

Middle Grades Visual and Performing Arts: Content and Delivery Guide

developed by

**Shasta County
Superintendent of Schools**



for

**California County Superintendents
Educational Services Association
(CCSESA)**

ARTS INITIATIVE



Funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation 2009

FOREWARD

On behalf of the County Superintendents of the State of California, we are pleased to introduce the ***Middle Grades Content and Delivery Guide*** as part of the CCSESA Arts Initiative and the Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee (CISC) Visual and Performing Arts Subcommittee. This project was funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

The California County Superintendents Education Services Association (CCSESA) is an organization consisting of the County Superintendents of Schools from the 58 counties in California working in partnership with the California Department of Education. The Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee (CISC) is a subcommittee of CCSESA, consisting of county office associate superintendents, focusing on curriculum, instruction, and professional development. The Visual and Performing Arts Subcommittee includes regional arts leads representing all eleven service regions geared at strengthening support and service in arts education to California school districts. Through the CCSESA Arts Initiative and the CISC VAPA Subcommittee county superintendents and their staffs are building capacity to advocate and increase visibility for arts education in California public schools. One area of this work is in the development and development of K-12 arts education curriculum resources aligned to the *Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California Public Schools*.

This project was developed by Heidi Brahms, Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator for Shasta County Office of Education and Region 2 Arts Lead and written by Patty Larrick, arts consultant. We especially want to thank Grace Ko and the San Diego County Office of Education for their production of the accompanying videos for this guide and for their ongoing work on the CCSESA Arts Initiative web site. We are also grateful for the leadership of Assistant Superintendent, Shasta County Office Instructional Services, and Judy Flores.

Also, we extend special thanks to Patty Taylor, CCSESA Arts Consultant, who contributed greatly to the development and finalization of the document as well as the CCSESA/CISC Visual and Performing Arts Regional Leads who provided input for this project. It is our hope that this will be a tool for developing quality arts learning courses of study at the middle school level. This document provides excellent examples that will guide the implementation and planning for middle school arts programs.

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Acknowledgements

The California County Superintendents

Educational Services Association and the

Shasta County Office of Education

acknowledge the contributions in the creation of the

Middle Grades Visual and Performing Arts:

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“Art delights, instructs, consoles. It educates our emotions. There are some truths about life that can be expressed only as stories, or songs, or images. I encourage you to use this guide in your schools. I hope it will reopen the conversation between our best minds and the broader public and the results will not only transform society, but also artistic and intellectual life.”

Tom Armelino, Shasta County Superintendent of Schools

About the CCSEA Arts Initiative

California County Superintendents Educational Services Association represents 58 county offices of education throughout the state of California. Knowing that the visual and performing arts contribute to effective schools, the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association with generous support of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation launched a statewide initiative in early 2006 to advocate for and strengthen arts education in California public schools. CCSESA urges every school to weave dance, music, theatre, and visual arts into the fabric of the curriculum providing all students with a comprehensive education, kindergarten through high school. CCSESA supports schools, districts, and communities in each of the state's 58 counties through a fully equipped statewide network. CCSESA is working at the state, regional, county and local levels to impact change in arts education.

CCSESA Arts Initiative VISION AND CORE PRINCIPLES

The visual and performing arts are an integral part of a comprehensive curriculum and are essential for learning in the 21st century. All California students from every culture, geographic region and socio-economic level--deserve quality arts learning in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts as part of the core curriculum.

Rich & Affirming Learning Environments

Create a safe, affirming, and enriched environment for participatory and inclusive learning in and through the visual and performing arts for every group of students.

Empowering Pedagogy

Use culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy that maximizes learning in and through the visual and performing arts, actively accesses and develops student voice, and provides opportunities for leadership for every group of students.

Challenging & Relevant Curriculum

Engage every group of students in comprehensive, well-articulated and age-appropriate visual and performing arts curriculum that also purposefully builds a full range of language, literacy, and other content area skills, including whenever possible, bilingualism, biliteracy, and multiculturalism. This curriculum is cognitively complex, coherent, relevant, and challenging.

High Quality Instructional Resources

Provide and utilize high quality standards-aligned visual and performing arts instructional resources that provide each group of students with equitable access to core curriculum and academic language in the classroom, school, and community.

Valid & Comprehensive Assessment

Build and implement valid and comprehensive visual and performing arts assessment systems designed to promote reflective practice and data-driven planning in order to improve academic, linguistic, and sociocultural outcomes for each specific group of students.

High Quality Professional Preparation & Support

Provide coherent, comprehensive and ongoing visual and performing arts professional preparation and support programs based on well-defined standards of practice. These programs are designed to create professional learning communities of administrators, teachers, and other staff to implement a powerful vision of excellent arts instruction for each group of students.

Powerful Family/Community Engagement

Implement strong family and community engagement programs that build leadership capacity and value and draw upon community funds of knowledge to inform, support, and enhance visual and performing arts teaching and learning for each specific group of students.

Advocacy-Oriented Administrative/Leadership Systems

Provide advocacy-oriented administration and leadership that institute system-wide mechanisms to focus all stakeholders on the diverse visual and performing arts needs and assets of each specific group of students. These administrative and leadership systems structure, organize, coordinate, and integrate visual and performing arts programs and services to respond systemically to the needs and strengths of each group of students.



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Middle Grades Visual and Performing Arts: Content and Delivery Guide

INTRODUCTION

The context for the arts in the middle level grades has changed over the years and recently has presented many challenges for arts educators. However, along with challenges come opportunities to examine the current reality and adjust curriculum and instruction accordingly in order to continue to help students meet standards in the visual and performing arts as well as gain the broad based advantages the arts provide as part of a comprehensive education.

The middle grades are unique in the K-12 educational continuum. At no other time in their school life are students so ever changing, or facing such complexities. This document makes the case that starting with an understanding of *who these students are*, is essential to making the arts relevant to their needs as well as recognizing how much the arts can contribute to their lives. It is not a difficult case to make. Many of the commonly held descriptors of these students in the sixth through eighth grades, define exactly the characteristics the arts, well taught, are so successful in addressing. Middle grade students prefer active over passive learning experiences, favor interaction, prefer to learn things they consider useful and relevant to their lives, and are, in general, trying to understand who they are. They are anxious about how they look, move, talk and get along in the world. Classes in dance, music, theatre and the visual arts are just the place for middle school students to work through these concerns – and be engaged in what *Caught in the Middle* describes as “thoughts and feeling of awe and wonder related to their expanding intellectual and emotional awareness.”

The structure, configuration and approaches of middle schools have largely been about reform over the past ten or fifteen years. From *Caught in the Middle* through *Taking Center Stage (Act One and Two)*, the focus has been upon ways to increase academic achievement related to the tested “basics”. This focus has produced a context that defines the arts as electives in nearly all situations. Thus access to the arts has become highly unequal for California students. However, many innovative approaches can be taken to develop and strengthen arts education offerings. Part Two of this document discusses, however briefly, some of the current conditions, attitudes and practices that impact the quality of arts education at the middle grade levels and how these conditions might be creatively addressed. These include issues of access and equity, breadth vs. depth, including the arts in program improvement schools (and under other difficult conditions), scheduling options, instructional time and the advantages of long range planning for arts education.

Over the last few years, it has become more and more important that arts educators sharpen their focus and come to see these realities as a starting place for new thinking and innovative ways to be successful in providing our students with the arts experiences and learning they so greatly need and deserve. In that light, it is the assumption of this guide, that the more arts educators (and middle grade teachers in general) know about the visual and performing arts strands and content standards, the more effective they can be in meeting the current challenges with imagination and relevance. That is why so much of this guide focuses on helping teachers realize just how useful, interesting, flexible and broad-based the VAPA strands and standards really are.

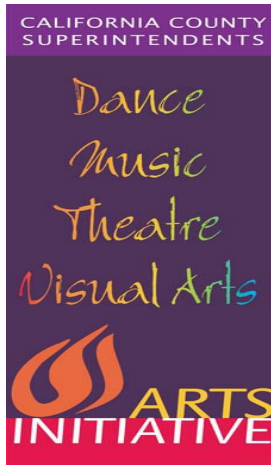
To that end, this Guide features a presentation of a series of ways in which the content strands, standards, and sequence of ideas and concepts of each of the arts disciplines at the middle grade level can be understood and interpreted by educators. Arts specialists teachers are most likely very familiar with the content standards for their art form, at their grade level(s). However, after awhile, it sometimes becomes difficult to see new possibilities. We may overlook connections, or forget just how exciting and open-ended the standards can be. Thus, the “re-viewed” standards found in this guide can be helpful in seeing the content standards in a whole new way. They change the *format*, but *not* the content. They allow arts teachers to more clearly see the sequence of concepts, skills and ideas and the relationships and connections between the ideas *across the strands*. Themes emerge that can be combined to great effect, both in terms of helping students to make connections and in terms of the efficient use of instructional time. These themes are captured by the “spiral curriculum” charts for each of the arts

disciplines and emphasize the movement and layering of ideas across the grades. Both of these ways of looking at the content standards provides teachers with a rational means of making choices about which standards to emphasize (and/or combine) in order to meet the specific needs and match the background and prior knowledge of their particular group of students, especially in situations where instructional time and student access is an issue. The emphasis on themes also makes integrated instruction in the arts more accessible to all teachers.

The largest piece of this “re-presentation” of the VAPA content standards is an analysis of the standards at each grade level. Here, the guide takes an in-depth look at what the standards in each of the arts disciplines is actually saying, grade by grade. The discussion makes clear the assumptions, which underlie the standards in each discipline. The analysis also focuses upon the “layering” of concepts and instructional approaches from grade to grade (and within grades), so that middle school arts teachers, who most likely teach across the 6-8th grade range, can plan a continuum of content that is realistic for the time frame that exists. Finally, the analysis points out the ways in which the content standards focus on certain attitudes and ways of working within the discipline across the strands that help teachers balance their instruction between strands and make more authentic connections between them. The analysis addresses the standards in terms of how content and instructional methods may be selected in the context of the current reality of the typical middle school arts program.

Conditions that effect standards based *instruction* are discussed in the section that follows the “re-viewed standards”, spiral curriculum charts and analysis. The instructional time frame, the nature of the particular arts discipline, instructional support materials and the availability of facilities and equipment all influence the choice of standards emphasis in a real world context. In the end, it is always the choices that teachers make that make the greatest difference in the quality of the arts experience for their students. We hope this guide will be a useful tool for middle grade teachers of all the arts disciplines, as well as teachers who integrate the arts, teaching artists who contribute to the arts education of students and to educators and administrators concerned with the quality of the total educational experience of middle grade students.

Middle Grades Visual and Performing Arts: Content and Delivery Guide



PART ONE **CHAPTER ONE: THE CONTEXT FOR MIDDLE GRADES ARTS EDUCATION**

The Unique Aspects of Middle School Students

Students in the middle grades, usually considered to be grades six through eight, are in the middle of change on the intellectual, physical, psychological, social, moral and ethical levels. There is probably no group of students in our schools who are as complex and ever changing, and who need our support and understanding more. These are the transitional years and everything within the school setting at these grade levels can have important consequences for students. It is essential that everyone who impacts the life of middle school students understand the unique character of their situation in the K-12 continuum.

The concepts, processes, and habits of mind that are essential to learning in the visual and performing arts can play a key role in the development of middle school students. The transition in intellectual development involves a movement from the concrete-manipulative state to the capacity for abstract thought. Thus students can consider ideas contrary to fact, engage in propositional thought, think about the future and formulate goals, and seek insight into previously unquestioned attitudes, behaviors and values. They become increasingly capable of interpreting larger concepts and generalizations. They are, all sources agree, intensely curious. This guide illustrates how standards-based instruction in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts helps students through all of these aspects of intellectual development.

Caught in the Middle: Educational Reform for Young Adolescents (CDE Press, 1987) identifies characteristics of middle school students. If these characteristics are kept in mind while reading this guide one can surmise that they can be addressed effectively

through the learning, thinking, discussing, and doing that occurs through learning and participating in the arts.

The middle school students

- Prefer active over passive learning experiences
- Favor interaction with peers during learning activities
- Are egocentric, argue to convince
- Prefer to learn things they consider useful
- Exhibit independent, critical thought
- Consider academic goals as a secondary level of priority
- Dominate their thoughts and activities with personal and social concern
- Begin to know what they know and do not know (experience metacognition)
- And, are intellectually at-risk and face decisions that have the potential to affect major academic values with lifelong consequences.

Many changes in students are also outlined in *Caught in the Middle*. Students are undergoing tremendous physical change including increases in weight, height and muscular strength. Many of these physical changes explain why they are so concerned with what peers think of them. Any visit to a middle school campus will demonstrate that these students mature at wildly varying rates. There can be considerable lack of coordination and awkwardness. All this is on top of the biological changes going on within their bodies. They are often disturbed by all these changes and become anxious about how they look, move, talk, and generally get along in their world. It may be comforting and motivational for them to reflect on the various sizes and shapes actors come in, and dancers and musicians.

The psychological development of middle grade students is complex and contradictory. They are often erratic and inconsistent, anxious and full of bravado. They try on personalities. They are trying to answer the question, "Who am I?" *Caught in the Middle* says, "...at no other point in human development is an individual likely to encounter so much diversity in relation to oneself and others." Personal and social concerns dominate the thoughts and activities of students at this level. Their peers become their most important reference point. They pay intense attention to popular

media, which can help shape their behavior and fashion. The review of the arts content standards points to many instructional opportunities for students to explore some of these issues through their expression in the arts individually and in small and large group situations.

There is very positive news in relation to the moral and ethical development of middle school students. *Caught in the Middle* maintains that they are “essentially idealistic” and “have a strong sense of fairness in human relationships.” They “experience thoughts and feelings of awe and wonder related to their expanding intellectual and emotional awareness. They ask large, unanswerable questions about the meaning of life”, but do not expect absolute answers. They can be “reflective, analytical and introspective” about themselves and are “willing to confront hard moral and ethical questions for which they are unprepared to cope.” Participating in the arts offers opportunities for students to deal with some of the questions through positive interactions with peers, through the great literature of theatre, and through the non-verbal avenues of expression provided by the visual arts, dance, and instrumental music.

These students have personal concerns above all; they are trying out personalities, are socially oriented, they pay extreme attention to media, they ask large questions and they can be reflective and analytical. The case for the arts grows stronger the more we look at its multiple aims, from the arts-specific to the kinds of competencies or habits of mind to be found in the 21st Century Learning Framework and in the slowly building research both about how the brain learns and about transferable skills developed by the arts that help students succeed across the curriculum and in life.

Taking the characteristics of the middle school students into account, the recommendations of the most influential middle school documents to improve learning at the middle grades level fall under three categories: academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, and social equity. It is part of the intent of this guide to show how the visual and performing arts contribute to each of these areas. The recommendations and strategies common for the middle grades focus on a comprehensive school vision and culture based on a belief that all young adolescents can achieve and on a commitment to do whatever it takes to make that achievement happen. The arts can and need to be part of the commitment to help these students be successful.

The Reality of Electives

Except in magnet or charter middle schools with an arts focus, the visual and performing arts are not treated in the same way as other subjects in the core curriculum, despite being included in federal education initiatives and legislation from national

standards to *No Child Left Behind* to current reform efforts. The arts in the middle schools remain, most often, within the elective program. Art classes are often defined as “interest based” or “exploratory”. The California League of Middle Schools states, “Whereas the core curriculum focuses on students’ academic development and the co-curricular program on their equally important personal and social development, the exploratory/elective program targets both academic and personal growth.” That is a very hopeful declaration for the arts. However there are a number of issues that affect the number, range, time frame and quality of the arts as electives. There is also a great deal of competition among the electives. The arts are typically among some of the possible electives – in some places called “selectives.” In short, student’s access to the arts in the middle grades is not equitable across the state. *An Unfinished Canvas – Arts Education in California: Taking Stock of Policies and Practices*, a research project conducted by SRI International (2007), found that at the elementary level, more than half of California students received at least some standards-based music and visual arts instruction. However, about a quarter of middle school students experienced music and visual arts instruction and about a quarter of high school students received visual arts instruction, while just 14% of high school students received music instruction. The percentages of students receiving theatre and dance instruction were also lower for middle and high schools than for elementary schools.

The Implications of School Size, Configuration and/or Staffing

Certainly school size effects many aspects of the curriculum, but none so much as the number and variety of electives the school can offer to students. Full range elective programs exist for the most part in medium to large size middle schools and traditional junior high schools where the numbers support many sections. The smaller the school, the more difficult it is to have electives, not just in the arts, but in any area. Small schools also have to make some painful choices between the electives they can offer. Music or foreign language? Art or computers? Small schools also may not have the highly qualified teachers they need for such classes in the first place. However many small, usually K-8 schools, have figured out some highly creative ways to offer experiences in the arts anyway.

Attitudes About the Nature of Arts Education at the Middle Grades Level

Much of the middle school reform agenda is about recommendations that will help students learn in multiple dimensions. *Taking Center Stage, Act 2* (CDE Press 2004) has 12 such recommendations. The approaches take into consideration the intellectual, physical, psychological, social and moral dimensions of education. The emphasis in *Taking Center Stage*, as far as the curriculum is concerned, is on language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. However, our focus in this document is on the place of the visual and performing arts in the middle grades. The place of the arts in the

middle grades curriculum tends to reflect how the community and parents think about the nature of arts education and the value they place on a comprehensive education for their children. The nature of the arts program will also depend upon how educators understand and define the goals and educational outcomes of arts education in their schools and districts. The place of the arts is also dependent upon the size, configuration and location of the school and the kind of student population they serve as is also pointed out in *An Unfinished Canvas*.

The Arts and Academic Performance

The arts are a part of the recommendations for success in *Taking Center Stage*. They are referred to as “interest-based courses” and sometimes as “enrichment” courses, on the elective side of the equation. They are linked to providing students with important emotional, physical, and psychological support. The arts are seen as a way for students to learn about themselves which is a primary concern at these grade levels. While acknowledging that some schools have focused primarily on reading, writing and mathematics, the document states “the arts and other electives develop ‘habits of mind’ that assist students in learning all subjects.” That argument for the arts in the middle grades seems to be centered around how the arts can improve brain processes and academic success. *Center Stage*, under its section on the visual and performing arts, cites the work of James Catterall, specifically his essay, “The Arts and the Transfer of Learning” as evidence for this argument. Many arts educators and leaders in the field argue that the arts have intrinsic value, in and for themselves, and certainly the learning that is achieved through the study of dance, music, theatre and the visual arts clearly addresses the multiple needs of young adolescents. The arts engage students in learning. They have cognitive, emotional, social and psychological aspects. After looking carefully at the twelve recommendations in *Taking Center Stage*, it is probably safe to say that there is support for strong arts programs at the middle grade level, both for the learning described in the *VAPA Framework* specifically, and for the role the arts play in the affective learning of students.

Community Expectations and Arts Education

One of the strongest influences on whether there is an arts program for students in the middle grades, and what disciplines it might include, is the community itself. Active, pro-arts parents – band boosters and theatre boosters and “parents for the arts” organizations and community members – can wield much influence on school boards and thus on schools to keep their arts programs strong. Such advocacy tends to develop over time and become part of the traditions that define the community and its schools. Certain arts programs become institutionalized into the very nature of the school and are supported through thick and thin. Motivated parents organize

educational foundations in support of the arts or include arts education as part of various measures and parcel taxes set to support the schools.

This kind of intense support is found in all kinds of communities – affluent neighborhoods, urban, inner-city and rural middle schools. Some middle schools or K-8 schools become known for their band or choir or their drama productions and parents see those activities as helping their students and there is heightened parental support. Perhaps the school has a Mariachi Band that keeps their kids interested in school – as the reason their kids go to school – and are quite adamant about keeping those programs in place. Sometimes, middle grade schools develop arts programs that are highly relevant to the culture and ethnic arts traditions of a community or classes in various dance styles that reflect the ethnic background of the students. These kinds of programs can gather great support and become institutionalized in the school culture.

A recent national Harris Poll reported that 93 percent of Americans consider the arts vital to a well-rounded education. The California PTA has made the return of arts education to our schools, K-12 a high priority since 2000 through their SMARTS: Bring Back the Arts parent/community advocacy campaign.

<http://www.capta.org/sections/programs-smarts/newsletters.cfm>.) Many parents in a wide variety of settings notice that charter, magnet and private schools always seem to have the arts programs that their schools may lack. There has been an increase of arts-centered charter and magnet schools across the state and most of them have above average academic outcomes.

Goals for Arts Education at the Middle School Level

Arts education goals for middle school vary greatly across the state, despite the presence of the *VAPA Framework* and content standards for the four arts disciplines. Local issues and attitudes almost always determine the stance a district and its schools take toward any discipline. It may be useful to think about the learning outcomes for students taking arts classes in the middle grades on two levels: first those outcomes directly related to arts discipline content and guided by the VAPA content standards, and second, those goals related to a broader view of arts education. These goals include certain “competencies” and “habits of mind” that are likely to be developed by participation in arts programs in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts. These broader goals, which can include the 21st Century Skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills), such as the ability to work collaboratively, technology and media literacy, creativity, innovation and problem solving are part of learning in the arts and can be validation and advocacy for existing arts programs and for sustaining and expanding such programs in the middle grades.

Broader Learning Goals and the Arts

Middle school arts teachers will want to demonstrate how the arts classes they teach contribute significantly to district-wide goals for students and can relate arts learning to the broader competencies that are desired. For example, if the school identifies media literacy as a goal, the arts teachers are going to pay close attention to the standards that guide creative and artistic work using new media. If becoming a successful global citizen is a learning goal, all arts instruction is likely to include the content standards under the historical and cultural context strand and include more projects and assignments that help students learn about how the dance or theatre of a culture defines what it values. Music teachers may be motivated to search for more global and multicultural music for their students to learn and perform.

Guiding Principles of the VAPA Framework

The *VAPA Framework* itself puts forth larger, essential ideas specific to arts education that educators need to consider as they develop their local goals. The *VAPA Framework's* overarching goals for teaching the arts to our students are summed up in this passage: "This capacity of human beings to create and appreciate the arts is just one of the many reasons to teach the arts in the schools. Study and practice in the arts refine students' abilities to perceive aesthetically, make connections between works of art and the everyday lives of people, and discuss visual, kinesthetic and auditory relationships."

The essential ideas in arts education as described by the *VAPA Framework* include:

1. The arts are core subjects
2. Arts instruction includes dance, music, theatre and the visual arts
3. The arts enrich and are enriched by other subjects
4. The arts promote creativity, thinking and joy
5. The arts offer different ways to make meaning
6. The arts reflect and influence cultures
7. The arts promote aesthetic literacy
8. Assessment is inherent in the arts
9. Technology expands the arts
10. The arts prepare students for full participation in society

In middle schools (as in high schools) there are typically course outlines for all the classes offered. The most important part of a course description is the content of that course, and everything listed should reflect an alignment with content standards and with an effort to include all of the standards in some meaningful way at some point during the course.

Goals and Content Standards for the Arts

The most basic goal for any arts program or class is that it be standards-based. If that has not been the case over the years, then work will have to be done to understand the standards, get a sense of their scope and sequence, their guiding essential ideas contained within the strands and their particular requirements as seen in the actual grade by grade standards across the arts. That is part of the purpose of this guide. Part Two of the Guide is an analysis of the 6-8 standards in dance, music, theatre and the visual arts. Sometimes it is an excellent idea, even for discipline specialists, to go back over the standards in light of new ideas about teaching and learning, new methodologies, or with an idea for a new focus for the curriculum.

A vision of common goals for the arts program across the levels leads to a coherent approach over all. Content goals for the specific arts disciplines included in the program will be guided by the content standards, but there are many paths to those goals, each with a different emphasis, both in terms of content and delivery. (See the CCSESA Guide, *Perspectives on Arts Education* for more detail about the various approaches to curriculum in the arts at www.ccsesaarts.org .

Access and Equity Issues: the Arts for All Students

One of the most essential ideas from the *VAPA Framework* is that the arts are for ALL students, regardless of location, ethnicity, gender, grade level or socioeconomic level and including children with disabilities. This idea may represent the biggest gap of all between goals and implementation. The SRI research reports that access to arts programs in this state is very unequal and that “students attending high-poverty schools have less access to arts instruction than their peers in more affluent communities.”

Students that attend program improvement middle schools face a narrowing curriculum that generally excludes the arts. Small rural schools where middle grades are included within a K-8 configuration have significantly fewer electives in the arts, sometimes none at all. Even in middle schools where there are electives, students do not have access to all of the arts electives, especially when the school day has been shortened so that only one elective is available at each grade level. Even among the arts, if a student at a middle school with a complete music program selects instrumental music, the yearlong course structure precludes them from taking any other art form.

Offering Courses in All the Arts

One indication of best practice in visual and performing arts programs is for schools to offer courses in all four of the arts disciplines. However, while many middle grade schools have music and visual arts across the grades, few also offer theatre and dance with dance being the most underrepresented of the four arts disciplines in the middle grades in California schools. However, there are districts and schools with highly

developed programs in dance/movement. The problem with such a range of realities is that it is difficult to describe attributes of good practice that exists in many places without making it seem beyond the grasp of schools and districts in other places. It is also the case that many excellent examples of standards-based arts content come from arts magnet and arts-based charter schools. Such examples can be very useful in gathering “outside of the box” ideas for implementing arts instruction.

Time to Teach the Arts

One of the most important goals for arts education at the middle grades is to provide enough time to teach the arts. The arts take time to learn and time to do and time to share with others in performance and exhibition. The content standards for the visual and performing arts are structured to reflect a year-by-year set of concepts, skills and understandings. Standards are to be achieved by students at the end of an academic year, as in any other subject. It would seem to follow that middle grade programs offer the arts electives for a full year, sixth through eighth grade. A long-term arts program goal might be to offer yearlong, or at least semester long courses in all four arts disciplines, at every grade level, 6-8. There are examples of year-long courses in all four disciplines and it could be important to a school building or expanding a program to find out how it has been done elsewhere.

Exposure, Exploration, Enrichment: a Question of Breadth vs. Depth

Many educators believe that it is more important for middle school students to get a sample of all the art forms than it is to immerse themselves in any one of them too soon. The idea is to try the disciplines out and then select one to pursue. For this and many other reasons, the arts tend to be on a “wheel” configuration at the sixth grade level (and maybe beyond that) for periods of time much shorter than a year. Seventh and eighth grade arts classes are typically a semester long, and the usual intent is that students can take the second semester seamlessly. The exception is usually instrumental music, which, in many middle grade schools tends to be offered as a full year course at every grade, and represents a depth over breadth approach. However, there are approaches to instrumental music that could provide more access points for students as they go up the grades, such as electronic music and composition, and ethnically based music. Teachers of short “wheel” arts courses must focus on the key content standards identified in the VAPA Framework and determine which new skills are essential to be taught at this grade level to ensure success at the next grade level as shown on the “Re-viewed” standards in this Guide.

The Middle School as Part of the Continuum of District K-12 Arts Education Programs

In a K-12 district that has an established program in the visual and performing arts, the arts courses at the middle school level will be part of a program that begins in the elementary grades, is expanded and deepened in middle school and refined and focused at the high school level. First, it is important that the middle grade programs be articulated within the school and district. Next, attention should be paid to the two transitions points: from the fifth grade to the sixth grade, especially if students are in a new school, and from the eighth grade to the ninth grade, where the whole standards structure changes. Sixth grade arts teachers must determine the level of prior knowledge students are bringing to their courses and plan accordingly. Eighth grade arts teachers (likely to be the same people) have to understand what the high school proficient level standards look like in the discipline they teach so they can emphasize the standards at their grade level that will best prepare their students to successfully complete their university entrance A-G fine arts requirement in high school. Knowing the high school proficient level standards provides a way for the middle grade arts teachers to work backwards to what they will absolutely need to cover.

Articulation Considerations

K-8 school configurations make the articulation between the elementary and the middle grades arts program much easier. But problems may arise because of the unevenness of the elementary program across the arts disciplines and the possible lack of arts courses at the middle grades level. Maybe there is a very good, coordinated visual arts program, K-5, but no art instruction at the 6-8 grade level. Certainly a major goal would be to find a way to continue the visual arts program at the upper grades, especially as there are likely to be art classes at the high school.

