



TO: P-12 Education Committee
Cultural Education Committee

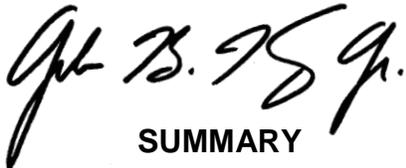
FROM: Ken Wagner 

Jeffrey Cannell



SUBJECT: National Core Arts Standards Update

DATE: October 10, 2014

AUTHORIZATION(S): 
SUMMARY

Item for Discussion

Department staff will present an update on the newly released National Core Arts Standards and New York State's process of surveying arts teachers for their feedback concerning the new standards in relation to the New York State Learning Standards for the Arts.

Background Information

Originally created in 1994, the National Core Arts Standards were completely revised to emphasize that collaboration and communication are the key components of the 21st century skill set desired by employers and by higher education. The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) launched the 2014 National Core Arts Standards in June.

The new standards for dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts were created by seventy writers representing NCCAS's arts education member organizations. Each arts discipline's writing team included a balance of members across specific areas of expertise, geography, diversity, and experience. New York State had representatives on the Dance, Music, and Media Arts writing teams. New York State arts teachers had the opportunity to comment on the three drafts of PreK-12 standards over the last year. More than 6,000 educators, teaching artists, parents, students, and State and local focus groups offered input in four national reviews that helped shaped the final standards. As educational practice improves, these standards will continually be revised. The PreK-12 grade-by-grade standards are intended to guide educators

seeking to provide quality arts education for students, define artistic literacy, support 21st century skills, and college and career readiness. The arts standards are housed at the NCCAS website (www.nationalartsstandards.org). A key feature of the interactive website is the option for teachers and other users to create customized standards handbooks that match their curricula and their students' learning needs.

The National Core Arts Standards are designed to guide schools' arts curricula, instruction, and assessment. The new standards apply to all students, regardless of their experiential backgrounds, capabilities, and developmental and learning differences. Students with diverse learning needs may need accommodations or adaptations of instructional strategies and materials to enhance their learning and/or adjust for their learning capabilities. Standards writers included a review team of arts and special education professionals, led by The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, ensuring that each standard encompasses a broad range of communication and learning styles.

Given the central role that the Common Core State Standards are playing in education and school-reform initiatives nationwide, it was a priority of the NCCAS to ensure that the goals and objectives of the National Core Arts Standards relate clearly and directly to the Common Core. College Board researchers have updated their study of the Common Core standards as they relate to arts-based learning. This second phase of the research report, *The Arts and the Common Core: A Comparison of the National Core Arts Standards and the Common Core State Standards* (<http://nccas.wikispaces.com/Common+Core+Alignment>), identifies the similarities in processes and habits that are the focus and outcome of both sets of standards. The aim of the College Board alignment study was to highlight the ways that the skills emphasized in the Common Core (the ability to analyze and interpret the ideas of others, put your own ideas forward in a considered way, and to engage in the kind of flexible thought that problem solving requires) are at the heart of authentic arts practice, as well.

Cornerstone Assessment Models, supplied for grades 2, 5, and 8, and for each high school proficiency level, illustrate how student learning can be assessed through rich performance tasks with clearly identified criteria. These tasks and benchmarked student work are intended to serve as models to guide the development of local assessments. NCCAS is currently working on a benchmarking project for the elementary and middle school Model Cornerstone Assessments.

To date, South Dakota, Arkansas, and Arizona are in the process of adapting the new National Arts Standards for use in their states.

The Core Arts Standards Review Process in New York

The creation of the new arts standards was an inclusive process, with input from a broad range of arts teachers, other educators, and decision makers, including representation from several state and national professional organizations. The final comprehensive review, completed in March, incorporated significant updates to the standards structure and focus based on comments received in two previous reviews and analysis by NCCAS leadership.

Since release of the National Core Arts Standards, Department staff worked with the five arts professional associations and the New York State Alliance for Arts Education (NYSAAE) to develop a survey of New York State arts educators to gather feedback concerning the new National Core Arts Standards in relation to the New York State Learning Standards for the Arts. The survey <http://www.nysaae.org/ncas-survey/> was open for 3 weeks from September 15th through October 6th. Department staff, with the assistance of the arts professional associations, will analyze the responses by arts discipline and provide the Board with recommendations later this year.

Next Steps

After receiving recommendations from New York State arts professional associations, the Regents may wish to consider adopting or adapting the National Core Arts Standards.