The arts are an integral part of a well-rounded education, helping students to express their creativity, open their minds and foster a lifelong goal for artistic literacy. In the Shoreham-Wading River School District, students are learning to transfer arts knowledge and skills to other subjects, settings and contexts.

Students take part in numerous artistic and musical opportunities and collaborations throughout their K-12 educational career – from identifying primary, secondary and tertiary colors in kindergarten, to Middle Schoolers performing at regional concerts, to preparing an extensive portfolio for High School seniors in the Advanced Placement Studio Art course. In between, there are an abundance of ways for them to conceptualize their artistic ideas and musical talents.

“The District continues to provide extensive enrichment activities related to the arts through a number of programs, including arts-in-education-related presentations, extensive field experiences and student participation in a wide variety of music ensembles and competitions,” Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Mr. Alan Meinter said.

Walk the halls of any of the four schools in the District and you will hear and view the artistic endeavors of students as they participate authentically in the arts.

Miller Avenue students engage in cross-curricular opportunities – inspired by Robert Frost’s poetry, they painted their interpretation of birch trees using watercolor, tempera and markers. While learning about Spanish artist Joan Miro, Wading River School students created an abstract piece of art using chalk, pastel, tempera paint and markers. Prodell art teacher Gina Hand regularly encourages her students to choose their own subject and media and experiment with acrylics and oils. The students in Kathryn Garvey’s drawing and painting class at the High School studied Op artist Bridget Riley and were inspired to create beautiful optical artworks that are displayed in the entrance of the school.

The concerts, musicals and theater productions throughout the schools, including the well-attended WRES SRO (Standing Room Only) shows, engage many students in all aspects of performance – actors, pit orchestra, stage construction crew and those running the front of the house. They encourage collaboration and problem-solving and result in successful and applauded final stage productions.

To further students’ appreciation for the arts, culture and history, they have the opportunity to take in musicals and plays both locally and through grade-level visits to explore regional museums, theater art shows and other cultural activities – all encouraging students to synthesize and relate these experiences and knowledge to find their own creativity.
Starting in kindergarten, students are introduced to musical instruments, such as wood tone blocks, cymbals, tambourines, drums, maracas and xylophones, and start to develop choral abilities through singalongs, holiday musical performances and other celebrations.

At Wading River Elementary School, their musical instruments and vocal development experiences are expanded and strengthened and they are encouraged to take part in chorus, orchestra/strings or band. They also start their public performances by participating in regional music festivals. Middle School and High School students have the opportunity to join the extracurricular music groups: Jazz Band, Chamber Orchestra, Chromatics and Quartetones, both at the Middle School and Vocal Express at the High School. The High School also offers several courses for students to expand their depth and breadth of knowledge. These courses include Advanced Placement Music Theory, Music Theory and Music Lab.

As many neighboring school communities do not offer a strings program in third grade, students at Wading River have a unique opportunity to begin lessons at this grade level. Their musical journey under the direction of music teachers Jenilyn Smith and Erin Fasano is a popular, small group experience of between three and six students who receive lessons once per week. Generally, about 75 percent of third-graders participate and learn the fundamentals of string playing – hand position, bow position and posture, and basic note reading and care of the instrument. They are taught simple songs by rote, including “Hot Cross Buns,” and “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” In addition to a lesson book and packet created by the teachers who include some challenging and fun music like “We Will Rock You,” they begin to progress to even more exacting music in fourth and fifth grade.

“Our goal is to allow our students to have many experiences in the arts so that they can find which area is their favorite,” said Ms. Fasano. “Third grade strings are often their first instrumental experience and many go on to play in high school, college and even as adults professionally – some even become music teachers. One of the best experiences I have as a teacher is when I see a student who struggles with academics excel on an instrument. Seeing their confidence develop is awesome.”

This is another opportunity to open the door to musical literacy for District students. They learn the discipline, collaboration and techniques in playing, as well as the enjoyment of challenging themselves with the creative process of performing.

Students of today are mostly familiar with MP3 and digital music, and may have heard of compact discs and magnetic recordings through 8-track tapes. Prodell music teacher Paula Albert-Franz reached even farther back in time and combined lessons in music, history, technology and research when she introduced her students to how an original Thomas Edison phonograph works. The cylinder record and horn from the 1880s was the first known physical object to reproduce recorded sound. Her students then selected a musical invention that interested them, researched it in the lab and created PowerPoint presentations that shared with the class its purpose, people who influenced or aided in its invention and by whom it was created. Some inventions chosen were Robert Moog’s synthesizer, William Sydney Mount’s cradle of harmony violin, Adolph Rickenbacker’s electric guitar and Adolphe Sax’s saxophone.
Tri-M Music Honor Society

This academic year saw the establishment of the Shoreham-Wading River High School chapter of the Tri-M Music Honor Society, a program of the National Association for Music Education that focuses on creating future leaders in music education and music advocacy.

SWR chapter’s goal is to inspire and recognize musical achievement in the school music department as well as in the community, according to Ashley O’Connor, music teacher and chapter adviser.