THE CALIFORNIA CONTEXT FOR THE MIDDLE GRADES
Initial Research Report—Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades

California's 1.5 million 6th-, 7th-, and 8th-grade public school students represent one out of eight middle grade students in the United States. Based on these numbers alone, California is important; but its student diversity and variety of school and district configurations add to the state's relevance for any consideration of middle grade education. Grade and district configurations in California vary widely: Among more than 2,000 schools in California with grade spans that included 7th and 8th grade in 2007–08 (CDE, 2008b, pg. 3), about:

- 35% were K–8 schools;
- 41% were 6–8 schools;
- 17% were 7–8 schools; and
- 7% were a variety of other configurations.

In 2008–09, California was home to 1,043 school districts and 746 charter schools. California's middle grade schools are distributed across three different kinds of school districts: K–8 elementary districts, K–12 unified districts, and high school districts (most of which serve grades 9–12). Although the vast majority of middle grade students in the state are enrolled in elementary or unified districts, a small number of high school districts also educate 7th and 8th graders.

The school districts serving California's middle grade students range from very small districts with one school and one person who serves as both school principal and district superintendent—i.e., superintendent-principals—to Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), which served more than 687,500 K–12 students in 2008–09. Middle grade education in California is also influenced by the incredible diversity of the state's students:

- More than 40% of middle grade students in the state live in poverty.
- Statewide across all grades in 2008–09, 49% of California students were Latino, 28% were white, 8.4% were Asian, 7.3% were African American, and the balances were of various other ethnic backgrounds.
- The ethnic distribution of students throughout the state is uneven. For example more than 40% of African American students in California attend public schools in just 13 school districts.

One in five middle grade students in the state are categorized as an English learner (CDE, 2008b, pg. 3). Across all grades, about 85% of English learners (ELs) speak Spanish, and the rest speak a plethora of other languages. California's EL students are distributed unevenly throughout the urban, rural, and suburban areas of the state. EL students are over-represented in Los Angeles County, for example, but are also more than 30% of students in a few small,

largely rural counties in the agricultural area of the state. Although California serves the highest proportion of English learners in the nation and a disproportionate number of low-income students compared to the national average, the resources available to California schools are fewer than those in most other states. In addition, to the extent that California has invested in education reform in the past 15 years or so, that investment has largely centered on the early elementary grades and high school.

For 30 years, California has lagged behind the national average in its expenditures per pupil. In 2006–07, California ranked 49th among all states (and Washington D.C.) in its ratio of teachers to students, at about 74% of the U.S. ratio. Further, California’s ratio of school site administrators to students was 71% of the U.S. ratio, and that of district officials was 39% (EdSource, 2009b). At the same time—given the state’s relatively high cost of living—average educator salaries are the highest in the country.

(Data from the California Department of Education and the National Center for Education Statistics.)

PART ONE

CHAPTER TWO: LEADERSHIP, PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING MIDDLE GRADES ARTS PROGRAMS

The Current Reality

Visual and performing arts programs are not being implemented equitably across California's middle grades as envisioned by the VAPA Framework. In fact, programs have been reduced or cut in many places over the past few years in response to extremely difficult fiscal pressures and/or the pressures of high stakes testing, especially in program improvement schools. There are a great many competing priorities out there, especially at this level, but the arts must remain in the curriculum because so much of what we know is important, relevant and motivating for middle school students is contained in the understandings and ways of working that engagement in the arts provides.

Many middle grade schools of whatever configuration are not where they want to be with the arts. Administrators and teachers would like to offer more than they are able to offer currently. In schools that have established arts programs, there is a concern for sustainability. In places where there is little or nothing, it is daunting to think about beginning from scratch.

But there are signs that narrowing of the curriculum is not the answer. Parents and educators are talking about getting the arts back. The California State PTA initiated its *Smarts: Bring Back the Arts* campaign in 2000 and continues its support of bringing the arts back to our schools. Most recently they published, in collaboration with the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association Arts Initiative, *Be a Leader for Arts Education: A Guidebook to Expand Arts Learning in Public Schools* in which they say, "The PTA has a long-standing commitment to arts education for every student at every school, in conjunction with comprehensive, quality education (<http://www.capta.org/>). The PTA believes that the arts are essential for a creative, engaged, thoughtful, work-prepared, fully educated and civic-minded student population." Their rationale for providing the arts for every child also links to the outcomes described by the arts to the 21st Century Learning Framework. This guide is for parents, teachers and administrators – anyone who is interested in supporting and expanding arts education. The PTA's Guide focuses on action and persistence and most particularly on planning. The PTA document also advocates the use of the planning process described below.

Long Range Planning for Arts Education

One of the most positive things a middle school (or any school with middle grade students) can do is to consider developing a long-range arts education plan. This would accomplish multiple goals. An inclusive planning process would put the arts “back on the table”, it would occasion a close look at the current reality of what is being offered, how and by whom and at what level of quality. The process would identify the gaps, come to a consensus about what the goals and outcomes of a visual and performing arts program at the middle grades should be, and develop new leadership and advocacy through taking part in the process. The planning process can also raise community awareness and develop new relationships between the district and community members.

By identifying actions and benchmarks over a 3-5 year period, a school can move in an incremental way to improve their VAPA program. The specifics of the plan become the guide for all decisions related to the arts over the future years, including fiscal and hiring decisions. It allows a district to make coherent decisions over time in alignment with stated goals. If funding becomes available again, there would already be a plan in place to help make strategic decisions immediately. If conditions change, for better or worse, the plan can be revisited. Many times these VAPA plans can be incorporated into the larger district plans, especially if the arts plans show how they can contribute to the larger goals of the district vision.

An Inclusive Planning Process

There are many kinds of planning processes that might be used to develop a long-range arts education plan. However, there is a process that has been specifically developed for arts education planning by the California Alliance for Arts Education (CAAE). The process is contained in the *Insiders Guide to Arts Education Planning, 2nd Edition* (also available on line (<http://www.artsed411.org>)). The Alliance states that the purpose of the Guide “is to provide a hands-on, how-to planning process for schools, districts and counties, which enables them to assess, envision, and implement quality visual and performing arts programs for their students.” The purposes of system-wide planning in arts education is to:

- Improve access to arts education for all California students through a planning process that engages leaders representing the district, school board, PTA and the community
- Identify, cultivate, and empower arts education leadership among the diverse spectrum of stakeholders and sectors charged with implementing quality arts education in the schools

- Assist parents in becoming advocates in their children’s schools for stronger arts education programs
- Build partnerships and collaborations with community resources

One of the great strengths of this process is the inclusion of a broad range of individuals representing all of the “layers” that will be necessary to implement the plan and, most importantly for the future, the development of leadership in the arts. The outcomes for this kind of long range planning are clear and practical. The idea is that every member of the team has an important piece of the larger puzzle, and each offers a valuable perspective that will contribute to the greater good.” (From the *Insider’s Guide* Introduction).

There are seven stages of the strategic planning process and they include:

- Building a community arts team
- Assessing the current arts education program
- Establishing a district arts policy
- Generating the Strategic Plan, a multi-step process consisting of the practical vision, identifying the strengths and challenges and defining the strategic directions and developing a phased implementation plan
- Developing a funding strategy
- Presenting and adopting the plan
- Implementing the plan

Administrative Leadership in the Planning Process

The kind of planning described above, or any inclusive planning process preferred by a school or district, needs support from the superintendent and site principals. The active participation of the superintendent is a great plus. The participation of principals is essential. A facilitator from outside of the district can focus on the process itself and does not have any agenda beyond helping the group to be as thoughtful and effective as they can be. Once the plan has been completed, it will take administrative support to see to it that it is presented to various groups for their information and/or adoption as well as to guide and monitor the plan’s implementation.

Teacher Leadership for the Arts

Arts specialist teachers of dance, music, theatre and the visual arts have always paid attention to what is going on in their schools – the trends, new approaches, district politics, budget, etc. in order to assure the continuance and improvement of their programs. They have had to be advocates for their subjects on many occasions. In larger schools where there are a number of arts specialists, they establish a visual and performing arts department with a chair-person to represent the group at general department and planning meetings. It is so very important for all of the arts to be on the same page regarding school decisions that could affect their programs, and never to be in a competitive relationship with one another.

Working With Colleagues

Every effort should be made to have an “arts person” at the table when big, school-wide decisions are being discussed, especially those that affect the schedule, and organizational practices such as teaming or establishing “small learning communities” or instituting integrated instruction or project based learning. A concern may be to make sure that the suggested changes do not make it harder for the arts disciplines currently in place to be offered to the most number of students possible within the context of the size and staff of the school. In smaller schools it is important that the arts have a “spokes person” – a coordinator, formal or informal, whose job it is to pay attention to what is being proposed related to time and/or organization or methodology, and find a place for the arts in that proposal.

The Organization of Students and Teachers for Teaching and Learning: Teaming, Small Learning Communities, Integrated Instruction

Over the past few years, middle grade schools have instituted many changes in the organization of students, time and staff, and curriculum delivery systems to better serve the needs of middle grade students. The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform recommended in 2004, that policy makers support the creation of small schools, or, if that was not possible, then that school leaders “break down large middle-grades schools into smaller schools or small learning communities that create a personalized environment for teaching and learning.” The smaller schools or communities then develop interdisciplinary teams that share the same group of students. “Teaming structures vary in many ways – by grade level or multiyear and by size. They are responsible for their students’ core academic courses and sometimes courses in the arts.

The Implications of Teaming for the Visual and Performing Arts

The arts (and other electives and PE) are generally outside the teamed core subjects. However, if there are “houses” or “school-within-a-school” configurations, an arts discipline specialist might be part of each (or rotate among the groups) according to the content or curricular themes that will guide instruction. If the “houses” are thematic (sometimes associated with careers), the inclusion of an arts discipline could be the centerpiece of the more active learning these small learning communities seek to provide. Students could be more engaged in problem solving and project-based learning experiences *through the arts*. This would place the arts instruction, in a more interdisciplinary context, which would require the arts teachers to re-think their curriculum focus in order to link with themes and to be sure they are still meeting the standards for their discipline. However, arts teachers can very successfully coordinate their content (and stay entirely standards based) with the themes and concepts being developed by the teamed teachers.

Planning Curriculum That Supports “Themes”

The academic core teachers usually plan curriculum around their subjects and may not be aware of what the arts could bring to the mix, how the arts could strengthen and support the goals and outcomes of the curriculum approach. Arts teachers can make the connections explicit and offer to plan with the core teachers. Resulting dance, music, theatre or visual arts units would certainly be standards based as the instruction would remain within the context of the learning of the skills and processes of the art form. The academic themes would simply guide the selection of certain subjects, styles, or historical periods, such as a unit on the Harlem Renaissance that builds upon the art of Romare Beardon or the jazz idioms and styles of music and dance of the era, or scripts and plays that portray the issues of the day. Students may take only one class in the arts, but if the content of that class was coordinated with at least some of the themes, the learning on all sides would be expanded and enriched.

Improving Instruction for Students: Understanding by Design

It is not a stretch to organize arts learning around essential themes or questions. That, in effect, is what the *Understanding by Design* (UBD) curriculum development process is about. It is a best practice for planning instruction in all subjects throughout the curriculum. Many other teachers of 6-8th grade students may be using this approach themselves, so if the arts teachers use it as well, especially for the integrated units, it will help to coordinate outcomes with the core teachers.

The Importance of Professional Development

All teachers should seek every opportunity to participate in subject specific professional development that will enhance their discipline knowledge. Under the current economic conditions, schools have been challenged to pay for professional development.

However many county offices of education provide professional development and The California Arts Project sites provide some of the most comprehensive professional development in the arts that is available and scholarships are sometimes available. The institutes are well known for their depth and high level of arts content information, as well as curriculum design.

Many middle school arts specialists teachers have a long standing connection with their professional organizations; California Dance Educators Association (CDEA), California Association for Music Education (CAME), California Educational Theatre Association (CETA) and the California Art Education Association (CAEA). These organizations hold annual statewide conferences as well as regional activities that bring like educators together around timely themes and issues and always include workshops that further discipline information and teaching methodology. These organizations understand the political landscape for their discipline and inform their membership. These kinds of conferences also give arts educators a chance to share best practice and learn from each other.

There is another approach to professional development for arts educators that is very effective and has no cost. They can become a “learning community.” If middle grade teachers find themselves in large districts, this may already be happening under the direction of an arts coordinator or lead teacher. Teachers may meet by discipline across grade levels to talk about such issues as articulation and transitions from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school. Or they may meet by discipline at one grade level, but across the multiple schools in the district to “compare notes.” Once in awhile, in a large district, all of the arts specialist teachers can meet. There are few things more powerful than sharing student work in learning communities. This may be in the form of audio and/or video tapes or portfolios. How well are particular groups of students doing? What kinds of aesthetic problems are they concerned with? What kinds of assessments are being used? All of these ideas would make for a productive focus for such meetings as well as sharing performances or exhibitions that are happening regionally, so teachers can attend each other’s events. Nothing informs teaching quite as well as seeing what others are doing.

The Master Schedule and Competing Priorities

Arts teachers will need to thoroughly understand the issues under consideration in any discussion of instructional time and student/teacher organization in order to take part effectively. The arts teachers themselves may have to come up with an approach that might work for the students they will be teaching.

Decisions about trying a block or flexible schedule open up new possibilities. Many times, tradition and “what has always been” has a huge effect on the design of a master schedule and can keep teachers and administrators from seeing new possibilities. It would seem that the smaller the school, the easier the job of creating a schedule would be, and that is true to some extent. But if the K-8 school is in a position to provide arts instruction for its students, it will take some creative work to develop the delivery system that will make that work.

The Length of the School Day

One of the most basic schedule considerations is the length of the school day. Over the past few years, middle schools throughout the state have been reducing the number of periods in the school day, not because they want to, but mostly as a cost cutting measure. One solution may be to have some form of rotating block scheduling that offers arts classes – usually music and/or visual art, less often but for a longer period of time. The extended time provided by block or flexible scheduling, if it includes more than the academics, is always welcomed by the arts. It allows more to be accomplished when there is more work time and less set-up, clean up and transition time. Music usually prefers shorter classes every day. In K-8 schools where there are fewer middle grade students, most of the instructional time may be taken up by the “basics” and PE with no time left over. If some arts programs are to be maintained at all, they may have to be offered as a zero period before school or scheduled for after school. Taking the arts out of the regular school day is not a direction arts educator’s support, however, as an interim solution, it may be necessary. K-8 schools sometimes use a “pull-out” format for band or other arts classes. This is also an approach with challenges. The academic teachers can decide not to let students go to the music or theatre class for whatever reason, which can be detrimental to instruction in the arts.

No one-size solution fits all, but it can be helpful for leaders to find models in other places that have solved some of the problems they are still struggling with. Certainly middle grade arts magnet and arts-based charter schools have solved the scheduling problems. They have found the time to include the academics! They manage to have it all, (along with typically high test scores) and when one looks at the schedule it is clear that the one thing they have “added back” is instructional time. They almost always have a longer school day than the average middle grade school. Maybe that solution is

currently impossible for many schools, but it is worth keeping in mind as a long-range goal.

The Exploratory Wheel as a Scheduling Device

The elective wheel arrangement has been discussed in other sections of this Guide, especially in regard to the limitations it places on meeting VAPA content standards at the sixth grade level in arts classes on the wheel. However, the wheel is common practice in middle schools and junior high schools across the state. That is probably because it serves several functions. Many administrators have the point of view that the middle grade students should have a broad range of “experiences” across a diverse range of options, from many fields including the arts as part of their education, so that later they can select those that most reflect their interests and abilities.

It would be exciting if there could be a visual and performing arts wheel (outside of a magnet or charter school setting) so students could experience an integrated approach among the arts. Essential ideas and questions could be investigated through each of the arts disciplines so students would understand what is unique about each as well as what connects them all. This approach requires having the qualified staff to teach the classes and considerable planning and might be less open-ended in terms of the schedule, but it could work in large and smaller schools. In smaller schools, perhaps teachers of other subjects who have an interest or background in one or more of the arts could teach an arts integrated wheel period in partnership with a teaching artist from the local arts council or other quality arts provider organizations.

Including the Arts Under Difficult Circumstances

Throughout this Guide, we have tried to focus on what is intended by the VAPA Framework regarding the planning and implementation of visual and performing arts programs and standards-based instruction in the middle grades, without ignoring some of the realities that impact what schools can and cannot actually do. Each difficult situation has its own realities and conditions, but there are some elements in common that can be addressed and some ideas may be appropriate and perhaps helpful.

Keeping the Arts in All Schools Including Low Performing Schools

All students need the arts, and arts classes are very important to students in low performing schools. In response to this, arts educators have proposed different types of curriculum integration that could include one or more of the arts, thinking that the addition of an art form connected by theme or process to math and reading would enliven the instruction and open up modalities for students whose primary learning style is not verbal or mathematical. It is a kind of “arts as differential instruction” point of view. An excellent resource for arts integration is the Kennedy Center’s ARTSEGE —

the National Arts and Education Network — which empowers educators to teach in, through, and about the arts by providing the tools to develop interdisciplinary curricula that fully integrate the arts with other academic subjects. ARTSEDGE offers free, standards-based teaching materials for use in and out of the classroom, as well as professional development resources, student materials, and guidelines for arts-based instruction and assessment. (<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/aboutus/>)

Another choice would be for schools to create partnerships with local, quality arts providers that have well thought out arts programs that they bring to the schools and are taught by artist-teachers who understand the content standards. The artists work in the classrooms along with the credentialed teachers. An artist-in-residence approach can provide wheel-length units of instruction in dance, music, theatre or visual arts. Such residencies can be custom designed to meet the needs of the school. It is unlikely, due to both time and money, that a school could work with all four arts disciplines, 6-8, so the first priority would be to select a discipline and grade level focus. Next, decide if the residency should be arts-centered or integrated in its approach. Finally, details of implementation need to be worked out. For example, would it be feasible to include a six-week (two days a week, 12 lessons) dance unit in PE using a dance artist? It would certainly be the dedicated time needed to assure access to all the students at a particular grade level. The content might be connected to academic themes or, it could be related to many different dance styles. The selected art form could also be integrated into any of the core classes, depending on what themes were to be expanded and enriched through the selected art form.

Urban middle schools have a greater choice of arts providers anxious to work with the schools than do K-8 schools in rural areas. Big cities have cultural institutions with established educational outreach departments and many times they work with the entire district to provide or augment arts instruction in the schools. K-8 schools in smaller communities, however, may have local arts councils or small performing groups or artist associations upon whom they can call for help. In rural areas, the potential artist-teachers in whatever discipline, may know the schools and the students better as well, and be able to plan an approach that fits the school perfectly. The issue in whatever location will likely be the cost. Grant writing, parent support groups, or partnerships with local business and/or industry sometimes helps pay for programs. A few weeks of instruction in an art form is an interim solution and in no way replaces a real, standards-based program taught by credentialed arts specialist teachers.

Mini-Electives

Many small schools with middle grade students have managed to keep some arts in the curriculum as sort of “mini-electives” that can be offered by capitalizing on the skills and backgrounds of the teachers. A social studies teacher might have an undergraduate degree in visual art or an English teacher in drama, or a math teacher could have a great deal of experience in photography. Through a kind of small-scale block scheduling one or two days a week, classes can be traded among teachers so 7th and 8th graders can have a quarter of photography or drama. Teachers who offer these classes can use the arts content standards to guide them just as specialists do. They can select the slice of the art form they can teach comfortably in the instructional time available, and then select the standards they think would be the most relevant for their students. Teachers with these kinds of backgrounds generally enjoy teaching and observing their students in a new context. They may discover that some students have talents and strengths in some of the arts forms that they never would have known about. For the students, there can be a boost in self-confidence that comes with success and engagement.

Many middle grade schools still retain some electives or mini-courses in the use of computers. If such classes are not specifically linked to other academic subjects (as in various learning programs), there is no reason that the basics of operation cannot be taught with the arts as the subject matter. On-line research could be about one of the art forms or about artists and their work in any discipline. Students could learn to navigate the web by learning how to take virtual tours through the world’s finest museums. There are multiple web sites for all of the visual and performing arts. The history of dance in the Caribbean or theatre in Japan could be the subject of research using the computer. The web is an intensely visual media. It would be a great advantage to students to learn about *visual literacy* and the effect the medium has on the message.

Scheduling Options: Before and After School Programs

There are some measures to include the arts where programs within the school day have vanished that involve going to before and after school alternatives. And while these options may not be an arts educator’s first choice, such approaches may keep the arts alive in a school. Zero period is common for band classes, especially in K-8 schools. Music students are usually highly motivated and will do what it takes to get to school early for the class. Even though it is rare to find other arts disciplines in a zero period, it is something to consider. Perhaps dance would be an excellent choice. The physical aspects of dance would certainly wake the students up! It is assumed that any zero period arts class would be standards-based as are classes in the regular school day.

The same applies to any after school arts programs. Sometimes these programs are planned and implemented by the teachers themselves. More commonly, they are developed and taught by artist-teachers, or trained parents or volunteers. Two guides for after school arts programs are available from the CCSESA Arts Initiative website (www.ccsesaarts.org). One focuses on leadership in developing after school programs and is titled *Taking the Lead in After School Arts Programs: Expanding Horizons for Arts Learning*, and the other, *Visual and Performing Arts Learning in an After School Setting*, is directed to those teaching in after school programs. The goal for after school arts programs is to plan a standards-based curriculum and hire effectively trained teachers who can, when appropriate, connect the learning in the after school program to learning that occurs during the school day.

At the middle school level, theatre production can often be found after school, even in places where there is a strong theatre program during the school day. Productions, especially in musical theatre, which is very popular at this level, take a great deal of time and rehearsal. Theatre is multi-arts disciplinary, involving visual art for the sets, scenery and the program design, vocal and sometimes instrumental music, dance and choreography, and of course, technical theatre (lights, sound) and the actors, dancers and singers of the cast. It would be impossible to bring all these students together during the day, so these things have to be done after school. Such productions often involve artist-teachers hired for special tasks: accompanist or choreographer, or technical advisor. There are hardly any experiences in school that can compare with the excitement and engagement to be found in theatrical productions and they are extremely popular with parents and thus are an excellent project for a fund-raising drive in the community.

Commit to the Arts for All Students

The Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, sent a letter in September of 2009 to educational community leaders that said in part, “At this time when you are making critical and far-reaching budget and program decisions for the upcoming school year, I write to bring to your attention the importance of the arts *as a core academic subject* and part of a complete education for all students. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (*ESEA*) *defines the arts as a core subject*, and the arts play a significant role in children’s development and learning processes.”

If we go back to who middle grade students are, what they are like, how they learn and what matters to them and helps them to succeed in life and in school, it is hard to escape the fact that the learning that comes through meaningful engagement in sequential, standards-based instruction in dance, music, theatre and visual arts is vital

and relevant in every way. School and district leaders, teachers and parents can make it happen for them. It takes intent, action and will.

PART ONE

CHAPTER THREE: VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS MAGNET AND CHARTER SCHOOLS FOR THE MIDDLE GRADES

An excellent area to study when exploring the possibility of providing standards-based arts learning to all middle school students is charter and magnet schools. There are many of these schools, K-8, 7-8, and K-12, in California and in other states. They have found a way to provide quality education across all curriculum areas along with providing an array of excellent arts classes. Many of the strategies and scheduling plans that they use can be adapted for use in any middle school. The Internet is an excellent resource for finding these schools. Contact those that may provide insights and ideas that might be beneficial to your school.

In reviewing the philosophy, mission statements, and goals of several charter and magnet schools, one finds many references to “teaching the whole child,” “innovative curriculum,” and “understanding the world.” Charter and magnet school also provide much justification and reasoning for including the arts such as, *“It is the goal of the school that students be offered an art-enriched environment that encourages students to make connections and judgments that validate their learning. Students at a young age who are engaged in the arts, in song, in paints, in drama, in dance learn to express themselves in unique and diverse ways. Arts offer a different way to make meaning.”* Such references refer to the inclusion of arts education, not just as a wheel, but standards-based course offerings. The courses vary according to program, local opportunities and student’s interests. These schools are seeing increasing enrollments and often, there is a long waiting list for students to get enrolled.

Student Outcomes

The visual and performing arts charter and magnet schools refer often to positive learning opportunities, positive group activities and experiencing success throughout the school years. They point to the Partnership for 21st Century Learning Skills and understand that the United States must continue to compete in a global economy that demands innovation which is part of learning in the arts. The U.S. education system must keep up by fusing the three Rs with critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation. These outcomes for student learning are key to learning in the arts.

Other arts charter and magnet schools focus more directly on student achievement in the arts, as stated in the mission statement of the Natomas Performing and Fine Arts Academy in Sacramento County.

Natomas Performing and Fine Arts Academy, 6-12, 6-12

<http://pfaa.natomascharter.org>

“The mission of the Natomas Charter School's Performing and Fine Arts Academy is to prepare 6th - 12th grade students with strong personal interests in the arts to successfully pursue entry into an institute of higher learning and/or a career in the performing and fine arts by channeling their unique skills and talents through an intense, integrated academic and arts program which focuses on a whole-person developmental approach to learning in unity with high academic and artistic standards.”

Programs and Schedules

Arts charter and magnet middle school programs vary greatly for the same reasons that are stated in this document for regular middle schools including school configurations, student enrollment, and the facility. Course offering also vary accordingly. Following is a sample schedule for students in an arts charter school.

<u>6th Grade</u>	<u>7th Grade</u>	<u>8th Grade</u>
Language Arts	Language Arts	Language Arts
Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies
Math	Math	Math
Science	Science	Science
Technology	Art 7	Arts Elective
Arts Preview	Arts Elective	Arts Elective
Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education

Watsonville Charter School, K-6

<http://www.wcsa.santacruz.k12.ca.us/en/charter-watsonville-charter-school-arts>

Watsonville Charter School in central California imbeds visual and performing arts learning into the curriculum of language arts, mathematics, physical education, science, and social studies. Additionally, the arts are taught discretely, as subject matter in and of themselves. State and national standards drive the academic and arts curricula of the school. The school serves a diverse population of students and teaches multiculturalism “to promote the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to function effectively within, and help create and perpetuate a just, humane, and democratic society.” The arts are also included in an extended day program which offers arts enrichment, academic support, service learning, rehearsal time, and after-school field trips.

Parent and Community Involvement

Another common characteristic of arts charter and magnet schools is parent and community involvement. The students have many opportunities to experience community partnerships, guest speakers and visiting artists. Parents are an integral part of the school environment, participating in school governance, helping out in the classroom, sewing costumes or writing grants.

Informative Examples of Arts Charter and Magnet Schools

The following information is from the Redding School of the Arts in northern California, the Ventura Charter School of Arts and Global Education K-8, and the Millikan Middle School and Performing Arts Magnet in Sherman Oaks, California. Each school provides insights into the value of arts education for all students and different approaches used to provide arts learning both as part of a well balanced curriculum and as areas of special focus. This information helps to dispel several myths about including the arts at the middle school level for all students. There is time in the school day to include instruction in the arts, all students’ benefit from arts instruction, and interdisciplinary instruction that includes learning in the arts and learning in other curriculum areas is an effective instructional strategy. There is much more to be learned from these few examples.

Redding School of the Arts, K-8

<http://www.rsarts.org>

Redding School of the Arts (RSA) opened its doors in August of 1999. The school was created at a time when local elementary school's visual and performing arts programs were in rapid decline or nonexistent. The founders believe that education in its entirety

is complete when the arts are included in the academic program and when students are instructed at their academic level. From this educational platform Redding School of the Arts was created. The school serves a diverse ethnic and social economic population reflecting the greater Redding area. However, the learning needs of the students are different. Students attending RSA have a real interest in the arts. This often means students who are low academic achievers but excel in the arts or students who excel in academics and excel in the arts choose to attend. The school has been able to document over time that low academic achievers are personally challenged academically and in the visual and performing arts. Being a small school allows yearly adjustments to the school's class structure such as the combination of grade levels within the school or of the higher-level math classes to meet the students' educational needs.

