

The Arts



PART I.1

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NOTE: This document is a work in progress. Parts II and III, in particular, are in need of further development, and we invite the submission of additional learning experiences and local performance tasks for these sections. Inquiries regarding submission of materials should be directed to: The Arts Resource Guide, Room 681 EBA, New York State Education Department, Albany, NY 12234 (tel. 518-474-5922).



The Learning Standards for the Arts reflect the educational goals that are common to dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts, while recognizing the distinctive aspects of each discipline. The materials in this section of the *Arts Resource Guide* have been selected:

- to provide **support** for teachers as they continue to incorporate the standards in their everyday classroom practice
- to **inform** the curriculum development process
- to **share** local curriculum models (scope and sequence)
- to **provide** information on State and local efforts in arts education.

New York State Arts educators embarked on their journey to develop rigorous content and performance standards in the Arts—dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts—just as their colleagues at the national level addressed the need for national arts standards. The National Standards for Arts Education and the New York State Learning Standards for the Arts are closely aligned and complement each other. Teachers in New York State will want to be cognizant of the work at both the State and National levels as they address the learning standards for the Arts in their classrooms.

What Students Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts

There are many routes to competence in the arts disciplines. Students may work in different arts at different times. Their study may take a variety of approaches. Their abilities may develop at different rates. Competence means the ability to use an array of knowledge and skills. Terms often used to describe these include:

- creation
- production
- culture
- analysis
- aesthetics
- appreciation.
- performance
- history
- perception
- criticism
- technology

Competence means capabilities with these elements themselves and an understanding of their interdependence; it also means the ability to combine the content, perspectives, and techniques associated with the various elements to achieve specific artistic and analytical goals. Students work toward *comprehensive* competence from the very beginning, preparing in the lower grades for deeper and more rigorous work each succeeding year. As a result, the joy of experiencing the arts is enriched and matured by the discipline of learning and the pride of accomplishment. Essentially, the National Standards ask that students should know and be able to do the following by the time they have completed secondary school:

- ▲ *They should be able to communicate at a basic level in the four arts disciplines, music, theatre, and the visual arts. This includes knowledge and skills in the use of the basic vocabularies, materials, tools, techniques, and intellectual methods of each arts discipline.*
- ▲ *They should be able to communicate proficiently in at least one art, including the ability to define and solve artistic problems with insight, reason, and technical proficiency.*
- ▲ *They should be able to develop and present basic analyses of works of art from structural, historical, and cultural perspectives, and from combinations of those perspectives. This includes the ability to understand and evaluate work in the various arts disciplines.*
- ▲ *They should have an informed acquaintance with exemplary works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods, and a basic understanding of historical development in the arts disciplines, across the arts as a whole, and within cultures.*
- ▲ *They should be able to relate various types of arts knowledge and skills within and across the arts disciplines. This includes mixing and matching competencies and understandings in art-making, history and culture, and analysis in any arts-related project.*

As a result of developing these capabilities, students can arrive at their own knowledge, beliefs, and values for making personal and artistic decisions. In other terms, they can arrive at a broad-based, well-grounded understanding of the nature, value, and meaning of the arts as a part of their own humanity.

Source: *National Standards for Arts Education* 1994.

Benefits Provided by an Arts Education

An arts education benefits the *student* because it cultivates the whole child, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination, and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication. The arts cultivate the direct experience of the senses; they trust the unmediated flash of insight as a legitimate source of knowledge. Their goal is to connect person and experience directly, to build the bridge between verbal and nonverbal, between the strictly logical and the emotional—the better to gain an understanding of the whole. Both approaches are powerful and both are necessary; to deny students either is to disable them. An education in the arts also benefits *society* because students of the arts disciplines gain powerful tools for:

- understanding human experiences, both past and present
- learning to adapt to and respect others' ways of thinking, working, and expressing themselves
- learning artistic modes of problem solving, which bring an array of expressive, analytical, and developmental tools to every human situation
- understanding the influences of the arts in their power to create and reflect cultures, in the impact of design on virtually all we use in daily life, and in the interdependence of work in the arts with the broader worlds of ideas and action
- making decisions in situations where there are no standard answers
- analyzing nonverbal communication and making informed judgments about cultural products and issues

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The Power of the Arts to Transform Education, a report by the

Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. states:

“They (the arts) provide schools with a ready way to formulate relationships across and among traditional disciplines and to connect ideas and notice patterns. Works of art provide effective means for linking information in history and social studies, mathematics, science and geography. A work of art can lead to many related areas of learning, open lines of inquiry, revealing that art, like life, is lived in a complex world not easily defined in discrete subjects.”

- communicating thoughts and feelings in a variety of modes, giving them a vastly more powerful repertoire of self-expression.

