
Dance Arts Standards of Learning

for
Virginia
Public Schools



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Adopted in April 2006 by the Board of Education

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Foreword

The Fine Arts Standards of Learning in this publication represent a major development in public education in Virginia. Adopted in April 2006 by the Virginia Board of Education, these standards emphasize the importance of instruction in the fine arts—dance arts, music, theatre arts, and visual arts—and, therefore, are an important part of Virginia’s efforts to provide challenging educational programs in the public schools. Knowledge and skills that students acquire through fine arts instruction include the abilities to think critically, solve problems creatively, make informed judgments, work cooperatively within groups, appreciate different cultures, imagine, and create.

The Fine Arts Standards of Learning were developed through the efforts of classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, administrators, college faculty, professional artists, fine arts organization representatives, and museum personnel. These persons assisted the Department of Education in developing and reviewing the draft documents. Opportunities for citizens to make comments with respect to the standards documents were provided through public hearings that were held at two sites across the state.

Copies of the Fine Arts Standards of Learning were distributed to public schools throughout Virginia for teachers to use in developing curricula and lesson plans to support the standards. The standards are minimum requirements in the fine arts, setting reasonable targets and expectations for what teachers need to teach and students need to learn. The standards set clear, concise, measurable, and rigorous expectations for young people. Schools are encouraged to go beyond the prescribed standards to enrich the curriculum to meet the needs of all students.

A major objective of Virginia’s educational agenda is to provide the citizens of the commonwealth with a program of public education that is among the best in the nation and that meets the needs of all young people in the commonwealth. These Fine Arts Standards of Learning continue the process for achieving that objective.

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Dance Arts Standards of Learning

Introduction

The Dance Arts Standards of Learning identify the essential content and skills required in the dance arts curriculum for the middle school and core high school courses in Virginia’s public schools. The standards are designed to be cumulative and progress in complexity by course from the middle school through the secondary level.

Throughout dance arts education, course content is organized into four specific content strands or topics: Performance and Production, Cultural Context and Dance History, Judgment and Criticism, and Aesthetics. It is through the acquisition of the concepts, content, and skills that the goals for dance arts education can be realized. A comprehensive dance arts program provides students with the ability to develop thinking skills and draw upon core academic areas to solve problems of creation, design, and execution. Through participation in the dance arts, students develop individual expression and the ability to work collaboratively to achieve common artistic goals.

The Dance Arts Standards of Learning provide a foundation for dance study at the middle and high school levels and suggest the minimum criteria for a comprehensive dance education program. The standards are readily applicable to a variety of dance techniques and styles, including ballet, modern, jazz, and the dance of world cultures. Teachers are encouraged to go beyond the standards and develop instructional processes that exceed these minimum criteria. Teachers will consistently model appropriate use of copyrighted and royalty-protected materials.

Goals

The content of the Dance Arts Standards of Learning is intended to support the following goals for students:

- Develop the technical and artistic skills necessary for expressive dance performance and for the safe training and care of the body as an instrument.
- Solve choreographic problems creatively through use of the principles, processes, and structures of dance composition.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the elements of dance production and the safe use of materials, methods, and technologies.
- Demonstrate understanding of dance within the contexts of history, culture, and other art forms, and the role of dance as a vehicle for human expression.
- Develop observation and critical thinking skills for the evaluation of dance works and their impact on society.
- Make connections between dance arts and other fields of knowledge, including awareness of the impact of technology on dance creativity and performance.
- Demonstrate understanding of the variables of culture and experience that shape the aesthetics of individuals and societies.
- Articulate personal aesthetic preferences and apply aesthetic criteria to the creation and evaluation of dance works.
- Develop awareness of copyright and royalty requirements when rehearsing, performing, or otherwise using the works of others.

Strands

Performance and Production

Students will develop a range of physical skills associated with dance performance and demonstrate an intellectual and physical understanding of safe, expressive dance technique. Through study of the principles, processes, and structures of dance composition, students will creatively design and implement choices that support the intent of their choreographic concepts. Students will participate in all aspects of dance production and demonstrate appropriate use of related materials, methods, and technologies.

