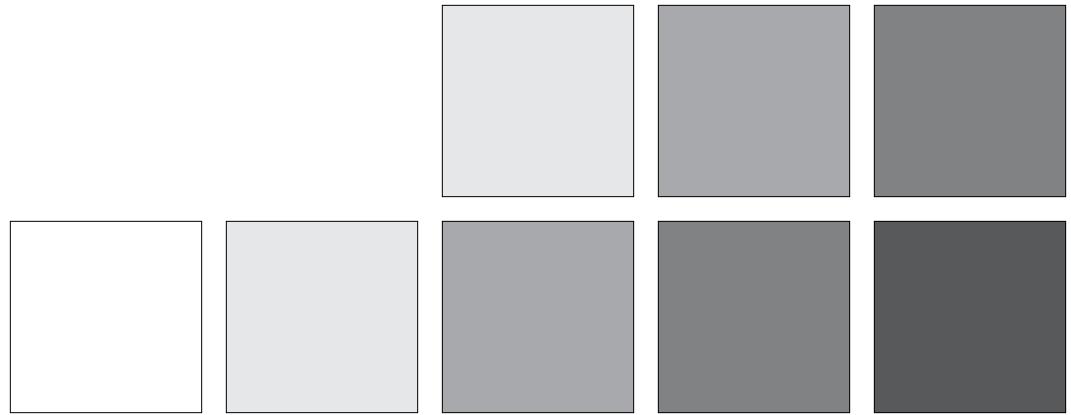
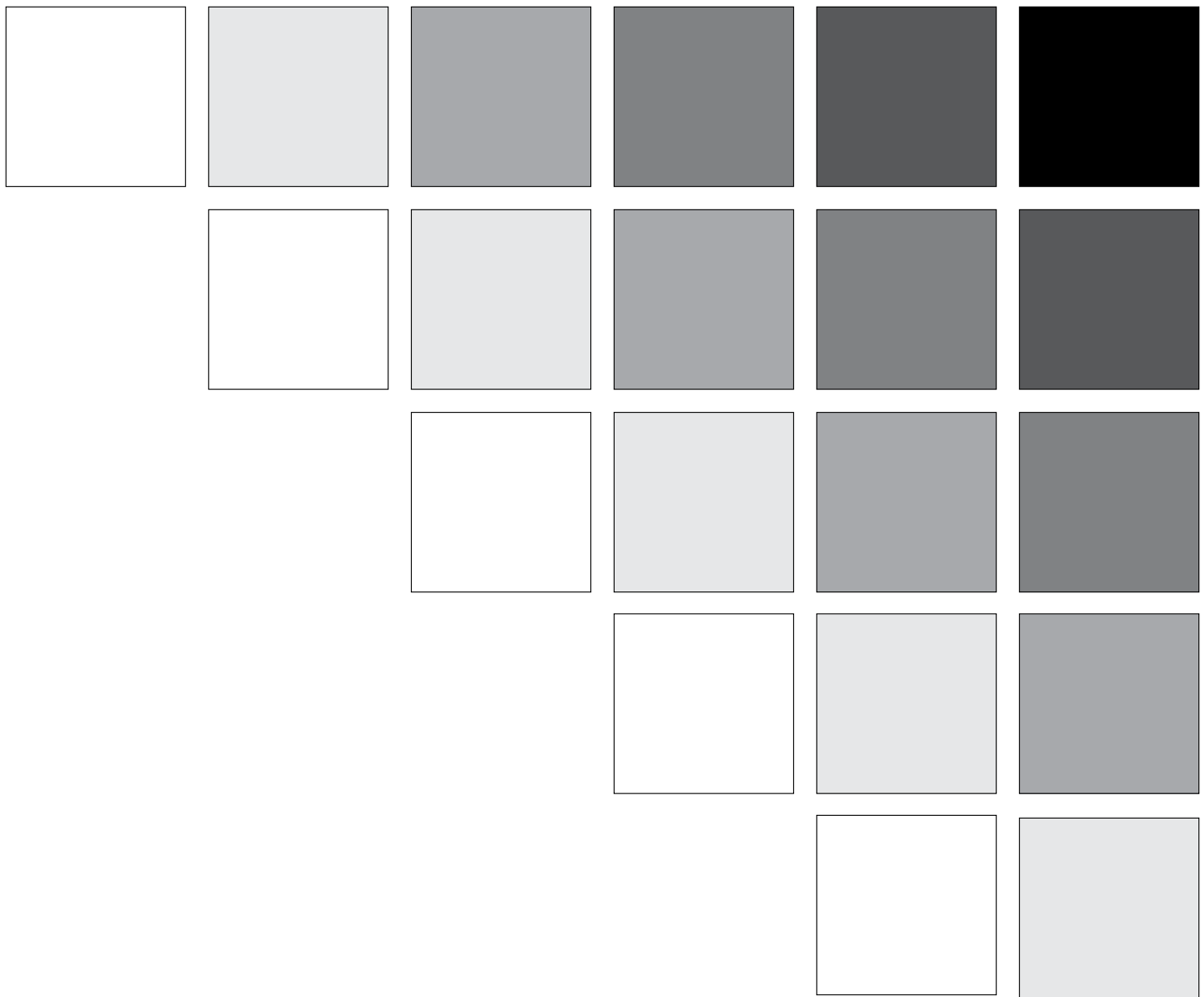


NATIONAL ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION



# The National Visual Arts Standards



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Founded in 1947, the National Art Education Association is the largest professional art education association in the world. Membership includes elementary and secondary teachers, art administrators, museum educators, arts council staff, and university professors from throughout the United States and 66 foreign countries. NAEA's mission is to advance art education through professional development, service, advancement of knowledge, and leadership.

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# CONTENTS

**Preface** *i*

**Introduction** *1*

Discovering Who We Are *1*

What Benefits Does an Arts Education Provide? *2*

An Education In The Arts Is for All Students *3*

The Arts Are Important to Life And Learning *4*

The Difference Standards Make *5*

Contexts and Issues *6*

Arts Standards Are at the Core of Education Reform *6*

The Standards Provide A Crucial Foundation *7*

The Standards Are Keys To Each Of the Arts Disciplines *8*

The Standards Are Keys To Correlation And Integration *8*

The Standards Incorporate Cultural Diversity *9*

The Standards Focus On Appropriate Technologies *10*

The Standards Provide A Foundation For Student Assessment *10*

The Standards Point Beyond Mere "Exposure" *11*

Adopting the Standards Is Only A Beginning *12*

The Standards *13*

How The Standards Are Organized *13*

What Students Should Know And Be Able To Do In The Arts *14*

**Standards: Grades K-4** *15*

**Standards: Grades 5-8** *18*

**Standards: Grades 9-12** *21*

**Outlines Of Sequential Learning** *25*

**Selected Glossary** *32*

**Summary Statement** *34*

# PREFACE

The *National Visual Arts Standards* form the basis for providing depth of knowledge and achievement in art for all students throughout their education and for developing effective art programs in all schools throughout the U.S.

The Congress, the U.S. Department of Education, and other national groups are calling for high quality visual art education in the schools as part of *Goals 2000: Educate America*, which states what all students are expected to achieve in basic subjects including the arts. Through implementation of the art standards, all children and youth at all educational levels will receive a distinctive sequential visual art education, and all high school graduates will be visually literate, understanding and using sensitive and powerful visual images as part of their daily lives.

Early in 1991, the National Art Education Association, with a consortium of national educational associations for music, dance, and theatre, began to develop national voluntary standards under the America 2000 initiative. The NAEA Art Standards Committee began work on an initial draft of these standards for visual art. A Board of Examiners composed of members of the research and university communities, K-12 teachers, district and state department of education art supervisors, NAEA officers, NAEA regional and division directors, and state art association and affiliate leaders reviewed several drafts of the standards. The NAEA membership responded to several versions of drafts published in the *NAEA News*. The visual arts standards represent broad consensus-building and support from a wide range of groups and individuals, and also include the review of state and local art guides, standards from other nations, and consideration at a series of national forums regarding art content and performance—what are expected of students to achieve in art.

These standards offer one road map for competence and educational effectiveness, but without casting a mold into which all visual arts programs must fit. The standards are intended to focus on the student learning results that come from basic education, not how art is to be taught. The matter of curriculum and teaching strategies are decisions for the states, school districts, and art teachers. It is our hope to provide art education goals and not a national curriculum; we do believe the standards can improve multiple types of art instruction.

