education is complex. Evaluating growth in artistic expression, art knowledge gained, skills mastered, and attitudes enriched, as well as conduct and social behavior in the art class, can provide a profile of your child's total progress in art and help me guide him/her to further growth. We use a variety of ways to assess progress at the elementary level, such as tests, quizzes, demonstration, discussion, sketchbooks, role-play, debate, and my own observations. I will record a minimum of nine grades each semester. If I see that your child runs the risk of an art grade lower than a "B" (for grades 2-5), "N" (for K - 1), or a conduct grade of "U" on a progress report, you will receive a note or call from me.

It is important to keep in mind that it is not your child's artwork that is being graded, but your child's progress in art learning. Should you have any questions about our art education program throughout the school year, please do not hesitate to call me at school.

Sincerely,

Paul Karnowski and Fred Ciminelli

Climb to the Top!