The arts also make a contribution to education that reaches beyond their intrinsic value. An education in the arts helps students learn to identify, appreciate, and participate in the traditional art forms of their own communities. As students imagine, create, and reflect, they are developing both the verbal and nonverbal abilities necessary for school progress. At the same time, the intellectual demands that the arts place on students help them develop problem-solving abilities and such powerful thinking skills as analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. A comprehensive, articulated arts education program also engages students in a process that helps them develop the self-esteem, self-discipline, cooperation, and self-motivation necessary for success in life.

An Education in the Arts Is for All Students

- ▲ The arts help all students to develop multiple capabilities for understanding -and deciphering an image- and symbol-laden world. Thus, the arts should be an integral part of a program of general education for all students.
- ▲ The argument that relegates the arts to the realm of passive experience for the majority, or that says a lack of ‘real talent’ disqualifies most people from learning to draw, play an instrument, dance, or act, is simply wrong-headed. Clearly, students have different aptitudes and abilities in the arts, but differences are not disqualification.
- ▲ Talent should never be a factor in determining the place or value of the arts in an individual’s basic education.

“

All Students Helped Through the Arts

“When I examine myself and my method of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than my talent for absorbing knowledge.”

Albert Einstein

The Arts Are Important to Life and Learning

Values can inform what happens when the Standards, students, and their teachers come together. These expectations draw connections among the arts, the lives of students, and the world at large:

- The arts have both intrinsic and instrumental value; that is, they have worth in and of themselves and can also be used to achieve a multitude of purposes.
- The arts play a valued role in creating cultures and building civilizations.
- The arts are a way of knowing. As students create dances, music, theatrical productions, and visual artworks, they learn how to express themselves and how to communicate with others.
- The arts have value and significance for daily life by providing personal fulfillment.
- Lifelong participation in the arts is a valuable part of a life fully lived and should be cultivated.
- Appreciating the arts means understanding the interactions among the various professions and roles involved in creating, performing, studying, teaching, presenting, and supporting the arts.
- Awakening to folk arts and their influence on other arts deepens respect for one’s own and for others’ communities.
- Openness, respect for work, and contemplation when participating in the arts are personal attitudes that enhance enjoyment.
- The arts are indispensable to freedom of inquiry and expression.
- The arts offer continuing challenge of situations in which there is no approved answer, so that those who study the arts become acquainted with many perspectives on the meaning of “value.”

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Creativity Is Naturally Developed Through the Arts

“Pyramids, cathedrals, and rockets exist not because of geometry, theories of structures or thermodynamics, but because they were first a picture—literally a vision—in the minds of those who built them.”

Historian Eugene Ferguson

- The modes of thinking and methods of the arts disciplines can be used to illuminate situations in other disciplines that require creative solutions.
- Attributes such as self-discipline, the collaborative spirit, and perseverance, can transfer to the rest of life.
- The arts provide forms of nonverbal communication that can strengthen the presentation of ideas and emotions.
- The arts encourage the responsibility for advancing civilization itself, and provide skills and perspectives for doing so.

The Difference Standards Make

Arts education standards can make a difference because they speak powerfully to two fundamental issues that pervade all of education—quality and accountability. In addressing these issues, the Standards insist on the following:

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The arts are serious and rigorous academic subjects. They are an essential aspect of human knowing. “Science will. . . produce the data. . . , but never the full meaning. For perceiving real significance, we shall need. . . most of all the brains of poets, [and] also those of artists, musicians, philosophers, historians, writers in general. “

Lewis Thomas, Scientist

- ◆ That an arts education is not a hit-or-miss effort but a sequenced and comprehensive enterprise of learning across four arts disciplines
- ◆ That instruction in the arts takes a hands-on orientation, that students be continually involved in the work, practice, and study required for effective and creative engagement in all four arts disciplines
- ◆ That students learn about the diverse cultural and historical heritages of the arts, focusing on the global and the universal, not the localized and the particular
- ◆ That arts education can lead to interdisciplinary study; achieving standards involves authentic connections among and across the arts and other disciplines
- ◆ That the transforming power of technology is a force not only in the economy but in the arts as well.
- ◆ That across the board and as a pedagogical focus, the development of the problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills necessary for success in life and work is taken seriously
- ◆ That arts standards offer a foundation for educational assessment on a student-by-student basis.

Adapted from: *National Standards for Arts Education*, Reston, VA, 1994.

As teachers develop curriculum which address the arts standards, they become more familiar with how National and State standards are aligned. The following charts show the relationship between the National and State arts standards in four disciplines—dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. These relationships are followed by a comparison of the KEY IDEA statement of New York State’s standards to the content standard of the National standards in the area of music.