The next step is implementation. Using the standards as a voluntary resource, art educators, school administrators and school board members, parents and community leaders, and higher education faculty will need to work closely together in their local communities to design and implement school art programs at all grade levels which offer all children and youth a personally meaningful art education of depth and sensitivity. We know from research and common sense that children will work to the level of expectation that is placed before them and we believe these standards are a way of turning this into the student's advantage. However, there is a general absence of visual arts policy provisions throughout our schools, districts, and states. It is our hope that these standards will serve as a general pilot light for substantive growth in visual arts instruction, staff development, teacher preparation, assessment, scheduling, and curriculum design.

The standards are high. They are also achievable. They specify the knowledge and skills which students need in order to fulfill their personal potential, to enrich and deepen their lives, and to enable them to contribute effectively to society. But it now depends on the parents, members of the community, and the art education community to take the leading role.

I am indebted to the NAEA Board of Directors for their vision and support throughout this unprecedented task; and to each member of the writing task force for their work on the multiple versions in the developmental process. All of us are grateful for the support and insight of the Board of Examiners and the NAEA membership for their thoughtful reviews and commentaries.

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Jeanne Rollins, Chair

NAEA Visual Arts Standards Task Force and

Director of Fine Arts Programs

Texas Education Agency

Members: The National Visual Arts Standards Task Force

Carmen L. Armstrong  
Professor of Art  
Northern Illinois University

Mac Arthur Goodwin  
Education Associate for Visual Arts  
South Carolina Department of Education

Larry Peeno  
Supervisor of Fine Arts  
Missouri Department of Elementary  
and Secondary Instruction

James M. Clarke  
Immediate Past President  
National Art Education Association, and  
Art Consultant  
Aldine Independent School District, Texas  
(Coordinating Council Member)

Thomas A. Hatfield  
Executive Director  
National Art Education Association  
(Coordinating Council Member)

# INTRODUCTION

*NOTE: This introduction is reproduced from the Standards document submitted to the Secretary of Education. It pertains to the four arts areas: visual arts, dance, theatre, and music.*

## Discovering Who We Are

The arts have been part of us from the very beginning. Since nomadic peoples first sang and danced for their ancestors, since hunters first painted their quarry on the walls of caves, since parents first acted out the stories of heroes for their children, the arts have described, defined, and deepened human experience. All peoples, everywhere, have an abiding need for meaning—to connect time and space, experience and event, body and spirit, intellect and emotion. People create art to make these connections, to express the otherwise inexpressible. A society and a people without the arts are unimaginable, as breathing would be without air. Such a society and people could not long survive.

The arts are one of humanity's deepest rivers of continuity. They connect each new generation to those who have gone before, equipping the newcomers in their own pursuit of the abiding questions: Who am I? What must I do? Where am I going? At the same time, the arts are often an impetus for change, challenging old perspectives from fresh angles of vision, or offering original interpretations of familiar ideas. The arts disciplines provide their own ways of thinking, habits of mind as rich and different from each other as botany is different from philosophy. At another level, the arts are society's gift to itself, linking hope to memory, inspiring courage, enriching our celebrations, and making our tragedies bearable. The arts are also a unique source of enjoyment and delight, providing the "Aha!" of discovery when we see ourselves in a new way, grasp a deeper insight, or find our imaginations refreshed. The arts have been a preoccupation of every generation precisely because they bring us face to face with ourselves, and with what we sense lies beyond ourselves.

The arts are deeply embedded in our daily life, often so deeply or subtly that we are unaware of their presence. The office manager who has never studied painting, nor visited an art museum, may nevertheless select a living-room picture with great care. The mother who never performed in a choir still sings her infant to sleep. The teenager who is a stranger to drama is moved by a Saturday night film. A couple who would never think of taking in a ballet are nonetheless avid square dancers. The arts are everywhere in our lives, adding depth and dimension to the environment we live in, shaping our experience daily. The arts are a powerful economic force as well, from fashion, to the creativity and design that go into every manufactured product, to architecture, to the performance and entertainment arts that have grown into multibillion dollar industries. We could not live without the arts—nor would we want to.

For all these reasons and a thousand more, the arts have been an inseparable part of the human journey; indeed, we depend on the arts to carry us toward the fullness of our humanity. We value them for themselves, and because we do, we believe knowing and practicing them is fundamental to the healthy development of our children's minds and spirits. That is why, in any civilization—ours included—the arts are inseparable from the very meaning of the term "education." We know from long experience that *no one can claim to be truly educated who lacks basic knowledge and skills in the arts.*

If our civilization is to continue to be both dynamic and nurturing, its success will ultimately depend on how well we develop the capacities of our children, not only to earn a living in a vastly complex

world, but to live a life rich in meaning. The vision this document holds out affirms that a future worth having depends on being able to construct a vital relationship with the arts, and that doing so, as with any other subject, is a matter of discipline and study.

Standards identify what our children must *know* and be able to *do*. Thus, the vision embedded in these Standards insists that a mere nodding acquaintance with the arts is not enough to sustain our children's interest or involvement in them. The Standards must usher each new generation onto the pathway of engagement, which opens in turn onto a lifetime of learning and growth through the arts. It is along this pathway that our children will find their personal directions and make their singular contributions. It is along this pathway, as well, that they will discover who they are, and even more, who they can become.

## What Benefits Does an Arts Education Provide?

These Standards are an attempt to render, in operational terms, the value and importance of the arts for the educational well-being of our young people and our country. Arts education benefits both student and society. It 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. This process requires not merely an active mind but a trained one. Arts education also helps students by initiating them into a variety of ways of perceiving and thinking. Because so much of a child's education in the early years is devoted to acquiring the skills of language and mathematics, children gradually learn, unconsciously, that the "normal" way to think is linear and sequential, that the pathway to understanding moves from beginning to end, from cause to effect. In this dominant early mode, students soon learn to trust mainly those symbol systems, usually in the form of words, numbers, and abstract concepts, that separate the experiencing person from what that person experiences.

But the arts teach a different lesson. They sometimes travel along a road that moves in a direction similar to the one described above, but more often they start from a different place. 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' (often very different) 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 (this is why we speak, for example, of the "art" of teaching or the "art" of politics);

- ▲ understanding the influences of the arts, for example, 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; and
- ▲ communicating their thoughts and feelings in a variety of modes, giving them a vastly more powerful repertoire of self-expression.

In a world inundated with a bewildering array of messages and meanings, an arts education also helps young people explore, understand, accept, and use ambiguity and subjectivity. In art as in life, there is often no clear or “right” answer to questions that are nonetheless worth pursuing (“Should the trees in this painting be a little darker shade of green?”). At the same time, the arts bring excitement and exhilaration to the learning process. Study and competence reinforce each other; students become increasingly interested in learning, add new dimensions to what they already know, and enhance their expectations for learning even more. The joy of learning becomes real, tangible, powerful.

Perhaps most important, the arts have *intrinsic* value. They are worth learning for their own sake, providing benefits not available through any other means. To read Schiller’s poem “Ode to Joy,” for example, is to know one kind of beauty, yet to hear it sung by a great chorus as the majestic conclusion to Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony is to experience beauty of an entirely different kind, an experience that for many is sublime. Because these experiences open up this transcending dimension of reality, there can be no substitute for an education in the arts, which provides bridges to things we can scarcely describe, but respond to deeply. In the simplest terms, no education is complete without them.

The arts also make a contribution to education that reaches beyond their intrinsic value. Because each arts discipline appeals to different senses and expresses itself through different media, each adds a special richness to the learning environment. 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. Further, numerous studies point toward a consistent and positive correlation between a substantive education in the arts and student achievement in other subjects and on standardized tests. 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**

*All* students deserve access to the rich education and understanding that the arts provide, regardless of their background, talents, or disabilities. In an increasingly technological environment overloaded with sensory data, the ability to perceive, interpret, understand, and evaluate such stimuli is critical. 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. In particular, students with disabilities, who are often excluded from arts programs, can derive great benefit from them—and for the same reasons that studying the arts benefits students who



are not disabled. As many teachers can testify, the arts can be a powerful vehicle—sometimes the best vehicle—for reaching, motivating, and teaching a given student. At the same time, there is a continuing need to make sure that all students have access to the learning resources and opportunities they need to succeed. Thus, as in any area of the curriculum, providing a sound education in the arts will depend in great measure on creating access to opportunities and resources.