Redding School of the Arts is recognized nationally for its innovative approach to special education. The educational model focuses on identifying students with exceptional needs as early as possible and meeting their educational needs in a proactive, preventive fashion. In fact, the school received a California Dissemination grant to share the knowledge of providing services to children in a positive direct model where by all students, including the talented and gifted students, benefit. The school has also received the California Creative Schools Award. This was the first time a charter school or an elementary school had received such an award in California.

The school's educational approach can be viewed as a four level pyramid. At the base of this educational pyramid is academic learning that stresses the mastery of reading, writing and mathematics. These fundamental skills are needed in all subjects to ensure academic success. As these three core subjects are reinforced through interdisciplinary instruction, students develop deeper levels of understanding and reasoning of the world around them weaving instruction through science, social science and arts which is represented by the second level of the pyramid. Interdisciplinary units that contain well planned instructional lessons in academic subjects and which include activities in the arts enable children to develop initiative, creative ability, self-expression, self-reflection, thinking skills, discipline, a heightened appreciation of beauty and cross-cultural understanding.

The third level represents the elective program. As students progress in their academic areas an elective program is offered simultaneously. The elective program consists of visual and performing arts classes offered during the afternoon. Students may elect to participate in this program and select their desired classes. The classes may be either theater arts, including stagecraft, dance classes (including ballet, tap, swing and folk), visual arts (including oil painting, sculpture, art appreciation and photography), music (including show choir and violin/fiddle), computer skills and physical education.

At the top of the pyramid is character development. Character building occurs through mutual respect, service or participation in the community, encouraging positive morals, positive group activities and experiencing success in the learning environment. When each level of the pyramid is strong learning is maximized for each individual student.

The Ventura Charter School of Arts and Global Education, K-8

<http://www.venturacharterschool.org>

At this school project-based learning provides opportunities for students to explore real-world issues and questions and to make decisions about how they will find answers and solve problems. Students' activities are constructive and purposeful and allow them to develop independence and responsibility. Children who are excited about what they are learning dig more deeply, expand their interests, and retain what they have learned. They make connections and apply their learning to other problems. This approach allows them to collaborate, build social skills, solve problems, and think critically as is evident in the following example.

Seventh and Eighth Grade Renaissance Project: When analyzing the origins and accomplishments of the Renaissance, students chose an in-depth study focus area of art, science, literature, or drama. Students built a trebuchet using da Vinci's design; studied Renaissance artists choosing one masterpiece to reproduce; chose a scientist and representative experiment to replicate; and studied scenes from several of Shakespeare's plays. The project culminated in a school-wide Renaissance Faire where students dressed in hand-made costumes, exhibited the art pieces and science experiments, demonstrated catapults, and performed scenes from "A Midsummer's Night Dream" and "Romeo and Juliet."

Millikan Middle School and Performing Arts Magnet (6th, 7th, 8th grades)

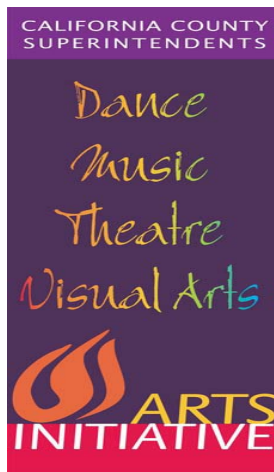
http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/Millikan_MS

The Millikan Performing Arts Magnet offers exceptional training in the disciplines of drama, dance, vocal and instrumental music within the context of a challenging academic atmosphere. The emphasis is on exposing the student to the arts so that the artist can emerge!

Students participate in a well rounded, experience-based, three-year program, representing the richness and diversity of Los Angeles. It is a challenging and engaging standard-based instructional program that attempts to integrate the arts across all curricular areas. Many of the magnet students qualify for our School of Advanced

Studies (SAS) program and participate in honors classes.

Performing arts classes combine instruction in technique and history coupled with performance opportunities that strengthen community partnerships. Highlights of the magnet program include; physical education with a dance emphasis, an introductory arts elective wheel, beginning, intermediate, and advanced classes in drama, film, orchestra, concert band, vocal music and Afro-Caribbean percussion. The musical theatre and costume design classes are unique and culminate in participation in major productions and statewide competitions.



PART TWO **HOW THE CONTENT STANDARDS GUIDE CURRICULUM IN THE MIDDLE GRADES**

The Component Strands as Overarching Ideas – An Overview

The VAPA Framework describes the characteristics of middle grade students (6-8) – their issues, needs and point of view – and how the arts in particular, contribute to their success and well being in these grades. One of the guiding principles of the VAPA Framework is that all students, at all grade levels, have access to the arts. The arts are included in the Education Code, which specifies the adoption of a course of study for grades K-6, that includes the visual and performing arts, and the same requirement for the arts for grades 7-12. The arts are to be studied as discrete disciplines related to each other, and when appropriate, to other subject areas in the curriculum. The visual and performing arts content standards, which are included in the VAPA Framework, should be the basis upon which the arts curriculum is developed. Curriculum based on the content standards requires active learning through the study, practice, creation and performance of work of art. The standards themselves are built upon the larger ideas embodied in five component strands, shared by all four arts disciplines, which describe the scope and range of the standards included in the strand, and, taken together, the goals of arts learning for all students across the grades. These strands embody the “essential understandings” that are absolutely basic to the arts as a whole. They describe the broad landscape and the ways of working and thinking in and about the arts.

Artistic Perception Strand

The *artistic perception* strand asks students to understand that the arts are perceived through the senses: sight, sound, movement, touch, and that we both perceive and respond to what our senses tell us. Artistic perception is also about learning that each of the arts disciplines has its own unique vocabulary, skill base and ways of working. Analyzing and responding, using the vocabulary appropriate to each arts discipline is a focus of this strand. Content standards written under this strand help student to notice, see, hear and move; to explore, discover, learn and practice the “elements” of dance, music, theatre and the visual arts.

Creative Expression Strand

Throughout the grades, artistic perception is directly related to the *creative expression* strand. What is perceived, responded to, described and practiced under artistic perception becomes the basis of hands-on creative work and/or performance within the arts discipline under the creative expression strand. Creative expression is about the making and doing of the art form; it is about actively participating in the discipline. This

strand is at the heart of any standards-based arts curriculum. Content standards written under this strand help students to understand that the skills involved in the arts can be practiced and learned, that is not a matter of “talent”, it is about the steady growth and improvement of the skills necessary to be expressive. Students are asked to be problem solvers and gain in the capacity to think creatively. Middle grade learners will see that the skills they attained in the arts in elementary school are connected to the new skills at the middle grade level, that these skills are sequenced in a way that promotes growth and success.

Historical and Cultural Context Strand

The *historical and cultural context* strand insures that students understand the historical contributions and cultural dimensions of an arts discipline. This strand helps students learn about the place and role of the arts around the world, over time, past to present. The *VAPA Framework* states that students are to analyze the roles, functions, and development of the arts disciplines in cultures throughout the world noting human diversity as it relates to that discipline. Students learn how both the historical period and the culture, including our current, modern culture, define the dance, music, theatre and visual arts that is produced and, in turn, how those art forms help us to understand the culture of a particular period or place. Attention to historical and cultural context allows teachers to integrate learning in the arts with many of the themes and important ideas from social studies and literature. This strand also helps students appreciate the diversity of the arts over time, place, culture and society.

Aesthetic Valuing Strand

Aesthetic valuing refers to making informed judgments about the quality of works of art (or if something is a work of art). What is being judged may be the work of famous artists, composers, choreographers, writers, directors or actors, or one’s own work, or the work of peers. In order to make these judgments, students must go back to the “elements of art” and the skill base unique to the discipline (from the artistic perception strand) and be able to use the specific vocabulary of that discipline in making such judgments. This strand involves students in analyzing and critiquing works of art. Content standards written under this strand help students to understand that art, including one’s own, has meaning and can be judged as to quality. Students learn to articulate their own opinions and point of view about works of art, performances, and other forms of artistic experiences, with clarity and reason. The strand isn’t about being “right” as there are many “right” responses. But it does require students to get beyond “likes and dislikes” only and base opinions on their understanding of the skills, and the expressive possibilities of the discipline.

Connections, Relationships, and Applications Strand

This strand involves connecting and applying what is learned in one arts discipline and comparing it to learning in the other arts, other subject areas, and careers in the arts. In many ways, this is the integration strand. It encourages students to make connections from themes in the arts to other parts of the curriculum, as well as from themes from other areas of the curriculum to the arts. Standards written under this strand add multiple dimensions to how students understand important ideas and multiple ways of expressing these understandings. For example, the skills learned in theatre connect to the language arts curriculum, and skills in drawing and design help students make more effective visual representations of information from science and social studies. This strand also addresses certain “habits of mind” (identified by the research team of Hetland/Winner for Harvard Project Zero and included at the end of Chapter 3) and competencies consistent with success such as collaboration and cooperation, time management, persistence, and creative problem solving that contribute to lifelong learning which have been identified as being among the 21st Century Learning Skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills).

The “Re-viewed” Content Standards

The content standards were developed to make the essential ideas of the component strands explicit. In the *VAPA Framework*, the component strands are separated from each other but combined on a single page across the four arts disciplines – dance, music, theatre and the visual arts (always in that order), grade by grade, Kindergarten through grade eight. (The high school standards are in a different format). For example, teachers can see the sixth grade standards for dance, music, theatre, and visual art under aesthetic valuing, or historical and cultural connections on a single page. Key standards, which identify ideas, concepts, and experiences, that are critical to student achievement at certain times in their artistic and cognitive development, appear on a single page at the beginning of each grade level section across the strands for each discipline.

This arrangement highlights a four-discipline focus across each component strand, and across the grades as well as putting the emphasis on each separate strand, one at a time. It would take a different kind of arrangement to see all the content standards for a single discipline together. It would take yet another kind of arrangement to see a single strand for a single discipline over a grade range. This is the arrangement of the re-viewed standards in this guide, as it is in the *Arts in the Elementary Classroom: A Visual and Performing Arts Content and Program Guide* published by CCSESA in 2008 (available at www.ccsesaarts.org).

With this point of view, a teacher can see the complete set of standards for aesthetic valuing in any one of the arts disciplines, say, K-5 (in the Elementary Guide) or 6-8 in this Middle School Guide. With the re-viewed standards, all of the standards for any

one discipline are together in one section. This arrangement makes it possible for teachers to see the instructional sequence implied by the standards under each strand, as well as to see the connections among the strands and standards themselves within a single discipline. This way of looking at the standards is intended to make explicit the *sequence* of the understandings, concepts and skills over the middle grades, (or any other grade level span, K-8). This arrangement will be particularly useful to middle grade arts teachers who are looking for the whole set of standards for their own discipline. It is also highly likely that the middle school arts teachers will teach more than one grade level within the discipline and will have mixed grade level classes. Thus it becomes even more important to see at a glance what came before and what comes after in any of the strands, in their discipline.

Combined Artistic Perception and Creative Expression

There is another important change in the formatting of the re-viewed standards in this guide. The artistic perception and creative expression strands have been combined. It is a natural combination. Together they provide the complete picture of the skills, vocabulary and processes within each discipline. These two combined standards contain about 80% of all the skills in each discipline that are necessary for personal expression. (There are still some skills within the other strands). They are also strongly interrelated in each discipline: content that is introduced, practiced, viewed, discussed or analyzed in artistic perception is expanded into individual or group work within the specific standards under creative expression. In other words, the artistic perception strand becomes the basis of the creative expressions strand in many cases. With these two strands linked, it is also easier to see how the content is layered and spiraled and thus how each discipline's skill-based content standards are sequential over the grades.

In the performing arts instruction tends to focus on the perception and creative expression strands – where all the technical skills reside. However, the other strands can be and are, successfully integrated into all phases of instruction in the performing arts as *the context for the learning* including practice and rehearsal in many quality arts programs. The other strands enhance such instruction in untold ways, bringing richness and complexity and multiple points of view to the technical tasks. And, at least in a school setting, performance may not be the outcome we wish for all students. The process by which students arrive at performance (or exhibition), including the depth of their knowledge around the styles, themes, cultural significance, meaning and value of what they are doing, are equally and for some students even more important.

The Verbs of the Content Standards

The language of the standards, the 1.1, 2.3, 3.2 etc. under each strand, is verb-driven. The verbs are formal and always begin with the unstated sentence “students will”, as in “students will... *demonstrate the ability to, or to identify, perceive, combine, perform,*

explain, dramatize, and respond to various things. It is very helpful to examine those verbs and see the actual action called for because it is what the students are asked to do with the content that is the basis of the pedagogy. It is also the most important element in making sure that students are involved in meaningful study of the discipline. The verbs also point to the methods or approaches teachers might take toward assessment of student outcomes. Thus the first column of the “re-viewed” standards are the verbs or tasks, *exactly* as they are written in the standards, separated for clarity from the content, which appears in the second column, again, exactly, word for word, as it does in the standards. *No wording from the VAPA standards has been changed in any way.* It is important, because to ask students to *analyze, interpret, compare and contrast, or construct and describe*, is to ask students to engage in complex, higher order thinking skills which give the standards much of their power.

The Third Column: Suggestions for Teachers

There is a third column in the re-viewed standards. It contains suggestions for teachers relating to some of the specific standards. What appears in that column is just that: suggestions – sometimes related to vocabulary or definitions, sometimes to links to other subjects, sometimes helpful references, sometimes reminders. Perhaps teachers could add to the list of suggestions and share them with each other.

The Spiral Curriculum

The spiral curriculum charts provide a summary of each of the arts discipline strands and content standards across the middle grade span. The focus here is on the *content* part of the standards. The organizing principal this time is the theme, idea, subject or approach that unites a cluster of standards, not just in one grade level, but much more importantly, across the grade span. One can see at a glance when a concept is introduced in the sixth grade and when it is addressed again in the seventh and eighth grades. The concepts are visually lined up across the page so that it is easy to see the curriculum layers across the grades and how the layers becomes more complex as they go up the grades.

Sometimes an idea or concept is introduced at the sixth grade level and is not mentioned again specifically in subsequent grades. In that case, the spiral curriculum chart shows arrows across the grade levels indicating that the idea is on-going from the point of introduction onward. For example, in the visual arts under artistic perception/creative expression, *sixth grade* students are to discuss theme, genre, style, idea, and media differences, but there is no parallel standard at the seventh or eighth grade level. Those ideas, so important to discussing and making art, will always be present and it is assumed that teachers will continue to include them in their lessons and units.

The other strands, too, are part of the spiral curriculum charts for each discipline. The historical and cultural context strand and the aesthetic valuing strand spiral ideas and concepts, rather than technical skills for the most part. Although the connections, relationships and applications strand is included in the spiral curriculum chart, it is not at all sequential, and there may or may not be themes that move across the grades, depending on the discipline. This strand is more a list of integration ideas that pick up on some of the skills and concepts from the other strands at a particular grade level.

Why Standards Analysis?

The better one understands the content standards in the context of teaching and learning, the easier it is to use them with intent and purpose in ways that do meet the needs of all students. The standards are the “what” not the “how”, which is always left up to the teacher who knows his/her students better than anyone. It also becomes easier to use them to guide the very hard work of creating a relevant, engaging and sequential curriculum that assures that students at whatever grade or level of experience with the discipline can grow and be expressive.

The re-viewed standards and the spiral curriculum charts for dance, music, theatre, and visual arts grades six, seven, and eight follow. They will help administrators, teachers, and parents understand the scope and sequence of what students will know and be able to do in one or more of the arts by the time they are ready to enter high school. Ideally students will have the opportunity to learn and participate to some degree in all of the arts disciplines.

Dance

Re-Viewed Dance Standards

Spiral Curriculum

Standards Analysis

“Re-Viewed” DANCE STANDARDS
6-8 Artistic Perception and Creative Expression Combined

(Technical Skills, Concepts and Vocabulary)

SIXTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Demonstrate	focus, physical control, coordination and accurate reproduction in performing locomotor and axial movement	Remember Gardner’s kinesthetic intelligence/physical memory. Consult with PE specialist on alignment as above – 5 th grade.
Include	a variety of force/energy qualities into executing a full range of movements	
Identify and use	force/energy variations when executing gesture and locomotor and axial movements	Think contrasts; look for lessons that link with the physical environment, especially physics
Use	the principles of contrast, unity, and variety in phrasing in dance studies and dances	These ideas can be related to visual art as an example
Describe and analyze	movements observed and performed using appropriate dance vocabulary	Keep a “word wall” for vocabulary
Invent	multiple possibilities to solve a given movement problem and	Video tape the ideas to assist in selection and “editing” the dance
Develop	the (above) material into a short study	
Compare and demonstrate	the difference between imitating movements and creating original material	Understand that this is what separates creating dance from learning dance steps
Describe and include	dance forms into dance studies	

Demonstrate	the ability to coordinate movement with different musical rhythms and styles such as ABA form, cannon	Consider how the music can influence/change movement
Use	the elements of dance to create short studies that demonstrate the development of ideas and thematic material	Consider having a guest dance artist help students with some of the technical skills
Demonstrate	awareness of the body as an instrument of expression when rehearsing and performing	Establish expectation for rehearsal time
Revise, memorize, and rehearse	dance studies for the purposes of performing for others	Develop class norms for the use of rehearsal time
Demonstrate	an ability to cooperate with a wide range of partners and groups when imitating, leading, following, echoing, and sequence building	Show DVD's or video of partner dances from many different genres
SEVENTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Demonstrate	increased focus, physical control, coordination, skill, and accurate reproduction in performing locomotor and axial movement	
Demonstrate	increased ability and skill to sustain longer and more complex movement sequences for expression in a variety of dance styles	
Demonstrate risk taking in generating	bigger and stronger movements through space in rehearsal and performance	
Identify and use	a wider range of space, time, and force/energy to manipulate locomotor and axial movements	
Use	appropriate dance vocabulary to describe everyday gestures and other movements observed in viewing live or recorded dance performances	

Create, memorize, and perform	improvised movement sequences, dance studies, and choreography with dynamic range and fulfillment	
Demonstrate the ability to use	personal discovery and invention through improvisation and choreography	
Demonstrate the ability to use	dance elements to develop dance phrases reflecting various musical rhythms, styles, and dynamics	
Demonstrate	skill in using ideas and themes to develop simple dance forms (e.g., rondo, ABA form).	
Demonstrate in the ability to interpret and communicate	performance skill through dance	In this, the verbs are the most important. Emphasis is on performance, interpretation and communication
Collaborate	with others in preparing a dance presentation for an audience (short informal dance, lecture/demo, evening concert)	
Demonstrate	increased originality in using partner or group relationships to define spatial floor patterns, shape design, and entrances and exits	Originality is the key
EIGHTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Demonstrate increased ability and skill to apply	the elements of space, time, and force/energy in producing a wide range of dance sequences	
Demonstrate capacity	for centering/shifting body weight and tension/release in performing movement for artistic intent	
Demonstrate	greater technical control in generating bigger and stronger movements through space in rehearsal and performance	

Analyze Apply	gestures and movements viewed in live or recorded professional dance performances and that knowledge to dance activities	
Identify and analyze	the variety of ways in which a dancer can move, using space, time and force/energy vocabulary	
Create, memorize, and perform	dance studies, demonstrating technical expertise and artistic expression	
Expand and refine	a personal repertoire of dance movement vocabulary	
Apply	basic music elements to the making and performance of dance (e.g., rhythm, meter, accents).	
Record	personal movement patterns and phrases, using a variety of methods (e.g., drawings, graphs, words).	
Demonstrate in the ability to	performance skill project energy and express ideas through dance	In this, the verbs are the most important. The emphasis is on performance, interpretation and communication
Demonstrate	The use of personal images as motivation for individual and group dance performances	
Demonstrate	originality in using partner or group relationships to define spatial patterns and the use of overall performing space	Originality is the key

“Re-Viewed” DANCE STANDARDS
6-8 Historical and Cultural Context

(Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of the Dance)

SIXTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Compare and contrast	features of dances already performed from different countries	Look at (and try out) line dances, circle dances, square dances
Explain	the importance and function of dance in students’ lives	Use biographies of famous dancers as a starting point
Explain	the various ways people have experienced dance in their daily lives such as Roman entertainments, Asian religious ceremonies, baby naming in Ghana, Latin American celebrations	Check out one of the most complete sites for dance: www.humanKinetics.com under dance for links, books, DVD’s. Etc for all grades. There are also many dance history sites
SEVENTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Identify and perform	dances from countries studied in the history-social science curriculum	Plan with the social studies teachers; locate and evaluate various videos, CD’s and DVD’s of examples of folk dancing before showing them
Explain	the function of dance in daily life during specific time periods and in countries being studied in history-social science (e.g., North African, Middle Eastern, and Central American dance in ceremonies, social events, traditional settings, and theatrical performances)	This will require students to research dance in cultural settings. Provide some on-line starting points for the students; check with the school library to see what they have
Explain	how dance functions among people of different age groups, including their own	Maybe have the students do a survey among their friends or in another class

EIGHTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Compare and contrast	specific kinds of dances (e.g., work, courtship, ritual, entertainment) that have been performed	
Explain	the variety of roles dance plays among different socioeconomic groups in selected countries (e.g., royalty and peasants)	
Describe	the roles of males and females in dance in the United States during various time periods	

**“Re-Viewed” DANCE STANDARDS
6-8 Aesthetic Valuing**

(Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works of Dance)

SIXTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Apply	knowledge of the elements of dance and the craft of choreography to critiquing (spatial design, variety contrast, clear structure, etc.)	Introduce the work of famous choreographers, especially in modern dance
Propose	ways to revise choreography according to established assessment criteria	Be sure students understand what a choreographer does: have them take turns being the lead as the choreographer in their small groups. Establish a rubric for the work
Discuss	the experience of performing personal work for others	Have students keep personal dance journals that keep track of their personal experiences with dance
Distinguish	the differences between viewing live and recorded dance performances	Record in the dance journals
SEVENTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Demonstrate	understanding of the elements of dance and the craft of choreography when critiquing two kinds of dance (e.g., solo, duet)	
Identify	assessment criteria used for outstanding performances in different styles of dance (e.g., theatre, social, ceremonial)	
Explain and analyze	the impact of live or recorded music on dance performances. (Recorded music is consistent. Live music can be altered)	

Explain	how different venues influence the experience and impact of dancing (e.g., a studio setting, traditional stage, theatre in the round)	
EIGHTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Identify	preferences for choreography and...	
Discuss	those performances, using the elements of dance	
Explain	the advantages and disadvantages of various technologies in the presentation of dance (e.g., video, film, computer, DVD, recorded music)	
Describe and analyze	how differences in costumes, lighting, props, and venues can enhance or detract from the meaning of a dance	

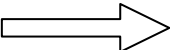
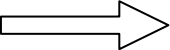
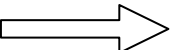
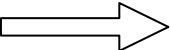
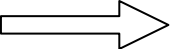
“Re-viewed” DANCE STANDARDS
6-8 Connections, Relationships and Applications

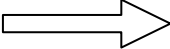
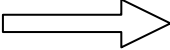
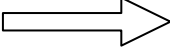
(Connecting and Applying Dance to Other Art Forms and Subject Areas)

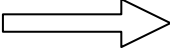
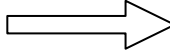
SIXTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Describe	how other arts disciplines are integrated into dance performances (music, lighting, set design)	Research famous artist/dance collaborations (Picasso, Matisse, etc. did the sets and backgrounds for famous dance choreographers)
Describe	the responsibilities a dancer has in maintaining health-related habits (balanced nutrition, regular exercise, adequate sleep)	Have students keep a dance journal
Identify	careers in dance and dance-related fields (teacher, therapist, videographer, dance critic, choreographer)	Have students do on-line research on one of these areas
SEVENTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Identify and use	Different sources to generate ideas for dance compositions (e.g., poetry, photographs, political/social issues)	
Describe	How dancing builds physical and emotional well-being (e.g., positive body image, physical goals, creative goals, focus/concentration)	
Appraise	How time management, listening, problem-solving, and teamwork skills used with other dancers in composing and rehearsing a dance can be applied to other group activities	

Research and compare	Careers in dance and dance-related fields	
EIGHTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Identify and compare	How learning habits acquired from dance can be applied to the study of other school subjects (e.g., memorizing, researching, practicing)	
Describe	How dancing builds positive mental, physical, and health-related practices (e.g., discipline, stress management, anatomic awareness)	
Research and explain	How dancers leave their performing careers to enter into alternative careers	

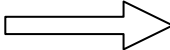
THE SPIRAL CURRICULUM FOR DANCE IN THE MIDDLE GRADES

GRADE SIX	GRADE SEVEN	GRADE EIGHT
ARTISTIC PERCEPTION AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION: DISCIPLINE SKILLS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate focus, physical control and coordination • Demonstrate accurate reproduction in locomotor and axial movement • Demonstrate awareness of the body as an instrument of expression • Use appropriate dance vocabulary to describe movements observed and performed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements: Identify and use force/energy variations when executing gesture and locomotor and axial movement • Elements: Include a variety of force/energy qualities into executing a full range of movements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate increased focus, physical control and coordination • Demonstrate increased skill in accurate reproduction in locomotor and axial movement <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;"></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate dance vocabulary to describe everyday gestures and other movements observed in viewing live or recorded dance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements: Identify and use a wider range of space, time and force/energy to manipulate locomotor and axial movement • Elements: Generate bigger and stronger movements through space 	<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements: Identify and analyze the variety of ways in which a dancer can move, using space, time and force/energy • Elements: Demonstrate increased ability and skills to apply the elements of space, time and force/energy in producing a wide range of dance sequences • Elements: Demonstrate greater technical control in generating bigger and stronger movements through space (rehearsal and performance) • Elements: Demonstrate capacity for centering/shifting body weight and tension/release in performing movement for artistic intent • Elements: Analyze gestures and movements view in live or recorded professional dance performances and apply the knowledge to dance activities

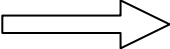
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements: Use the elements of dance to create short studies that show the development of ideas and thematic material • Form: Use the principles of contrast, unity, and variety in phrasing in dance studies and dances • Personal expression: Invent multiple possibilities to solve a given movement problem and develop the material into a short study • Music: Coordinate movement with different musical rhythms and styles • Compare and demonstrate the difference between imitating movements and creating original material • Performance: Revise, memorize and rehearse dance studies for the purposes of performing for others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate increased ability and skill to sustain longer and more complex movement sequences for expression in a variety of dance styles • Form: Use ideas and themes to develop simple dance forms (rondo, ABA) • Personal expression: Demonstrate the ability to use personal discovery and invention through improvisation and choreography • Music: Use dance elements to develop dance phrases reflecting various musical rhythms, styles, and dynamics • Performance: Create, memorize and perform improvised movement sequences, dance studies and choreography (with dynamic range) • Performance: Demonstrate performance skill in the ability to interpret and communicate through dance 	  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal expression: Expand and refine a personal repertoire of dance movement vocabulary • Personal expression: Record personal movement patterns and phrases, using a variety of methods, such as drawings, graphs, words • Personal expression: Demonstrate the use of personal images as motivation for individual and group dance performances • Performance: Create, memorize and perform dance studies demonstrating technical expertise and artistic expression • Performance: demonstrate skill in the ability to project energy and express ideas through dance 
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration: Demonstrate an ability to cooperate with a wide range of partners and groups (imitating, leading, following, and sequence building) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration: Demonstrate increased originality in using partner or group relationships to define spatial floor patterns, shape design, and entrances and exits • Collaboration: Collaborate with others in preparing a dance presentation for an audience (short informal, lecture/demo, concert) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration: Demonstrate originality in using partner or group relationships to define spatial patterns and the uses of overall performing space 
HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and contrast features of dance performed from different countries • Explain the importance and function of dance in student's lives • Explain the various ways people have experienced dance in their daily lives (examples: Roman entertainments, Asian religious ceremonies, baby naming in Ghana, Latin American celebrations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and perform dances from countries studied in the history/social studies curriculum • Explain how dance functions among people of different age groups, including one's own • Explain the function of dance in daily life during specific time periods and in countries being studied in social studies in ceremonies, social events, traditional settings, and theatrical performances - (examples: North African, Middle Eastern, and Central American) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and contrast specific kinds of dances – work, courtship, ritual, entertainment • Describe the roles of males and females in dance in the United States during various time periods • Describe the variety of roles dance plays among different socioeconomic groups in selected countries (example: royalty and peasants) 

AESTHETIC VALUING

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply knowledge of the elements of dance and the craft of choreography to critiquing (such things as spatial design, variety, contrast, clear structure, etc.) • Propose ways to revise choreography according to established assessment criteria • Distinguish the difference between viewing live and recorded dance performances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the elements of dance and the craft of choreography when critiquing two kinds of dance (solo, duet, etc.) • Identify assessment criteria used for outstanding performances in different styles of dance (example: theatre, social, ceremonial) • Explain the impact of live or recorded music on dance performance (recorded music is consistent, live music can be altered) • Explain how different venues influence the experience and impact of dancing (examples: studio setting, traditional stage, theatre in the round) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify preferences for choreography and discuss those performances -- the vocabulary of the elements of dance <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the advantages and disadvantages of various technologies in the presentation of dance (examples: video, film, computer, DVD, recorded music) • Describe how difference in costumes, lighting, props, and venues can enhance or detract from the meaning of a dance
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CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS AND APPLICATIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration: Describe how other arts disciplines are integrated into dance performances (music, lighting, set design) • Health: Describe the responsibilities the dancer has in maintaining health-related habits (balanced nutrition, regular exercise, adequate sleep) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration: Identify different sources to generate ideas for dance compositions such as poetry, photographs, political/social issues • Health: Describe how dancing builds physical and emotional well being through positive body image, physical goals, creative goals, focus and concentration • Habits of mind: Appraise how time management, listening, problem-solving, and teamwork skills used with other dancers in composing and rehearsing a dance can be applied to other group activities 	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health: Describe how dancing builds positive mental, physical and health-related practices such as discipline, stress management, anatomic awareness) • Habits of mind: Identify and compare how learning habits acquired from dance (memorizing, researching, practice) can be applied to the study of other school subjects
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<p>• Careers: Identify careers in dance and dance-related fields (teacher, therapist, videographer, dance critic, choreographer)</p>	<p>• Careers: Research and compare careers in dance and dance related fields</p>	<p>• Careers: Research and explain how dancers leave their performing careers to enter into alternative careers</p>
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THE STANDARDS ANALYSIS FOR DANCE 6-8

What are the essential understandings of the strands for dance? What do the dance content standards say? What will students learn and be able to do? How do the standards guide curriculum?

