

NORTH CAROLINA ESSENTIAL STANDARDS

ARTS EDUCATION

Introduction to the Standards

The *North Carolina Arts Education Essential Standards* provide a comprehensive framework for each of the arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre arts, and visual arts) in the public schools. The Essential Standards communicate what students should know and be able to do as a result of instruction at each grade level (K-8) or proficiency level: beginning, intermediate, proficient, and advanced (9-12). Because of the broad base of knowledge and skills involved in creating, performing, responding to, and understanding the arts, experiences and learning must occur in a sequential manner.

The *Arts Education Essential Standards* incorporate the *National Standards for Arts Education*, which were developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations in 1994, as part of the standards movement defining what every young American should know and be able to do in the arts. The more recent *National Standards for Learning and Teaching Dance in the Arts*, from the National Dance Education Organization (2005), as well as research in each of the arts disciplines, other state standards, and international resources, were used in the development of these standards.

The arts are core subjects in the federal *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, and the *NC Basic Education Program*, and, as such, are included as core subjects every student should learn as part of a balanced curriculum for all children in North Carolina. While not all students will become professional dancers, musicians, actors, or visual artists, all students will benefit from skills and processes that are developed through the arts and that can be applied in a variety of disciplines and settings. One example is the creative process for any work of art and its direct correlation to the processes used for writing.

The arts have both intrinsic and instrumental value; that is, they have worth in and of themselves and can be used to achieve a multitude of purposes (e.g., to communicate issues and ideas, to persuade, to entertain, to beautify). Beyond the intrinsic value of studying the arts, each arts discipline appeals to different senses and expresses itself through different media, adding richness and engagement to the learning environment. An education in the arts helps students learn to identify, appreciate, and participate in the traditional art forms of their own communities. As students imagine, create, and reflect, they are developing both the verbal and nonverbal abilities necessary for school success. At the same time, the intellectual demands of the arts help