

Your Question:

Which, if any, states include arts education in their accountability system for K-12?

Our Response:

State accountability systems serve the important purpose of setting the state goals for education and establishing the metrics by which the state will know if it has achieved the goals. As part of the requirements for receiving Title I funding, states must identify the components of their accountability systems with special attention given to the indicators required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): measures of student achievement and growth in mathematics and English language arts at both the high school and elementary/middle school levels; high school graduation rates; measures of language proficiency for English language learners; and at least one measure of school quality or student success. It is this final indicator — school quality or student success — that opens the door for opportunities within the arts.

According to ESSA, indicators of school quality or student success can include: “measures of student engagement, educator engagement, student access to and completion of advanced coursework, postsecondary readiness, school climate and safety, and any other indicator the state chooses ...” (Title I, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 1005). These indicator options provide a number of opportunities for the arts.

Education Commission of the States and the Arts Education Partnership identified 11 states, plus the District of Columbia, that include the arts as a part of their current or future accountability systems. While some states specifically measure participation in the arts, other states measure participation in the arts as a part of a well-rounded education or include the arts as options in the postsecondary and career readiness components of their accountability systems.

State	Accountability Indicator
<i>Arts Specific Indicator</i>	
Connecticut	Includes an arts access metric that measures the percentage of students in ninth through 12th grade participating in at least one dance, theater, music or visual arts course in the school year. (pg. 41)
Illinois	Will include fine arts as a School Quality/Student Success indicator. This metric may consider the percentage of students enrolled in a fine arts course during the school year. (pg. 47)
<i>Well-Rounded Indicator</i>	
District of Columbia	Includes well-rounded experiences as a part of the Access and Opportunities measure of the School Quality or Student Success Indicator. The measure is yet to be determined, but will provide multiple options for schools to highlight results. (pg. 21)
Georgia	The Beyond the Core indicator measures the percentage of students in elementary and middle school earning a passing score in specified enrichment courses that expose students to a well-rounded curriculum. Content areas include fine arts. (pg. 33)
Kentucky	The Opportunity and Access indicator includes a metric focused on access to standards-based curriculum in visual and performing arts, among other well-rounded education courses. (pg. 13)

Louisiana	The Interests and Opportunities indicator measures whether schools are providing students with access to a well-rounded education, including visual and performing arts. (pg.26) Will use a menu approach to allow LEAs to demonstrate a strong effort in a variety of ways, determined by a working group no later than the 2019-20 school year. The indicator will measure the extent to which schools are providing opportunities to take courses in the arts. (pg.45)
Maryland	Measures the percentage of fifth grade students passing a fine arts course, among other well-rounded coursework, as part of its Academic Progress indicator for elementary/middle school. Measures the percentage of fifth and eighth grade students enrolled in fine arts, among other well-rounded coursework, as part of its School Quality or Student Success Indicator. (pg. 23)
Massachusetts	Measures the percentage of 11th and 12th grade students that complete a broad course of study (e.g., courses beyond English language arts, mathematics, science, history and civics, such as the arts, physical education, computer science and community service) as part of its school quality/student success indicator. (pg. 23, 46)
Michigan	Includes K-8 Access to Arts/Physical Education as a School Quality/Student Success Sub-indicator. The measure is the ratio of students to educators for all kindergarten through eighth grade schools, and the expectation is that students will have increased access to these educators at ratio of 116:1 by the 2024-25 school year. (pg. 34)
Minnesota	Includes the arts in the definition of a well-rounded education. Beginning with the 2020-21 school year, Minnesota intends to add a measurement of equitable, well-rounded instruction as a part of the school quality/student success indicator(s). (pg. 21)
<i>Arts as an Option</i>	
New Hampshire	Includes a college and career readiness indicator in which high school students must meet any two metrics on a menu of options. One option is that the student has completed a New Hampshire Scholars program of study, which includes standard, STEM or arts pathways. (pg. 41)
Wyoming	Includes a Post-Secondary Readiness indicator for high schools that may be met through one of three options, including the completion of a college preparatory curriculum. The college preparatory curriculum includes four years of math, four years of science, four years of English, three years of social studies, plus two years of foreign language, two years of fine/performing arts or two years of career/technical education. (pg. 21)

Where state ESSA plans included arts education or well-rounded education as an accountability metric, nine states have elected to measure access (i.e., student enrollment) to arts/well-rounded education courses. By contrast, only Georgia measures student performance (i.e., students earning passing scores) in well-rounded education courses.

Read more about accountability and the arts in [ESSA: Mapping Opportunities for the Arts](#).

Where Do Charter Schools Fit In?

ESSA defers to state laws regarding charter school accountability. This gives states flexibility in how they incorporate charter schools into accountability systems, as charter schools are semi-autonomous and exempt from most state laws.

Even so, most state charter school laws hold charter schools to the same standards as traditional public schools. Thirty states do not exempt charter schools from statewide rules specifically related to standards, assessment, teacher certification and graduation requirements. Of the 30 states, eight have arts education requirements, including California, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, New York and Virginia. More information on charter school rules and arts education can be found in the school choice and arts education information request library.

Read more about [Charter School Accountability Under ESSA](#).