Cultural Context and Dance History

Students will understand dance arts within the contexts of culture and history. Students will examine the interrelationships among current events, developing technologies, and dance in society. By viewing and evaluating the work of acclaimed choreographers and dance artists, students will become aware of the contribution of the dance arts to the quality of human experience.

Judgment and Criticism

Criticism in dance arts is based upon a thorough understanding of artistry and craft. Students will employ the processes of observing, listening, responding, reflecting, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating while studying the dance arts. Through thoughtful examination, students will articulate an objective evaluation of dance works by analyzing the creative elements and the dance production as a whole. Students will apply these same processes to the creation and evaluation of their own choreographic work.

Aesthetics

The ability to make qualitative judgments about the dance arts depends upon the ability to experience a sensory, emotional, and/or intellectual response. Students must recognize the implementation of choreographic and production elements in performance in order to analyze their response and relate that response to the dance experience. Students will gain insight into different cultural perspectives and the factors that shape aesthetic responses.

Safety

Safety must be given the highest priority in implementing the Dance Arts Standards of Learning. Students must know how to follow safety guidelines, demonstrate appropriate safety techniques, use equipment safely, and demonstrate dance theatre etiquette both on and off the stage while working individually and in groups. These guidelines apply in both the instructional and the performance settings.

Structurally sound training techniques, as well as wise selection of appropriate resources, materials, and dance experiences must be considered carefully for every instructional activity. Safe facilities for instruction and performance require careful planning, management, and the monitoring of student activities. Class enrollments and audience size must remain within the designated capacity of any instructional or performance setting.

Studio Safety in the Dance Instruction Setting

1. Every effort should be made to provide an instructional site appropriate to dance instruction.
2. Students should be instructed in proper studio rules, dress, and etiquette that provide a safe educational environment.
3. Instructors should stress safe technical practices for their students, including
 - emphasizing the importance of correct alignment and technical skills to minimize the risk of injury while enhancing technical accomplishment; and
 - selecting appropriate movement material to provide technical challenges with a minimum of risk to the students' physical safety.

Theatre Safety in the Dance Performance Setting

Dance production embraces a wide range of activities necessary for a successful performance, including

- design and implementation of lighting, costumes, properties, sound, and scenery;
- technical rehearsals with cast and crew;
- performances with audiences; and
- strike and clean-up of production materials upon completion of performance run.

Each of these activities requires knowledgeable teachers who are prepared to teach the safe use of equipment and facilities. The standards listed below are among those that should be followed to avoid damage or injury:

1. Technical elements designed and implemented according to safety guidelines
 - Stage curtains and drapes should have a flameproof rating and current certification.
 - Stage lighting circuits, dimmers, and fixtures should be properly maintained and regularly inspected, especially for ground continuity.
 - There should be an accessible master switch for the electric supply for stage lighting equipment.
 - Amplified sound volumes should not exceed safe levels.
 - Damaged and worn out equipment should be immediately removed from service.
 - When dance productions require the construction of costumes, properties, and/or scenery, these activities should be conducted under the same conditions and practices used in career and technical education classrooms, including use of appropriate personal safety equipment, such as gloves, goggles, hearing protectors, and dust masks.
 - Stage floor surfaces should be smooth, resilient, not slippery, and free of obstructions.
2. Rehearsals for cast and crew and performances with audiences
 - Technical rehearsals and performances should be staffed with a stage manager, production manager, and/or technical director.
 - A telephone with a direct outside line and emergency numbers posted nearby should be conveniently located in the theatre and studio settings.
 - Exits must be clear and unobstructed at all times.
 - Proper procedures for evacuation of the theatre should be discussed and rehearsed with cast and ushers.
 - During periods of occupancy, no exit door should be locked, chained, or obstructed from opening freely from inside the theatre.
 - Exit and emergency lights must be in good operating condition.
 - Fire extinguishers must be well-maintained and available at all times. Appropriate school personnel should be trained in their use.
 - Reasonable access to changing facilities and restrooms should be provided for performers.