In this context, the idea that an education in the arts is just for “the talented,” and not for “regular students” or those with disabilities, can be a stumbling block. 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 wrongheaded. Clearly, students have different aptitudes and abilities in the arts, but differences are not disqualifications. An analogy may be helpful. We expect mathematical competence of all students because a knowledge of mathematics is essential to shaping and advancing our society, economy, and civilization. Yet no one ever advances the proposition that only those who are mathematically “talented” enough to earn a living as mathematicians should study long division or algebra. Neither, then, should talent be a factor in determining the place or value of the arts in an individual’s basic education.

### **The Arts Are Important to Life and Learning**

If arts education is to serve its proper function, each student must develop an understanding of such questions as these: What are the arts? How do artists work and what tools do they use? How do traditional, popular, and classical art forms influence one another? Why are the arts important to me and my society? As students seek the answers to these questions, they develop an understanding of the essence of each arts discipline, and of the knowledge and skills that enliven it. The content and the interrelatedness of the Standards, especially, go a long way toward producing such understanding. But meeting the Standards cannot—and should not—imply that every student will acquire a common set of artistic values. Ultimately, students are responsible for their own values. What the Standards *can* do is provide a positive and substantive framework for those who teach young people why and how the arts are valuable to them as persons and as participants in a shared culture.

The affirmations below describe the values that 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 (e.g., to present issues and ideas, to teach or persuade, to entertain, to design, plan, and beautify).
- ▲ The arts play a valued role in creating cultures and building civilizations. Although each arts discipline makes its unique contributions to culture, society, and the lives of individuals, their connections to each other enable the arts disciplines to produce more than any of them could produce alone.
- ▲ The arts are a way of knowing. Students grow in their ability to apprehend their world when they learn the arts. As they 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. They provide personal fulfillment, whether in vocational settings, avocational pursuits, or leisure.

- ▲ 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, and in appreciating their interdependent nature.
- ▲ 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 as an observer or audience member are personal attitudes that enhance enjoyment and ought to be developed.
- ▲ The arts are indispensable to freedom of inquiry and expression.
- ▲ Because the arts offer the continuing challenge of situations in which there is no standard or approved answer, those who study the arts become acquainted with many perspectives on the meaning of “value.”
- ▲ 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, which are so necessary to the arts, can transfer to the rest of life.
- ▲ The arts provide forms of nonverbal communication that can strengthen the presentation of ideas and emotions.
- ▲ Each person has a responsibility for advancing civilization itself. The arts encourage taking this responsibility and provide skills and perspectives for doing so.

As students work at increasing their understanding of such promises and challenges presented by the arts, they are preparing to make their own contributions to the nation’s storehouse of culture. The more students live up to these high expectations, the more empowered our citizenry will become. Indeed, helping students to meet these Standards is among the best possible investments in the future of not only our children, but also of our country and civilization.

### **The Difference Standards Make**

Arts education standards can make a difference because, in the end, they speak powerfully to two fundamental issues that pervade all of education—quality and accountability. They help ensure that the study of the arts is disciplined and well focused, and that arts instruction has a point of reference for assessing its results. In addressing these issues, the Standards insist on the following:

- ▲ That an arts education is not a hit-or-miss effort but a sequenced and comprehensive enterprise of learning across four arts disciplines, thus ensuring that basic arts literacy is a consequence of education in the United States;

- ▲ That instruction in the arts takes a hands-on orientation (i.e., 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. The focus of these Standards is 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. The arts teach relationships between the use of essential technical means and the achievement of desired ends. The intellectual methods of the arts are precisely those used to transform scientific discovery into technology;
- ▲ 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; and
- ▲ That taken together, these Standards offer, for the first time in American arts education, a foundation for educational assessment on a student-by-student basis.

These features of the Standards will advance both quality and accountability to the levels that students, schools, and taxpayers deserve. They will help our nation compete in a world where the ability to produce continuing streams of creative solutions has become the key to success.

One by-product of adopting these Standards may be as revolutionary as it is exciting. Having the Standards in place may mean that teachers and others will be able to spend less time defending and advocating arts education and more time educating children, turning them toward the enriching power, the intellectual excitement, and the joy of competence in the arts.

Success in achieving these Standards will mean something else. As we look ahead, it is important to keep two things in mind. To the degree that students are successful in achieving them, the Standards will have to be raised to encourage higher expectations. At the same time, even though the substance of each of the arts disciplines will remain basically constant, the changes created by technology, new cultural trends, and educational advances will necessitate changes in the Standards as well. Among the educational changes likely to affect the structure of these Standards, for example, are those that may rearrange the school day and year, or the prospect that progression by grade level may give way to mastery as the overriding goal of education.

## **Context and Issues**

### **Arts Standards Are at the Core of Education Reform**

With the passage of the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, the arts are written into federal law. The law acknowledges that the arts are a core subject, as important to education as English, mathematics,

history, civics and government, geography, science, and foreign language. Title II of the Act addresses the issue of education standards. It establishes a National Education Standards Improvement Council, which has, among its other responsibilities, the job of working with appropriate organizations to determine the criteria for certifying *voluntary content standards*, with three objectives in mind: (1) to ensure that the standards are internationally competitive, (2) to ensure they reflect the best knowledge about teaching and learning, and (3) to ensure they have been developed through a broad-based, open adoption process.

In 1992, in anticipation of education standards emerging as a focal point of the reform legislation, the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations successfully approached the U.S. Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, for a grant to determine what the nation's school children should know and be able to do in the arts.

This document is thus the result of an extended process of consensus-building that has included a variety of efforts designed to secure the broadest possible range of expertise and reaction. The process involved the review of state-level arts education frameworks, standards from other nations, a succession of drafts by the arts education community, as well as consideration at a series of national forums where comment and testimony were received.

### **The Standards Provide a Crucial Foundation**

The arts have emerged from the education reform movement of the last decade as a vital partner in the continuing effort to provide our children with a world-class education. The Standards are a crucial element in that enterprise.

Almost alone in the industrialized world, the United States has no national curriculum. But national standards approach the task of education from a different angle; they speak of competencies, not a predetermined course of study. The need for standards arises, in part, from the recognition that we Americans can never know how well our schools are doing without some coherent sense of results. We recognize an obligation to provide our children with the knowledge and skills that will equip them to enter society, work productively, and make their contributions as citizens. In short, we need the clarity and conviction to say, "*This is what a student should know and be able to do.*" At the same time, in spite of our disparateness, Americans understand that, at the core, we are *one* country. As the education reform movement has recognized from the beginning, we need national goals—statements of desired results—to provide a broad framework for state and local decision making.

But the most important contribution that standards-setting makes lies in the process itself. In setting them forth, we are inevitably forced to think through what we believe—and why. The process refreshes and renews our interest in and commitment to education in general, and to what we believe is important in all subjects.

Standards for arts education are important for two fundamental reasons. First, they help define what a good education in the arts should provide: a thorough grounding in a basic body of knowledge and the skills required both to make sense and to make use of each of the arts disciplines—including the intellectual tools to make qualitative judgments about artistic products and expression. Second, when states and school districts adopt the standards, they are taking a stand for rigor, informed by a clear intent. A set of standards for arts education says, in effect, "An education in the arts means that students should know what is spelled out here, reach specified levels of attainment, and do both at defined points in their education." Put differently, arts standards provide a vision of both competence and educational effectiveness, but without creating a mold into which all arts programs must fit. Let us be clear. These Standards are concerned with which *results*, in the form of student learning, are characteristic of a basic education in the arts, but *not with how those results ought to be delivered*. The Standards do not provide

a course of study, but they can help weak arts instruction and programs improve and help make good programs even better.

The arts Standards are deliberately broad statements, the better to encourage local curricular objectives and flexibility in classroom instruction, that is, to draw on local resources and to meet local needs. These Standards also present areas of content, expectations for student experience, and levels of student achievement, but without endorsing any particular philosophy of education, specific teaching methods, or aesthetic points of view. The latter are matters for states, localities, and classroom teachers.

## **The Standards Are Keys to Each of the Arts Disciplines**

Each of the arts disciplines is in itself a vast body of subject matter—an array of skills, knowledge, and techniques offering the student a means of communication and modes of thought and action. Each discipline also provides rich and complex points of view on the world and human experience. Each offers analytical and theoretical perspectives, a distinct history, many schools of interpretation, as well as innumerable connections to all human activity. Amid this wealth, the Standards offer basic points of entry into the study of the arts disciplines.

