October 26, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Thomas R. Bice
State Superintendent of Education

RE: 2016 Alabama Dance Festival Conference

From January 22–31, 2016, the annual in-service conference of the Alabama Dance Council will be held in Birmingham, Alabama. The Alabama Dance Council and the Alabama Institute for Education in the Arts are presenting a one-day professional development workshop, “Dance and Literacy: Using Text as Inspiration for Original Movement and Choreography,” designed specifically for K-12 classroom teachers and arts specialists on Friday, January 22, 2016, from 9 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. at The Dance Foundation. Nationally renowned dance educator Susan McCreery-Nichols offers a teaching methodology that uses reading strategies to identify words and phrases that will be used as a source of inspiration for original movement and choreography. The arts processes, creating, performing, and responding, are carefully used to integrate dance throughout the curriculum, while affording a way to deepen understanding and assess both dance and non-dance content. Connections will be made to the new National Core Dance Standards.

In addition to the workshop, the Alabama Dance Festival has a free matinee school performance presented by Jessica Lang Dance on January 29, 2016, at 10 a.m. at Samford University’s Leslie S. Wright Fine Arts Center. More information and reservation forms are available at www.alabamadancefestival.org.

I encourage you to review your budget and professional development procedures to ascertain if your classroom teachers and arts specialists may attend this conference. Your encouragement and granting of professional leave should improve your arts education programs for your system’s students and teachers. The sharing of ideas and networking of arts educators through conferences of this type can be a valid approach to assisting teachers in learning and implementing new strategies to improve student achievement in your system and our state.

TRB:CAM:SSM
Attachment

FY16-2009
The 2016 Alabama Dance Festival

The Alabama Dance Festival on January 22 - 31 is proud to present Jessica Lang Dance in partnership with Samford University as guest company-in-residence, and Susan McGreevy-Nichols, Executive Director of the National Dance Education Organization, as the clinician for the Arts Integration Movement Workshop for classroom teachers and arts educators in partnership with the Alabama Institute for Education in the Arts and the Alabama Alliance for Arts Education.

The Festival’s Dance for Schools Program

Classroom teachers – we’ve planned some great activities for you and your students! Teachers will want to start on January 22 with a free Teacher Workshop where you will receive movement-based arts integration tools and materials. Put this information to use right away to prepare your students for the Festival’s free school matinee performance presented by our guest company Jessica Lang Dance on January 29. To make reservations for the workshop and/or school performance, contact Rosemary Johnson by email rosemary@alabamadancecouncil.org or phone at 205.602.3599.

Dance and Literacy: Using Text as Inspiration for Original Movement and Choreography
Friday, January 22, 9:00 am – 3:30 pm
The Dance Foundation
1715 27th Court South, Birmingham, AL 35209
205.870.0073 www.thedancefoundation.org

This one day hands-on workshop taught by Susan McGreevy-Nichols will guide participants through a teaching methodology that uses reading strategies to identify words and phrases that will then be used as a source of inspiration for original movement and choreography. The arts processes, creating, performing and responding, are carefully used throughout this methodology, enabling the teacher to honor both dance and other discipline content. This way of teaching provides a unique way of integrating dance throughout the curriculum, while affording a way to deepen understanding and assess both dance and non-dance content. Connections will be made to the new National Core Dance Standards.

Susan McGreevy-Nichols is the Executive Director of the National Dance Education Organization. Previous to becoming executive director she taught part-time at Loyola Marymount University and was a national consultant on Arts Education. Susan’s consulting work involved coaching districts in Los Angeles County as part of the Arts for All initiative and in Northern California in Alameda County as a part of that county’s initiative Revitalizing Classrooms Through Arts Learning: Strategic Plan. As a teacher at Roger Williams Middle School in Providence, Rhode Island from 1974-2002, Susan founded and developed that institution’s nationally renowned middle school dance program. She is the developer of a cutting edge reading comprehension strategy that uses text as inspiration for original choreography created by children. This literacy-based methodology combines the creative process with reading instruction. Co-author of five books: Building Dances (1995), Building More Dances (2001), Experiencing Dance (2004), Dance about Anything (2006) and Dance Forms and Styles (2010).
Founded in 2011, Jessica Lang Dance (JLD) is a New York City-based dance company dedicated to creating and performing the work of Jessica Lang. JLD enriches and inspires global audiences by immersing them in the beauty of movement and music. Hailed as "a master of visual composition" by Dance Magazine, Lang seamlessly incorporates striking design elements and transforms classical ballet language into artfully crafted, emotionally engaging contemporary works. Lang’s work has been performed by numerous institutions including The Juilliard School, NYU Tisch School of the Arts, The Ailey/Fordham BFA Program, Marymount Manhattan College, SUNY Purchase College, Southern Methodist University, Princeton University, University of Richmond, and Point Park University, among others. She is on faculty of American Ballet Theatre’s Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School as well as a teaching artist for the Make A Ballet program. With her strong belief in the importance of education, Lang recently developed her own methodology called LANGuage, a unique creative curriculum that teaches individuals from all populations to cultivate the habit of creative thinking through exercise.

Lang is the recipient of a prestigious 2014 Bessie Award. Her ballet Lyric Pieces, commissioned and performed by Birmingham Royal Ballet earned a nomination for a coveted 2013 Manchester Theatre Award in the UK. Lang has received numerous grants for her work on ballet companies from organizations including the Jerome Robbins Foundation, the NEA, and the Choo San Goh Foundation. Her receipt of a 2010 Joyce Theater Artist Residency supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation helped launch her own company, Jessica Lang Dance in 2011. In Winter/Spring 2015, JLD toured to eight cities including an international engagement in Istanbul, Turkey and the company’s first ever performances in its home base of Queens. This summer, JLD performed a two-week run of The Wanderer at Jacob’s Pillow, marking the company’s third Pillow season since its company debut at Festival 2012. www.jessicalangdance.com