3. Strike and clean-up

- Scheduling strike and clean-up immediately after the final performance, when fatigue and carelessness can result in accidents and injuries, should be avoided.
- Strike and clean-up must be supervised by an adult (usually the technical director) with training in theatre safety.

Dance II

The Dance II standards are designed to help students integrate and build upon concepts and skills acquired in Dance I. Students will increase their range of physical skills through disciplined study of dance technique. Dance improvisation and composition studies will expand students' creativity and choreographic craftsmanship. They will also develop additional performance and production skills. Students will refine communicative, interpretive, and evaluative skills by responding to and analyzing a variety of dance experiences. Through historical and cultural studies, students will expand their appreciation of the dance arts as a richly expressive, vital contribution to society. While developing awareness of the diversity that exists within the art form, students will identify a personal aesthetic and criteria for evaluating the dance arts.

Performance and Production

- DII.1 The student will maintain correct alignment while performing complex movement sequences.
- DII.2 The student will develop dance technique skills and movement vocabulary, including strength, flexibility, coordination, endurance, balance, replication, kinesthetic awareness, and self-evaluation.
- DII.3 The student will perform a variety of complex movement sequences that employ a wide range of space, shape, time, rhythm, energy, and effort requirements.
- DII.4 The student will identify implications for performance and injury prevention resulting from variations in physical structure and individual choices regarding health and wellness.
- DII.5 The student will participate in solo and group improvisations in response to a variety of environments and props.
- DII.6 The student will choreograph small-group dances that
 - 1. demonstrate manipulation and development of movement phrases;
 - 2. use a variety of compositional elements; and
 - 3. use a variety of compositional forms.
- DII.7 The student will demonstrate a range of performance skills, including dynamics, musicality, movement execution, and choreographic intent, in performance.
- DII.8 The student will
 - 1. identify and use safety procedures in all dance settings; and
 - 2. use proper care with theatre facilities, equipment, and costumes.
- DII.9 The student will participate in various production roles (e.g., those of choreographer, costume designer, stage manager, house manager, public relations) that involve leadership or design responsibilities for dance performance.

Cultural Context and Dance History

- DII.10 The student will identify periods and styles of dance and artists who contributed to the development of dance as a concert art form from 1900 to the present.

- DII.11 The student will identify, research, and discuss the effects of dance as an art form on individuals, groups, and cultures.
- DII.12 The student will research a variety of careers in the dance profession, including those of performers, choreographers, management and production personnel, collaborating artists, health professionals, and dance scholars.
- DII.13 The student will examine and discuss the impact of technology on the art of dance through time.
- DII.14 The student will demonstrate skill in communicating information by researching current dance institutions in the community, commonwealth, and world.

Judgment and Criticism

- DII.15 The student will describe, interpret, and evaluate in oral and written form, criteria that affect quality in a dance and the realization of choreographic intent, including
1. development of movement phrases;
 2. elements of composition and compositional form;
 3. technical skill of the performers;
 4. production elements; and
 5. impact of the dance performance as a whole.
- DII.16 The student will discuss ways in which other art forms (e.g., visual arts, music, film, theatre, literature) and technology can contribute to dance performance.
- DII.17 The student will discuss, analyze, and evaluate artistic choices in composition and performance, using appropriate dance arts vocabulary and terminology.
- DII.18 The student will identify the role of the dance critic and compare and contrast a variety of dance critiques.

Aesthetics

- DII.19 The student will view live and recorded dance performances and discuss aesthetic responses, using appropriate dance arts vocabulary and terminology.
- DII.20 The student will investigate how a dance can be viewed from a variety of aesthetic stances (e.g., classicism, postmodernism).
- DII.21 The student will analyze and articulate his/her personal aesthetic and the criteria upon which that aesthetic is based, using appropriate dance arts vocabulary and terminology.



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