When a standard for any given arts discipline has been met or achieved by the student, it means that a door has been opened; the student can use his or her achievement as a point of departure for other destinations. To take a straightforward example from dance, when a child learns to use basic movements to create and vary a movement theme, a new possibility is created. Now the child knows what it means to convert a rhythm heard with the ear into one that is expressed by the body. The child who reaches this point has not merely met a standard, but has learned a “new grammar”—one based on physical movement. As students grow in competence, their learning thus resembles an ascent up a spiral staircase; at each level, a new door opens onto an experience that is more challenging and more rewarding. The Standards are meant to reinforce this continual dynamic of climbing and exploring, a process that leads to increasing competence. As students meet these Standards, they learn to choose intelligently among many approaches that are likely to lead to the solution of an artistic or intellectual problem. Indeed, creative thinking cannot occur without this ability to choose.

But the Standards, rooted in the individual integrity of the visual arts, dance, music, and theatre, are more than doors to new capabilities and discoveries. They also serve as the foundation for making connections among the arts and to other areas of the curriculum.

## **The Standards Are Keys to Correlation and Integration**

A basic intent of the Standards is that the arts be taught for their intrinsic value. Beyond their significance in this arena, however, one of the most important goals the Standards can achieve is to help students make connections between concepts and across subjects. To this end, the Standards for each arts discipline reflect different kinds of learning tasks. By addressing these tasks together, students can fully explore each of the specific arts disciplines in and of itself. They can use these same tasks as bridges among the arts disciplines, and finally as gateways from the arts to other areas of study. But the Standards do not create these connections automatically, simply by their existence; making the connections is always a matter of *instruction*.

Connections among the arts or between the arts and other subjects are fundamentally of two kinds, which should not be confused. *Correlations* show specific similarities or differences. A simple example is the correlation between music and mathematics. Clearly evident in the structure of both are such ele-

ments as counting, intervals, and consistent numerical values. More complex examples could involve studies based on such areas as aesthetics, sociology, or historic periods, in which texts, interpretations, and analyses about two or more art forms are compared and contrasted. *Integration* is different from correlation. Instead of placing different subjects side by side to compare or contrast them, integration uses the resources of two or more disciplines in ways that are mutually reinforcing, often demonstrating an underlying unity. A simple example of integration within the arts is using combinations of visual effects and words to create a dramatic mood. At a more complex level involving the study of history, other examples of integration might be how the American theatre in the period 1900–1975 reflected shifts in the American social consciousness, or how the sacred and secular music of African-Americans contributed to the civil rights movement.

Because forging these kinds of connections is one of the things the arts do best, they can and should be taught in ways that connect them both to each other and to other subjects. Significantly, building connections in this way gives students the chance to understand wholes, parts, and their relationships. The high school student of world history who has learned something about the visual arts of Japan will understand the politics of the Tokugawa shoguns far better than a classmate who knows nothing of how the art of Japan reflects that country's core values. But one point is basic. Correlation, integration, and similar approaches to learning are first of all a matter of knowledge and competence within each of the arts disciplines themselves, which must be maintained in their full integrity. This competence is what the Standards address most powerfully.

## **The Standards Incorporate Cultural Diversity**

The culture of the United States is a rich mix of people and perspectives, drawn from many cultures, traditions, and backgrounds. That diversity provides American students with a distinctive learning advantage: they can juxtapose unique elements of their individual cultural traditions with elements that have been embraced, incorporated, and transformed into a shared culture. In the process, they learn that diverse heritages are accessible to all.

The cultural diversity of America is a vast resource for arts education, and should be used to help students understand themselves and others. The visual, traditional, and performing arts provide a variety of lenses for examining the cultures and artistic contributions of our nation and others around the world. Students should learn that each art form has its own characteristics and makes its distinctive contributions, that each has its own history and heroes. Students need to learn the profound connections that bind the arts to one another, as well as the connections between particular artistic styles and the historical development of the world's cultures. Students also need to understand that art is a powerful force in the everyday life of people around the world, who design and make many of the objects they use and enjoy. It is therefore essential that those who construct arts curricula attend to issues of ethnicity, national custom, tradition, religion, and gender, as well as to the artistic elements and aesthetic responses that transcend and universalize such particulars. The polyrhythmic choreography of Native American dancing, the incomparable vocal artistry of a Jessye Norman, the sensitive acting of an Edward James Olmos, and the intricate calligraphy of Japanese and Arabic artists are, after all, more than simply cultural artifacts; they are part of the world's treasure house of expression and understanding. As such, they belong to every human being.

The Standards regard these considerations of time, place, and heritage as basic to developing curriculum. Subject matter from diverse historical periods, styles, forms, and cultures should be used to develop basic knowledge and skills in the various arts disciplines.

## **The Standards Focus on Appropriate Technologies**

The arts disciplines, their techniques, and their technologies have a strong historic relationship; each continues to shape and inspire the other. Existing and emerging technologies will always be a part of how changes in the arts disciplines are created, viewed, and taught. Examples abound. In ancient times, sculptors used hardened metals to chisel wood and marble blocks; today they use acetylene torches to work in metal itself. The modern ballet slipper was a technological advance that emerged in the late nineteenth century; today it is complemented by the dancer's use of variable-resistance exercise equipment. Stradivarius once used simple charcoal and paper to design his violins; today's manufacturers use computers to design electronic instruments. The theatre, once limited to the bare stage, has found important resources for creating dramatic productions in such technologies as radio, film, television, and other electronic media.

For the arts, technology thus offers means to accomplish artistic, scholarly, production, and performance goals. But the mere availability of technology cannot ensure a specific artistic result: the pencil in a student's hand ensures neither drawing competency nor a competent drawing. Nor, by itself, will exchanging the pencil for an airbrush or a computer graphics program create a change in the student. What can happen is that interesting and engaging technologies can attract and motivate students to engage the arts. In the end, however, the use of technology in arts instruction is meaningful only to the degree that it contributes to competence, and that contribution comes through instruction and study. Used appropriately, technology can extend the reach of both the art form and that of the learner.

These considerations are especially important because of technology's power to expand today's students' access to information, opportunities, and choices. New technologies make it possible to try out a host of possibilities and solutions, and expanding learning technologies make it more important than ever that these tools be used to teach the arts. Computers create unimaginable efficiencies and opportunities for experimentation, and do it instantly. If well used, interactive video can also have a significant impact on the development of creative thinking skills. The educational challenge is to make sure that as technology expands the array of choices, students are also well guided toward choosing, compiling, and arranging materials appropriate to specific artistic ends.

The Standards should be considered as a catalyst for bringing the best arts-related technologies to bear on arts education. We need to remember, however, that access to many technologies will necessarily vary. The Standards are not themselves dependent on any particular technology; they can be met using a variety of technologies on different levels. The working assumption of the Standards is that whatever technology is available will be used not for its own sake, but to promote learning in the arts and the achievement of the Standards. Success should be thus measured by how well students achieve artistic and intellectual objectives, not alone by how adept they are in using a given arts technology. The use of technology should increase their ability to synthesize, integrate, and construct new meanings from a wealth of new resources and information. The effective results should be that students come to understand the relationships among technical means, artistic technique, and artistic end.

## **The Standards Provide a Foundation for Student Assessment**

Because arts education places a high value on personal insight, individual achievement, and group performance, educators must be able to assess these things; otherwise, it will be impossible to know whether the Standards are being reached. Because the Standards are consensus statements about what an education in the arts should contain, they can provide a basis for student assessment, and for evaluating programs, at national, state, and local levels. A broad range of measures could well be used to assess whether a given standard is being met. As in any area of the curriculum, tests and other measures

used in assessing students in the arts should be statistically valid and reliable, as well as sensitive to the student's learning context.

One of the substantial advantages offered by this comprehensive set of arts standards is that they combat the uninformed idea that the arts are an “academically soft” area of study. People unfamiliar with the arts often mistakenly believe that excellence and quality are merely matters of opinion (“I know what I like”), and that one opinion is as good as another. The Standards say that the arts have “academic” standing. They say there is such a thing as achievement, that knowledge and skills matter, and that mere willing participation is not the same thing as education. They affirm that discipline and rigor are the road to achievement. And they state emphatically that all these things can in some way be measured—if not always on a numerical scale, then by informed critical judgment.