The 47 students in the inaugural chapter wrote a music-inspired essay and performed a New York State School Music Association Level 3 or higher solo for the high school music faculty. Throughout the year, they must maintain a minimum average of 90 in music classes and an overall GPA of 80. Inductees are also required to participate in one of the High School’s music ensembles – band, orchestra, chorus, jazz band, chamber orchestra, the string quartet, the Orpheus Ensemble or the Vocal Express, the acclaimed a cappella group.

To help share their talents with the local community, the students have visited the Long Island State Veterans Home in Stony Brook and the Little Flower School in Wading River, where they collaborated and learned how to perform a song on handbells. They also volunteered to help run the festivities at the Wading River Historical Society’s annual Holiday Tea and Antiques Appraisal.

Their largest event to date took place in mid-April. “Suites and Treats” invited the public to listen to music while enjoying desserts and raising funds for the chapter. The successful event also collected approximately 100 nonperishable food items to benefit the Mount Sinai Congregational Church’s Island Heart Food Pantry.

In May, the veteran members celebrated the 24 new members at an induction ceremony with five students who performed string music for the processional and recessional, and one who sang the “Star Spangled Banner.”

Musical Accolades

The District’s exceptional music program is annually well-represented at various musical showcases, which is an outstanding accomplishment that allows students to experience working with other highly talented young musicians and continue their musical development. Many of these students began in the elementary music programs, most on a string instrument in third grade.

This academic year the District is proud of its many students who were selected for these prestigious competitions:

• 4 HS students were selected as All-State musicians.
• 9 HS students participated in the Suffolk County Music Educators’ Association All-County Festival and participated in band, orchestra and chorus.
• 10 HS students participated in the Long Island String Festival Association’s annual concert.
• 2 HS students performed with the Suffolk County Music Educators’ Association All-County Jazz Ensembles.
• 1 HS senior took part in the All-State Vocal Jazz Ensemble at the New York State School Music Association’s Joseph Sugar Day in Albany, an annual event that advocates for music education.
• 9 MS band students were selected to participate in the SCMEA festival.
• 5 MS string musicians were selected to participate in the Suffolk County Music Educators’ Association Festival.
• 4 MS students were participants at the Long Island String Festival Association’s intermediate concert.
• 1 MS percussion student was selected to the SCMEA percussion ensemble.
• 11 WR students showcased their exceptional talents at the prestigious Long Island String Festival Association concert.
• 9 MA students performed NYSSMA piano solos this spring.
**Prolific Performers**

The goal of the High School theater program is to establish a relationship between student and stage. Games, storytelling and body movement exercises pave the way to lessons in improvisation where students gain the skills to present individual scenes, original scripts and comedy sketches. In the Advanced Theater course, they learn set construction, sound, light design, costuming, makeup, directing, advanced acting and playwriting.

Each year, the fall and spring stage productions are a culmination of hundreds of hours of time, effort and a passion for the collaborative art form. From choosing the play or musical to auditions, rehearsals, choreography and blocking – where to stand and move on the stage for the best effects of lighting and the audience’s view – and the final performance, a SWR stage production is truly a labor of love.

This year’s productions of “Kiss Me Kate” and “The Curious Savage” engaged many students who took part in all aspects of its final stage performance, including actors, pit orchestra, stage construction crew and those running the front of the house. The months of planning and rehearsing under the leadership of director Dennis Creighton continue to generate praise from the audience, and “The Curious Savage” sold out before its final performance.

“The hard work and dedication of our theater students is truly inspiring,” Mr. Creighton said. “Not only do they work on their performance but they dive into the technical aspects of theater as well. They have a tireless work ethic. They become a tightknit team engaging with one another socially, intellectually and creatively.”

**Integrated Theater**

While the general philosophy of the High School’s Integrated Theater class has a typical focus on arts and education, it goes beyond that.
The class helps to develop many skills – including acting and public speaking – but the social and emotional component is just as important. The course provides a rewarding opportunity for the School’s RISE (Resources in Special Education) students and general education students to interact in an instructional and enlightening program.

Taught by Mary Hygom, with assistance by Special Education teacher Matthew Millheiser, the program runs the gamut of theater skills – improvisation, scene writing, rehearsal and final performance. Many scenes embrace social situations, making them “real-world” experiences that teach the students empathy and reinforce social skills.

Open to students in grades 9-12, Mrs. Hygom chooses parts suitable to each student’s skills set and helps make the experience authentic for all those involved. Students get to play dual roles – employer/employee, teacher/student, parent/child – and she encourages communication with one another and discussion with the teachers on ways to improve participation.

“This course enables even the shyest student the chance to develop the courage to take the stage publicly,” Mrs. Hygom said. “What was just a few lines of speaking is often and eventually expanded for the final performance.”

Music Institute and Theater Arts

The study of the fine and performing arts not only extends beyond the school day but also the school year, as K-12 students have the opportunity to pursue their creative interests in the summer during a five-week Music Institute and Theater Arts program.