In the dance standards, under the combined strands of artistic perception and creative expression, sixth grade students are introduced to a very big idea, which becomes a theme for the entire set of dance standards throughout the grades from this point through high school. That is that students will come to understand *the difference between imitating movements and creating original materials*.

This is the difference between what might be called top down choreography – dance steps developed by others that students are taught, and practiced until they can reproduce them with accuracy, and *original choreography which is developed by the dancer him/her self*. The dance standards are written in order to help *all students* explore and create within the discipline of dance. Most of the skills and concepts in the dance standards can be taught through multiple dance styles, including students developing their own original choreography to create their own dances.

Sixth Grade

Many sixth graders have had little or no dance experience in elementary school. However, dance is highly accessible to students at this level, even to those without experience. The elements of dance from the first five grades can be taught more quickly to the older students. They can experience locomotor (progressing through space) and axial (anchored in one place) movement right away and understand why these are basic building blocks of dance. The content standards under artistic perception and creative expression ask that sixth grade students first and foremost develop *focus, physical control* and *coordination* and that they remember that their body is an instrument of expression. Students display a measure of control and discipline to be successful in dance as dance skills develop. In the earlier grades, students learned about their personal space and the personal space of others. Movement becomes more deliberate and less haphazard than it was in elementary school, when students were in a constant mode of experimentation. Sixth grade students are also bigger and take up more space than young children, so there is an element of safety as well as creativity to consider.

Artistic Perception and Creative Expression - Sixth Grade

Control will be necessary for students to learn the next big idea in the perception and expression strands, which is to demonstrate accurate reproduction of a variety of locomotor and axial movements. Students are learning all the ways they can move through space. Over time, and it doesn't take long, sixth grade students are combining multiple locomotor movements across the floor in lines and then in various floor patterns as directed. Axial movements though organized around the axis of the body, (stretching, bending, turning in place, gesturing) must have equal control, as they can be more subtle and need to be defined and deliberate. These movements are put into various sequences and students are asked to demonstrate the sequence correctly many times over.

Students are re-introduced to the dance elements of *force and energy*, which refer to ways to go from “potential energy” to “kinetic energy”. The basic concept is introduced to first graders, and continues throughout the grades. Force and energy in dance have to do with weight and gravity as well as emotional and spatial relationships. These concepts are applied to both locomotor and axial movement. Force and energy are also attached to gesture, where the goal is to gain a full range of movement. As the students explore force and energy through locomotor and axial movement under the artistic perception strand, they apply the ideas under creative expression and students develop short studies around a theme for an audience – the audience most often being fellow members of the class. These studies are very short, about 1-3 minutes in duration. The teacher typically sets up the context or provides the theme or has a list from which students select a theme for the studies. Under creative expression, sixth graders are also to begin to “coordinate their movements with different musical rhythms and styles, such as ABA or canon. Dance teachers may start out with a variety of rhythm instruments rather than music, but will eventually introduce musical elements. Usually students are working in partners, small groups or with the whole class and the standards here emphasize that they cooperate with partners and groups.

Historical and Cultural Context- Sixth Grade

The sixth grade historical and cultural context strand focuses on a few broad concepts. Students should be exposed to and begin to understand the role of dance in the lives of people from other cultures, past and present, especially as it relates to celebrations, entertainment and religious ceremonies. Several cultures are mentioned as starting places, but it would be within the standard to select other cultures and contexts. Dance, from the point of view of the audience, is a visual experience, so students should see dance from other cultures on video or CD. As students see dance in this context – not as a formal performance, but as a part of life -- they are also asked to discuss how dance functions in *their own life*. This opens up many possibilities. Students may cite

the rise of dance on television as a competition in shows like “Dancing with the Stars” or “So You Think You Can Dance?” Students might talk about how these shows have affected the way they and others view dance in our culture.

Aesthetic Valuing- Sixth Grade

Since students will have applied their knowledge of the elements of dance and the craft of choreography under the creative expression strand to creating short dance studies, the focus here will be the application of the dance elements and vocabulary to describing the dance that they see and making informed judgments about the quality of dance – their own, peers and professionals. As students become more familiar with dance terminology, it becomes easier to describe in precise terms. They will be able to identify the quality of the energy, or the patterns of the pathways, or the kind of axial movement occurring in an observed dance. Learning vocabulary gives students a focus for observing and critiquing dance. Students are also to use their knowledge of the elements of dance and its vocabulary, to propose ways to revise choreography according to established assessment criteria. When small groups share their dance study, others in the class will have the clear responsibility to look carefully – to really see what is going on – and to make carefully considered suggestions. Sometimes the suggestions are not about improvement per se, but more about “what would happen if you tired...” It is, about experimentation and creativity rather than critique and meeting criteria. Finally, students are asked to distinguish the difference between viewing live and recorded dance performances.

Connections, Relationships and Applications - Sixth Grade

This last strand is divided between three ideas: dance as an integrated art form, identifying careers in dance and dance-related fields and the importance of health-related habits to the young dancer. In the standards from the sixth grade on, there is a spiraling of the standard that links dance and health. At the sixth grade level, students are to describe the responsibilities a dancer has in maintaining health-related habits. The inclusion of health related issues in the dance standards speak to the fact that dance is an intensely physical art form. It addresses a concern, across the grades that students are physically fit and ready to move. The standards also recognize that dance can contribute to health and fitness. At the sixth grade level, the focus is on balanced nutrition, regular exercise and adequate sleep.

Seventh Grade

Dance standards at the seventh grade level call for increased skill, focus, accurate reproduction, variety, use and application of appropriate vocabulary, improvisation, and personal discovery as well as more emphasis on performance that demonstrates artistic communication through dance. Seventh graders are always working on better physical control and coordination, and increasing their ability to remember and reproduce movement sequences accurately as well as to make them longer and more complex. This is to happen using a variety of dance styles. Dance curriculum at this level, especially in yearlong courses, is sometimes arranged by dance style, and may include modern, jazz, ballet and ethnic. All of the skill-based standards can be accomplished in any of these styles. Improvisation may be most closely associated with expressive modern dance, but it is also possible for students to improvise and create their own movement sequences in all of these styles, once they know the basics of the style.

Artistic Perception and Creative Expression - Seventh Grade

Seventh grade students are to demonstrate “increased ability and skill (in order) to sustain longer and more complex movements, and to take more risks through bigger and stronger movements through space”. They are to use a wider range of space as well as force and energy to layer and change locomotor and axial movements. All of this applies to any of the dance styles. Not only are students to increase their physical skills, they are also to increase their use of “appropriate dance vocabulary to describe everyday gestures and other movements observed in viewing live or recorded dance performances.” Developing ease in using dance terminology helps students sort out their dance ideas and reactions. It helps them to think like dancers. Once everyone understands the terms *in the same way*, communication of ideas among pairs, small groups and the whole class becomes easier and more effective.

At this grade level, a specific action pattern is introduced, i.e., students are to “create, memorize and perform”. This sequence sums up the focus of the creative expression strand. What are they to create, memorize and perform? The standard (2.1) indicates that the focus be upon *improvised movement sequences and dance studies*. It is important to note, that student dancers can improvise dance sequences, but that they also, once they settle on the most effective sequence, must memorize them. So there is an implied balance between creating an original sequence and learning and reproducing the movements. What the standard does *not* say, at least in the seventh grade, is that students will memorize and perform choreography determined by others. Students are also to use themes and ideas to develop simple dance forms, such as ABA and rondo, (to add to the cannon introduced in sixth grade). But whatever style, it is the students who are creating the movement sequences. Of course, this implies that they are familiar with some of the basic movements, gestures and sequences typical of

the style, and those skills would have to be taught in a more directed fashion, even though the standards don't mention this.

Seventh grade students will also use their increased skills to interpret and communicate through dance. This recognizes, again, that dance is an expressive art form and that the body is the instrument of expression. Dance is about something, even at its most abstract, when it may be about the vocabulary of dance itself. Dance communicates emotions and ideas, can make social statements and dance can tell stories. Dancers at this grade level are also getting better at collaboration with peers in their classes. They are to use increased originality with partners or groups to “define spatial floor patterns, shape design and entrances and exits.”

Historical and Cultural Context - Seventh Grade

The themes and ideas of this strand at the seventh grade level are the same as they are at the sixth grade and the same as they will be in the eighth grade. Students are learning to identify dances from other countries, connected to social studies themes, it is suggested. But at this grade level, students are also to learn some of these dances themselves. Students could certainly incorporate some of the dynamics, gestures and movement patterns from folk dances into their original work under the creative expression strand. There is a further focus on function of dance in daily life, this time during specific time periods in countries being studied in social studies. There is a list of suggested cultures to consider including African, Middle Eastern and Central American. The dance might relate to ceremonies, social events, and/or theatrical performances. Students would have to have sufficient visual materials in order to be able to explain or perform elements of dances from these cultures. For an example of a dance unit of study that helps students see how influential dances can be on their style of dance go to the CCSESA Arts Initiative website page <http://www.ccsesaarts.org/content/TeacherPages/Karsevar/projectOverview.html>. This unit is for high school, but provides an excellent example of cultural relevance and community involvement.

Aesthetic Valuing - Seventh Grade

Seventh grade students use the elements of dance and the vocabulary of choreography to critique two kinds of dance, the standard suggesting solo and duet, which could be part of any style of dance. It is an interesting challenge for students to “identify” assessment criteria for judging quality of performances for different styles of dance, such as theatrical, social and ceremonial. One would have to ask the question, “What is the most important thing about each of these styles?” Or, “What would dancers have to do to be successful in these dances?” It might be hard to think about criteria for ceremonial dance, but one could say that it would be very important that the dancers know their roles exactly, and that they do not vary from what is expected, as ceremony

depends on repetition of the same elements over time. With thought, students could create criteria for any kind of dance, as long as they know the intent of each style. Students are also asked, under this strand, to consider the impact of music on dance performance.

Connections, Relationships and Applications- Seventh Grade

Again, in the seventh grade, this strand is divided between “integration”, health and life skills. The integration this time is about identifying and using all kinds of sources to generate ideas for dance compositions, such as poetry, photographs and political/social issues. It is clear that this standard assumes that students are creating original dance, not just learning steps. The health focus at this grade is on how dancing builds physical and emotional wellbeing, which includes a positive body image. The life skills that students may take from dance, that students are to “appraise”, involve time management, listening, problem-solving and team work.

Eighth Grade

Dance at this level is transitional to high school dance classes. Students are therefore asked to both strengthen their technical skills and to become more independent dancers by developing a personal repertoire of dance movements. They do this by calling upon their own personal images for inspiration and by looking at, analyzing and applying what they see in professional dance performances. They are also looking at the effects of technologies on dance as well as the effect of various elements of staging on the meaning of a dance.

Artistic Perception and Creative Expression - Eighth Grade

Students focus on *space, time, and force/energy*, and apply those skills to “a wide range of dance sequences”. Students are to focus on centering and shifting their weight and on tension/release as they influence movement patterns. These concepts are important in many dance styles. And, again, students are asked to control bigger and stronger movements through space. Under this strand, eighth grade students look at dance performances by professional dancers, either live or recorded. Thus, in order for these students to increase their “personal dance vocabulary” it will be important for them to *see dance* – to have enough varied and creative examples of what dance looks like at a very high level. Students are not just to notice new ideas for dance movement; they are to *apply* the ideas to their own work – to make the ideas that they select their own, not for the sake of copying steps, but for original artistic intent.

Eighth grade students are refining their ability to “create, memorize and perform dance studies with increasing technical skills *and artistic expression*”. There is still a balance

between the making of a dance (or dance study), and being able to reproduce it with accuracy and performing or sharing it with an audience, formally or informally. The big idea behind the actions is always to create and perform dance that has *artistic intent*. The artistic intent, and thus the movement choices must come from the student or pair of students or group of students creating the dance. That does not mean that the dance study, once created, just continues to change and be improvised every time. Students must be able to memorize the choreography they have produced and replicate it with accuracy. It might be time to consider questions about the place of *interpretation* in dance. After all, most professional dancers do not create their own dances, their own choreography. They learn dances created by someone else, through hours of practice and memorization, and then perform the piece for an audience. They are using their command of technical skill to interpret the *artistic intent of the choreographer*, not their own intent. The content puts the emphasis clearly on the side of learning about what dance is, and how it is made. The bias of these content standards, from K through eighth grade and throughout high school, is toward the creation and performance of original work of art in dance.

At his level, musical elements become more important. Students are to “apply basic music elements to the making and performance of dance, (rhythm, meter, accents). Perhaps they are beginning to see the potential of interpreting the *music* through dance. Music becomes ever more influential in the making of dances, as it expresses its own “intent” and drives the selection of particular kinds of movement patterns and gestures. Eighth grade students also, for the first time, develop ways to record personal movement patterns and phrases.” They might experiment with drawings (like little stick figures) or graphs (especially for pathway patterns) as well as written descriptions for movement sequences.

Historical and Cultural Context - Eighth Grade

Students are to extend some of the ideas from the sixth and seventh grade relating to the function of dance in everyday life and as part of special occasions and formal performance. The emphasis at this grade level is upon dances related to work, courtship, ritual, and entertainment. They are also to consider and explain the role of dance in different socioeconomic groups, past and present, in selected countries and cultures, i.e., royalty and peasants, as well as the differing roles of males and females in dance in the US during various time periods. How have these roles changed over the years? How might that reflect changing cultural values and attitudes? These themes and ideas could influence the choice of resource materials students see and use for ideas for their own work under the creative expression strand.

Aesthetic Valuing - Eighth Grade

To parallel the focus on personal choice in creating dance that is at the center of the standards at this grade level, under aesthetic valuing, students are asked to “identify preferences for choreography”. They will have had many opportunities to see dance performance, live or recorded, and will begin to have specific likes and dislikes. They are to use specific performance examples as the context for their opinions, informed by pointing out how the dancers used the elements of dance and the vocabulary of choreography.

Connections, Relationships and Applications - Eighth Grade

Students see the relationship between dance and mental and physical health. They also come to understand that, through dance, they are developing positive habits of mind such as the ability to memorize, research, analyze as well as the discipline to practice that can be applied to learning in other subject areas. Dance can build body awareness that increases a middle school student’s ability to; literally, move through his/her world with confidence.



MUSIC

Re-Viewed Music Standards

Spiral Curriculum

Standards Analysis

“Re-Viewed” MUSIC STANDARDS
6-8 Artistic Perception and Creative Expression Combined
(Technical Skills, Concepts and Vocabulary)

SIXTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Read, write and perform	intervals with triads	
Read, Write and Perform	rhythmic and melodic notation using standard symbols for	
	pitch	
	meter	
	rhythm	
	dynamics	
	tempo	
	in duple and triple meters	
Transcribe	simple aural examples into rhythmic notation	
Sight-read	simple melodies in the treble clef or bass clef	
Analyze and compare	the use of musical elements representing various genres and cultures emphasizing meter and rhythm	
Describe	larger music forms	
	sonata-allegro form	
	concerto	
	theme and variations	
Sing	a repertoire of vocal literature representing various genres, styles and cultures with	
	expression	
	technical accuracy	
	good posture	

	tone quality	
	vowel shape	
	written or memorized by oneself or with others; LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: 1 on a scale of 1-6	
Sing	music written in two parts	
Perform	on an instrument, a repertoire of instrumental literature representing various genres, styles and cultures with	
	expression	
	technical accuracy	
	tone quality	
	articulation	
	by oneself and in ensembles; LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: 1 on a scale of 1-6	
Compose	short pieces in duple and triple meters	
Arrange	simple pieces for voices or instruments, using traditional sources of sound	
Improvise	simple melodies	
SEVENTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Read, write and perform	intervals, choral patterns, and harmonic progressions	
Read, write and perform	rhythmic and melodic notation in duple, triple, and mixed meters	
Transcribe	simple aural examples into rhythmic notation	
Sight-read	melodies in the treble or bass clef; LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: 1 on a scale of 1-6	

Analyze and compare	the use of various genres, styles, and cultures, emphasizing tonality and intervals	
Describe	larger music forms (cannon, fugue, and oratorio)	
Sing	a repertoire of vocal literature representing various genres, styles, and cultures with expression, technical accuracy, tone quality, vowel shape and articulation – written and memorized, by oneself and in ensembles; LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: 2 on a scale of 1-6	
Sing	music written in two and three parts	
Perform	on an instrument a repertoire of instrumental literature representing various genres, styles, and cultures with expression, technical accuracy, tone quality and articulation, by oneself and in ensembles; LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: 2 on a scale of 1-6	
Compose	short pieces in simple, triple, and mixed meters	
Compose and arrange	simple pieces for voice and instruments using traditional and nontraditional sound sources, including digital/electronic media	
Improvise	melodies and harmonic accompaniments	
Improvise	melodic and rhythmic embellishments and variations on given pentatonic melodies	
EIGHTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Read, write and perform	augmented and diminished intervals, minor chords, and harmonic minor progressions	
Read, write and perform	melodic notation in simple, triple, compound, and mixed meters	

Transcribe	aural examples into rhythmic and melodic notation	
Sight-read	accurately and expressively: LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY 2 on a scale of 1-6	
Analyze and compare	the use of musical elements representing various genres, styles, and cultures, with an emphasis on chords and harmonic progressions	
Describe	larger music forms (symphony, tone poem)	
Explain	how musical elements are used to create specific music events in given aural examples	
Sing	a repertoire of vocal literature representing various genres, styles, and culture	
	with expression, technical accuracy, tone quality, vowel shape and articulation	
	written and memorized	
	by oneself and in ensembles: LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: 3 on a scale of 1-6	
Sing	music written in two and three parts	
Perform	on an instrument	
	a repertoire of instrumental literature representing various genres, styles, and cultures	
	with expression, technical accuracy, tone quality and articulation	
	by oneself and in ensembles: LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: 3 on a scale of 1-6	
Compose	short pieces in supple, triple, and mixed and compound meters	
Arrange	simple pieces for voice and instruments other than those for which the pieces were written	

Using	traditional and nontraditional sound sources, including digital/electronic media	
Improvise	melodic and rhythmic embellishments and variations in major keys	
Improvise	short melodies to be performed with and without accompaniment	

**“Re-Viewed” MUSIC STANDARDS
6-8 Historical and Cultural Context**

(Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Music)

SIXTH GRADERS		
Compare	music from two or more cultures of the world as to the function the music serves and the roles of musicians	Find references in the social studies text books (teacher's editions) and/or books on music history – compare Greece and Egypt
Listen to and describe	the role of music in ancient civilizations (such as Chinese, Egyptian, Greek, Indian, Roman)	Look on ancient music sites
Describe	distinguishing characteristics of representative musical genres and styles from two or more cultures	Have the class, as a whole or in small groups, develop listening maps for the music
Listen to, describe, and perform	music of various styles from a variety of cultures	
Classify	by style and genre a number of exemplary musical works and explain the characteristics that make each work exemplary	Try The Classical Music Navigator, www.wku.edu/~smithch/music
SEVENTH GRADE		
Compare	music from various cultures as to some of the functions music serves and the roles of musicians	
Identify and describe	the development of music during medieval and early modern times in various cultures (e.g., African, Chinese, European, Islamic, Japanese, South American)	
Identify and describe	distinguishing characteristics of musical genres and styles from a variety of cultures	

Perform	music from diverse genres and cultures	
Identify	instruments from a variety of cultures visually and aurally	
EIGHTH GRADE		
Compare and contrast	the functions music serves and the place of musicians in society and various cultures	
Identify and explain	the influences of various cultures on music in early United States History	
Explain	how music has reflected social functions and changing ideas and values	
Compare and contrast	the distinguishing characteristics of musical genres and styles from a variety of cultures	
Perform	music from diverse genres, cultures, and time periods	
Classify	exemplary musical works by style, genre, and historical period and explain why each work is considered exemplary	

**“Re-viewed” MUSIC STANDARDS
6-8 Aesthetic Valuing**

(Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works of Music)

SIXTH GRADE		
Develop	criteria for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of musical performances and compositions, including arrangements and improvisations, and apply the criteria in personal listening and performing	Find examples of such criteria – check the CMEA web site and the materials associated with the music texts
Explain	how various aesthetic qualities convey images, feeling, or emotion	Connect these ideas to a visual arts lesson – or paint or draw to music and compare or have students write words/poems to various musical samples
Identify	aesthetic qualities in a specific musical work	Think about the elements of music
SEVENTH GRADE		
Use	criteria to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of musical performances and compositions	
Apply	criteria appropriate for the style or genre of music to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements, and improvisations by oneself and with others	
Compare and contrast	the differences between one performance of a specific musical work and another performance of the same work	

EIGHTH GRADE		
Use	detailed criteria for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of musical performances and compositions and...	
Apply	the criteria to personal listening and performing	
Apply	detailed criteria appropriate for the genre and style of the music to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements, and improvisations, by oneself and with others	
Explain	how and why people use and respond to specific music from different musical cultures found in the United States	
Compare	the means used to create images or evoke feelings and emotions in musical works from a minimum of two different musical cultures found in the United States	

“Re-viewed” MUSIC STANDARDS
6-8 Connections, Relationships and Applications

(Connecting and Applying What is Learned in Music to Other Art Forms)

SIXTH GRADE		
Describe	how knowledge of music connects to learning in other subject areas	Think about the music-math connection
Identify	career pathways in music	Have students do internet research on the various careers in music, especially those not about performance
SEVENTH GRADE		
Identify	similarities and differences in the meanings of common terms used in various arts and other subject areas	
Identify and describe	how music functions in the media and entertainment industries	
Identify	various careers for musicians in the entertainment industry	
EIGHTH GRADE		
Compare	in two or more arts forms how the characteristic materials of each art (sound in music, visual stimuli in visual arts, movement in dance, human relationships in theatre) can be used to transform similar events, scenes, emotions, or ideas into works of art	
Describe	how music is composed and adapted for use in film, video, radio, and television	
Describe	the skills necessary for composing and adapting music for use in film, video, radio, and television	

THE SPIRAL CURRICULUM FOR MUSIC IN THE MIDDLE GRADES

GRADE SIX	GRADE SEVEN	GRADE EIGHT
ARTISTIC PERCEPTION AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION: DISCIPLINE SKILLS		
<p>Read, write and perform (musical elements and terminology)</p> <p>intervals and triads</p> <p>rhythmic and melodic notation using standard symbols for pitch, meter, rhythm, dynamics, and tempo in duple and triple meters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze and compare the use of musical elements representing various genres and cultures, emphasizing meter and rhythm • Transcribe simple aural examples into rhythmic notation • Sight-read simple melodies in the treble clef or bass clef • Describe larger music forms (sonata-allegro, concerto, theme and variation) 	<p>Read, write and perform (musical elements and terminology)</p> <p>intervals, choral patterns, and harmonic progressions</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">rhythmic, and melodic notation in duple, triple and mixed meters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze and compare the use of various genres, styles, and cultures, emphasizing tonality and intervals • Transcribe simple aural examples into rhythmic notation • Sight-read melodies in the treble or bass clef (LOD: 1:6) • Describe larger music forms (canon, fugue, suite, ballet, opera, and oratorio) 	<p>Read, write and perform (musical elements and terminology)</p> <p>augmented and diminished intervals, minor chords, and harmonic minor progressions</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">rhythmic, and melodic notation in duple, triple and mixed meters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze and compare the use of musical elements representing various genres, styles, and cultures, with an emphasis on chords and harmonic progressions • Transcribe aural examples into rhythmic and melodic notation • Sight-read accurately and expressively (LOD: 2:6) • Describe larger musical forms (symphony, tone poem) • Explain how musical elements are used to create specific music events in given aural examples

<p>Vocal skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing a repertoire of vocal literature representing various genres, styles, and cultures with expression, technical accuracy, good posture, tone quality, and vowel shape – written and memorized, alone and in ensembles (LOD: 1:6) • Sing music written in two parts <p>Instrumental skills: Perform a repertoire of instrumental literature representing various genres, styles, and cultures, with expression, technical accuracy, tone quality, and articulation, alone and in ensembles (LOD 1:6)</p> <p>Composition, arrangement, improvisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compose short pieces in duple and triple meters • Arrange simple pieces for voices or instruments, using traditional sources of sound • Improvise simple melodies 	<p>Vocal skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing a repertoire of vocal literature representing various genres, styles, and cultures with expression, technical accuracy, tone quality, vowel shape, and articulation, alone and in ensembles (LOD:2:6) • Sing music written in two and three parts <p>Instrumental skills: Perform a repertoire of instrumental literature representing various genres, styles, and cultures with expression, technical accuracy, tone quality, and articulation, alone and in ensembles (LOD 2:6)</p> <p>Composition, arrangement, improvisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compose short pieces in duple and triple, and mixed meters • Compose and arrange simple pieces for voices or instruments, using traditional sources and nontraditional sound sources, including digital/electronic media • Improvise melodies and harmonic accompaniments • Improvise melodic and rhythmic embellishments and variations on given pentatonic melodies 	<p>Vocal skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing a repertoire of vocal literature representing various genres, styles, and cultures with expression, technical accuracy, tone quality, vowel shape, and articulation—written and memorized, alone and in ensembles (LOD:3:6) • Sing music written in two, three or four parts <p>Instrumental skills: Perform a repertoire of instrumental literature representing various genres, styles, and cultures with expression, technical accuracy, tone quality, and articulation, alone and in ensembles (LOD 3:6)</p> <p>Composition, arrangement, improvisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compose short pieces in duple, triple, mixed and compound meters • Arrange simple pieces for voices or instruments other than those for which the pieces were written, using traditional and nontraditional sound sources, including digital/electronic media • Improvise melodic and rhythmic embellishments and variations in major keys • Improvise short melodies to be performed with and without accompaniment
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HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare music from two or more cultures of the world as to the function the music serves and the role of musicians • Listen to and describe the role of music in ancient civilizations (Chinese, Egyptian, Greek, Indian, Roman) • Describe distinguishing characteristics of representative musical genres and styles from two or more cultures • Listen to, describe, and perform music of various styles from a variety of cultures • Classify by style and genre a number of exemplary musical works and explain the characteristics that make each work exemplary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare music from various cultures of the world as to the function the music serves and the role of musicians • Identify & describe the development of music during medieval and early modern times in various cultures (African, Chinese, European, Islamic, Japanese, South American) • Identify and describe distinguishing characteristics of musical genres and styles from a variety of cultures • Perform music from diverse genres and cultures • Identify instruments from a variety of cultures visually and aurally • Classify by style and genre a number of exemplary musical works and explain the characteristics that make each work exemplary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and contrast the functions music serves and the place of musicians in society in various cultures • Identify and explain the influences of various cultures on music in early US history • Explain how music has reflected social functions and changing ideas and values • Compare and contrast the distinguishing characteristics of musical genres and styles from a variety of cultures • Perform music from diverse genres, cultures and time periods • Classify exemplary musical works by style, genre, and historical period and explain why each work is considered exemplary
AESTHETIC VALUING		
<p>Criteria/Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop criteria for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of musical performances and compositions, including arrangements and improvisations, and apply the criteria in personal listening and performing 	<p>Criteria/Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use criteria to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of musical performances and compositions • Apply criteria appropriate for the style or genre of music to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements, and improvisations by oneself and others 	<p>Criteria/Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use detailed criteria for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of musical performances and compositions and apply the criteria to personal listening and performing • Apply detailed criteria appropriate for the genre and style of the music to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements, and improvisations by oneself and others

<p>Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how various aesthetic qualities convey images, feelings, or emotion • Identify aesthetic qualities in a specific musical work 	<p>Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and contrast the differences between one performance of a specific musical work and another performance of the same work 	<p>Meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how and why people use and respond to specific music from different musical cultures found in the US • Compare the means used to create images or evoke feelings and emotions in musical works from a minimum of two different musical cultures found in the US
CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS AND APPLICATIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how knowledge of music connects to learning in other subject areas • Identify career pathways in music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify similarities and differences in the meanings of common terms used in various arts and other subject areas • Identify and describe how music functions in the media and entertainment industries • Identify various careers for musicians in the entertainment industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare in two or more arts forms how the characteristic materials of each art can be used to transform similar events, scenes, emotions, or ideas into work of art (sound, visual stimuli, movement, human relationships) • Describe how music is composed and adapted for use in film, video, radio, and television • Describe the skills necessary for composing and adapting music for use in film, video, radio, and television

STANDARDS ANALYSIS: MUSIC, 6-8

What are the essential understandings of the strands for Music? What do the content standards say? What will students learn and be able to do? How do the standards guide curriculum?

