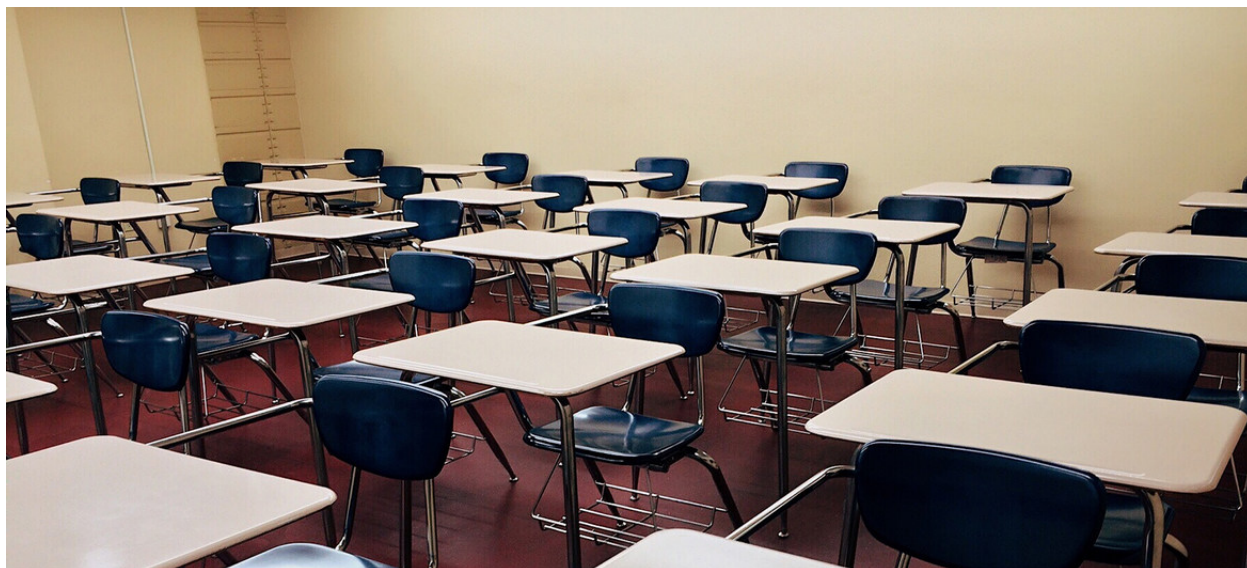


# NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS



## N2KN: Need to Know Now

Vol III-2021 Issue 1

Closing Opportunity Gaps & Re-engaging Students  
through the Arts

## IN WHAT WAYS CAN THE ARTS ASSIST IN CLOSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS IN LEARNING?

It has long been understood that the arts nurture social and emotional learning, particularly for vulnerable young students who are struggling to make sense of a very complicated world. As we enter the “new normal” of pandemic era education, the need for such support has never been greater. It will likely be decades before COVID-19’s cumulative impact and potential loss of learning will be fully understood. What is clear is that, as students and teachers engage in hybrid and in-school classrooms, the arts can play an important role in helping to bridge learning across multidisciplinary boundaries, whether through accelerated learning or remedial education.

### Why It Matters to You

Learning in the arts cultivates active learning as a component of a constructivist educational model, building on what students *know and can do* rather than focusing on what they are lacking.

### Things to Consider

- Inequities exist regarding access to quality educational resources.
- Variability in the quality of arts instruction can be affected by finances, leadership and teaching personnel, geography, politics, school cultural norms and accepted practices.
- Standards-based arts is a proven and effective, research-based instructional strategy to support improvement for struggling learners.
- Arts learning is measurable as a positive transference of learning.
- The inclusion of the arts in STEM (STEAM) initiatives has been shown to foster increased academic achievement, improve student engagement, promote inclusive school environments, and prompt community engagement.
- The arts can be utilized to increase and enhance:
  - collaborative / cooperative skills;
  - creative problem solving;
  - critical and analytic thinking skills;
  - cross-cultural understandings;
  - communication skills;
  - social, political, economic, and cultural awareness;
  - historical perspective; and
  - Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies.
- Federal stimulus resources (ESSER funds) can be utilized for arts education.