Arts educators can take pride in the fact that other content areas have borrowed heavily from assessment techniques long used in the arts, e.g., the practice of portfolio review in the visual arts and the assessment of performance skills through the auditions used in dance, music, and theatre. It is worth noting that the content of these *Standards* informs the perspective of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which attends to “creating, performing, and responding” in the arts. Although some aspects of learning in the arts can be measured adequately by traditional paper-and-pencil techniques or demonstrations, many skills and abilities can be properly assessed only by using subtle, complex, and nuanced methods and criteria that require a sophisticated understanding. Assessment measures should incorporate these subtleties, while at the same time making use of a broad range of performance tasks.

### **The Standards Point Beyond Mere “Exposure”**

All basic subjects, including the arts, require more than mere “exposure” or access. They need focused time for sequential study, practice, and reflection. While valuable, a once-a-month visit from an arts specialist, visits to or from professional artists, or arts courses for the specially motivated do not qualify as basic or adequate arts instruction. They certainly cannot prepare all students to meet the Standards presented here. These Standards assume that students in all grades will be actively involved in comprehensive, sequential programs that include creating, performing, and producing on the one hand, and study, analysis, and reflection on the other. Both kinds of activities are indispensable elements of a well-rounded education in the arts.

The comprehensive nature of these Standards does not require an inordinate focus on the arts at the expense of other subjects. Leading groups of arts educators, as well as the National Endowment for the Arts, recommend that 15 percent of instructional time at the elementary and middle school levels be devoted to serious study of the arts. In high school, it is expected that achieving the basic competencies set forth here will mean arts *requirements*, not just electives.

By the same token, however, when children move beyond the “exposure” level toward proficiency in an arts discipline, the basic processes of creating, performing, producing, thinking, perceiving, and responding in one context become available to them in another. The child who learns how to read or cipher can conquer new worlds with those basic skills. Just so, the child who learns to see with an artist's eye, hear with the musician's ear, dramatize the playwright's vision, or tell a story with the body's movement has acquired a tool that can enrich and enliven all learning, whether in the other arts or beyond them.

The creative and continual use of community resources is an important element in making sure that students receive more than exposure to the arts. Local orchestras and choruses, theatre groups and dance companies, individual professional artists, galleries, museums, concerts, and other kinds of performanc-



es all offer a rich repertoire of arts experiences that the schools can seldom match. State and local arts agencies and arts councils, as well as local chapters of national arts and arts education organizations, all have a rich contribution to make. All can offer distinctive introductions to the wealth of possibilities in the arts and serve as sources of profound learning. Teachers, education administrators, parents, and local arts organizations can create not merely “arts events” but working partnerships specifically designed to sustain, expand, and deepen students’ competence in all the arts disciplines.

### **Adopting the Standards Is Only a Beginning**

Our way of life in the modern world and the success of our children in it depend on creating a society that is both literate and imaginative, competent and creative. In a world exploding with information and experience, in which media saturate our culture with powerful images and messages at every turn, it is critical that young people be provided with tools not only for understanding that world, but also for contributing to it and making their own way. Without the arts to help shape students’ perceptions and imaginations, young people stand every chance of growing into adulthood as culturally disabled. We must not allow that to happen.

If our young people are to be fully educated, they need instructional programs in the arts that accurately reflect and faithfully transmit the pluralistic purposes, skills, and experiences that are unique to the arts—a heritage that also deeply enriches general education. What happens in the schools will require the active support of arts organizations, trade and professional groups in the arts, educational organizations, performers, and working artists. Without question, the Standards presented here will need supporters and allies in improving and changing how arts education is organized and delivered. But they themselves contain the potential to act as a lever on public perception and teacher preparation as well, to change education policy at all levels, and to make a transforming impact across the entire spectrum of education.

#### ***But only if they are implemented.***

Developing the physical and mental abilities needed to learn any art form can occur only through personal interaction with subject matter, the mastery of tools, adapting to physical challenges, and sustained relationships with others who have also subjected themselves to the discipline the arts require.

Teachers encourage and lead this interactive process. Since it is impossible to teach what one does not know, bringing the Standards to life in students will require professional development for many teachers and changes in teacher preparation programs. In many places, more teachers with credentials in the arts will be needed. Preservice training will have to be restructured to include the arts, or an existing arts training component will have to be strengthened. Many teachers already in service will need to supplement their knowledge and skills, acquire new capabilities, and form teaching alliances with arts specialists. Doing so will not be easy, but doing so is as necessary as it is worthwhile.

Site-based management teams, school boards, state education agencies, state and local arts agencies, teacher education institutions, and local programs of in-service education all bear a responsibility here, as do instructional approaches that involve the use of mentors, local artists, and members of the community. The support of such people and groups is crucial for the Standards to succeed. But the primary issue is the competence to bring together and deliver a broad range of competent instruction. All else is secondary.

Having written a set of voluntary Standards is only a first step. Merely “adopting” them will not be enough to make them effective, nor will changing the official expectations for student performance suffice to change the performance itself. New policy will be necessary. New and reallocated resources will be required. Teacher preparation and professional development must keep pace. People who care about

the arts and arts education will have to commit themselves to a broad, cooperative, and, indeed, relentless effort if implementation is to be successful.

In the end, truly successful implementation can come about only when students and their learning are at the center, which means motivating and enabling them to meet the Standards. With a steady gaze on that target, these Standards can empower America's schools to make changes consistent with the best any of us can envision for our children and for our society.

## The Standards

### How the Standards Are Organized

Teachers, policymakers, and students all need explicit statements of the results expected from an arts education, not only for pedagogical reasons, but to be able to allocate instructional resources and to provide a basis for assessing student achievement and progress. Because the largest groups using the Standards will be teachers and educational administrators, the most sensible sequence for presenting the Standards is by grade level: Grades K–4, Grades 5–8, and Grades 9–12. Individual standards should be understood as a statement of what students should know and be able to do. They may, of course, acquire the competency at any time within the specified period, but they will be expected to have acquired it before they move on.

Within each grade-level cluster, the Standards are organized by arts discipline: **Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts**. Presented within each of the disciplines are the specific *competencies* that the arts education community, nationwide, believes are essential for every student. Although the statement of any specific competency in any of the arts disciplines necessarily focuses on one part of that discipline, the Standards stress that all the competencies are interdependent.

The division of the Standards into special competencies does not indicate that each is—or should be—given the same weight, time, or emphasis at any point in the K–12 sequence, or over the student's entire school career. The mixture and balance will vary with grade level, by course, by instructional unit, and from school to school.

The Standards encourage a relationship between breadth and depth so that neither overshadows the other. They are intended to create a vision for learning, not a standardized instructional system.

Two different types of standards are used to guide student assessment in each of the competence areas:

- ▲ *Content standards* specify what students should know and be able to do in the arts disciplines.
- ▲ *Achievement standards* specify the understandings and levels of achievement that students are expected to attain in the competencies, for each of the arts, at the completion of grades 4, 8, and 12.

In this document, a number of achievement standards are described for each content standard. In grades 9–12, two levels of achievement standards—"Proficient" and "Advanced"—are offered for each of the arts disciplines. Several standards may be offered in each of these two categories. In grades 9–12, the "Advanced" level of achievement is more likely to be attained by students who have elected specialized courses in the particular arts discipline than by students who have not. All students, however, are expected to achieve at the "Proficient" level in at least one art.

## 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, performance, production, history, culture, perception, analysis, criticism, aesthetics, technology, and appreciation. 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 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—dance, 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 form, 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.

# GRADES K–4

## *Visual Arts*

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These standards provide a framework for helping students learn the characteristics of the \*visual arts by using a wide range of subject matter, symbols, meaningful images, and visual \*expressions, to reflect their \*ideas, feelings, and emotions; and to evaluate the merits of their efforts. The standards address these objectives in ways that promote acquisition of and fluency in new ways of thinking, working, communicating, reasoning, and investigating. They emphasize student acquisition of the most important and enduring \*ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas, and knowledge offered by the visual arts. They develop new \*techniques, approaches, and habits for applying knowledge and skills in the visual arts to the world beyond school.

The visual arts are extremely rich. They range from drawing, painting, sculpture, and design, to architecture, film, video, and folk arts. They involve a wide variety of \*tools, \*techniques, and \*processes. The standards are structured to recognize that many elements from this broad array can be used to accomplish specific educational objectives. For example, drawing can be used as the basis for creative activity, historical and cultural investigation, or \*analysis, as can any other fields within the visual arts. The standards present educational goals. It is the responsibility of practitioners to choose appropriately from this rich array of content and processes to fulfill these goals in specific circumstances and to develop the curriculum.