A curriculum based on the music standards, 6-8 will be highly sequential and will focus strongly on developing vocal and instrumental skills. The kinds of music students learn is suggested by the historical and cultural context strand, emphasizing a wide variety of musical sources and styles from around the world. Student progress is guided and measured by very specific and observable guidelines, which are represented in the standards by a “level of difficulty” (LOD) scale (from 1-6) that music teachers typically use for both vocal and instrumental music selection and instruction. As music students move toward performance, the aesthetic valuing strand asks them to develop criteria for evaluating the “quality and effectiveness” of their performances.

The music standards, especially the skills-based, technical standards to be found under the combined artistic perception and creative expression strands, note the division between vocal and instrumental music, but the specific language of the standards is quite parallel, or even identical in many cases, except for the words “vocal” or “instrumental”. In practice, instrumental music itself is divided into two basic categories: wind and percussion (the combination of which is a band) and stringed instruments. These divisions have implications for instruction and student learning, especially during the middle school grades, and especially for instrumental music, because it is during these years that students learn the fundamentals that make it possible to make musical sounds on their instrument and move on and become skilled enough to perform as a member of a band, string group or orchestra. Learning a musical instrument is intensely physical. Students need slow, consistent, skill building over time, and once they have learned to play at a basic level, they can move (more or less quickly) to more complex music requiring greater and greater levels of skill. After a certain point, it becomes impossible for a student to move into the music program, if they have missed the part about learning to play an instrument.

There are advantages for students if the instrumental program has begun at the fourth or fifth grade level, especially for learning stringed instruments, which are more physically challenging. But sixth graders with no previous experience can be “captured” by wind and percussion instruments and can be assured success (if they quite literally “get with the program.”) That is why band is the typical first course for musical instruments offered in the sixth grade. Band is built on percussion and wind: flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, baritone horn, and tuba – all instruments kids

can start on. Percussion is also accessible to students of this age: snare drums, base drums, and bells. As one music teacher put it, “As soon as they learn some stuff, you have a band!”

Generally speaking, there are more advantages to starting earlier for students learning stringed instruments – the earlier the better say many music teachers. Playing a string instrument is more physically challenging than playing wind instruments or percussion. It takes time to develop the fine motor skills involved. Stringed instruments are generally scaled down in size for younger students. Sixth grade strings needs a feeder program starting in the fourth grade. Then, as sixth graders, students would know how to use the bow, the finger patterns, and how to tune the instrument.

At the middle school level, vocal music is typically not divided further, except possibly by “level.” Even if the standards do not read as differentiating greatly between vocal and instrumental music, the issues of instruction are very different. The key issue is accessibility to the discipline across the grades. Access is easiest for choral music. Students can begin vocal music at any point through high school and experience success. Being able to read music is one of the keys to success in vocal music and it is easier to learn to read music at a younger age, like any new language, but students can begin that learning in the sixth or seventh grade. Everybody can sing, but the standards identify what students can learn that will put them well beyond the “once in awhile, casual” level. Beginning vocal students (and most begin in the middle grade years), learn sight singing, learn to read music, learn to count rhythms. In a standards based vocal class, they learn how to read musical scores, not just pages with words (which is really just about reading words). They learn how to follow the phrases and stanzas. The elements of music are embedded into the structure of the class.

Sixth Grade

In the sixth grade, students enter a whole new world of music, even if they experienced a standards-based program in the fourth and/or fifth grade. Students, starting in the sixth grade, find themselves in a very different setting and with very different outcomes expected. They will be learning a great many new skills, many of which they would not have been ready for until this point. Much of the technical vocabulary and many skills will be new to these students. They will need to learn essential content that must be mastered in order to move on with music, either vocal or instrumental. In elementary school, students learned about melodic and rhythmic notation and major and minor scales. Generally, they were using classroom instruments. Now, if the student is in beginning band, when the standard says “read, write and perform”, it refers to their band instrument. In elementary school singing tended to be just singing, with an emphasis on matching pitch and being expressive. Now a singer will expand their skill at part

singing, developing their ability to create good tonal quality and blend their voice within the vocal ensemble.

Artistic Perception and Creative Expression - Sixth Grade

At the sixth grade level, the artistic perception strand introduces (or re-introduces) the elements of music and is focused on learning and practicing the skills, though it is impossible to isolate them from one another. The first standard under artistic perception for sixth grade music asks students to read, write and perform intervals and triads. Band students can't play an interval until they have some control over the instruments they have selected. Some basic level of technical skill is absolutely essential for playing. Even though the standards don't say so in so many words, the first set of technical skills these students need is really quite basic and includes such things as learning how to put the instrument together and to control the mouth and tongue and air so they can make a sound – and that can take a month, and is on-going throughout the year. The skills involved in intervals are not there for beginners on instruments and won't be for quite some time. But once they have some control, they can move on to reading, writing and performing “*rhythmic and melodic notation* using standard symbols for *pitch, meter, rhythm, dynamics and tempo* in duple and triple meters.” Teachers can help students to control their air, and that begins the conversation about dynamics: how loud, how soft. It is difficult to learn to control the air. The minute students have a book with notes on it and transfer that to the note they are playing on the instrument, they are reading music. It is simple (or not so simple) decoding.

Beginning instrumental students will need to practice rhythm from the minute they can make sounds with the instrument – they are not just going to blow randomly. Once they have a sound, they need to put a context around it, which is rhythm. *Pitch, meter, rhythm, and notation* (whole notes) – those are the starting points. Once novice sixth grade music students begin playing a note, they identify what note it is, how long the note lasts, where the note is on the staff. All of this involves reading, counting, and breath control. There will be varying levels of accomplishment in the class. Acquisition of skills is typically verified by a kind of check off system of observable skills for each instrument. As the students' skills grow they will be expected to perform a variety of instrumental literature “representing various genres, and cultures with technical accuracy, tone quality, and articulation...with a level of difficulty of 1 on a scale of 1-6.”

Choral students come with their voices. The physical nature of singing (at least at this level) requires the same skills as wind instrument mastery. Though not as complex as taking up a new instrument, the students still need to develop breath control, and refine the skills needed for good vocal production. Reading and performing different intervals will not be as daunting for a beginning choral student. However, there is a whole section under the combined artistic perception and creative expression strand directed

specifically to choral music that asks students to “sing a repertoire of vocal literature representing various genres, styles and cultures with expression, technical accuracy, good posture, tone quality, and vowel shape, written or memorized alone or with others with a level of difficulty of 1 on a scale of 1-6” and to sing music in two parts.

After students have learned the basics of reading intervals and triads they should be able to transcribe simple aural examples into rhythmic notation. This means they can write the rhythm that is sung or played for them. They will also be asked to sight read simple melodies in the treble or bass clef depending on their instrument. As the students improve their ability to produce sounds, they will be encouraged to improvise their own simple melodies. This ability to read and write musical notation means that they can be asked to compose and arrange simple pieces in duple and triple meter as addressed in Creative Expression Standards 2.4 and 2.5. To gain the skills to be a better musician the students are asked to use musical vocabulary to analyze and compare the different genres of music they are performing with reference to the elements of music and cultural context of the music. They will be asked to describe various larger music forms such as theme and variations, concerto and sonata-allegro form.

Historical and Cultural Context: Sixth Grade

The sixth grade music student has a growing awareness of all types of music. They will be asked to analyze the role of music throughout the world by comparing music from two or more cultures and understand music functions within the cultures and the roles that musicians play within a culture. They will also understand the role that music has played through the ages with emphasis on the ancient civilizations they study in Social Studies. They will listen to, describe, and perform various styles of music. A young musician should always be made aware of the context of the music they perform. In addition sixth grade students should be able to classify an example they listen to as to style and genre.

Aesthetic Valuing: Sixth Grade

A music student needs to be able to evaluate their own performance in order to improve. They also learn by listening to and reflecting on the performance of others. The Aesthetic Valuing Standard for sixth grade addresses this. They will develop criteria for evaluating quality and effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements and improvisations. Usually this will be done as a class or in small groups. Such criteria give the student a frame of reference for thoughtful listening and provide a vocabulary for discussing the emotions and images conveyed in a musical work as well as the technical proficiency of the performance.

Connections, Relationships, Applications: Sixth Grade

The sixth grader is learning the relationship and the connections between music and other subjects they are studying. They are using a highly mathematical system of rhythmic notation. Their knowledge of fractions reinforces their understanding of rhythm notation. As they decode and use the rhythm notation they are reinforcing their understanding of fractions. A choral student will be exposed to the poetry within the songs they sing. Much of the choral repertoire is musical setting of great poetry. Knowing the historical and cultural context of the music they perform helps them to see the connections to what they study in Social Studies and Language Arts. The Career-Related Standard encourages the continued exploration of ways in which music skills are valued in the work place. Sixth graders certainly are aware of rock stars but need exposure to the many rewarding careers available to accomplished musicians. Such opportunities are not limited to performance but include composing, producing, and teaching.

Seventh Grade

At seventh grade some students will be just starting their instrumental learning. Those students will have to go through the beginning steps of learning their instruments, learning to decode musical notation and learning the musical vocabulary. It is expected that seventh grade students will perform various styles of music and work on improving technical accuracy on their instrument or using their singing voice. They will be asked to listen for how the musical elements, such as tonality and intervals, are different from one culture or style to another. Student musicians will be exposed to larger and more complicated musical forms. The ongoing student can perform music from many styles and cultures. This experience helps them in composing and arranging their own music. They can use thoughtful criteria to apply their skills in aesthetic valuing to what they hear performed and to reflect on their own performance and composing.

Artistic Perception and Creative Expression: Seventh Grade

As in the sixth grade the seventh grade student will continue working on their ability to read, write and perform intervals. They will expand into more work with choral patterns and harmonic progressions. For the instrumental student this means more complex harmonies within the instrumental ensemble and going into two and three part singing for the vocal student. Likewise rhythmic notation will become more complex requiring the students to read, write and perform notation in duple, triple, and mixed meters. This requires the student to be aware of time signatures and be alert to the rhythmic quality of each of these meters. With mixed meter a student may start a piece in 2/4 time and

have to adjust to 3/4 time within the piece and then go back to the original meter at some other time within the piece. The student will continue to practice sight reading at a difficulty level of 1 on a scale of 1-6.

In the seventh grade the first Creative Expression standard assumes that a student will improve their ability to perform a “repertoire ... (of) various genres, styles, and cultures with expression, technical accuracy, tone qualityby oneself and in ensembles.” It is assumed that they will improve to the level of 2 on the difficulty scale of 1-6. The beginning instrumental students will require catch-up time and ideally the music program would offer beginning and intermediate classes so that students can progress individually as well as in terms of their ensembles.

The students are asked to continue to transcribe (write) simple examples that they hear into rhythmic notation. This refines their listening skills and gives them references for their own composing and arranging. They are asked at this level to “compose and arrange simple pieces for voice and instruments, using traditional and nontraditional sound sources including digital/electronic media.” Students can also improvise melodies, accompaniments, and embellish simple pentatonic (5 tone scale) melodies rhythmically and melodically. This can only happen if the students have experienced a full, diverse repertoire so they have a knowledge base to spark their creativity.

Historical and Cultural Context: Seventh Grade

In seventh grade the student becomes more aware of the function of music within a culture and the roles of musicians within a culture. The evolution of music during medieval and early modern times in various cultures is studied. Some cultures suggested are African, Chinese, European, Islamic, Japanese, and South American. The student should perform music from many cultures and genres and be aware of the variety of instruments used in different cultures. They will be asked to classify as to style and genre “exemplary musical works and explain the characteristics that make each work exemplary.”

Aesthetic Valuing: Seventh Grade

As in the sixth grade the seventh grade music student will use appropriate criteria to evaluate musical performances and compositions of others as well as themselves. The criteria used may change based on the style or genre of music being evaluated. Students will need to brainstorm what are appropriate criteria for evaluating a work of pop music as opposed to a composition in the classical repertoire. They should be able to compare two different performances of the same piece of music using musical vocabulary to discuss the differences heard.

Connections, Relationships, Applications: Seventh Grade

A seventh grade student is asked to “Identify similarities and differences in the meanings of common terms used in various arts and other subject areas.” For example the word “tone” has different meanings in music and visual art but the word “unison” means pretty much the same thing in music and dance. At this level a student will identify how music functions in the media and entertainment industries and what careers are available for musicians in the entertainment industry.

Eighth Grade

At the eighth grade level the music students have a foundation of skills and music vocabulary to allow them to collaborate productively with fellow music students and students in other arts. They understand different cultural and historical elements of the music they hear and play. They are more aware of what they value and will take a greater part in determining their artistic choices. They understand the need for feedback from their peers and teachers if they are to improve their musical skills. The eighth grade musician expands their ability to perform different styles and genres of music from many different cultures. They will be able to sight read with greater skill and will be evaluated for accuracy and expressive quality in their instrumental or vocal performances. They now have the experience to compose short pieces of music in various meters. It is not likely that a school program will have a beginning instrumental program at this level. A student can take up an instrument at any age and have a degree of success but a beginner at this level will probably require private instruction as the school setting is not set up to accommodate that beginner.

Artistic Perception and Creative Expression: Eighth Grade

At the eighth grade level a student having more or less mastered the basics of their instrument or vocal production begins to advance into a more complex musical repertoire. The first and second standards in Artistic Perception indicate that a student will “read, write and perform augmented and diminished intervals, minor chords, and harmonic minor progressions.....in duple, triple, compound, and mixed meters.” This is a big step forward for these students. It requires a level of technical accuracy, tone quality, and articulation at a difficulty level of 3 on a scale 1-6. They will practice writing what they hear in rhythmic and melodic notation. Their sight reading skills will improve to a 2 on a difficulty scale of 1-6. Vocalist will “sing with expression, technical accuracy, tone quality, vowel shape, and articulation – written and memorized by oneself and in ensembles.” Instrumentalists will “perform...a repertoire of instrumental literature with

expression, technical accuracy, tone quality, and articulation, by oneself and in ensembles.” Both vocal and instrumental repertoire will contain literature that represents many genres, styles and cultures.

The eighth graders ability to analyze, compare and describe musical elements of “various genres, styles and cultures,” will expand into more emphasis on the harmonic progression in the music. They will be able to discuss larger works of music such as symphonies and how the “elements are used to create specific music events” within the works. As at earlier grades the eighth grade music students will continue to improvise, compose and arrange short pieces in duple, triple, and mixed meters. Additionally they will be asked to compose using compound meters. That would require them to use meters such as 6/8 or 9/8. Again, it is suggested that they include in their compositions traditional and nontraditional instruments including digital/electronic media. The eighth grade students are becoming well rounded musicians as individuals and within their ensembles.

Historical and Cultural Context: Eighth Grade

Eight graders will be able to discuss the role of music in many cultures and the function that music serves in the society of those cultures. They will be asked to examine and identify the influence various cultures have had on the music of the United States during its early history. They can explain how music reflects the changing values and ideas of a society. When they perform a piece of music they will understand and be able to discuss the context of that piece, identifying the genre, style and historical time period from which the music has come. They can identify those things when listening to an exemplary musical work and explain why the piece is exemplary. They are growing as musicians and becoming more knowledgeable about all aspects of musical literature.

Aesthetic Valuing: Eighth Grade

When critiquing and evaluating their own and others performances and compositions, the eighth grade student will use a more detailed criteria. This reflects their growth in skills and knowledge. The criteria used will be appropriate for the style and genre of the music to be evaluated. The use of such criteria will become second nature to the eighth grade musician, facilitating the self reflection needed to improve their skills. They will derive meaning from the music they play and hear and be able to compare the means used “to create images or evoke feelings and emotions” from that music. They will understand why people use specific music from the different musical cultures in the United States and what that music means to them.

Connections, Relationships, Applications: Eighth Grade

When thinking about connections and relationships across the arts, students will be able to compare the characteristic materials of each art form and how they can be used to communicate similar emotions, scenes, events or ideas to an audience. For example: How is sound in music like movement in dance? How would each be used to portray the same idea or event? What does a visual artist use to portray the same idea or emotion? A theatre person? The ability to collaborate with one's peers in these other art forms is dependent on understanding the similarity and differences within the art forms. A career in music would involve such collaboration. Students should be able to describe "how music is composed and adapted for use in film, video, radio, and television." In such settings singers must be able to work with instrumentalists. They will be in collaboration with composers, arrangers, choreographers, costume and set designers. Understanding what each art form brings to that collaboration is essential, not just for choosing a career path, but more immediately, for putting on that school musical.



Theatre

Re-Viewed Theatre Standards

Spiral Curriculum

Standards Analysis

“Re-Viewed” THEATRE STANDARDS
6-8 Artistic Perception and Creative Expression Combined
(Technical Skills, Concepts and Vocabulary)

SIXTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Use	the vocabulary of theatre	Have students keep a theatre journal
	action/reaction	
	vocal projection	Link to public speaking
	sub text	Link to poetry and literature
	theme	Link to literature, art and music
	mood	Link to visual art and literature
	design	Link to visual art
	production values	Link to movies, TV, video
	stage crew	Rotate kids to be stage crew; have them keep “technical journals”
Identify	how production values can manipulate mood to persuade and disseminate propaganda	Link to historical context. Also, take students to see live theatre
Participate in	improvisational activities, demonstrating an understanding of text, subtext and context	
Use	effective vocal expression, gesture, facial expression, and timing to create character	
Write and perform	scenes or one act plays that include monologue, action, and setting with a range of character types	Define audience for the performance Take students to see live theatre performances or bring performing groups to your school Collect examples of monologues and one act

		plays for students to use as examples
SEVENTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Use	the vocabulary of theatre such as	
	playwright	
	rehearsal/dress rehearsal	
	run-through	
	cold reading	
	to describe theatrical experiences	
Identify	dramatic elements within a script, such as	
	foreshadowing	
	crisis	
	rising action	
	catharsis	
	denouement	
	using the vocabulary of theatre	That <i>is</i> the vocabulary of theatre
Use	improvisation in rehearsal to discover character and motivation	
Maintain	a rehearsal script/notebook to record directions and blocking	
Create	characters, environments, and actions that exhibit tension and suspense	
EIGHTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Use	the vocabulary of theatre such as	
	ensemble	
	proscenium	
	thrust	
	arena staging	
	to describe theatrical experiences	
Identify and analyze	recurring themes and patterns	

	such as	
	loyalty	
	bravery	
	revenge	
	redemption in a script to make production choices in design and direction	
Analyze	the uses of figurative language and imagery in dramatic texts	
Create	short dramatizations in selected styles of theatre, such as melodrama, vaudeville, and musical theatre	
Perform	character-based improvisations, pantomimes, or monologues, using voice, blocking, and gesture to enhance meaning	

**“Re-Viewed” THEATRE STANDARDS
6-8 Historical and Cultural Context**

(Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Theatre)

SIXTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Create	scripts that reflect particular historical periods or cultures	Pre-teach dialogue and script writing basics
(Learn about/talk about and) Differentiate	the theatrical traditions of cultures throughout the world, such as those in Ancient Greece, Egypt, China, and West Africa	Use these cultures or others consistent with the cultures represented in the classroom; check on-line culturally based theatre traditions
SEVENTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Design and create	masks, puppets, props, costumes, or sets in a selected theatrical styles drawn from world cultures, such as Javanese shadow puppets or Kabuki masks	Collect and share images from books and on line with students as many of these theatrical artifacts as possible; find videos and CDs with this content; invite theatre groups that specialize in these theatrical styles
Compare and contrast	various theatre styles throughout history, such as those of Ancient Greece, Elizabethan theatre, Kabuki theatre, Kathakali dance theatre, and commedia dell’arte	Have the students do on-line research on any or all of these styles and collect and share visual images
EIGHTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Describe	the ways in which American history has been reflected in theatre (e.g., the ways in which the Industrial Revolution and slavery were portrayed in the minstrel show, the melodrama, and the musical	
Identify and explain	how technology has changed American theatre (e.g., how stage lighting has	

	progressed from candlelight to gaslight to limelight electrical light to digital light)	
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**“Re-Viewed” THEATER STANDARDS
6-8 Aesthetic Valuing**

(Responding to, Analyzing, and Critiquing Theatrical Experiences)

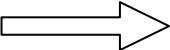
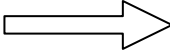
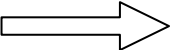
SIXTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Develop and apply	appropriate criteria for evaluating sets, lighting, costumes, makeup, and props	
Identify	examples of how theatre, television, and film can influence or be influenced by politics and culture	Find resources on line under media and the arts: theatre; talk about films and TV with political themes
SEVENTH GRADE	STANDARD OUTCOME	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Design and apply	appropriate criteria or rubrics for evaluating the effective use of masks, puppetry, makeup, and costumes in a theatrical production	
Explain	how cultural influences affect the content or meaning of works of theatre	
EIGHTH GRADERS	STANDARD OUTCOME	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Develop	criteria and write a formal review of a theatrical production	
Compare and contrast	how works of theatre from different cultures or time periods convey the same or similar content or plot	

“Re-viewed” THEATRE
6-8 Connections, Relationships and Applications

(Connecting and Applying What is Learned in Theatre, Film/video, and Electronic Media to Other Art Forms and Subject Areas)

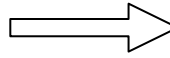
SIXTH GRADE	STANDARD OUTCOME	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Use	theatrical skills to communicate concepts or ideas from other curriculum areas, such as a demonstration in social studies of how persuasion and propaganda are used in advertising	
Research	career opportunities in media, advertising, marketing, and interactive web design	Assign various individual or group reports on these and other theatre related careers
SEVENTH GRADE	STANDARD OUTCOME	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Use	theatrical skills to communicate concepts or ideas from other curriculum areas, such as creating a musical based on a piece of literature	
Demonstrate	projection, vocal variety, diction, gesture, and confidence in an oral presentation	
EIGHTH GRADE	STANDARD OUTCOME	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Use	theatrical skills to communicate concepts to present content or concepts in other subject areas, such as creating a video on cellular mitosis	
Identify Research	career options in the dramatic arts, such as cinematographer, stage manager, radio announcer, or dramaturg; and the education, training, and work experience necessary in that field	

THE SPIRAL CURRICULUM FOR THEATRE IN THE MIDDLE GRADES

GRADE SIX	GRADE SEVEN	GRADE EIGHT
ARTISTIC PERCEPTION AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION: DISCIPLINE SKILLS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the vocabulary of theatre: action/reaction, vocal projection, sub text, theme, design, production values, stage crew, to describe theatrical experiences • Identify how production values can manipulate mood to persuade and disseminate propaganda • Improvisation: Participate in improvisational activities, demonstrating an understanding of text, subtext and context • Acting skills: Use effective vocal expression, gesture, facial expression, and timing to create character • Performance: Write and perform scenes or one act plays that include monologue, action, and setting with a range of character types 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the vocabulary of theatre: playwright, rehearsal/dress rehearsal, run-through, cold reading, to describe theatrical experiences • Production values:  • Improvisation: Use improvisation in rehearsal to discover character and motivation • Acting skills: Create character, environments, and actions that exhibit tension and suspense • Script work: Identify dramatic elements within a script such as foreshadowing, crisis, rising action, catharsis, denouement • Script work: Maintain a rehearsal script or notebook to record directions and blocking • Performance: Not specified, but ON GOING  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the vocabulary of theatre: ensemble, proscenium, thrust, to describe theatrical experiences • Production Values:  • Improvisation: Perform character-based improvisations, pantomimes, or monologues, using voice, blocking, and gesture to enhance meaning • Acting skills: Perform character-based improvisations, pantomimes, or monologues, using voice, blocking, and gesture to enhance meaning • Script work: Identify and analyze recurring themes and patterns such as loyalty, bravery, revenge and redemption in a script to make production choices in design and direction • Script work: Analyze the use of figurative language and imagery in dramatic texts • Performance: Create short dramatizations in selected styles of theatre, such as melodrama, vaudeville, and musical theatre (performance implied)

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active: Create scripts that reflect particular historical periods or cultures • Theatre styles: Learn about, talk about and differentiate the theatrical traditions of cultures throughout the world, such as those in ancient Greece, Egypt, China, and West Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active: Design and create masks, puppets, props, costumes, or sets in selected theatrical styles drawn from world cultures such as Javanese shadow puppets or Kabuki masks • Theatre styles: Compare and contrast various theatre styles throughout history, such as those of ancient Greece, Elizabethan theatre, Kabuki theatre, Kathakali dance theatre, and commedia dell'arte 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active: Not specified • Theatre styles: Describe the ways in which American history has been reflected in theatre (e.g., the ways in which the industrial revolution and slavery were portrayed in the minstrel show, the melodrama, and the musical) • Identify and explain how technology has changed American theatre, (e.g., how stage lighting has progressed from candlelight to gaslight to limelight to electrical light to digital light)
AESTHETIC VALUING		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique and criteria: Develop and apply appropriate criteria for evaluating sets, lighting, costumes, makeup, and props • Meaning: Identify examples of how theatre, television, and film can influence or be influenced by politics and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique and criteria: Design and apply appropriate criteria or rubrics for evaluating the effective use of masks, puppetry, makeup, and costumes in a theatrical production • Meaning: Explain how cultural influences affect the content or meaning of works of theatre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critique and criteria: Develop criteria and write a formal review of a theatrical production • Meaning: Compare and contrast how works of theatre from different cultures or time periods convey the same or similar content or plot
CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS AND APPLICATIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration: Use theatrical skills to communicate concepts or ideas from other curricular areas (how persuasion and propaganda are used in advertising) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration: Use theatrical skills to communicate concepts or ideas from other curricular areas (such as create musical based on a piece of literature) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration: Use theatrical skills to communicate concepts or ideas from other curricular areas (such as creating a video on cellular mitosis)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers: Research career opportunities in media, advertising, marketing, and interactive web design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration: Demonstrate projection, vocal variety, diction, gesture, and confidence in an oral presentation • Careers: Not specified, but ON GOING 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers: Identify career options in the dramatic arts, such as cinematographer, stage manager, radio announcer, or dramaturg and research the education, training and/or work experience needed
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The Standards Analysis for Theatre Grades 6-8

What are the essential understandings of the strands for Theatre? What do the content standards say? What will students learn and be able to do? How do the standards guide curriculum?

