

Introduction to The Pennsylvania Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities

The arts are not just a good idea, they're the law.

Passage of a new framework for the federal role in public education has both opened opportunities and raised questions related to arts education. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) was reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This law is the basis for most federal funding for the nation's schools.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 includes, in almost every section of the law, support and assistance for "core academic subjects." The No Child Left Behind Act's definition of core academic subjects includes the arts.

The arts have equal status with reading, math, science and all other disciplines. This definition could lead to a huge improvement in national education policy. The act requires states to develop plans to improve student achievement and requires "challenging academic standards." This means that whenever federal education programs (such as teacher training, school reform and technology programs) are targeted to "core academic subjects," the arts may be eligible to receive funds.

This new phase of educational reform allows for standards in other subjects as determined by the states. On January 16, 2003, the Pennsylvania State Board adopted the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities. Districts have until fall 2004 to implement standards-based curriculum.

Pennsylvania Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities: An opportunity not to be missed.

The Pennsylvania Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities provide us with a new window of opportunity to focus local attention on the importance of the arts. But it won't be an easy task. Arts educators, classroom teachers, administrators and parents will need to work together to ensure quality arts for all children and youth. The first step is to develop a clear understanding of the standards.

Presented here are the four standards categories with a comprehensive summary. As you review your current curriculum, use the summary to determine areas that are already included as well as a guide to reveal areas that may need strengthening.

The Pennsylvania Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities are now part of Chapter 4 Curriculum Regulations. Let us now embrace them as an opportunity to strengthen arts education throughout the Commonwealth.

Standards Summary

9.1 Production, Performance and Exhibition: The goals for this area focus on the manipulative skills and conceptual understanding to be achieved by the learners in order to produce, perform and exhibit their own works in the arts.

- A. Know and use elements and principles in an age/developmentally appropriate manner to create personal works in the arts.
- B. Know and use elements and principles in an age/developmentally appropriate manner to evaluate and revise personal works in the arts.
- C. Know and use vocabulary related to production and exhibition of works in the arts.
- D. Use knowledge of cultural and historical styles to create works in the arts and, when developmentally appropriate, develop own style to create works in the arts.
- E. Create works in the arts that communicate emotion, experiences or ideas.
- F. Create works in the arts that demonstrate ability to analyze and interpret works in the arts produced by others.
- G. Explain the function and benefits of rehearsal and practice sessions.
- H. Incorporate an understanding of safety issues related to the use of materials, tools and performance spaces.
- I. Demonstrate awareness of and/or participate in school, local, regional and national arts events.
- J. Use traditional and contemporary technologies to create personal works in the arts.
- K. Use traditional and contemporary technologies to further knowledge and understanding of the humanities.

9.2 Historical and Cultural Contexts: The goals for this area focus on the skills and knowledge to be achieved by the learners that are needed to identify, compare, contrast and analyze works in the arts in their historical and cultural context. Effort should be made to coordinate with district's social studies, literature and other curricula when possible.

- A. Explain the historical, cultural and social context of an individual work in the arts.
- B. Relate works in the arts chronologically to historical events.
- C. Relate works in the arts to varying styles and genres and to the periods in which they were created.
- D. Analyze a work of art from its historical and cultural perspective.
- E. Analyze how historical events and culture impact forms, techniques and purposes of works in the arts.
- F. Use vocabulary related to social studies, literature and other subject areas.
- G. Relate works in the arts to geographic regions.
- H. Identify, describe and analyze the work of Pennsylvania artists in dance, music, theatre and visual arts.
- I. Identify, describe and analyze philosophical beliefs as they relate to works in the arts.
- J. Identify, explain and analyze historical and cultural differences as they relate to works in the arts.
- K. Identify, explain and analyze traditions as they relate to works in the arts.
- L. Identify, explain and analyze common themes, forms and techniques from works in the arts.

9.3 Critical Response: The goals for this area focus on the skills and knowledge to be achieved by the learners that are needed to examine, analyze, interpret and evaluate works in the arts. Emphasis should be placed on developing various processes of critical analysis that will allow the learner to interpret meaning(s) of a work of art.

- A. Know and use the critical examination processes of works in the arts and humanities.
- B. Analyze and interpret specific characteristics of works in the arts within each art form.
- C. Identify, classify and apply understanding of styles, forms, types and genres to form critical response.
- D. Use the vocabulary of critical response to analyze, evaluate and interpret works in the arts.
- E. Use various types of critical analysis in the arts and humanities. (Contextual Criticism, Formal Criticism and Intuitive Criticism)
- F. Apply the process of criticism when comparing and contrasting meanings of a work in the arts.
- G. Compare and contrast critical positions or opinions about works in the arts and humanities.

9.4 Aesthetic Response: The goals for this area focus on the skills and knowledge to be achieved by the learners that are needed to investigate the philosophical aspects of work in the arts. The learner explores personal and historical definitions of art and art's varied purposes. Emphasis should be placed on examining how aesthetic choices impact the intended and/or interpreted meanings.

- A. Know how to respond to a philosophical statement about works in the arts and humanities.
- B. Compare and contrast informed individual opinions about the meaning of works in the arts.
- C. Recognize that the environment of the observer influences individual aesthetic responses to works in the arts.
- D. Recognize that choices made by artists regarding subject matter and themes communicate ideas through works in the arts and humanities.

Teaching Artists and Cultural Organizations Enrich Learning in the Arts.

The Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities provide a framework for all arts education providers.

Arts education programs in schools can be greatly enhanced by practicing artists and other arts providers who know and use a standards-based approach in their work. Education and outreach programs that use the standards framework as a basis for their work in school and after school programs enhance a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning in the arts.

The information in this document is available in a full color poster made possible by the Arts Education Collaborative, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Pennsylvania Department of Education and Philadelphia Arts in Education Partnership. For information on ordering copies of this poster, please contact the AEC at 412-201-7405 or info@artsedcollaborative.org.