Maryland Fine Art Standards for Early Learners

Background and Rationale

In June of 2014 the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards launched the new National Core Art Standards. These standards were crafted over the course of several years by a panel of experts in the art forms of Theatre, Dance, Music, Visual Arts and Media Arts.

Below is an abridged version of The Establishing Principles for the National Core Art Standards based on A Conceptual Framework for Arts Learning, NCCAS, 2014:

The development of the National Core Art Standards is based on the following principles:

1. Foundations of Artistic Literacy

Artistic literacy is the knowledge and understanding required to participate authentically in the arts. Fluency in the language(s) of the arts is the ability to create, perform/produce/present, respond, and connect through symbolic and metaphoric forms that are unique to the arts.

...An artistically literate person can … transfer arts knowledge, skills, and capacities to other subjects, settings, and contexts.

- What it means to be artistically literate

While individuals can learn about dance, media, music, theatre, and visual arts through reading print texts, artistic literacy requires that they engage in artistic creation processes directly.

Recent research on arts education as it relates to students’ social, emotional, and cognitive developmental needs indicates that arts experiences are consistently found to give students tools to make sense of their world and make connections between disparate ideas, while also making connections between themselves and others. Researchers found that the social and emotional benefits of arts education exist for students at all grades and levels.

2. Arts Success and Achievement through Creative Practices

Success and achievement in the arts demands engagement in the four fundamental creative practices of imagination, investigation, construction, and reflection in multiple contexts. These meta-cognitive activities nurture the effective work habits of curiosity, creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, communication, and collaboration, each of which transfers to the many diverse aspects of learning and life in the 21st century.

- The role of creative practices
A student engaged in creative practices:
- *Imagines* a mental image or concept.
- *Investigates* and studies through exploration or examination.
- *Constructs* a product by combining or arranging a series of elements.
- *Reflects* and thinks deeply about his or her work.

Creative practices:
- Evoke deep, meaningful engagement in the arts.
- Can be fluid, though there is purpose and meaning to the order in which they occur.
- Vary from person to person, project to project, and moment to moment.
- Require intense cognition that can be developed through arts engagement.

Creative practices promote the development of 21st Century Skills:
- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Communication
- Collaboration
Below is the basic framework for all five art forms (Theatre, Dance, Music, Visual Arts and Media Arts) for The National Core Art Standards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Artistic Processes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Performing/Presenting/Producing</strong></th>
<th><strong>Responding</strong></th>
<th><strong>Connecting</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creating</strong></td>
<td><strong>Definition:</strong> Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.</td>
<td><strong>Definitions:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Definition:</strong> Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Performing/Presenting/Producing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Performing:</strong> Realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation. <strong>Presenting:</strong> Interpreting and sharing artistic work. <strong>Producing:</strong> Realizing and presenting artistic ideas and work.</td>
<td><strong>Definition:</strong> Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.</td>
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<th><strong>Anchor Standards</strong></th>
<th><strong>Students will:</strong></th>
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<th><strong>Students will:</strong></th>
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<td>1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.</td>
<td>4. Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.</td>
<td>7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.</td>
<td>10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.</td>
<td>5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.</td>
<td>8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.</td>
<td>11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.</td>
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<td>3. Refine and complete artistic work.</td>
<td>6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.</td>
<td>9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.</td>
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Each art form extends this common framework with art specific discipline-based standards as demonstrated in the diagram below:

![Conceptual Framework Diagram](http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/content/conceptual-framework)

The National Core Art Standards articulate backward mapped standards for each art form for students PreK-grade 12. PreK refers to students between 3 and 4 years of age. The decision to begin with this age group was based on students in this age group being able to:

- Enter a school-based program in many school districts

- Cognitively, physically, and emotionally engage in the rigorous artistic processes of: Creating, Performing/Presenting/Producing, Responding and Connecting.

Younger children can begin to explore and experiment with these artistic processes as well. When presented in a developmentally appropriate manner, young children can engage in artistic work that uses the creative practices of imagination, investigation, construction, and reflection. These creative practices are not unique to learning an art form. They correlate with best practices in early childhood education and with the development of key 21st Century Skills. They also align with the 2014 Maryland Governor’s Task Force Report on Arts Education which advocates for “consistency, quality, and equity for every student” in arts education. This statement includes our youngest learners.

Therefore, the Early Childhood Division of the Maryland State Department of Education decided to revise the current art standards found in the Fine Arts Domain of Development and Learning to correspond with the new National Core Arts Standards extending the standards to children.
ages 0-3. This document, *The Maryland Fine Arts Standards for Early Learners*, reflects that revision.

*The Maryland Fine Arts Standards for Early Learners* are designed and organized in the same format as described above. The PreK standards outlined in the National Core Arts Standards served as a guide for backward mapping standards that are appropriate for children 0-12 months, 12-24 months and 24-36 months.

The Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards in English Language Arts and in Mathematics are rooted in the Common Core Standards but amplify and clarify those standards by articulating embedded essential skills and knowledge found within each standard. *The Maryland Fine Arts Standards for Early Learners* are designed to follow this model. The performance standards are further clarified by stating the embedded essential skills and knowledge found within each standard. This format provides teachers and caregivers with specific information to assist in the implementation of these standards with young children.

The design of *The Maryland Fine Arts Standards for Early Learners* is illustrated in the diagram below:

When implementing these standards, it is important to understand that the goal for teaching the arts to young children 0-3 is not training infants and toddlers in a future career as an artist but rather to recognize how the essential skills and knowledge of each art form correlates with key developmental milestones for healthy children 0-36 months old and that teaching the arts integrates and reinforces naturally and authentically all the other Domains of Development and Learning:
Language and Literacy (expressive and receptive language, singing, retelling stories, creating characters, scribbling/drawing/painting)

Mathematics (counting, rhythm, steady beat, shapes, scale, size, imitation, patterns)

Social Studies (self-regulation, awareness of others, respecting the feelings of others, following rules/routines, respectful use of materials, sharing artistic creations, cultural awareness)

Science (observation, experimentation, problem-solving, drawing conclusions)

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development (fine and gross motor skill development, balance, coordination, starting and stopping on cue, moving through space without hurting others, pride in accomplishments/self-esteem)

Social Foundations (focus/concentration, memory, persistence, self-regulation, independence, problem-solving, exploring feelings, empathy, sharing materials/taking turns, generating ideas)

Development Process

The Maryland Fine Arts Standards for Early Learners were drafted by Lenore Blank Kelner, Arts Education Consultant for the Division of Early Childhood Development under the leadership of: Rolf Grafwallner, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Early Childhood Development, Judy Walker, Early Learning Branch Chief, and with guidance from Kenneth W. Skrzesz, Coordinator of Fine Arts.

Research on each art form and on developmentally appropriate practice for young children guided the crafting of the standards. Visits to classroom and videos of young children also served as guides. Drafts were reviewed by arts and early childhood experts. In many cases the experts also served on the panel that created the National Core Arts Standards.

With gratitude for sharing their time and talents, the following individuals contributed to the final document. Those highlighted were lead reviewers:

Mike Blakeslee, Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer
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Susan McGreevy-Nichols, Executive Director, National Dance Education Organization
Cory Wilkerson, Project Manager State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education

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- Dr. Rima Faber, Dance Writing Chair for National Coalition for Core Arts Standards
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Reviewers of Theatre Arts Standards
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