Theatre is by far the most multi-disciplinary art form middle grade students are likely to experience. The theatre content standards reflect this at every level. Theater includes visual arts skills applied to sets, costumes, make-up, props, masks, puppets, etc., and may include music and dance, and certainly includes technology if what is learned in class is staged for an audience where lighting, sound and other “effects” are common. Theatre is also a very collaborative art form. Through theatre, students understand the nature and responsibilities of ensemble and the necessity of being able to work in supportive harmony with others. There are “roles” in theatre beyond taking on a character. There are actors, yes, but also directors, writers, stage technicians, and behind-the-scenes leaders. Successful theatre classes provide opportunities for students to experience all these roles and learn valuable, transferable skills through their participation.

Theatre is solidly connected to the goals (and many of the standards) of the English/Language Arts curriculum at this level. The theatre standards link to reading, literature and storytelling, as well as writing, and speaking skills. Theatre is also a perfect fit for middle school students – for who they are at this stage in their life and how they manage the various adjustments that are necessary as they develop in these grades. “Young people in grades six through eight are not always ready to articulate who they are and what they want to be. Theatre education provides a creative and focused discipline in which students explore identities and their roles in the worlds in which they live through scriptwriting, acting, directing, designing, and producing theatre for their peers and invited audience.” (Quoted from the Arizona State University ArtsWork website: <http://artswork.asu.edu/>).

The theatre content standards do not read quite the same way as the other arts disciplines. They do not have what all the other disciplines call “elements.” They do not have “principles” as found in visual arts. Theatre has what their content standards call “the vocabulary of theatre” as the guiding concepts for artistic perception and its application under creative expression, (as well as the other strands). It is very important to understand that this vocabulary began to be introduced in the early grades of elementary school and is added to at each subsequent grade level. The theatre vocabulary is thus highly cumulative and requires that theatre teachers at the middle

grades review the elementary content standards. It is highly likely that most middle school students have had little previous experience with theatre as an art form. They may have been in plays or taken part in grade level productions, but the skills of theatre may or may not have been taught. Risk taking and building trust in the classroom is critically important.

Sixth Grade

Sixth grade students have to review or learn the vocabulary of theatre in the K-5 standards. The concept of *character*, *setting* and *pantomime* are introduced in Kindergarten. First graders learn about *plot*, *improvisation* and *tableau*. Second graders add *scene*, *sets*, and *conflict*, *script* and *story points*. By the third grade, students who have had a standards based program would have learned about *motivation*, *strategies*, *blocking* and the “five W’s: *who*, *what*, *when*, *where* and *why*. Fourth grade content standards are especially rich: they add the concepts of *climax*, *resolution*, *tone*, *objectives* and *stock characters*. There is also an emphasis at this grade on voice: *diction*, *pace*, *volume* and *variety of tones*. And just before the middle grades, fifth graders in a standards-based class would have learned about *sense memory*, *script*, *cue*, *monologue*, *dialogue*, *protagonist* and *antagonist* as well as the structural elements of plot: *exposition*, *complication*, *crisis*, *climax* and *resolution*. They would have talked about universal themes in drama and literature. They would also have been introduced to blocking and stage areas, levels and the actor’s position on the stage. This vocabulary and these concepts and associated skills are on going throughout the grade levels.

Artistic Perception and Creative Expression - Sixth Grade

These concepts are generally taught within the context of what students will be doing in class and students already know much of this vocabulary from their English/language arts curriculum, and from a general knowledge of “theatre” from TV, movies, computer games and the Internet. The sixth grade theatre vocabulary adds to the above list such ideas as *action-reaction*, *text* and *sub-text*, and *production values*. The content standards re-introduce *improvisation*, *vocal projection* and add *expression* and *timing* to create character. *Theme and mood* come around again, as does a focus on *monologue*, *action* and *setting* and the depiction of a wide range of character types. They are also to write and perform scenes or one act plays.

The context in which students learn the previous and new concepts within the artistic perception and creative expression strands, is not specified in the content standards,

however, specific suggestions for context are denoted under the historical and cultural context strand. The theatre content standards are highly integratable. For example, any of the above theatre vocabulary and associated skills could be taught through a focus on theatrical traditions of cultures throughout the world, such as those in Ancient Greece, Egypt, China, and West Africa. A unit of instruction at the sixth grade might explore the conventions of classical Greek theatre. Students learn about, practice, and employ all of the vocal projection concepts, as well as setting, action and monologue, text and sub-text in the one act plays in the style of ancient Greece that they write. To address technical theatre skills, they present their plays to an audience (classmates, other classes or a wider audience), incorporating staging skills.

Sixth graders use improvisation as part of creative drama. Improvisation taps into the innate ability of students to create personas and tell stories. Improvisation involves the ability to create characters and dialogue in the moment. The first rule of improvisation is to support one's partner. The second is to always say yes, and the third is to do no harm. These are lessons that are enormously valuable to students in the middle grades, and are a metaphor for developing some of the social skills they need at this time in their life. Theatre teachers need to develop a classroom atmosphere of trust – a safe environment in which students can take risks. A spirit of collaboration and cooperation must be build among the students. There are rich and plentiful resources available for improvisation sometimes included in materials called theatre games.

Historical and Cultural Context - Sixth Grade

This strand, as indicated above, can help provide the context for the teaching of the vocabulary and skills outlined under artistic perception and creative expression. Besides the suggestion of using the theatre of ancient Greece, the strand opens up almost any possibility as it asks students to create scripts that reflect particular historical periods or cultures. Teachers will need to research and find the resources necessary to include drama in the style of some of the other cultures directly mentioned, such as Egypt, China and West Africa.

Aesthetic Valuing- Sixth Grade

The criteria for judgment students are to develop and apply is for evaluating sets, lighting, costumes, makeup and props. Looking back at the fifth grade, students are to develop and apply appropriate criteria for critiquing the work of actors, directors, writers, and technical artists in theatre, film and video. That is a little broader, and could be specifically focused on the theatre happening in the classroom. In the fourth grade, students are to develop and apply appropriate criteria or rubrics for critiquing performances as to characterization, diction, pacing, gesture, and movement. These ideas, too, should be brought forward to the sixth grade. Critique in theatre is an on-going process. In fact, critique is completely imbedded in the instruction typical in

theatre classes: side coaching, feedback after every scene practiced in the classroom and/or in rehearsal, and assessment after scenes and short plays are performed. Sixth grade students are also to identify examples of how theatre, television and film can influence or be influenced by politics and culture. This represents a very big idea in theatre, and opens up many possibilities for student learning.

Connections, Relationships and Applications - Sixth Grade

The purpose of this strand is to use theatre as a method of integration. It assumes that theatre students are learning transferable skills. At the sixth grade level, students are to use theatre skills to enhance and communicate concepts from other curricular areas.

The standards suggest students use theatre skills to show how persuasion and propaganda are used in advertising. Typically, theatre students write and develop short scenes or improvisations in which they play characters involved in making commercials for various products. Many other activities could flow from this idea. Under this strand, students are also asked to research career opportunities in media, advertising, marketing, and interactive web design.

Seventh Grade

Overall, seventh grade standards help theatre students move into performance. The “what” to perform is open ended in the artistic perception and creative expression strands at this level. However, the “what” can be found under the historical and cultural context strand. The emphasis on examining and identifying the elements in a written script also strongly links these standards to the English/Language arts standards and, the themes suggested in the cultural context strand link strongly with history/social studies themes and standards.

Artistic Perception and Creative Expression – Seventh Grade

At the seventh grade level, students will be learning about scripts, the written text of a play or scene. All of the concepts students are to identify are essential to the study of literature as well: *foreshadowing, crisis, rising action, catharsis, and denouement*. Students typically work from teacher-selected scripts or they select scripts from approved sources. Many times, a particular script is selected to analyze because it will be the basis of performance. Understanding these terms and how they serve dramatic intent, will strengthen the student’s ability to build characters and understand motivation. If the students can identify where they are in a script, i.e., in a scene that foreshadows coming actions, or if they are at the moment of catharsis, then they will understand much more about how the scene might be played – where their emphasis and dramatic focus should be. Students are also to keep a rehearsal script/notebook to record directions and blocking.

There is a strong focus on improvisation again, now placed in the context of preparing for performance. Students are asked to use improvisation in rehearsal *to discover character and motivation*. This is a time-honored approach to preparing for a role in a production. Students are learning to think like actors. In this context, students can see improvisation as an important tool for an actor—a vehicle of experimentation and discovery. They follow the rules of improvisation emphasizing support of one another. The students might use improvisation to learn how to create actions that exhibit tension and suspense, as asked for in the standards.

On the production side, students will learn about the purpose and rules of the rehearsal process, which begins with experimentation and slowly focuses on details of performance, brought to near final form in the dress rehearsal. Seventh grade students will also see how a *run-through* and a *cold reading* function at the beginning of a process that ends in performance. They are expected to use these terms, and all the other theatre vocabulary introduced at this level (and in previous years) to describe their experience in theatre.

Historical and Cultural Context – Seventh Grade

Wonderful and extremely interesting aspects of theatre await the seventh grade student who experiences the concepts and content within the historical and cultural context strand of the standards. They will learn about historical theatrical traditions in both western and non-western contexts. For the first time, students are introduced to the world of theatrical masks, puppets, props, costumes, and sets in the context of world cultures. A world culture approach as suggested in the standards opens up opportunities to learn about and recreate some of the rich traditional uses of theatre to entertain, tell stories and recount cultural myths and legends such as through Javanese shadow puppets, Kabuki masks (and Kabuki theatre) or Kathankali dance theatre. Historic and important European theatrical traditions are also suggested through the study of the theatre of ancient Greece (a theme begun in the sixth grade), Elizabethan theatre and Italian commedia dell'arte. Students will learn how theatre can be guided by very specific conventions of the time and place and how those theatrical conventions have influenced theatre to the present day. The styles of theatre seventh graders are learning about and engaging in, provide a rich and complex window into theatre, history and culture.

Aesthetic Valuing – Seventh Grade

This strand is linked to the content suggested by the preceding historical and cultural context strand. Students are to design and apply appropriate criteria or rubrics for evaluating the effective use of masks, puppetry, makeup, and costumes in theatrical productions. They are also to discuss and explain how cultural influences affect both the meaning and the content of works of theatre. Even though the critique suggested

here is specific to the theatrical styles to be studied and experienced at this grade level, it is assumed that students will also be creating and applying criteria and rubrics to other aspects of performance, especially to the skills suggested by the standards under artistic perception and creative expression.

Connections, Relationships and Applications – Seventh Grade

The connections, relationships and applications strand provides suggestions regarding possible contexts for the skills introduced at this level. Seventh grade students can use their theatrical skills to communicate concepts or ideas from other curricular areas, such as creating a musical based on a piece of literature. The focus on acting skills in the seventh grade can help students to become more effective oral communicators.

Eighth Grade

Theatre standards at the eighth grade introduce students to some universal themes and big ideas in theatre through a continued emphasis on script analysis. They also analyze figurative language and imagery in dramatic texts. The content context comes from American history, connecting with what is being taught in history-social science at this grade level. They learn about and perform American theatrical styles and add to their technical acting skills to enhance meaning. They also learn more about staging and today's theatre technology in order make production choices.

Artistic Perception and Creative Expression – Eighth Grade

If they have been in standards-based classes, students have had experience in reading, analyzing and performing from theatrical scripts from many traditions, times and places and they have had performing and technical experience ranging from small scenes to full staging. They have learned about the essential storytelling nature of theatre. Now, the artistic perception strand asks students to think about, identify and analyze some of the universal themes in literature and theatre: loyalty, bravery, revenge and redemption. Students will recognize these themes recurring in multiple theatrical styles. They will see that these basic and strong themes are, in many ways, the building blocks of theatrical storytelling. They identify these themes in the scripts they read because they will affect production choices in design and direction (as well as the actor's development of the characters). Production choices will also be affected by different kinds of staging, and the theatre vocabulary introduced in the eighth grade includes *proscenium*, *thrust* and *arena staging*.

Since the content standards under these strands are so closely linked to the history/social studies curriculum at the eighth grade level, students, under creative expression, are to create short dramatizations in selected styles of theatre such as melodrama, vaudeville and musical theatre, which are very American inventions. To

build upon and strengthen drama skills previously studied, eighth grade theatre students continue to build characters based on improvisation. To that have been added pantomimes and monologues. The focus point for the students is to be on the voice, gesture and blocking, all in the effort to enhance meaning. The monologues could come from melodrama scripts or even musicals or be created by the students themselves from relevant events in their own lives.

Historical and Cultural Context – Eighth Grade

This strand provides additional context for integrating theatre content with social studies themes with an emphasis on “the ways in which American history has been reflected in theatre” especially ideas such as the industrial revolution and slavery, which have been portrayed through the minstrel show, the melodrama, and the musical. Under this strand, too, students are asked to identify and explain how technology has changed American theatre, citing the example of the progression of stage lighting. Students will be involved in an on-going focus on the skills involved in creating criteria for critical judgment as to the quality of a theatrical production, formal or informal, large or small. They will need to draw upon their accumulated knowledge of the vocabulary of theatre, used accurately.

Aesthetic Valuing – Eighth Grade

The use of criteria has now expanded to include the development of criteria for the formal review of a theatrical production. The review would be in written form. The standard is typically open ended, so the choice of the production subject to formally review could be something the class has performed, or it could be a high school production seen by the middle school students or it could be a live or recorded professional production. In keeping with the American history themes at this grade level, students are asked to compare and contrast the same or similar content or plot as it is found in theatre from widely different cultures and different time periods.

Connections, Relationships and Applications – Eighth Grade

Students use their growing theatrical skills to communicate concepts from other disciplines. One method would be to create a video. An example would be a video on a scientific concept or discovery. This kind of interdisciplinary approach could be an interesting challenge for eighth grade students. Students would have to have a bit of technical expertise in the use of the video camera, but their theatre skills would no doubt make a project such as this much more effective. Finally, eighth grade students under this strand are to identify and research career option in the dramatic arts and to find out what kind of education and training would be necessary in that field. In California, where the entertainment business is one of the mainstays of economic growth, this is an important idea for students to consider.



Visual

Arts

Re-Viewed Visual Arts Standards

Spiral Curriculum

Standards Analysis

“Re-Viewed” VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS
6-8 Artistic Perception and Creative Expression Combined

(Technical Skills, Concepts and Vocabulary)

SIXTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Identify	ALL the elements of art	Keep an “art idea journal”/sketch book
Discuss	works of art as to	Check the many lessons available from local and national art museum educational outreach programs
	theme	
	genre	Look up “genre”, collect examples
	style	Look up “style”, collect examples
	idea	
	media differences	Take the same subject through several media for comparisons
See and describe	how artists can express the same theme using different media and styles	Collect good examples to show the students
See and describe	how symmetrical, asymmetrical and radial balance is used effectively in works of art	Look to ethnic art for examples and ideas
Depict	a variety of subject matter using observational drawing skills	Have students keep a yearlong sketchbook for practicing observational drawing

Apply	two point perspective to create an original work of art	Find videos or DVD's that show a step-by-step process for students to follow
Create	a drawing using varying tints, shades, and color intensity	Try chalk pastels or colored pencils
Create	increasingly complex artwork reflecting personal choices and increased technical skills	Assign a subject, let students pick the media, OR assign the media and let students pick the subject
Select	specific media to express moods, feelings, themes, and ideas	Try using the same subject, but use several different materials
Create	an original work of art using technology	Check out the web sites of schools/departments that have strong arts technology programs – they usually display student art examples
SEVENTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Describe	the environment and selected works of art, using the elements of art and the principles of design	Collect pictures or slides (or transparencies) of natural and man-made environments
Identify and describe	scale (proportion) as applied to two-dimensional and three-dimensional works of art	Connect to the same concepts as found in mathematics
Identify and describe	the ways in which artists convey the illusion of space (e.g., placement, overlapping, relative size, atmospheric perspective, and linear perspective)	Made some diagrams that show these concepts one at a time and then in combination – could be on transparent sheets – or do this on a computer
Analyze and describe	how the elements of art and the principles of design contribute to	Begin with an understanding of what was intended by the

	the expressive qualities of their own works of art	student artist
Develop	increasing skill in the use of at least three different media	Printmaking is a good choice -- many techniques require no equipment
Use	different forms of perspective to show the illusion of depth on a two-dimensional surface	For example: linear vs. atmospheric
Develop	skill in using mixed media while guided by a selected principal of design	Harmony and unity will help students keep mixed media project from getting too wild
Develop	skill in mixing paints and showing color relationships	Do something other than a standard color chart!
Interpret	reality and fantasy in original two-dimensional works of art	Surrealism fits this standard if reality and fantasy are to be combined
Create	an original work of art using film, photography, computer graphics or video	Focus the assignment: give the students a theme or topic or element on which to focus
Create	a series of works of art that express a personal statement by	Working in series is a common approach of artists and teaches students about the progression of an idea and of technical skill. Focus the assignment
demonstrating skill in applying	the elements of art and the principles of design	May need to be selective here
EIGHTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Use	artistic terms when describing the intent and content of works of art	Have students keep journals that include artistic terms and their definitions

Analyze and justify	how their artistic choices contribute to the expressive quality of their own works of art	Have them talk about the choices they <i>didn't</i> make and why
Analyze	the use of the elements of art and the principles of design as they relate to meaning in video, film, or electronic media	This is about visual literacy. How do the elements and principles <i>make</i> meaning?
Demonstrate	an increased knowledge of technical skills in using more complex two-dimensional art media and processes, for example	
	printing press	Other art media and processes could be added or substituted such as paper making and/or weaving, photo grams or photo collage, etc.
	silk screening	
	computer graphic software	
Design and create	maquettes for three dimensional sculpture	(Small, preliminary studies)
Create	an original work of art using film, photography, computer graphics, or video	Focus the assignment for the students. Limitations invite creative solutions
Design and create	an expressive figurative sculpture	Figurative = representational
Select	a medium to use to communicate a theme in a series of works of art	This will increase technical skill using the selected medium – pick a medium that students need more practice using well or in different ways such as watercolor
Design and create	both additive and subtractive sculptures	Clay works both ways

Design	a work of public art appropriate to and reflecting a location	Have visual examples of public art from around the country and community if possible
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**“Re-Viewed” VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS
6-8 Historical and Cultural Context**

(Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of the Visual Arts)

SIXTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Research and discuss	the role of the visual arts in selected periods of history	Focus on how art reflects and leads culture
Using	a variety of print and electronic resources	Consider on-line research with links to the major museum collections
Look at	selected works of art from a culture AND	Get a good, basic world art history book
Describe	how they have changed or not changed in theme and content over a period of time	Connect to the world history curriculum
Select and compare	representative (typical) images or designs through writing or oral report	Check the Museum of California Design on line, among others
SEVENTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Research and describe	how art reflects cultural values in various traditions throughout the world	
Compare and contrast	works of art from various periods, styles, and cultures and explain how those works reflect the society in which they were made	
EIGHTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Examine and describe or report	on the role of a work of art created to make a social comment or protest social conditions	
Compare, contrast and analyze	styles of art from a variety of times and places in Western and non-Western cultures	

Identify	major works of art created by women and describe the impact of those works on society at that time	
Discuss	the contributions of various immigrant cultures to the art of a particular society	

“Re-Viewed” VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS
6-8 Aesthetic Valuing

(Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works in the Visual Arts)

SIXTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Construct and describe	plausible interpretations of what they perceive in works of art	There are no “right” answers
Identify and describe	ways in which their culture is being reflected in current works of art	Think contemporary, “cutting edge” art, not necessarily what you or your students like
Develop	specific criteria as individuals or in groups to assess and critique works of art	Create a rubric with the whole class
Change, edit, or revise	their works of art after a critique, articulating reasons for the changes	Have students write about the changes made and add to their portfolio
SIXTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Explain	the intent of a personal work of art and draw possible parallels between it and the work of a recognized artist	
Analyze	the form (how a work of art looks) and content (what a work of art communicates) of works of art	
Take an active part	in a small-group discussion about the artistic value of specific works of art, with a wide range of the viewpoints of peers being considered	
Develop and apply	specific and appropriate criteria individually or in groups to assess and critique works of art	
Identify	what was done when a personal work of art was reworked and explain how those changes improved the work	

SIXTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Define	their own points of view and investigate the effects on their interpretations of art from cultures other than their own	
Develop	a theory about the artist's intent in a series of works of art, using reasoned statements to support personal opinions	
Construct	an interpretation of a work of art based on the form and content of the work	
Develop and apply	a set of criteria as individuals or in groups to assess and critique works of art	
Present	a reasoned argument about the artistic value of a work of art and respond to the arguments put forward by others within a classroom setting	
Select	A grouping of their own works of art that reflects growth over time and describe the progression	

“Re-viewed” VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS
6-8 Connections, Relationships and Applications

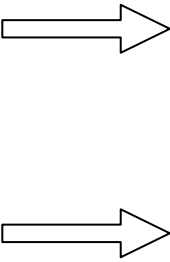
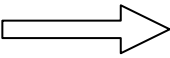
(Connecting and Applying the Visual Arts to Other Art Forms and Subject Areas)

SIXTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Research	how art has been used in theatrical productions in the past and present	Consider set design, background painting, lighting, etc.
Research	how traditional characters are represented in art and illustrations (such as the “trickster”)	Use commedia dell arte characters as well, or fools, or nymphs, etc.
Create	artwork with visual metaphors that express the traditions and myths of selected cultures	Help students understand metaphor and then visual metaphor
Describe	the tactics employed in advertising to sway the viewer’s thinking and provide examples	Use examples from television as well as print media
Develop	criteria to use in selecting artwork for specific kinds of exhibitions	Have students work in small groups or as a whole class. Think about showing artwork at your own school for different occasions
SEVENTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Study	the music and art of a selected historical era and create a multi-media presentation that reflects that time and culture	This would be a very time consuming project which might best be used in a multi-media or new media art class
Use	various drawing skills and techniques to depict lifestyles and scenes from selected civilizations	Don’t allow students to copy drawing from photographs without significant changes that would make the work original
Examine	art, photography, and other two- and three-dimensional images, comparing how different visual representations of the same object lead to different	Help students understand metaphor in language and then visual metaphor

Describe or illustrate	interpretations of its meaning, and the results	
Identify	professions in or related to the visual arts and some of the specific skills need for those professions	
EIGHTH GRADE	STANDARD CONTENT	TEACHER SUGGESTIONS
Select	a favorite artist and some of his or her works of art and create a music video that expresses personal ideas and views about the artist	
Create	a painting, satirical drawing, or editorial cartoon that expresses personal opinions about current social or political issues	
Demonstrate	an understanding of the effects of visual communication media (e.g., television, music videos, film, internet) on all aspects of society	
Work collaboratively	with a community artist to create a work of art, such as a mural, and write a report about the skills needed to become a professional artist	

THE SPIRAL CURRICULUM FOR VIUSAL ARTS IN THE MIDDLE GRADES

GRADE SIX	GRADE SEVEN	GRADE EIGHT
ARTISTIC PERCEPTION AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION		
<p>Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify all the elements of art • See and describe how symmetrical, asymmetrical and radial balance is used effectively in works of art <p>Color: Create artwork using tints and shades and color intensity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss theme, genre, style, idea, media differences <p>• Perspective: Apply two point perspective to create an original work of art</p> <p>Observational drawing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depict a variety of subject matter using observational drawing skills 	<p>Elements & Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe environment and selected works of art using elements of art and principles of design • Analyze and describe how the elements of art and the principles of design contribute to the expressive qualities of works of art <p>• Color: Develop skill in mixing paints and showing color relationships</p> <p>→</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective: Identify and describe the ways in which artists convey the illusion of space • Perspective: Identify and describe scale (proportion) as applied to 2-D and 3-D art • Perspective: Use different forms of perspective to show the illusion of depth on a 2-D surface <p>Observational drawing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret reality and fantasy in original 2-D art 	<p>Elements & Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use artistic vocabulary (elements and principles) in describing intent and content of artworks • Analyze the use of the elements of art and the principles of design as they relate to meaning in video, film, or electronic media <p>→</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p>

<p>Media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select specific media to express moods, feelings, themes, and ideas • See and describe how artists can express the same theme using different media and styles <p>Personal choices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create increasingly complex artwork reflecting personal choices (and increased technical skill) <p>Use of Technology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an original work of art using technology 	<p>Media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop increasing skill in the use of at least three different media • Develop skill in using mixed media while guided by selected principles of design <p>Personal choices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a series of artwork that expresses a personal statement (using the elements of art and the principles of design) <p>Use of Technology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create original work using film, photography, computer graphics 	<p>Media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show increased technical skills in more complex 2-D art media and processes • Select a medium to use to communicate a theme in a series of artwork • Design and create maquettes for 3-D work • Design and create expressive figurative sculpture • Use additive and subtractive sculpture processes • Design a work of public art appropriate to and reflecting a location <p>Personal choices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze and justify how personal artistic choices contribute to the expressive quality of one's own artwork <p>Use of Technology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and Create original work using film, photography, computer graphics or video
HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and discuss the role of art in selected periods of history (using a variety of print and electronic resources) • Describe art from a selected culture and describe how theme and content has or has not changed over time • Select and compare typical images or designs (writing or oral report) from two selected cultures 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the role of art created to make social comment or protest social conditions 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop specific criteria as individuals or in groups to critique works of art • Change, edit or revise one's own works of art after a critique, citing reasons for the changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and apply specific criteria individually or in groups to assess and critique works of art • Identify what was done when a personal work of art was reworked and explain how those changes improved the work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and apply a set of criteria as individuals or in groups to assess and critique works of art • Select a grouping of one's own work that reflects growth over time and describe the progression
CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS AND APPLICATIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration: Research how art has and is use in theatrical productions • Research how traditional characters are represented in art • Visual literacy: How advertising sways viewer • thinking. (Describe and provide examples) • Create art with visual metaphors that express myths and cultural traditions • Develop criteria to select artwork for specific kinds of exhibitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual literacy: Examine art, photography, and other 2-D & 3-D images to compare different visual representations of the same object and how that effects meaning (Describe the results) • Create a multi-media presentation about the music and art that reflects a specific time and culture • Use various drawing skills to depict scenes from selected civilizations • Identify professions in or related to the visual arts and what skills are needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual literacy: Demonstrate an understanding of the effects of visual communication media (TV, video, film, internet on all aspects of society • Create a music video that expresses personal ideas and views about a favorite artist (use images of the artist's work) • Create a painting, satirical drawing or editorial cartoon that expresses personal opinions about current social or political issues • Work with a community artist to create a public work of art; what skills are necessary for the artist? (Write a report)

The Standards Analysis for Visual Arts 6-8

What are the essential understandings of the strands for the visual arts? What do the content standards say? What will students learn and be able to do? How do the standards guide curriculum?