Under the direction of Paula Albert-Franz, Prodel Music Teacher and Program Director, students are encouraged to create friendships, acquire teambuilding skills, learn responsibility and develop an appreciation for the performing arts, as well as enhance their musical studies through instrumental and vocal lessons.
Throughout the District, students are celebrated for their artistic abilities with exhibits of their works. “Night at the MoMa: Museum of Miller Avenue,” is an opportunity for Miller Avenue families to see what their children are creating in class and to take part in a variety of art-related and collaborative activities. Wading River hosts a festive “Evening of the Arts,” which showcases the talents of third- through fifth-graders. The High School’s annual Art Showcase and Awards ceremony recognizes the expressive talents of its art students with certificates of achievement for work they create across a variety of genres, including drawing, painting, crafts, photography and studio in art. An art auction featuring student work to raise funds for scholarships for students pursuing the arts in college is also a part of this evening.

AP Studio Art
The AP Studio Art Program at the High School consists of three portfolios – 2D Design, 3D Design and Drawing – that correspond to common college foundation courses. Working with art teacher Jason Andria, senior Shiloh Benincasa has chosen convenience stores as her theme of works that she will submit for review. Looking to study at Purchase College or the School of Visual Arts, her physical works of art and digital images demonstrate her significant artistic growth and development and showcase her personal, unique artistic vision.

New HS Opportunities in Technology and Arts
While full implementation of the new New York State arts standards will take place in the 2018-19 school year, Shoreham-Wading River educators are on the forefront of identifying arts education initiatives throughout the District and engaging in ongoing professional development opportunities. As curriculum is a continuous improvement process, the District places a high focus on annual and ongoing curriculum writing projects.

As a result of this process, the District is excited to implement two new courses at the High
School in September.
Learning the fundamentals of design, development and maintenance using HTML and CSS will be part of the new technology elective, Website Design. Students will develop their own websites and learn how to use graphics, lists, tables, links, text and basic design principles to create them.

An Introduction to Fashion Design course will be a visual arts elective and cover a broad foundation of fashion design, including vocabulary, history, developing drawing skills and creating original designs. Projects may include the fashion figure, apparel design, textiles, accessories and drawing skills as they pertain to the world of fashion. Students will use a variety of mediums to render their fashion illustrations. Students will develop designs and illustrations that may be used for their fashion portfolios.

On a daily basis, students are actively engaged in developing and strengthening their creative skills, thus paving their way to artistic literacy. From first-graders studying and emulating the still-life paintings of Paul Cezanne, to third-graders learning how a mandala’s symmetry and balance can integrate math and the arts, to middle schoolers broadening their technique in various mediums and high schoolers exploring traditional and contemporary craft making, the District’s art programs emphasize creativity and skill development as lifelong interests.
Dear Shoreham-Wading River Community,

On behalf of the Board of Education and our students, I would like to thank our community for approving the budget for the 2018-2019 school year. Your continued support is the foundation for the success of our students. It allows the District to maintain and enhance our excellent student offerings such as the music and art programming highlighted in this newsletter.

Arts education is a critical component of our curriculum, and participation in these programs has been proven to benefit students both academically and socially. Our District offers a full array of art, music and theater programming that is scheduled across the calendar year. New offerings next year such as website and fashion design will provide our students with innovative 21st century career experiences in the arts.

Our music programming continues to flourish, in our ensemble programs alone this year, 750 students participated in our Orchestra, Band, Chorus and Concert Choir programs! Students also have opportunities to visit art museums, cultural centers and be instructed by fine art professionals who visit our schools.

I am also pleased to share with you that over the summer and into the early fall, our high school auditorium is scheduled for a renovation as part of the Bond project. We are looking forward to the grand opening of the newly renovated space in early October.

Gerard W. Poole, Superintendent of Schools

Update on Bond: Prodell Projects

As part of the 2015 resident-approved capital project bond referendum, the District continues with projects that are enhancing instructional space, preserving the integrity of the District's facilities, promoting energy efficiencies and improving athletic fields and resources for the schools and community.

In April, a walkthrough and groundbreaking were held at Albert G. Prodell Middle School to provide the Board of Education and members of the community with an update on the middle school's completed work to date, which included new exterior doors and windows, filtered water fountains, carbon monoxide detectors, roofing, a new phone system, additional AEDs, the resurfaced track and the reconditioned football field.

The Board of Education and BBS Architecture representatives then dug their shovels in the dirt to commemorate the upcoming kitchen and café addition, site and parking improvements, library reconstruction, and new quarters for the main office, guidance department and nurse's office.

To keep up to date on district news, events and announcements, please be sure to visit our website regularly and “Like” us on Facebook. The district’s official Facebook account is discoverable @SWRSchools.

To locate student-specific information, please sign into your Parent Portal account: https://ic.swr.k12.ny.us/campus/swr.jsp and click on the CAMPUS BRIEFCASE link on the lower left side of the homepage.

For information on extracurricular events, local happenings, nature and sports camps, contests, fundraisers, outings, support groups and more, please visit the Virtual Backpack on the left side of the homepage of your child’s school.

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