

# **Salt Lake Arts Academy**

## **Executive Summary**

**The mission of the Salt Lake Arts Academy is that all students become thoughtful, responsible contributors to the world community, whose decisions they will shape and whose designs they will create.**

**The purpose of the Salt Lake Arts Academy is to offer a unique middle school experience for students in grades 5 through 8 that takes advantage of the rich educational environment in the downtown area and provides a strong academic foundation with an emphasis in the arts.**

Eventually to be housed at Library Square in Salt Lake City's downtown center, the Academy will model how a school and a downtown community can collaboratively provide an enriched educational program and environment for young adolescents. The students will receive a strong academic foundation with particular emphasis on an enriched, in-depth arts education. The Salt Lake Arts Academy has been chartered by the State Office of Education to open in the fall of 2003.

### **Key elements that define the Salt Lake Arts Academy**

- **Small, intimate size.** The Academy will provide an intimate learning community, responsive to the unique characteristics of 10- to 14-year-olds. Small classes will insure a personalized learning environment where students are taught in flexible groupings. On-going assessments will shape instruction and curriculum so that learning remains relevant and challenging at every grade level.
- **Enriched environment.** Students will take advantage of the rich resources of Salt Lake City, from the University of Utah to the Gateway Center and from the State Capital to Abravanel Hall, with UTA passes that allow them free use of buses and TRAX. They will learn to access the city's downtown resources, such as the new computer center housed at the completely new city library and the photography studios at the Salt Lake Art Center, and see themselves as active members of a learning community.
- **Innovative space usage.** Once the 10 million dollar renovation is complete, the Academy is expected to have its "home campus" on the third floor of the old Main Library at Library Square, also the designated home of Global Artways, Salt Lake City Corp.'s Arts Education Program. The Academy will share Global Artways' space, equipment, and expertise during the academic day. The Utah Science Center and the Center for Documentary Arts, organizations to be housed in the same building, are expected to join in this education collaboration by contributing resources and expertise. Specialists from community organizations such as these would be considered Academy faculty members, helping develop curriculum, provide instruction, and assess students. This collaborative effort

would exemplify the vision of the White House Task Force on Livable Communities as described in *Schools as Centers of Community: A Citizen's Guide for Planning and Design*.

- **Collaborative partnerships and mutually supportive philosophies.** The objective of the Salt Lake Arts Academy is to encourage creativity, develop critical thinking, and instill a love of learning while mastering art skills with citywide partners. This philosophy is intended to form a community of learning which encompasses all ages. We agree with the philosophy stated by Global Artways that in each art form the creative process enables people of any age to understand the past, imagine a positive future, and preserve their cultural heritage. Academy students will use the arts to expand and deepen their knowledge in science, the social sciences, mathematics, and literature. They will develop creative skills and patterns of thought that will position them to become the designers of the twenty-first century and allow them to promote trans-cultural understanding, celebrate diversity, and facilitate bridge building within our city's neighborhoods.
- **Professional support and development.** The Academy will also serve as a professional development partner with Westminster College and the University of Utah, providing integrated training for the developing teacher. Under this collaboration, education majors and pre-service teachers will mentor with Academy teachers and specialists while incorporating progressive teaching methods and current research.
- **Community-based concept, founded by parents and educators.** Parents and educators committed to providing choice and excellence in education to the children of our community formed the Salt Lake Arts Academy. Their concept of an excellent public education incorporated with art and a community setting is their driving force.

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