To meet the standards, students must learn vocabularies and concepts associated with various types of work in the visual arts and must exhibit their competence at various levels in visual, oral, and written form.

In Kindergarten–Grade 4, young children experiment enthusiastically with \*art materials and investigate the ideas presented to them through visual arts instruction. They exhibit a sense of joy and excitement as they make and share their artwork with others. Creation is at the heart of this instruction. Students learn to work with various tools, processes, and \*media. They learn to coordinate their hands and minds in explorations of the visual world. They learn to make choices that enhance communication of their ideas. Their natural inquisitiveness is promoted, and they learn the value of perseverance.

As they move from kindergarten through the early grades, students develop skills of observation, and they learn to examine the objects and events of their lives. At the same time, they grow in their ability to describe, interpret, evaluate, and respond to work in the visual arts. Through examination of their own work and that of other people, times, and places, students learn to unravel the essence of artwork and to appraise its purpose and value. Through these efforts, students begin to understand the meaning and impact of the visual world in which they live.

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*\* denotes selected art terms that may be found in the glossary*

**1. Content Standard:** Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

- a. know the differences between materials, techniques, and processes
- b. describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses
- c. use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories
- d. use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

**2. Content Standard:** Using knowledge of \*structures and functions

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

- a. know the differences among visual characteristics and purposes of art in order to convey ideas
- b. describe how different \*expressive features and \*organizational principles cause different responses
- c. use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas

**3. Content Standard:** Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

- a. explore and understand prospective content for works of art
- b. select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning

**4. Content Standard:** Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

- a. know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures
- b. identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places
- c. demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art

**5. Content Standard:** Reflecting upon and \*assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

- a. understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art
- b. describe how people's experiences influence the development of specific artworks
- c. understand there are different responses to specific artworks

**6. Content Standard:** Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

- a. understand and use similarities and differences between characteristics of the visual arts and other arts disciplines
- b. identify connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum

# GRADES 5–8

## Visual Arts

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Students in grades 5–8 continue to need a framework that aids them in learning the characteristics of the visual arts by using a wide range of subject matter, symbols, meaningful images, and visual expressions. They grow ever more sophisticated in their need to use the visual arts to reflect their feelings and emotions and in their abilities to evaluate the merits of their efforts. These standards provide that framework in a way that promotes the students’ thinking, working, communicating, reasoning, and investigating skills and provides for their growing familiarity with the \*ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas, and knowledge important in the visual arts. As students gain this knowledge and these skills, they gain in their ability to apply the knowledge and skills in the visual arts to their widening personal worlds.

These standards present educational goals. It is the responsibility of practitioners to choose among the array of possibilities offered by the visual arts to accomplish specific educational objectives in specific circumstances. The visual arts offer the richness of drawing and painting, sculpture, and design; architecture, film, and video; and folk arts—all of these can be used to help students achieve the standards. For example, students could \*create works in the \*medium of videotape, engage in historical and cultural investigations of the medium, and take part in \*analyzing works of art produced on videotape. The visual arts also involve varied \*tools, \*techniques, and \*processes—all of which can play a role in students’ achieving the standards, as well.

To meet the standards, students must learn vocabularies and concepts associated with various types of work in the visual arts. As they develop increasing fluency in visual, oral, and written communication, they must exhibit their greater artistic competence through all of these avenues.

In grades 5–8, students’ visual expressions become more individualistic and imaginative. The problem-solving activities inherent in art making help them develop cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills. They select and transform ideas, discriminate, synthesize and appraise, and they apply these skills to their expanding knowledge of the visual arts and to their own \*creative work. Students understand that making and responding to works of visual art are inextricably interwoven and that \*perception, \*analysis, and critical judgment are inherent to both.

Their own art making becomes infused with a variety of images and approaches. They learn that preferences of others may differ from their own. Students refine the questions that they ask in response to artworks. This leads them to an appreciation of multiple artistic solutions and interpretations. Study of historical and cultural \*contexts gives students insights into the role played by the visual arts in human achievement. As they consider examples of visual art works within historical contexts, students gain a deeper appreciation of their own values, of the values of other people, and the connection of the visual arts to universal human needs, values, and beliefs. They understand that the art of a culture is influenced by \*aesthetic ideas as well as by social, political, economic, and other factors. Through these efforts, students develop an understanding of the meaning and import of the visual world in which they live.

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\* denotes selected art terms that may be found in the glossary

**1. Content Standard:** Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

- a. select media, techniques, and processes; analyze what makes them effective or not effective in communicating ideas; and reflect upon the effectiveness of their choices
- b. intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of \*art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas

**2. Content Standard:** Using knowledge of \*structures and functions

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

- a. generalize about the effects of visual structures and functions and reflect upon these effects in their own work
- b. employ organizational structures and analyze what makes them effective or not effective in the communication of ideas
- c. select and use the qualities of structures and functions of art to improve communication of their ideas

**3. Content Standard:** Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

- a. integrate visual, spatial, and temporal concepts with content to communicate intended meaning in their artworks
- b. use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks

**4. Content Standard:** Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

- a. know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures
- b. describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts
- c. analyze, describe, and demonstrate how factors of time and place (such as climate, resources, ideas, and technology) influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of art



**5. Content Standard:** Reflecting upon and \*assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

- a. compare multiple purposes for creating works of art
- b. analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry
- c. describe and compare a variety of individual responses to their own artworks and to artworks from various eras and cultures

**6. Content Standard:** Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

- a. compare the characteristics of works in two or more art forms that share similar subject matter, historical periods, or cultural context
- b. describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with the visual arts

# GRADES 9–12

## Visual Arts

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In grades 9–12, students extend their study of the visual arts. They continue to use a wide range of subject matter, symbols, meaningful images, and visual expressions. They grow more sophisticated in their employment of the visual arts to reflect their feelings and emotions and continue to expand their abilities to evaluate the merits of their efforts. These standards provide a framework for that study in a way that promotes the maturing students’ thinking, working, communicating, reasoning, and investigating skills. The standards also provide for their growing familiarity with the ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas, and knowledge important in the visual arts. As students gain this knowledge and these skills, they gain in their ability to apply knowledge and skills in the visual arts to their widening personal worlds.

The visual arts range from the folk arts, drawing, and painting, to sculpture and design, from architecture to film and video—and any of these can be used to help students meet the educational goals embodied in these standards. For example, graphic design (or any other field within the visual arts) can be used as the basis for creative activity, historical and cultural investigations, or \*analysis throughout the standards. The visual arts involve varied \*tools, \*techniques, and \*processes—all of which also provide opportunities for working toward the standards. It is the responsibility of practitioners to choose from among the array of possibilities offered by the visual arts to accomplish specific educational objectives in specific circumstances.

To meet the standards, students must learn vocabularies and concepts associated with various types of work in the visual arts. As they develop greater fluency in communicating in visual, oral, and written form, they must exhibit greater artistic competence through all of these avenues.

In grades 9–12, students develop deeper and more profound works of visual art that reflect the maturation of their creative and problem-solving skills. Students understand the multifaceted interplay of different \*media, styles, forms, techniques, and processes in the creation of their work.

Students develop increasing abilities to pose insightful questions about \*contexts, processes, and criteria for evaluation. They use these questions to examine works in light of various analytical methods and to express sophisticated ideas about visual relationships using precise terminology. They can evaluate artistic character and \*aesthetic qualities in works of art, nature, and human-made environments. They can reflect on the nature of human involvement in art as a viewer, creator, and participant.

Students understand the relationships among art forms and between their own work and that of others. They are able to relate understandings about the historical and cultural contexts of art to situations in contemporary life. They have a broad and in-depth understanding of the meaning and import of the visual world in which they live.

