



## Drama and Theatre Arts in the Elementary School

### **Definition:**

“Drama is a natural process through which human beings can explore and expand their own ideas and potential. Drama is process centered. Theater is product centered. Drama is a basic human art form out of which the more complex art of theater has sprung.” Karen L. Erickson

**Drama:** Drama is based in a human’s natural ability to play. It is a study of the art form through improvisational process centered activities. The work produced is not necessarily intended for an audience.

**Examples:** movement activities (tableaux, mirroring...), cooperative games (e.g. Morning Circle or Morning Meeting) transformation (act like a giraffe), improvisation games, role-play, clowning, miming, non-scripted dramatic interpretation of an event, character, story....

**Theatre:** Theatre is the formal study of the art form through performance-centered activities. Performance stage vocabulary is part of the instruction as well as rules and strategies for sharing work in front of an audience.

**Examples:** reader’s theater, assembly presentation, puppet plays for parents, oral presentation of a project (e.g. newscast, interview...), debates, story transformation to script (dialogue, plot, set), cultural theatre (bunraku, Indian dance, shadow puppets, masks...)

### **Goals of drama in the elementary school:**

- ∞ Develop poise, confidence, initiative, and ways to express ideas clearly;
- ∞ Work cooperatively with others;
- ∞ Understand the artistic process, the craft processes and the tools of drama/theatre
- ∞ Gain experience in, and an aesthetic appreciation for drama as an art form
- ∞ Use drama to extend learning in all curricular areas

### **Essential Expectations**

- ∞ Drama in the elementary school is integrated into the grade level curriculum.
- ∞ Drama **performance skills** will be taught within the creative arts department and in coordination with grade level teachers twice a year for semester end concerts.
- ∞ Drama **presentations** will be co-taught with grade level teachers in conjunction with the curriculum.
- ∞ At least one presentation will be shared with the relevant audiences during the year (e.g. assembly, grade level presentation for parents, etc.)
- ∞ Assembly presentations should include the majority of students in any one grade level
- ∞ Presentation and/or performance etiquette should be shared with all staff and as much as is possible it should be used during regular classes where children are being prepared for either a presentation or a performance

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