Middle grades visual arts bring together everything that students learned about art in elementary school and takes them to a whole new level where personal choice combined with greater skills makes it possible to work with intent. With practice and experience, they will be able to do what they have in mind – to create the images, objects and effects they want to create, and when accidents happen, they learn how to make the most of them instead of asking for a new piece of paper. Accidents in art teach. Students in middle school learn perspective, which they have always wanted to use but didn't know how. In these grades they are constantly discovering new media and methods that they have never had a chance to use before. It is exciting and challenging to work with clay and glazes, printmaking and photo collage, acrylic paint and a whole new array of three dimensional materials and processes.

There is a strong emphasis on learning to be expressive using new media such as computer graphic programs and all the fun and tricky and cool things those programs can do, as well as animation (at least on a fairly simple level) and perhaps video and/or photography. Since middle school students are intensely interested in media, this focus is very relevant to them and to their lives. Middle grade students also learn that there is way more to the study about art than just making it. They learn about art from other cultures that can influence their work and they have a chance to find out about contemporary artists and their work and how it reflects the society they live in. The aesthetic valuing strand is especially strong in the middle grades, allowing them to express their opinion about the value of artwork, which they love to do, as long as they learn how to back up those opinions with “visual evidence” and an appropriate use of the visual arts vocabulary. Work in art is a very good match for where these students are in terms of self-discovery and expressing their own ideas.

Sixth Grade

Any discussion of visual arts at the sixth grade level has to take into account the fact that in many cases, it is offered only as part of an exploratory wheel and thus the instructional time is severely limited. If the wheel time is 6-8 weeks, it will be necessary to compress the standards in order to help students experience at least a glimpse of what they contain. Teachers will have to select from among standards those they think would be most relevant for their students, or use the “key standards” selected by the

Framework. The standards will have to be compressed to include as much as possible in each unit. In the end, it is not possible to expect students to meet the grade level standards in 6-8 weeks when they were written for student engagement in the content over a full year.

Artistic Perception and Creative Expression – Sixth Grade

In the area of artistic perception and creative expression, where more than 80% of the skills of the discipline can be found, middle grades visual arts classes expand and refine all of the concepts from the K-5 curriculum standards in new and exciting ways. The students know the elements and principals of art and build real work upon them. They explore media and processes of much more complexity than was possible in the elementary setting. Beginning in the sixth grade, students are introduced to such concepts as *theme, genre, style, idea* and the differences in expression that media can make. They learn how artists can express the same theme using different media and styles, and the difference in meaning those variations make. They begin to see that a portrait of the same person (and the same poses) rendered in black and white ink line and one in blended chalk pastels have very different expressive qualities. Likewise, a blue scale monochromatic tempera painting of a seascape and a full color representation of the same scene, produces very different moods and feelings for the observer.

Sixth graders are learning about symmetrical, asymmetrical and radial balance and how they are used effectively in works of art. At this grade level, there is a focus on the skills involved in observational drawing, that is, drawing based on an accurate reproduction of objects, people, landscapes – anything that can be seen in the real world.

Observational drawing is an essential skill, a building block for so much that follows over the years, whether in the middle grades or in high school and beyond. Observational drawing is based on one's ability to learn to see – to really see. Many visual arts teachers have begun to use the right brain drawing exercises found in the popular Betty Edwards books, beginning with *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. Students are re-introduced to blind contour, contour, gesture and other drawing processes.

Another aspect of observational drawing that applies more obviously to the wide world of landscapes (cityscapes, seascapes, real or imaginary) as well as “realistic” still life is the application of the rules of two and three point perspective, one of the basic concepts upon which much of representational artwork is based. Perspective is the invention of the Renaissance and is one of the most technical skills students ever learn in the visual arts. It is one of the few times students spend time with rulers. It takes many process oriented exercises to get the idea before students are asked to apply it in expressive works of art. Students who are particularly good at observational drawing and

perspective may think of careers in medical illustration, graphic design, advertising, and the film industry.

Sixth graders take color theory past primary, secondary and complementary into using varying tints, shades and learning about color intensity. Many times the exploration of color at this level is combined with new media, especially chalk pastels, colored pencils (of much better quality than those they used for charts and graphs in elementary school), and higher quality tempera or even acrylic paint. Students may also be introduced to colored inks and liquid and tube watercolor paint. Even familiar media like pan watercolors and liquid tempera are used with much greater sophistication. Since all of these materials are about color first, it is natural that they are part of any unit on color theory, especially one involving intensity, (how much color) and tints (mixing colors with white, or, in the case of watercolors, with water) and shades, mixing colors with black. A thorough understanding of the color wheel is usually part of any sixth grade class. There are many, many exercises based on exploring the color wheel and the relationships it sets up between colors. It is quite a challenge for art teachers to keep from getting too tedious with these exercises and give the students a chance to explore their new information on color in creative and expressive ways.

Sixth graders are ready for more complex artwork than they were in elementary school, work that reflects more personal choices about the use of the elements and principles and media and processes. Also, gradually, with every assignment, they increase their technical skills. Typically, they have more sustained time for a particular lesson or unit of instruction or project, be it on a wheel or part of a full year, than they had in elementary school. At this level, they are ready to produce original works of art using technology – perhaps computer generated images, photos manipulated in Photo Shop or like programs, simple animation techniques, and artistic Power Point presentations of research on artists and art history.

Historical and Cultural Context – Sixth Grade

Students in the sixth grade, under the historical and cultural context strand, study the role of the visual arts in selected periods of history, (content standards 3.1). Many times teachers select historical periods that align to those being studied in the history/social studies classes. They begin to use print and electronic resources to research information. They can visit on-line museums all over the world to obtain images and information they need for reports and research papers connected to their hands-on learning in art. For example, students may select or be assigned to study ancient Egyptian art history and images. They may go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's web site and gain access to images from their vast collection. There is substantial historical background information also available and lists of other resources connected with this subject. Students, using a good, basic reference book (or on-line information) can then

trace the themes of Egyptian art over centuries to see if it did or did not change in content over time, one of the standards (3.2) in the content standards. The student can track the reoccurring images from Egyptian cultures (or any other selected culture over time).

Aesthetic Valuing – Sixth Grade

Under the aesthetic valuing strand, sixth graders are taking artistic interpretation, to which they were introduced in elementary school, to a much higher level. They are given opportunities to develop their own interpretations regarding meaning in a work of art. They learn that they need to be plausible and based on the visual evidence that is presented by the artwork itself, and guided by an understanding of the elements and principles of art, but they also learn that there are multiple “plausible” interpretations and that there are no absolutely “right” answers. There are, however, better and “less good” explanations about the meaning of art out there. They are beginning to learn that one can understand a work of art, even come to an interpretation and still not like it.

For the first time, students are being asked to identify and describe how culture is being reflected in contemporary art – work that is being produced around their own time. Art is an always on-going process and artists that may not be fully appreciated today, may be the masters when looked back on from the future. Many art history classes seem to stop somewhere in mid-century, at the high school and even college level. But much provocative, controversial work is produced all the time. Much of this work will be very exciting to sixth graders to discover, (always with appropriate for school content in mind). Students have discovered Keith Herring, a former graffiti artist, for example. His work is symbolic, colorful, and bold and also holds within it some interesting aesthetic questions about “street art” and graffiti and the function of critics in defining what is art. Again, looking at contemporary art helps students see that they may need background information to understand the intentions of contemporary artists, and that intentions may be fulfilled and yet, the work in question is not appealing to them. They don’t have to like something to understand it and even to find that it is successful, according to the artist’s intent. This is a very essential understanding. A very big idea in the world of the visual arts. The sixth grade is a very good place to begin this understanding. It has relevance to many things in their life.

Along with looking into and understanding contemporary art, students are asked to continue to develop, with the help of their teacher, and in groups of their peers, specific criteria by which to critique their work, and the work of others. Again, it is the criteria that keep the judgments they make from becoming just “I like it” or “it’s dumb!” Six graders are at a point to get beyond this kind of reaction. They learn that only by finding, creating and using specific criteria, can they make informed judgments. In the school setting, the criteria for a lesson or project can be created by the teacher and the

class in relation to what the students are being asked to learn. They will see that not everything in a lesson is part of the criteria – just those things that are the focus of the learning. The criteria are partly a “check list” of what must be present, and also a rubric for how well things must be done with examples from several levels of performance. But things not specifically taught in a lesson should not be part of the criteria. The more students participate in developing the criteria, the better the chance that they will accept the outcomes of the application of those criteria.

The point of applying criteria in making informed judgments about their own work in particular, is that it should lead to an “editing process” that will improve the final product. Students at this level are learning how to use critical judgment of their own work to change, edit and revise what they have done. Critiques to improve artwork as it moves toward completion, has been a part of how artists work over the ages, especially in art school and studio settings. This is authentic, embedded assessment. And not just assessment of an “end product” but assessment that guides breakthroughs and new ways of seeing one’s own work. It can help students solve problems in the work and open doors to new approaches.

Connections, Relationships and Applications – Sixth Grade

Finally, related to the final strand, connections, relationships and applications, of the content standards, sixth graders are asked to make some interesting connections between visual arts and other disciplines. The sixth grade curriculum in general is highly “integratable.” Themes from English/language arts and history/social studies are connected at this level and the arts curriculum, especially under the historical/cultural strand and the connections, relationships and applications strand, connects with these same themes. Myths, visual metaphors, and visual representations of traditional characters from literature are at the core of this strand at the sixth grade. Visual art students are asked to research how art has been used in theatrical productions of the past and present. The “art part” of theatre is an exceptionally rich area in which to make connections. Artwork can be created around the “visual metaphors” that express the traditions of a culture. These lessons can connect back to the required skills at this level, of course. Another key idea in this strand is for students to find out about the tactics that advertising use to persuade viewers and to find specific examples from print, TV, and on-line examples. This is a kind of introduction to media literacy. Finally, students are asked to develop criteria in selecting artwork for specific kinds of exhibits. This standard is a natural outgrowth to the emphasis on creating criteria for aesthetic judgment that is the core of the aesthetic valuing strand.

Seventh Grade

As with the other arts disciplines, there is a strong tendency in the standards at the seventh grade level to reinforce many of the big ideas introduced in the sixth grade. If the sixth grade students have actually not had a yearlong course, which would be, in the real world of middle school schedules, quite rare, but instead have had some kind of “wheel exploration” of significantly shorter time, then 7th grade becomes all the more important. It will be important to not only reinforce the concepts of the 6th grade curriculum, but the teacher may in fact, be introducing them for the first time in a longer time context – either a semester, or, as best practice would indicate, a year long course. Because the standards at this grade level spiral the concepts introduced at the 6th grade level, the challenge of meeting the standards of a two grade span is way more “doable” than one might first think.

Artistic Perception and Creative Expression - Seventh Grade

Under the combined artistic perception and creative expression strands, students continue to refine, talk about and apply the elements of art and the principles of design. If they were not introduced to *theme*, *genre*, or *style*, those ideas will be a natural part of the discussion of works of art at the seventh grade (or any subsequent grade level for that matter). These are ideas that will be talked about from this point forward in any visual art class in the context of the elements and principles. Actually, there is nothing strange about the continuing focus on elements and principles, as they remain the basic “grammar” of the visual arts regardless of grade level – all the way through high school and, should students continue with the visual arts at the post secondary level, all the way through their college courses. Seventh grade students, usually enrolled in Art One or Introduction to Art, are to describe both the environment, natural and man-made, as well as selected works of art in terms of the elements and principles. Students at this level must demonstrate the ability to define, understand and use the vocabulary appropriately. They must also be able to analyze and talk about how they, themselves, have used the elements and principles in their own work to create specific expressive qualities. How has the use of shaded color literally darkened the mood of their work? How has emphasis (a principle of design) directed the eye to the most important part of the picture? Teachers are guiding students to be more intentional in their choice of which elements and principles dominate their work and to be able to explain their choices, as they can be quite different choices that peers have made. That is part of the nature of creative visual arts.

Out of those elements of art, there is an emphasis on the illusion of space at the seventh grade level. This is a basic concept that is introduced in the standards at the third grade where children learn about foreground, middle ground and background. The illusion of depth on a two dimensional surface becomes more and more complex and

layered throughout the grades: from placement, overlapping and relative size to vanishing points, horizon line, line of sight, the role of diagonal lines, etc. It is one of the ways in which artists (and student artists, of course) create representational works of art. Scale and proportion are part of this emphasis on the illusion of space, but perspective is the key tool to be learned and applied. Perspective is, of course, not used without context, except perhaps in beginning exercises, like the often used drawing of the road with telephone poles on both sides, disappearing into the distance by the use of the horizon line, diagonal lines, relative size, intervals and, of course, the vanishing point of one-point perspective. But at this grade level, students are also to “interpret reality and fantasy in original two-dimensional works of art”. Thus they have an interesting context for the application of the skills associated with one and two point perspective, one that will prove fun and challenging to students at this grade level. Imagine the challenge of depicting castles, stairways and roads inside large and small bubbles, floating into the distance! Every skill of perspective, proportion, relative size, placement, overlapping, and atmospheric perspective to create the illusion of space would be brought into play. There are also many simpler examples that would be sufficiently challenging as well and would use most of the ideas listed above.

At the seventh grade level, the standards also emphasize the use of art media and processes, asking, under creative expression, that students increase their skill in the use of at least three different media, develop skill in using mixed media, and show skill in mixing paints and showing color relationships. They are also asked to “create an original work of art using film, photography, computer graphics or video”.

Various media was introduced to students throughout the K-5 curriculum: drawing materials of all kinds including colored pencils, chalk and oil pastels and various markers and pens; painting media like tempera and watercolor, and simple three dimensional materials such as papers, cardboard and found man made and organic materials, clay, wood, modeling compounds, wire and materials like yarn, string, and fabric. Along with these materials were the processes that were connected to each and that made them work in predictable and successful ways. Sometimes the processes are the most important element, such as in printmaking, collage, mixed media, clay and glazes and the use of stencils, templates, and rubbings. The sixth grade does not introduce any new materials or processes. By the seventh grade, students are to get better at the use of at least three media. The students themselves sometimes select the media, but more often than not, the teacher has selected the mediums of focus for the whole class. (Not everything will be available for students to choose from). Many times, the teacher will go back to some basic materials that students may not have had a chance to work with often or deeply enough, such as watercolor. Perhaps they have not worked with quality watercolors, or had good brushes or paper, so they really don't

know what this media is capable of, or what they could do with it if they knew more about it. Besides, their fine motor skills are vastly improved since they were introduced to watercolor in the first or second grade.

Tempera paint is a mainstay of school artwork as the major opaque, water-based painting media. If there is the budget, it may give way to acrylics, which are higher quality paint, still opaque, and capable of much more subtlety. Whichever paint is used, the seventh grade standards say that students will mix paint (of whatever kind) to emphasize color and color relationships. This is an extension of the focus on color in the previous grade – especially tints and shades and color intensity. That is why there is almost always a unit on color theory at this grade level. Students can work with transparent color (as in watercolors) where water is the means of creating tints, or they can use opaque pigments where the addition of white creates the tints. They can do more with various color schemes such as analogous, monochromatic, and complementary. Or, sometimes the teacher will introduce a new media/process with which the students have most certainly had limited experience, such as printmaking.

In the sixth grade, students were asked to create an original work of art using technology. If they did not have this experience, the whole idea of technology as an expressive tool of art can and should be introduced at the seventh grade level. Units of instruction can be designed around whatever form of visual technology is most available to the students: photography, computers and computer graphic programs, or video. The essential idea here is to be sure that the elements of art and the principles of design are the basis of all work using such technology and that aesthetics be the dominant concept. It is easy to let the technology dominate, especially when students are just learning how to manipulate it, but ultimately, the work produced by whatever method must meet artistic standards. A very effective way to manage this might be, at least as a beginning project, to assign students a “graphic notebook or sketchbook” in which students use a graphic program to develop examples of each of the elements and principles. Beyond that, there are many subjects and themes appropriate for original creative work through the application of the elements and principles.

Historical and Cultural Context - Seventh Grade

The overarching theme of this strand at the seventh grade level is to understand how art reflects cultural values and the society from which it comes by looking at and analyzing art from various periods, styles and cultures throughout the world. The standards are very wide open at this grade level. There are no specifics in the standards regarding the choice of cultures. Therefore it is up to the teacher to determine the appropriate historical period and culture to focus upon. One choice would be to connect to the themes and cultures in alignment with what students are studying in their history/social studies class. Another idea is to connect with the ethnic background of the students

represented in the class and/or in the community. That has the potential to increase relevance and interest. Teachers need to collect good quality examples of the work to be studied in the form of art reproductions/prints, or slides or images on line or on CD's. Teachers will discover amazing resources by going to on-line galleries or national museums, most of which have educational outreach programs. It is extremely useful to have many art history books in the classroom for students (and the teacher) to use for reference.

Aesthetic Valuing – Seventh Grade

Once again, even if seventh grade students did not have an opportunity to engage in the activities suggested by the aesthetic valuing standards of the sixth grade, the key ideas can be introduced for the first time at the seventh grade level, as the standards here are extensions of the same ideas. The concepts fall into three categories: how art is intentional and makes meaning, how to critique a work of art and determine artistic value and how revisions and changes in one's own artwork results in great improvements. Seventh grade students begin to understand the concept of intent in the artwork of famous artists and in their own work. Artists make deliberate decisions about every aspect of a work of art and students learn to do the same. They learn to explain the decisions they have made and, probably for the first time, compare their own artwork to that of recognized artists and look for parallels. Students begin to understand that what they see in a well known painting or sculpture is not an accident, that art, by and large, is not accidental (Pollock notwithstanding – he chose to be somewhat accidental). It is the result of many decisions, large and small. And that they, even as "student artists" make the same kinds of decisions about their work as famous artist did and do. They explore the idea that form (how a work of art looks) and content (what a work of art communicates) are necessarily related.

Seventh grade students continue to learn how to critique their own work and the work of peers in supportive, helpful and useful ways that depend on seeing what is there and what was intended and not on simple likes and dislikes. Students use teacher developed rubrics to guide the evaluation of work and learn to develop rubrics on their own. The rubrics are the criteria to which the work is held. The criteria come from what the students were expected to learn by way of the lesson or unit of instruction. The methods of a successful critique have to be taught and practiced by students. They need to learn how to be active participants in large and small group discussions and to make an effort to understand a wide range of viewpoints. As Elliot Eisner says, work in the arts develops a "tolerance for ambiguity", which is essential for a subject with multiple right answers and where there is no single right answer. It is very important that students use the artistic vocabulary of the elements and principles correctly in their comments. It is also important for the students to be able to actually point to the visual

“evidence” for their statements – to go up and point out exactly where they see balance or dominance or implied line or shaded color or the vanishing point. All of this helps ground any discussion in observable terms. Again, this takes practice and needs to be an on-going part of the curriculum in seventh (and eighth grade). The skills learned in artistic critique will serve students well in other areas of the curriculum.

Finally, at the seventh grade level, the aesthetic valuing strand asks students to engage in the process of revising, changing and improving their own work of art. They should be able to explain what they did and how the changes improved the work. It is very important for students to understand the way in which artists work. The process of constant revision is built into artistic process – in all of the arts disciplines. Visual artists revise their work as they go along. It may be that the materials with which they are working, especially sculptural materials, will suggest changes along the way – just by the nature of experimenting with them. Some things *do* happen by accident, but *intent* takes over when the artist decides to keep the results and even to try to make it happen again. Students are used to the revision and editing process in writing, but seldom understand its importance in the visual arts until it is brought to their attention. Thus it is very wise for teachers to select several lessons or projects that include revision as part of the rubric.

Connections, Relationships and Applications – Seventh Grade

This strand is somewhat unlike the others, in that the content standards can be understood more easily as “project suggestions”. They are certainly connected to the skills and concepts defined by artistic perception and creative expressions and enriched by the historical and cultural context strand, but they are narrower in scope, even as they are more specific. Still, the specificity is just a suggestion. There are many possible ways to apply the skills and concepts learned at this grade level across the arts disciplines and/or across the other subject areas. The strand suggests transferring skills especially related to making multi-media presentations. Students are also to use their drawing skills and techniques to depict scenes from selected civilizations. Increasingly, middle school social studies teachers are using a project-based approach to their units of study and that can often include visual representations of aspects of culture and society. Arts students should be able to apply their skills to these kinds of projects successfully.

This strand also asks students to identify various professional careers related to the visual arts and understand the various specific skills someone would need to succeed. It is important for students to understand just how many high level professional jobs there are in the visual arts in the current world. They tend to identify studying art with becoming an “artist” by which they usually mean someone who works in a studio, does paintings or sculpture and shows in a gallery or sells some stuff now and then if they are

lucky. This image is very far from what most art majors end up doing. Students, especially at the middle grade level, need to learn about the more contemporary professions associated with the visual arts. There are thousands of well paid people working in the entertainment business, a huge contributor to the economics of California. They work in animation -- computer generated and hand drawn or constructed, in special effects, costume design, set decoration, and art direction. Art majors work in the theater creating sets and costumes. They create and draw (by whatever means) video games, complex and simple. Beyond entertainment, people with high level visual arts skills become illustrators, work in advertising and graphic design. Art majors are photographers – both journalistic and artistic. People with strong arts backgrounds work in product design: everything from cars and bicycles to toasters and tooth brushes. Furniture and fabric design is a big and growing area of product design. All architects have a visual arts background. Students should recognize that many highly paid jobs in the arts these days demand a combination of art and science, technology or engineering skills. Our world is becoming increasingly visual – in print, on line, and in all phases of news and entertainment. Visual literacy and visual skills are and will continue to be in high demand. And, students can still become that artist in his or her studio, as a professional or as a person with a lifelong passion for creating art.

Eighth Grade

Artistic Perception and Creative Expression – Eighth Grade

The eighth grade is the last of what is thought of as the middle grades and is thus a transitional grade level. All subjects taught at the eighth grade in one way or another, prepare students to transition to high school. This very much includes the visual and performing arts as they are a part of the A to G requirements for admission to the UC and CSU. The student who has elected to take visual art at the eighth grade level will typically go on to select a yearlong visual art class at the high school level to satisfy the fine arts requirement. Thus the eighth grade art teacher needs to keep one eye on the content standards at this grade level, and one eye on the content standards at the proficient level at grades 9-12.

Eighth grade students know and use all the terminology and vocabulary of the elements of art and the principles of design. At the end of the year, they will be expected to use this vocabulary to describe two big “essential understandings”: the *content* of a work of visual art and the *intent or meaning* (or *expression*) that the use of the elements and principles indicate. This applies to analyzing the work of recognized artists as well as the work of peers and their own original artwork. This is the heart of the artistic perception strand at the eighth grade level. The students are expected to justify how their artistic choices (that would be which of the elements and principles they employed

in a work of art, combined with the choice of media) contribute to its expressive quality or what it means. Students have to be able to look at a work of art and determine which elements of art dominate. Is the work defined by the use of color? Or does it rely more on line and shape? Then, the students should, by the end of the year, be able to identify which principle(s) of design organize the composition of the work of art. Does the composition depend on dominance and subordination or is it organized through the use of repetition and rhythm? The students are beginning to learn that the principles of design are the way in which the visual image is composed. And all of this speaks to the artist's intent – what they mean to do, what they mean to say, which reinforces the fact that art has meaning. All art, from the most representational to the most non-objective, has meaning. This is an essential understanding.

There is a heavy emphasis at this grade level on “non-traditional” media such as film, video and other electronic media, in both the artistic perception and creative expression strands. Students are to apply the elements of art and principles of design to determine the meaning of works of art created in these media. This approach reinforces the fact that visual arts in the twenty-first century is no longer considered to be only the “fine arts” of painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture and photography. The intent is to broaden the definition of what is art, and how aesthetic elements are applied to these new media works. The point here is, in many ways, to address *visual literacy* across the ever-expanding ways through which visual meaning can be achieved. Film (and video) can be shared between the disciplines of theatre and visual arts. Meaning comes as interplay between the skills associated with “drama” but the “look” of the film or video as it influences the meaning, is visual. Art students should be able to perceive and describe what is going on visually (color saturation, low angle point of view shots, open vs. confined spaces, close-up vs. distance shots, repetition of images, etc.) in terms of the elements and principles (especially the principles of design). In the shift to creative expression, students at the eighth grade level are asked to create an original work of art using film, photography, computer graphics or video. This theme is spiraled throughout the middle grades beginning in grade six. Students will have gained technical skills associated with the selected media, and will be more able, at this age, to use them to create meaning – to be deliberate in their aesthetic choices – to actually notice that there *are* aesthetic choices to be made when using this technology.

Within traditional media and processes, students are expected to increase their technical skills related to more complex two-dimensional works of art. The content standard suggests the processes inherent in using a printing press, silk screen or, computer graphic software. Teachers should look at these as suggestions only (as the standard does say “such as”). Printmaking is certainly an important aspect of visual art, and if the teacher has access to a printing press – large or small – this is certainly an

area worthy of exploration as most middle school students have had very limited exposure to printmaking of any kind. Silk screening is a kind of printmaking, and can be associated with real artistic works and strictly commercial applications such as tee-shirts. There are many more interesting and challenging two dimensional processes and media for students to explore at this level, especially mixed media approaches which can include printmaking as well as painting, various forms of image transfers, photo collage and drawing (think Robert Rauschenberg). Standard 2.5 asks students to “select a medium to uses to communicate a theme in a series of works of art”. Working in a series is a very important concept in visual arts. It allows students (and artists) to explore ideas more fully, to apply lessons learned from one work to the next one. The series focuses on a specific theme or idea, which can be explored fully within the chosen media and artistic process. Students could select a simple media such as charcoal and do a series of portraits, or figure studies or different views of the same still life. Or they could select watercolor and use it in an abstract context where it could be allowed to flow, mix, bleed, etc., and then in progressively more controlled contexts.

Finally, under the creative expression strand, students at the eighth grade are to work with three dimensional art forms and processes. They are to make maquettes (small, preliminary models) for sculptures, as well as create an expressive figurative sculpture. The media is not suggested. Typically the media is clay, but it could be anything: found objects, wire, metal, wood, plaster, fabric or any combination thereof. Students will learn how to apply the elements and principles to three dimensional forms at this grade level. They are also asked to design “a work of public art appropriate to and reflecting a location”. The finished work would most likely be drawings of the idea from multiple points of view or the creation of a small model or “maquettee”.

Historical and Cultural Context – Eight Grade

In the eighth grade, this strand introduces students to the connection between art and social issues, including art as social comment or protest. Art has always had a controversial side in so far as it comments on social conditions, both personal and more broadly in the culture. Students need to see examples of such art from around the world, from times past and in the contemporary mode. Students are asked to “identify major works of art created by women and describe the impact of those works on the society at the time”. Again, consideration must be given to the work in the past and in a contemporary setting. There may be important parallels or contrasts to be discovered by comparing the historical with the contemporary. Some may wonder why there is still a seemingly separate category of “women artists” and not just “artists.” Also included under this strand at the eighth grade level are the contributions of various immigrant cultures to the art of a particular society. That could open the door to units of instruction

based on the considerable contributions of African American and Latino artists on American society or it could be the influence of the ancient Phoenicians on Greek art.

One of the biggest ideas from the historical and cultural context strand at this grade level is the understanding of and comparison between European art, and art originating from cultures and societies outside of the western world. Many students at this age have never heard of this terminology. They typically don't understand "western" in this context, thinking more along the lines of "cowboy art" – unless they have heard the terms in their social studies classes. It is essential that students transition to high school understanding that there are two great traditions in art: what we know of as "western art" which includes the art from Europe and the Americas and non-western art, which is generally understood to be art from Asia, the island nations and Africa. It is important that students see that art is part of every culture at every time in every place in the world. It is also essential that they do not think that western art is the "important art" and that eastern art is in any way "primitive" or less aesthetic. It just proceeds from different sensibilities. Art history books used to routinely refer to African art as "primitive", but the term took on such a negative connotation that it is rarely used anymore. The high renaissance is not superior to the great Chinese dynasties that produced exquisite, refined art and sculpture and utilitarian objects. The two are just different.