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*\*denotes selected art terms that may be found in the glossary*

**1. Content Standard:** Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

**Achievement Standard, Proficient:**

Students

- a. apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks
- b. conceive and \*create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques, and processes they use

**Achievement Standard, Advanced:**

Students

- c. communicate ideas regularly at a high level of effectiveness in at least one visual arts medium
- d. initiate, define, and solve challenging \*visual arts problems independently using intellectual skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation

**2. Content Standard:** Using knowledge of \*structures and functions

**Achievement Standard, Proficient:**

Students

- a. demonstrate the ability to form and defend judgments about the characteristics and structures to accomplish commercial, personal, communal, or other purposes of art
- b. evaluate the effectiveness of artworks in terms of organizational structures and functions
- c. create artworks that use \*organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems

**Achievement Standard, Advanced:**

Students

- d. demonstrate the ability to compare two or more perspectives about the use of organizational principles and functions in artwork and to defend personal evaluations of these perspectives
- e. create multiple solutions to specific visual arts problems that demonstrate competence in producing effective relationships between structural choices and artistic functions

**3. Content Standard:** Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

**Achievement Standard, Proficient:**

Students

- a. reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally, and describe how these are related to history and culture
- b. apply subjects, symbols, and ideas in their artworks and use the skills gained to solve problems in daily life

**Achievement Standard, Advanced:**

Students

- c. describe the origins of specific images and ideas and explain why they are of value in their art-work and in the work of others
- d. evaluate and defend the validity of sources for content and the manner in which subject matter, symbols, and images are used in the students' works and in significant works by others

**4. Content Standard:** Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

**Achievement Standard, Proficient:**

Students

- a. differentiate among a variety of historical and cultural contexts in terms of characteristics and purposes of works of art
- b. describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places
- c. analyze relationships of works of art to one another in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture, justifying conclusions made in the analysis and using such conclusions to inform their own art making

**Achievement Standard, Advanced:**

Students

- d. analyze and interpret artworks for relationships among form, context, purposes, and critical models, showing understanding of the work of critics, historians, aestheticians, and artists
- e. analyze common characteristics of visual arts evident across time and among cultural/ethnic groups to formulate analyses, evaluations, and interpretations of meaning

**5. Content Standard:** Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

**Achievement Standard, Proficient:**

Students

- a. identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implications of various purposes, and justify their analyses of purposes in particular works
- b. describe meanings of artworks by analyzing how specific works are created and how they relate to historical and cultural contexts
- c. reflect analytically on various interpretations as a means for understanding and evaluating works of visual art

**Achievement Standard, Advanced:**

Students

- e. correlate responses to works of visual art with various techniques for communicating meanings, ideas, attitudes, views, and intentions

**6. Content Standard:** Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

**Achievement Standard, Proficient:**

Students

- a. compare the materials, \*technologies, media, and processes of the visual arts with those of other arts disciplines as they are used in creation and types of analysis
- b. compare characteristics of visual arts within a particular historical period or style with ideas, issues, or themes in the humanities or sciences

**Achievement Standard, Advanced:**

Students

- c. synthesize the creative and analytical principles and techniques of the visual arts and selected other arts disciplines, the humanities, or the sciences

# *Visual Arts Outline*

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= The achievement standard at one level is related to more than one achievement standard at another level.

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= The students at this grade level are expected to follow the previous achievement standard, demonstrating higher levels of these skills, dealing with more complex examples, and responding to works of art in increasingly more sophisticated ways.

**1. Content Standard:** Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

**Achievement Standard:**  
Students

know the differences between materials, techniques, and processes (a)

describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses (b)

use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories (c)

use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner (d)

**Achievement Standard:**  
Students

select media, techniques, and processes; analyze what makes them effective or not effective in communicating ideas; and reflect upon the effectiveness of their choices (a)

intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas (b)

**Achievement Standard, Proficient:**  
Students

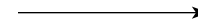
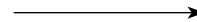
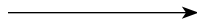
apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks (a)

conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relate to the media, techniques, and processes they use (b)

**Achievement Standard, Advanced:**  
Students

communicate ideas regularly at a high level of effectiveness in at least one visual arts medium (c)

initiate, define, and solve challenging visual arts problems independently, using intellectual skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (d)



**2. Content Standard:** Using knowledge of structures and functions

**Achievement Standard:**  
Students

know the differences among visual characteristics and purposes of art in order to convey ideas (a)

describe how different expressive features and organizational principles cause different responses (b)

use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas (c)

**Achievement Standard:**  
Students

generalize about the effects of visual structures and functions and reflect upon these effects in their own work (a)

employ organizational structures and analyze what makes them effective or not effective in the communication of ideas (b)

select and use the qualities of structures and functions of art to improve communication of their ideas (c)

**Achievement Standard, Proficient:**  
Students

demonstrate the ability to form and defend judgments about the characteristics and structures to accomplish commercial, personal, communal, or other purposes of art (a)

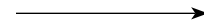
evaluate the effectiveness of artworks in terms of organizational structures and functions (b)

create artworks that use organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems (c)

**Achievement Standard, Advanced:**  
Students

demonstrate the ability to compare two or more perspectives about the use of organizational principles and functions in artwork and to defend personal evaluations of these perspectives (d)

create multiple solutions to specific visual arts problems that demonstrate competence in producing effective relationships between structural choices and artistic functions (e)





**3. Content Standard:** Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

explore and understand prospective content for works of art (a)

select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning (b)

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

integrate visual, spatial, and temporal concepts with content to communicate intended meaning in their artworks (a)

use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks (b)

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally, and describe how these are related to history and culture (a)

apply subjects, symbols, and ideas in their artworks and use the skills gained to solve problems in daily life (b)

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

describe the origins of specific images and ideas and explain why they are of value in their artwork and the work of others (c)

evaluate and defend the validity of sources for content and the manner in which subject matter, symbols, and images are used in the students' works and in significant works by others (d)

**4. Content Standard:** Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

**Achievement Standard:**  
Students

know that the visual arts have a both a history and specific relationships to various cultures (a)

identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places (b)

demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art (c)

**Achievement Standard:**  
Students

know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures (a)

describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts (b)

analyze, describe, and demonstrate how factors of time and place (such as climate, resources, ideas, and technology) influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of art (c)

**Achievement Standard:**  
Students

differentiate among a variety of historical and cultural contexts in terms of characteristics and purposes of works of art (a)

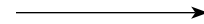
describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places (b)

analyze relationships of works of art to one another in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture, justifying conclusions made in the analysis and using such conclusions to inform their own art making (c)

**Achievement Standard:**  
Students

analyze and interpret artworks for relationships among form, context, purposes, and critical models showing understanding of the work of critics, historians, aestheticians, and artists (d)

analyze common characteristics of visual arts evident across time and among cultural/ethnic groups to formulate analyses, evaluations, and interpretations of meaning (e)



**5. Content Standard:** Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

**Achievement Standard:**  
Students

understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art (a)

describe how people’s experiences influence the development of specific artworks (b)

understand there are different responses to specific artworks (c)

**Achievement Standard:**  
Students

compare multiple purposes for creating works of art (a)

analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry (b)

describe and compare a variety of individual responses to their own artworks and to artworks from various eras and cultures (c)

**Achievement Standard:**  
Students

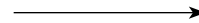
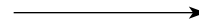
identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implications of various purposes, and justify their analyses of purposes in particular works (a)

describe meanings of artworks by analyzing how specific works are created and how they relate to historical and cultural contexts (b)

reflect analytically on various interpretations as a means for understanding and evaluating works of visual art (c)

**Achievement Standard:**  
Students

correlate responses to works of visual art with various techniques for communicating meanings, ideas, attitudes, views, and intentions (e)



**6. Content Standard:** Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

understand and use similarities and differences between characteristics of the visual arts and other arts disciplines (a)

identify connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum (b)

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

compare the characteristics of works in two or more art forms that share similar subject matter, historical periods, or cultural context (a)

describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with the visual arts (b)

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

compare the materials, technologies, media, and processes of the visual arts with those of other arts disciplines as they are used in creation and types of analysis (a)

compare characteristics of visual arts within a particular historical period or style with ideas, issues, or themes in the humanities or sciences (b)

**Achievement Standard:**

Students

synthesize the creative and analytical principles and techniques of the visual arts and selected other arts disciplines, the humanities, or the sciences (c)



# SELECTED GLOSSARY

## *Visual Arts*

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**Visual Arts.** A broad category that includes the traditional fine arts such as drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture; communication and design arts such as film, television, graphics, product design; architecture and environmental arts such as urban, interior, and landscape design; folk arts; and works of art such as ceramics, fibers, jewelry, works in wood, paper, and other materials.

**Aesthetics.** A branch of philosophy that focuses on the nature of beauty, the nature and value of art, and the inquiry processes and human responses associated with those topics.

**Analysis.** Identifying and examining separate parts as they function independently and together in creative works and studies of the visual arts.