### Reflection Questions

Outcomes of standards-based instruction are tangible metrics for gauging levels of student achievement regardless of the pedagogy; whether face-to-face, virtual, or hybrid learning models are employed.

- How can breadth and depth of applicable knowledge and skills gained through immersive arts and arts-integrated instructional models be gauged?
- How can standards-based arts instruction reduce learning gaps?

- In what ways can formative assessment be used as a diagnostic tool to inform the allocation of instruction focus, time, and resources?
- In what ways can educators use formative assessment to identify gaps in learning?
- How are opportunities for arts learning impacted by equity and access issues to quality instructional resources? How do variables in instructional resources affect learning outcomes?
- In what ways can STEM/STEAM initiatives support student learning?
- In what ways can the arts be utilized to:
  - support connected learning and transference of knowledge and skills;
  - reduce learning gaps;
  - increase student engagement;
  - increase student attendance, participation and achievement;
  - heighten critical and analytic thinking skills;
  - increase SEL competency;
  - appreciate and embrace differences in culture; and
  - stimulate the communication of student ideas.
- In what ways might federal stimulus resources be utilized for arts learning?

## Resources for Attending to Access

*The central purposes of education standards are to identify the learning that we want for all students and to drive improvement in the system that delivers the learning.* Every student should have access to instruction in all art forms, and be included within the curricula of every school across the nation. Students should develop competence in all four Artistic Processes through instruction in each art form. [Opportunity to Learn standards](#) help encourage equitable delivery of arts education by outlining the resources necessary for students to succeed, illustrating a continuum of programming, allowing for program review, and articulating the basis for a comprehensive arts education.

In addition, the National Arts Standards website provides guidance on attending to the instructional needs of all learners with resources for teaching exceptional children. Additional resources may be found on the The National Association for Gifted Children website; which offers a Position Statement on Arts Education for Gifted and Talented Students.

## Recommended Actions You Can Take

- Utilize outcomes of standards-based instruction as tangible metrics for determining levels of student achievement regardless of the pedagogy.
- Embrace multimodal instructional frameworks - including face-to-face and hybrid instruction as appropriate to individual student needs and circumstances.
- Utilize Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds to support and enhance quality opportunities for learning in the arts.
- Focus on the synergistic relationship between the arts and social emotional learning.
- Embrace the Arts ARE Education campaign. Encourage your school board to pass the Arts ARE Education Resolution and encourage community members to sign the pledge.
- Speak with school leaders in your district about the power of arts education. Share the campaign Challenges & Talking Points Document and stories of how arts education has continued successfully throughout the pandemic in your schools and supported students' well-being and a positive school climate.
- Celebrate with other school districts that embrace the Arts ARE Education campaign. Share your wins on the Arts ARE Education website, along with your district's resolution.
- Reach out to your school district leadership and encourage them to apply for federal ESSER funds to support arts programs and teachers.

***“The future of who we are lies in the arts. It is the expression of our soul.”***

**-President Joe Biden**

## Links

- Arts ARE Education: HOME, <https://www.artsareeducation.org/>.
- Arts Are Education Action Center, <https://www.artsareeducation.org/action-center>.
- Arts education in a virtual learning environment: an introduction to the lessons, policies, budgets and practices from the COVID-19 era, <https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/5KPME4S8DMAU7WAKMQ9B/full?target=10.1080/10632913.2021.1931600>.
- Arts Education and Social Emotional Learning Framework, <https://selarts.org/>.
- Arts Education is Essential (National Coalition for Arts Standards), [https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/Arts\\_Education\\_Is\\_Essential.pdf](https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/Arts_Education_Is_Essential.pdf)
- The Center for Arts Education and Social Emotional Learning, <https://artsedsel.org/>.