Aesthetic Valuing – Eighth Grade

One of the most important aspects of the aesthetic valuing strand is to prepare eighth graders to be able to take part in meaningful critiques of their own artwork and the artwork of peers. More emphasis is placed on these skills at the proficient (and advanced) levels of visual arts classes in high school. Thus at the eighth grade level, students are asked to "present a reasoned argument about the artistic value of a work of art and respond to the arguments brought forward by others within a classroom setting." They learn the "give and take" nature of an artistic critique and can defend their judgments without becoming either defensive or overly aggressive. And as they began to learn at the sixth grade, they understand that artistic judgments of quality are different from one's likes and dislikes. They are, of course, expected to use the vocabulary of the visual arts accurately. They are expected to be able to apply criteria to the judgment of artwork, whether it comes from the teacher, an external source or is developed by the class, small groups or individual students. They are also asked to "select a grouping of their own works of art that reflect growth over time and describe the progression" This standard picks up on the idea of working in a series (from the creative expression strand) and asks students to think about what they have learned over time as evidenced in their own work. The student must learn to be articulate about the issues he/she has solved through the progression of the work. How did the work

get better? What lessons were learned? How did he/she get from one idea to another? What triggered new insights? Where were the breakthroughs and why did they happen? All of these questions are implied by this standard.

The idea of working in a series is continued in this strand beyond one's own work. Students are asked to determine artistic intent, by looking critically at a series of work by an established artist connected by theme, style, and perhaps time. Most recognized artists, especially contemporary artists, work in series: O'Keeffe's flower paintings, or her skull paintings, Matisse's collages, Picasso's Cubism period, Alexander Calder's mobiles, etc. What can students discover about what was important to these artists by looking at many images of similar themes and styles over time? How do they know all of these images were created by the same artist? What elements and principles are common to the whole set of images they are looking at? All of these questions are essential aesthetic valuing – making an informed judgment about the work of artists.

Related to the understanding of western and non-western art (as found in the historical, cultural connections strand), the aesthetic valuing strand at this level asks students to consider how one's "cultural lenses" effect their judgment of artistic quality or worth. Students come to understand that some of their likes and dislikes can be traced back to their cultural orientation. The aesthetics of some other culture may seem odd or strange. Latino and Mexican art is full of lively, brilliant, contrasting color, pageant, people, storytelling, social commentary and visual complexity. If that is not the visual experience of some other students of different cultural orientations, can they "see" the art of Rivera or Mexican folk artists or mural painters in positives terms? Can they learn to understand it and judge its intent and success based on a different set of values than they might have for the things they like? This is an issue that will continue throughout the art courses they may take in high school and college. These eighth graders are just being introduced to the complexity of aesthetic judgment, especially in relation to the role of culture on attitudes about art. Those attitudes can exist on a level, other than one's ethnic orientation. Perhaps a student comes from a family that values representational art and derides abstract art as something "anybody could do." Those family attitudes and preferences have a strong influence on one's preferences. It comes down to helping students to become informed about all kinds of art – to see many examples from many times, places and cultures, so they can become familiar with ideas, styles and representations very different from what they "grew up with." The more they know about art, the more open they will be to a wide range of expressive content.

Connections, Relationships and Applications – Eighth Grade

Again, at this grade level, the standards of this strand are a collection of integrated, project-based ideas that teachers might use, or they might take the themes and concepts found in the other strands and develop different interdisciplinary projects. This set of project choices reflects the application of technology to communicate information about artists and art works, developing visual ideas that portray social and political issues, and projects that demonstrate visual literacy in looking at communications media (television, music videos, film, Internet, etc.). One project also suggests that students may take the public art idea from a design idea (in creative expression) to actual completion by having the class work with a community artist to create a collaborative work of art such as a mural and then write about the process and the skills needed to become a professional artist doing that kind of work.



PART THREE

STANDARDS BASED INSTRUCTION ACROSS THE ARTS FOR THE MIDDLE GRADES

Introduction and Context

After the preceding analysis of the strands and standards for the four arts disciplines for grades 6-8, the focus turns to the implications for pedagogy and instructional methodology. Effective and creative teaching is the most important element in student learning. The spiral curriculum is charted to see the progression from one grade to another, and to see the layering of concepts within each of the particular grades. There are three realities that will influence teaching methodology for the visual and performing arts in the middle grades: the content to be learned, the nature of the arts disciplines itself, and the characteristics of the learners. These three categories are not separate, but interact in the teaching day. The arts are well taught when teachers weave together standards based content, an understanding of the processes and ways of working involved in the art form in relation to the overarching ideas of the strands and the developmental realities of young adolescents. Teachers know their students and perhaps it is the students themselves that most influence what is taught and how. School culture also plays a role.

Instructional Time Frame

Yearlong courses for dance, theatre or visual arts are not currently common in the middle grades. These courses are usually on an elective wheel for the sixth grade and tend to be semester courses for seventh and eighth grade students. However, students enrolled in instrumental music may have full year courses throughout the middle grades. The implications for the selection of curriculum and instructional methodology are that teachers of shorter courses, or yearlong courses divided into semesters that are more or less independent of each other and may include different students each semester have to take the time frame into consideration. They have to ask, given the allotted amount of time, what learning outcomes are possible? What would instruction look like? How would strands and standards be balanced? What kinds of units could be developed and taught? The difference between what an art teacher can do with 40 weeks vs. six weeks of instructional time is significant.

How Teachers Mediate the Curriculum

Teaching is the most important element in student learning. The strands and standards guide the design of the curriculum, but it is the teachers who implement the curriculum on a day-to-day basis for their students. In this Guide, we are always speaking of instruction that is based on the strands and content standards contained in the *VAPA Framework*. Those content standards provide teachers with the “what” but not the “how”, thus teachers find multiple ways of teaching standards. Given the time constraints, especially at the middle school level, they must also make educated choices about where to place the emphasis and how they will balance the strands and standards over the length of the available instructional time.

Middle school arts teachers will emphasize some standards over others based on who their students are, as well as their own choices and beliefs about what is most important, among the standards, for students to learn in dance, music, theatre or visual arts. For example, an arts teacher in any of the disciplines who values multiculturalism and diversity will emphasize different standards than a teacher who is convinced that the development of skills is the most important aspect of the art form for students at this age. Teachers who value process over product will have a different emphasis than those who put more emphasis on product or performance.

The *VAPA Framework* identifies key content standards that are viewed as beginning points for standards-based instruction in each of the elementary school and middle school grades for each of the arts disciplines. Middle grade teachers will want to familiarize themselves with the key standards as they make both curricular and instructional decisions. These key standards focus on fundamental content those students with any level of prior knowledge need to move to the next level of understanding and expression. As described in the framework, “Like the complete standards, the key standards build up content in each successive grade level and spiral throughout the curriculum for kindergarten through grade eight. They are essential in preparing students for beginning-level high school arts courses in which they engage in more focused and independent work.”

Teaching with the Students in Mind

Teachers are greatly and rightly influenced by whom their students are. Making the curriculum relevant to the lives of their students is one of the hallmarks of effective instruction. Teachers in urban middle and junior high schools with large populations of African American, Latino and Asian students will consider the cultural background of their students as they design and/or select curriculum that meet standards. All art has to be about something – expressing something – so the “subject” for the work is often taken from the cultural context of the students. The music that is learned may be

selected specifically from the prevailing culture, the dance styles taught may reflect the cultures represented in the class. Perception and discipline skills and aesthetic valuing in theatre and the visual arts can easily be taught through the lens of culture and ethnic traditions. The historical and cultural context strand can thus be the organizing principle of the curriculum of both disciplines, (dance as well). This is a common approach in many middle schools. Dance teachers additionally, are aware that middle school students come in all sizes and shapes and body image will be a big concern to them. Teachers will design instruction with that in mind. Theatre teachers are aware that they need to create a safe and trusting environment for middle school students – some shy, some show-offs and everything in between – so that they can take risks together in the same classroom.

For excellent information on culturally and linguistically responsive arts education, go to the CCSESA Arts Initiative website at: <http://www.ccsesaarts.org> and click on Publications. There you will find *Strategies for Success: Engaging and Motivating Students through Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Arts Strategies for Success* which can be downloaded. Another useful document on this website is under the “Toolbox” heading and titled *The Transformative Power of the Arts in Closing the Achievement Gap*.

The Nature of the Discipline

Instructional methods also vary with the arts discipline and the specific courses within that discipline as well as with the instructional materials typically used for those courses. Instruction in vocal music looks different than instruction in instrumental music. They already know something about singing. The intricacies and skills involved in the vocal music from other cultures may be more accessible to vocal students than it is for instrumental students still struggling with the technical requirements of their instrument (not to mention having all the instruments play together). Ceramics is more hands-on than other visual arts media and needs space for equipment. Theatre teachers tend to divide students into small groups to write and practice scenes and thus have the pedagogical challenge of managing those groups so that everyone is accountable for their contributions – and their focus. Dance teachers must be concerned with the very physical nature of the discipline and keep safety and control in mind at all times. Warm-ups are essential as the body is the instrument of dance.

The Influence of Curriculum Support Materials

The instructional materials available to and selected by middle school arts teachers can have a strong influence on their approach to standards and pedagogy. Middle school general music teachers can select from state adopted instructional materials. Middle school instrumental music teachers tend to use the “band books” as the sequential curriculum under artistic perception and creative expression. The musical scores

students are to learn have been sequenced in the book according to what skills and concepts need to come before others. The books are organized into levels of difficulty that match the levels of difficulty models in the music standards under creative expression. Teachers of dance and theatre tend to use their favorite textbooks and/or supplemental books as resources to their own curriculum design. There are also state adopted instructional materials for theatre. Theatre teachers typically choose the scripts their students will learn and perform. Those choices tend to reflect the emphasis the teacher places on certain standards as well as the way in which the instruction will proceed. Visual arts teachers have many, many choices from a set of state adopted instructional materials at grades 6-8, to the vast array of “how to do it” and/or “how to teach it” books on every media and process and skill imaginable. Art teachers tend to use these books as both resources for their teaching and for the students to use as references for their own work. A list of state adopted instructional materials for the visual and performing arts may be found on the California Department of Education website (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/vp/im/documents/vpaadoptrpt.pdf>)

The Presence of Facilities and Equipment

Teachers are sometimes forced to adapt the curriculum in light of the facilities and equipment available to them. Specialized spaces for the arts are present in most middle schools and K-8 schools – a music room with storage; a room with a small raised space (or stage) or the use of the auditorium or stage in the multipurpose room; an art room with storage, a sink and running water; and an indoor, spacious and safe place for dance. Safety issues are always of first concern to arts teachers. If any of these conditions are missing many adjustments and compromises from the ideal in content and methodology will need to be made.

What is possible to teach in dance is especially effected by the space available. Students need room to jump and skip and turn and propel themselves into space without hurting themselves or others. Some people don't understand that the floor is one of the most important considerations. Best case, it should be a wood “spring floor”, which has give and bounce and helps the dancers move. It is also much more forgiving on feet. A standard wood floor is the next best thing. Linoleum tile over concrete is problematic: it is very hard, has no give whatsoever and can be quite dangerous. Students should keep their shoes on. Carpet over concrete is no better – sometime worse if shoes get caught on the surface. It is possible to improve flooring by investing in a “Marley floor” which is made of layers of a thick, flexible and soft kind of linoleum that cushions feet and provides a safe surface. It can be rolled out over a hard floor. It is much less expensive than a sprung floor.

Some compromise to the theatre curriculum will be necessary if the teacher and class have no access to a stage. There are many parts of the curriculum that could go on as

planned, except aspects of technical theatre, which is part of the standards. However, teachers have made do with a “stage” space delineated by tape on the floor and all the desks pushed to the back of the room. Theatre is a very flexible art form and creative staging is part of the curriculum. However, without lighting, curtains, places to store props and costumes, there would be a limit on what could be done in terms of technical theatre.

Including and Balancing all the Strands and Standards Over Time

The five component strands in the standards are the big ideas, the enduring understandings that organize the specific standards that come under each of them. In every discipline, the strands are meant to work together. The strands represent what the developers of the content standards consider valuable and worth knowing at every grade level and the California standards are in alignment with the national arts standards. The strands are inextricably linked, in both curriculum planning and teaching. They are not vertical but horizontal – or maybe circular is a better model for understanding their relationship. The *VAPA Framework* makes it clear that any complete, quality curriculum in dance, music, theatre and the visual arts would be a thoughtful, intentional combination of the strands. No one lesson contains all the strands – and should focus on only two or three specific standards. The focus is on artistic perception and the acquisition of the skills necessary for students to achieve in their creative work. However, it is expected that the other strands will be addressed and when appropriate, integrated into units of study that are based on perception and creative expression.

Becoming Standards-based in the Performing Arts

Each of the disciplines has its own issues with the inclusion and balance of strands. Music teachers with an intensely sequential and skills driven curriculum, especially at the middle school level when such skills are first mastered do tend to focus instructional time on the skill driven perception and creative expression strands. Music, along with all the performing arts, can be very performance driven. Students are learning all those instrumental skills for a reason: so they can become an ensemble making music together, each with their own contribution to the artistic whole. The challenge becomes how to fit the other strands into the curriculum – even with a full year to do so.

Theatre and dance share some of the same challenges as music in including all the strands. The dance standards at the middle grades are heavy on the skills, including performing skills. But they also have a strongly detailed aesthetic valuing strand which focuses on the role of dance. Even though the dance standards require independent, personal expression, many dance teachers spend time teaching students specific dance choreography and having them practice it until it is perfect. Dance teachers have to do research to find the quality examples of dance from other cultures or professional dance

companies to show to the students, as suggested under the historical cultural context strand. Theatre teachers, in order to be truly standards based, must find ways to keep from turning a large percentage of instructional time into rehearsal time. There is a great deal of theatre instruction that can be “in the moment” and does not require long rehearsals. Theatre is naturally interdisciplinary, so there is no issue with including the connections, relations and applications strand. The historical and cultural context strand can clearly provide the context for the creative expression strand. Teachers in all the performing arts need to take the time to teach students to develop rubrics and criteria to judge activities and performances. It is critical to improving their work in the future.

Balancing the Strands in the Visual Arts

Balancing the strands and standards has not been as challenging for visual arts teachers. Perhaps that is because the strands that organize the content standards are aligned to the percepts of “discipline based art education” (DBAE). The theoretical basis for DBAE was first advanced by Jerome Bruner, through his ideas about the relationship between curriculum and the structure of the discipline. The whole idea of DBAE was to provide a more comprehensive approach to arts education that included attention to learning to see with greater nuance and complexity, to pay attention to the vast field of art history and to learn to judge quality and assign meaning to works of art – all of this beyond the previous centrality of art making (creative expression). Teachers can integrate art history and cultural considerations into their introduction of new units of instruction and/or into the day-to-day instruction. The critique has always been an established part of the art student’s life and most art teachers are familiar with the process and with its importance in student learning.

Studio Thinking Framework: Eight Habits of Mind Through All the Arts

A currently influential theoretical approach from the visual arts is the *Studio Thinking Habits of Mind*, created by the Hetland/Winner Research Team from Harvard’s Project Zero. It delineates eight stances observed (and recorded) in high functioning, quality art classes at the middle and high school levels. The “habits of mind” described, however, are not in any way, the sole province of the visual arts. They, like the ideas behind discipline based art education, have much in common with successful pedagogical approaches to teaching all the arts disciplines – and have something in common with good teaching in most of the academic disciplines to a greater or lesser degree. They align to the component strands and go beyond in some ways, to capture some of the aspects of learning in the arts that are so valued in today’s 21st Century Learning Skills published by the Partnership for 21 Century Skills. The *Studio Thinking Habits of Mind* follow at the end of this chapter.

Considering this “studio-thinking framework,” teachers of other arts disciplines must think of “studio” in terms of the dance studio, the music room, or practice room, and the stage. Summarized, the habits of mind developed in and through the arts include:

- The development of craft and technique
- Engagement and persistence
- The ability to envision – to mentally picture next steps
- Expressing ideas, feeling or personal meaning
- Learning to observe (see, listen) and attend to detail
- Reflection, including the ability to question, explain and evaluate
- The ability to stretch and explore
- Understanding the domain: it’s history and its communities

To nurture these skills, especially with curious, somewhat scattered, experimental middle school age adolescents, takes persistence and pedagogical planning. And they are important thinking skills for these students to have. These eight habits of mind would serve them well in other areas of the middle school curriculum, in their general approach to learning, which they are trying to establish, and in their future success beyond middle school.

The Qualities of Quality Report

The recently published report, *The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education*, is from Harvard Project Zero and was commissioned by the Wallace Foundation. This study is helpful in defining the characteristics of excellence in arts instruction at multiple grade levels. Many of their observations were at the middle grade level. The report focuses upon the learner’s experience of the arts in an educational setting, as well as upon the pedagogical approach of the teachers of quality arts classes of whatever discipline. It is important to note that much of the research was conducted in educational settings beyond the public school classroom where an artist-teacher directed the learning. However, many observations were also made in regular and magnet programs in the public schools as well. The generalized attributes of quality learning in the arts as noted in this report is quite useful to arts teachers at any level, and any of the arts disciplines, regardless of their specific situation.

The report defines the elements of quality arts learning through four lenses: student learning, pedagogy, community dynamics and environment. The report defines the lenses this way:

1) Looking through the *lens of student learning*, you'll see what students are actually doing in the classroom; 2) looking through the *lens of pedagogy*, you'll see how teachers conceive of and practice their craft – how they design and implement instruction; 3) the *lens of community dynamics* affords a view of the social dimension of the relationships in the classroom (or other arts learning settings) – the relationships among students themselves, between students and teachers, and among the teachers and other adults who interact with students in the classroom and, 4) *the lens of the environment* which focuses upon tangible and concrete elements, including the physical space of the classroom, the material resources available, as well as the time students are given – hours as well as years – to engage in arts learning.

Each of these lenses is in alignment with the ideas within this Guide regarding the implications of standards-based instruction in the arts and is mainly concerned with arts learning in the context of middle grade public schools and magnet programs and/or public charter schools at this level. Essential charts from the report follow.

STUDIO THINKING FRAMEWORK (visual arts): EIGHT HABITS OF MIND

Hetland/Winner Research Team, Harvard Project Zero, 2003

Visual and Performing Arts Strand Comparison

Artistic Perception	Creative Expression	Historical and Cultural Context	Aesthetic Valuing	Connections, Relationships and Applications	OTHER: “Habits of Mind” or Cognitive Development
<p>Observe Learning to attend to visual contexts more closely than ordinary “looking” requires, and thereby to see things that otherwise might not be seen</p>	<p>Develop Craft <i>Technique:</i> Learning to use tools (viewfinders, brushes). Learning artistic conventions (color mixing, perspective)</p>	<p>Understand the Art World <i>Domain:</i> Learning about art history and current practice</p>	<p>Reflect <i>Question & Explain:</i> Learning to think and talk with others about an aspect of one’s work or working process <i>Evaluate:</i> Learning to judge one’s own work and working process and the work of others in relation to standards of the field</p>	<p>Develop Craft <i>Studio Practice:</i> Learning to care for tools, materials, space</p>	<p>Engage and Persist Learning to embrace problems of relevance within the art world and/or of personal importance, to develop focus and other mental states conducive to working and persevering at art tasks.</p>
	<p>Express Learning to create works that convey an idea, a feeling, or a personal meaning</p>			<p>Understand the Art World: <i>Communities:</i> Learning to interact as an artist with other artists in the classroom, in local arts organizations, and across the art field and within a broader society</p>	<p>Envision Learning to picture mentally what cannot be directly observed and imagine possible next steps in making a piece.</p>
					<p>Stretch and Explore Learning to reach beyond one’s capacities, to explore playfully without a preconceived plan, and to embrace the opportunity to learn from mistakes and accidents</p>

Adapted from *Qualities of Quality in Arts Education:
Understanding Excellence in Arts Education*
A Research Study from Harvard Project Zero

<p>Quality Arts Education Through the Lens of Student Learning</p> <p>High quality learning takes</p>	<p>Quality Arts Education Through the Lens of Pedagogy</p> <p>High quality teaching takes</p>
<p>Engagement in Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a sense of flow • focus and absorption • intrinsic pleasure in the processes of the art form 	<p>Participation in the Learning Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students and teacher engaged in inquiry • “making art” along with the students • passion and love of the discipline
<p>Purposeful Experience Creating or Engaging with Works of Art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • balance between making and “looking/listening” • experimenting, discussing, reflecting, exploring, discovering • exhibiting or performing • centrality of big ideas and relevant content 	<p>Making Learning Relevant – Connecting to Prior Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating links between arts learning and students own lives • challenging students prior understandings • scaffolding concepts • making connections explicit
<p>Emotional Openness and Honesty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working in a safe space • respect and trust • intellectual and emotional balance • developing an adequate level of technique for expression 	<p>Intentionality, Flexibility and Transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparation and clarity about learning goals • balance of preparedness and spontaneity • diverse pedagogical/artistic philosophies • clear expectations
<p>Experimentation, Exploration and Inquiry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practice, rehearsal • authentic problem solving • ventures into new realms of experience 	<p>Modeling Artistic Process, Inquiry and Habits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarity and rigor • generosity • looking at what other artists have done
<p>Ownership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal investment • pride in process • authority over work • responsibility for artistic choices 	<p>Authenticity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involving the learners in actual artistic processes (not “school art – all disciplines) • allowing students to express personal meaning • real reasons for the work – risks and payoffs • sharing/showing work through performance or exhibition

Summary

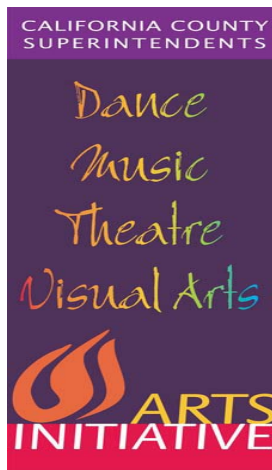
In summary, instructional methodology is what brings the whole reality of standards-based instruction to students. It is the delivery system for the standards. Standards remain words on a page, until they are actualized in the dance, music, theatre and visual arts classrooms and studios. In this brief chapter, it was not possible to go into the kind of depth that this subject deserves; however, there are many, many excellent books available on effective teaching strategies relative to each of the specific arts disciplines. Quality professional development, such as that provided by county offices of education, the California Arts Project, the state and national professional arts teacher organizations and others also focuses on instructional practice specific to each discipline, from lesson plans through assessment of student accomplishment. Quality instruction has much to do with an understanding of the correct instructional relationship between the content and ways of working specific to an art form and its appeal or relevance to the students for whom the instruction is intended. Quality classes in the arts have a certain flow, a sequence of instructional events that are natural. Performing arts students, each session, need to warm up, experiment, practice old skills and learn new ones and apply everything they know to new and challenging situations. And the content must be relevant – culturally, intellectually, personally. Quality teaching and learning in the visual arts reflects the same ideas, it just looks a bit different – more individual, less ensemble.

As has been touched upon in several places in this guide, the amount of instructional time available opens doors or forces hard choices for teachers of the arts, especially at the middle school level. No one can doubt the difference between what can be accomplished in six weeks vs. a semester or a year. Ultimately, the more the time frame is compressed, the more important it is to unite the content, so that important aspects of all the strands can be touched upon. Effective teachers find the themes that cut across all of the strands and teach holistically. Since the general themes or approaches are described in the standards with only suggestions for *specific* content, and since there are so many different ways to accomplish teaching an idea, teachers can then select the cultural and socially relevant concepts that address the needs and interests of their specific students. The less instructional time teachers have, the more difficult it is to focus entirely on skill development and the more frustrating the experience will be to teachers and students. However there may be time for more exploration, self-expression and cultural context and relevance, accompanied by just enough skill development for students to be successful. Refined products and performances take huge amounts of time to accomplish. The reduction of instructional time might be a catalyst for emphasizing process over product. With less time, every

day, every “project” or lesson becomes more and more valuable and essential. Students need to be engaged quickly and motivated to fully participate. That is why the relevance to students of the selected themes and methodologies to the students at hand is so important. Quality is still very possible, if instruction and content are truly focused.

And it is that issue of quality that ends this section. Both the Harvard Project Zero studies included in this section, the *Studio Thinking Framework* and the *Qualities of Quality* report are about helping educators and others identify quality teaching and learning in the arts; to literally know it when you see it. Once quality is recognized and its attributes and conditions understood, it becomes possible to replicate them across the arts in many different situations and contexts. Despite the fact that the *Studio Thinking Framework* comes from observations in visual arts classrooms, it speaks to the connectedness between the arts. The “habits of mind” described are equally and appropriately applicable to the performing arts in a school setting. Arts educators everywhere recognize that the development of craft (skills) and technique is important to learning in all arts disciplines. The ability to envision next steps, learning to observe, stretch and explore, to be engaged and persistent, to understand the history of the art form and to express, feelings or personal meaning is the core of what is called for in the California VAPA content standards. If these things can be observed in concrete, actual terms in the classroom – if they are embedded in everything students are actually doing, day after day, the chances that they are having a quality educational experience is high.

Finally, the *Qualities of Quality* report helps us define the possible ways of looking at the reality of the classroom, of instructional strategies and methodologies, growing out of arts discipline content, and at the ways in which students are learning. This is not a question of whether or not the class exists, but the quality of that class. The report suggest educators look at exactly what students are doing to learn, at what teachers are doing to ensure that learning, at the relationships within the class (between teacher and students and among students) and at the physical environment for the learning. These are all observable, quantifiable things to consider. Of course, the question of quality in arts programming, content and instruction rests on our ability to clearly define what we mean by “quality”, to be able to define its attributes and characteristics and to know it when we see it. We hope that the discussions, charts and ideas presented in this guide will prove helpful in that regard.



PART FOUR **RESOURCES**

Middle School Specific

Caught In the Middle: Educational Reform for Young Adolescents. California Department of Education, 1987

Taking Center Stage, Act 2. California Department of Education, 2004
<http://pubs.cde.ca.gov/tcsii>

Gaining Ground in the Middle Grades: Why Some Schools Do Better, Research Report from EdSource and Stanford University School of Education, 2010.
www.edsouce@edsouce.org

Small Schools and Small Learning Communities, The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, Policy Statement. Issue 4, June 2004. www.mgforum.org

This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents. Position Paper of the National Middle School Association. www.nmsa.org

The Visual and Performing Arts

Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2001. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/index.asp>

Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2004. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/vplcfl>

The Arts in the Elementary Classroom: A Visual and Performing Arts Content and Delivery Guide. California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), 2008 Available on line at www.ccsesaarts.org/content/toolbox.asp

Doing Well and Doing Good by Doing Art: Effects on the Achievements and Values of Young Adults. James S. Catterall, 2009

The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education. Seidel, Tishman, Winner and Palmer. Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education. 2009

Insider's Guide to Arts Education Planning, Second Edition. Burt, Lindsley and Russell. California Alliance for Arts Education, 2009. Available on line at www.artsed411.org

An Unfinished Canvas. Arts Education in California: Taking stock of policies and practices. Woodworth, K. R., Gallagher, H. A., and Guha, R. *Summary Report.* Center of Educational Policy, SRI International, 2008.

The Arts and the Creation of Mind. Eisner, Elliot W. New Haven and London. Yale University Press, 2002.

Studio Thinking Framework: Eight Habits of Mind. 2003 President and Fellows of Harvard Collage on behalf of Project Zero. Hetland/Winner Research Team

Be a Leader for Arts Education: A Guidebook to Expand Arts Learning in the Public Schools. The California PTA and California County Superintendents Educational Services Association www.capta.org/selections/programs-smarts/index.cfm

Understanding by Design. Wiggins, Grant and Jay McTighe. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1998.

Web Resources

California County Superintendents Educational Services Association Arts Initiative Web Site, www.ccsesaarts.org

The California Alliance for Arts Education. www.arts411.org

The California Art Education Association (CAEA). www.caea-artseducation.org

The California Arts Project (TCAP). <http://csmp.ucop.edu/tcap>

California Association for Music Education (CAME). <http://www.calmusiced.com>

California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) <http://www.ccsesaArts.org>

California Dance Educators Association (CDEA). <http://www.cdeadans.org>

California Educational Theatre Association (CTEA). <http://www.cetaweb.org>

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills - Framework for 21st. Century Learning.
www.p21.org

California League of Middle Schools. www.clms.net