**Art criticism.** Describing and evaluating the media, processes, and meanings of works of visual art, and making comparative judgments.

**Art elements.** Visual arts components, such as line, texture, color, form, value, and space.

**Art history.** A record of the visual arts, incorporating information, interpretations, and judgments about art objects, artists, and conceptual influences on developments in the visual arts.

**Art materials.** Resources used in the creation and study of visual art, such as paint, clay, cardboard, canvas, film, videotape, models, watercolors, wood, and plastic.

**Art media.** Broad categories for grouping works of visual art according to the art materials used.

**Assess.** To analyze and determine the nature and quality of achievement through means appropriate to the subject.

**Context.** A set of interrelated conditions (such as social, economic, political) in the visual arts that influence and give meaning to the development and reception of thoughts, ideas, or concepts and that define specific cultures and eras.

**Create.** To produce works of visual art using materials, techniques, processes, elements, and analysis; the flexible and fluent generation of unique, complex, or elaborate ideas.

**Expressive features.** Elements evoking affects such as joy, sadness, or anger.

**Expression.** A process of conveying ideas, feelings, and meanings through selective use of the communicative possibilities of the visual arts.

**Ideas.** A formulated thought, opinion, or concept that can be represented in visual or verbal form.

**Organizational principles.** Underlying characteristics in the visual arts, such as repetition, balance, emphasis, contrast, and unity.

**Perception.** Visual and sensory awareness, discrimination, and integration of impressions, conditions, and relationships with regard to objects, images, and feelings.

**Process.** A complex operation involving a number of methods or techniques, such as the addition and subtraction processes in sculpture, the etching and intaglio processes in printmaking, or the casting or constructing processes in making jewelry.

**Structures.** Means of organizing the components of a work into a cohesive and meaningful whole, such as sensory qualities, organizational principles, expressive features, and functions of art.

**Techniques.** Specific methods or approaches used in a larger process; for example, graduation of value or hue in painting or conveying linear perspective through overlapping, shading, or varying size or color.

**Technologies.** Complex machines used in the study and creation of art, such as lathes, presses, computers, lasers, and video equipment.

**Tools.** Instruments and equipment used by students to create and learn about art, such as brushes, scissors, brayers, easels, knives, kilns, and cameras.

**Visual arts problems.** Specific challenges based in thinking about and using visual arts components.

# SUMMARY STATEMENT

*NOTE: This summary statement is reproduced from the Standards document submitted to the Secretary of Education. It pertains to the four arts areas: visual arts, dance, theatre, and music.*

## Summary Statement: Education Reform, Standards, and the Arts

These *National Standards for Arts Education* are a statement of what every young American should know and be able to do in four arts disciplines—dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts. Their scope is grades K–12, and they speak to both content and achievement.

**The Reform Context.** The Standards are one outcome of the education reform effort generated in the 1980s, which emerged in several states and attained nationwide visibility with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. This national wake-up call was powerfully effective. Six national education goals were announced in 1990. Now there is a broad effort to describe, specifically, the knowledge and skills students must have in all subjects to fulfill their personal potential, to become productive and competitive workers in a global economy, and to take their places as adult citizens. The *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* writes the national goals into law, naming the arts as a core, academic subject—as important to education as English, mathematics, history, civics and government, geography, science, and foreign language.

At the same time, the Act calls for education standards in these subject areas, both to encourage high achievement by our young people and to provide benchmarks to determine how well they are learning and performing. In 1992, anticipating that education standards would emerge as a focal point of the reform legislation, the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations successfully approached the U.S. Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities for a grant to determine what the nation’s school children should know and be able to do in the arts. This document is the result of an extended process of consensus-building that drew on the broadest possible range of expertise and participation. The process involved the review of state-level arts education frameworks, standards from other nations, and consideration at a series of national forums.

**The Importance of Standards.** Agreement on what students should know and be able to do is essential if education is to be consistent, efficient, and effective. In this context, Standards for arts education are important for two basic reasons. First, they help define what a good education in the arts should provide: a thorough grounding in a basic body of knowledge and the skills required both to make sense and make use of the arts disciplines. Second, when states and school districts adopt these Standards, they are taking a stand for rigor in a part of education that has too often, and wrongly, been treated as optional. This document says, in effect, “an education in the arts means that students should know what is spelled out here, and they should reach clear levels of attainment at these grade levels.”

These Standards provide a vision of competence and educational effectiveness, but without creating a mold into which all arts programs must fit. The Standards are concerned with what *results*, in the form of student learning, come from a basic education in the arts, but *not with how those results ought to be delivered*. Those matters are for states, localities, and classroom teachers to decide. In other words, while the Standards provide educational goals and not a curriculum, they can help improve all types of arts instruction.

**The Importance of Arts Education.** Knowing and practicing the arts disciplines are fundamental to the healthy development of children’s minds and spirits. That is why, in any civilization—ours included—the arts are inseparable from the very meaning of the term “education.” We know from long experience that no one can claim to be truly educated who lacks basic knowledge and skills in the arts. There are many reasons for this assertion:

- ▲ The arts are worth studying simply because of what they are. Their impact cannot be denied. Throughout history, all the arts have served to connect our imaginations with the deepest questions of human existence: Who am I? What must I do? Where am I going? Studying responses to those questions through time and across cultures—as well as acquiring the tools and knowledge to create one’s own responses—is essential not only to understanding life but to living it fully.
- ▲ The arts are used to achieve a multitude of human purposes: to present issues and ideas, to teach or persuade, to entertain, to decorate or please. Becoming literate in the arts helps students understand and do these things better.
- ▲ The arts are integral to every person’s daily life. Our personal, social, economic, and cultural environments are shaped by the arts at every turn—from the design of the child’s breakfast placemat, to the songs on the commuter’s car radio, to the family’s night-time TV drama, to the teenager’s Saturday dance, to the enduring influences of the classics.
- ▲ The arts offer unique sources of enjoyment and refreshment for the imagination. They explore relationships between ideas and objects and serve as links between thought and action. Their continuing gift is to help us see and grasp life in new ways.
- ▲ There is ample evidence that the arts help students develop the attitudes, characteristics, and intellectual skills required to participate effectively in today’s society and economy. The arts teach self-discipline, reinforce self-esteem, and foster the thinking skills and creativity so valued in the workplace. They teach the importance of teamwork and cooperation. They demonstrate the direct connection between study, hard work, and high levels of achievement.

**The Benefits of Arts Education.** 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. This process requires not merely an active mind but a trained one. An education in the arts benefits *society* because students of the arts gain powerful tools for understanding human experiences, both past and present. They learn to respect the often very different ways others have of thinking, working, and expressing themselves. They learn to make decisions in situations where there are no standard answers. By studying the arts, students stimulate their natural creativity and learn to develop it to meet the needs of a complex and competitive society. And, as study and competence in the arts reinforce one another, the joy of learning becomes real, tangible, and powerful.

**The Arts and Other Core Subjects.** The Standards address competence in the arts disciplines first of all. But that competence provides a firm foundation for connecting arts-related concepts and facts across the art forms, and from them to the sciences and humanities. For example, the intellectual methods of the arts are precisely those used to transform scientific disciplines and discoveries into everyday technology.



**What Must We Do?** The educational success of our children depends on creating a society that is both literate and imaginative, both competent and creative. That goal depends, in turn, on providing children with tools not only for understanding that world but for contributing to it and making their own way. Without the arts to help shape students' perceptions and imaginations, our children stand every chance of growing into adulthood as culturally disabled. We must not allow that to happen.

Without question, the Standards presented here will need supporters and allies to improve how arts education is organized and delivered. They have the potential to change education policy at all levels, and to make a transforming impact across the entire spectrum of education.

***But only if they are implemented.***

Teachers, of course, will be the leaders in this process. In many places, more teachers with credentials in the arts, as well as better-trained teachers in general, will be needed. Site-based management teams, school boards, state education agencies, state and local arts agencies, and teacher education institutions will all have a part to play, as will local mentors, artists, local arts organizations, and members of the community. Their support is crucial for the Standards to succeed. But the primary issue is the ability to bring together and deliver a broad range of competent instruction. All else is secondary.

In the end, truly successful implementation can come about only when students and their learning are at the center, which means motivating and enabling them to meet the Standards. With a steady gaze on that target, these Standards can empower America's schools to make changes consistent with the best any of us can envision, for our children and for our society.