



State Policies Regarding Arts in Education

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Introduction

In an age of accountability, schools must devote more energy than ever before to ensure students are able to meet state academic standards in reading, mathematics and science. As a result, many are concerned about a narrowing of the curriculum, as more time is devoted to these content areas at the expense of subjects that often are not tested or part of accountability systems such as social studies, foreign language and the arts. Yet phrases like “educating the whole child” and “well-rounded students” are prevalent, and point to the need for a balanced curriculum.

This *StateNote* summarizes the findings of a recent ECS scan of policies related to arts in education for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Complete results of the scan are contained in a searchable database called “Artscan.” This scan is restricted to those policies contained in statute and administrative code. The summary and chart below contain abbreviated results for selected indicators from several categories. For the remaining indicators, as well as brief summaries of the state policies and citations, visit the full database at www.ecs.org/Artscan.

Summary

Nearly every state and the District of Columbia have established content standards in the arts, that outline the knowledge and skills each student should acquire in the arts in each grade or across grade spans. The lone exception is Iowa, which does not have state content standards, as local districts develop their own standards.

Forty-four states and the District of Columbia have policies that specifically require schools or districts to offer instruction in the arts. For example, Connecticut’s prescribed course of study requires that public schools offer a program of instruction that includes the arts. Other states are more prescriptive in their requirements, such as Arkansas, which requires a minimum of 40 minutes of instructions in the visual arts and 40 minutes in music at the elementary level each calendar week (or the equivalent).

Although most states require instruction in the arts, 36 states and the District of Columbia either require students to complete coursework in the arts or require students to select from a specified list of courses, which includes the arts, for high school graduation. While many students across the country participate in the arts as part of their K-12 education experience, Kentucky is the only state to include assessment in the arts as a component of its statewide assessment systems. Eight states require local districts to assess the arts, however.

Thirty-one states and the District of Columbia require that regular classroom teachers complete coursework or demonstrate competence in the arts for certification, or that teacher education programs ensure teachers have completed some coursework in the arts. In most cases the requirements for regular classroom teachers apply specifically to elementary teachers, although Connecticut also requires the arts for certification of secondary teachers.

Additional Information about the Artscan Database

Artscan is divided into four main categories of state arts in education policies: Access and Participation; Standards, Assessment and Curriculum; Teaching Quality; and State-Level Initiatives. While the chart below indicates the presence or absence of state policies in selected categories of Artscan, the database contains additional information about each state’s policies, including citations. Artscan will be updated and expanded as new information becomes available. The database’s accuracy depends on contributions and corrections by those who use it. So if any relevant state policy has been misinterpreted or overlooked, contact Mary Fulton, ECS policy analyst, at mfulton@ecs.org or 303.299.3679.

Selected Categories from the Artscan Database
(www.ecs.org/Artscan)

State	State Content Standards in the Arts	Schools/Districts Required to Provide Arts Instruction	Arts Courses Required/Optional for High School Graduation	State-level Arts Assessment	District-level Arts Assessment Required	Arts Required for Certification of Regular Teachers
Alabama	X	X	X			X
Alaska	X					
Arizona	X	X	X		X	X
Arkansas	X	X	X			X
California	X	X	X			X
Colorado	X					X
Connecticut	X	X	X			X
Delaware	X	X				X
District of Columbia	X	X	X			X
Florida	X	X	X			X
Georgia	X		X			
Hawaii	X		X			
Idaho	X	X	X			X
Illinois	X	X	X			X
Indiana	X	X	X			X
Iowa		X				
Kansas	X	X	X			X
Kentucky	X	X	X	X		
Louisiana	X	X				X
Maine	X	X	X			
Maryland	X	X	X			
Massachusetts	X	X				X
Michigan	X					
Minnesota	X	X	X			X
Mississippi	X	X	X			X
Missouri	X	X	X			X
Montana	X	X	X		X	
Nebraska	X	X				
Nevada	X	X	X			
New Hampshire	X	X	X		X	X
New Jersey	X	X	X		X	X
New Mexico	X	X				X
New York	X	X	X			X
North Carolina	X	X	X			X
North Dakota	X	X				
Ohio	X	X	X		X	
Oklahoma	X	X	X		X	
Oregon	X	X	X			X
Pennsylvania	X	X			X	X
Rhode Island	X	X	X			X
South Carolina	X	X				
South Dakota	X		X			
Tennessee	X	X	X			

State	State Content Standards in the Arts	Schools/Districts Required to Provide Arts Instruction	Arts Courses Required/Optional for High School Graduation	State-level Arts Assessment	District-level Arts Assessment Required	Arts Required for Certification of Regular Teachers
Texas	X	X	X			X
Utah	X	X	X			
Vermont	X	X	X			X
Virginia	X	X	X			X
Washington	X	X	X		X	X
West Virginia	X	X	X			X
Wisconsin	X	X				X
Wyoming	X	X				
Totals	49 states and D.C.	44 states and D.C.	36 states and D.C.	1 state	8 states	31 states and D.C.

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