Relationship Between the National Standards for Arts Education and the New York State Arts Standards

National	New York State
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They (students) should be able to communicate at a basic level in the four arts disciplines - <i>dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts</i>. • They (students) should be able to communicate proficiently in at least one art form. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should demonstrate elementary level achievement in the content standards for each of the four disciplines of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. • Students should demonstrate intermediate level achievement in the content standards for two of the four disciplines of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. • Students should demonstrate commencement level achievement in the content standards for one of the four disciplines of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. <p><i>Standard 1: Creating, performing, and participating in the arts</i> Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts.</p> <p><i>Standard 2: Knowing and using arts materials and resources</i> Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.</p>

National

- They should be able to develop and present basic analyses of works of arts.
- They should have an informed acquaintance with exemplary works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods.
- They should be able to relate various types of arts knowledge and skills within and across the arts disciplines.

New York State

Standard 3: Responding to and analyzing works of art

Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.

Standard 4: Understanding the cultural dimensions and contributions of the arts

Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.

- All Four Learning Standards
Relationship Between New York State Key Ideas and the National Content Standards in Music

New York State Key Idea

Arts Standard 1: Creating, performing, and participating in the arts

Music: Students will compose original music and perform music written by others. They will understand and use the basic elements of music in their performances and compositions. Students will engage in individual and group musical and music-related tasks, and will describe the various roles and means of creating, performing, recording and producing music.

National Content Standards

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
5. Reading and notating music

Arts Standard 2: Knowing and using arts materials and resources

Music: Students will use traditional instruments, electronic instruments, and a variety of non-traditional sound sources to create and perform music. They will demonstrate their ability to use various resources to expand their knowledge of listening experiences, performance opportunities, and/or information about music. Students will identify opportunities to contribute to their communities' music institutions, including those embedded in other institutions (church choirs, industrial music ensembles, etc.). Students will know the vocations and avocations available to them in music.

2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Arts Standard 3: Responding to and analyzing works of art

Music: Students will demonstrate the capacity to listen to and comment upon music. They will relate their critical assertions about music to its aesthetic, structural, acoustic, and psychological qualities. Students will use concepts based on the structure of music's content and context to relate music to other broad areas of knowledge. They will use concepts from other disciplines to enhance their understanding of music.

6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
7. Evaluating music and music performances
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Arts Standard 4: Understanding the cultural dimensions and contributions of the arts.

Music: Students will develop a performing and listening repertoire of music of various genres, styles, and cultures that represent the peoples of the world and their manifestations in the United States. Students will recognize the cultural features of a variety of musical compositions and performances and understand the functions of music within the culture.

9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture
1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

Learning Standards for the Arts: Expectations for Achievement

In the four disciplines of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts, students are expected to create, perform, and participate as audience members. The standards address these activities while acknowledging differences in students' talents, abilities, and interests. In New York State, school programs at elementary, intermediate, and commencement levels must seek to provide opportunity for all levels and types of talent and to maintain high expectations for all. All students—artistically gifted as well as those with learning problems or disabilities—can experience success in progressing toward achievement of the standards for the arts.

All students should participate at an appropriate level and should demonstrate competent, proficient, or distinguished levels of achievement in the following areas by the completion of their secondary schooling:

- Elementary level achievement in the content standards for each of the four disciplines of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts
- Intermediate level achievement in the content standards for two of the four disciplines of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts
- Commencement level achievement in the content standards for one of the four disciplines of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.

Since the standards refer to creation and performance in the arts disciplines, some student work will be judged for its qualities as art according to the guidelines of the arts disciplines using the following levels of achievement:

Distinguished : achievement equal to what is expected of top students at the specified age/grade level

Proficient : achievement equal to what is expected of the majority of students at the specified age/grade level

Competent: achievement equal to the minimum for students at the specified age/grade level.

Collaborative Arts in Education

Cultural resources in New York State—museums, libraries, historical sites, performing arts centers—are used throughout the State to support and enrich the school curriculum. Many programs are conceived, planned, and implemented by teachers and arts professionals collaborating together to utilize the resources of cultural organizations. Such projects are designed to supplement rather than supplant school programs.

These partnerships are integral to effective arts in education programs, both discipline-based and interdisciplinary. Teachers will expand upon and develop new partnerships with others in the cultural community as they develop new and more effective instructional strategies to help students achieve higher standards in the arts and to provide quality learning opportunities for all students.

“ . . . Institutions of cultural education constitute a vital network of resources which complement the schools. . . . The role of community cultural and arts institutions in The Compact include . . . collaborating with the schools to provide lessons that integrate cultural and artistic resources into curriculum. . . incorporating in the curriculum study visits to museums, historical sites, performing arts organizations, and other cultural insitiutes. . . . ”

A New Compact for Learning, 1993

