

Tennessee Arts Education at a Glance

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) lists the arts and music as a part of a “well-rounded” education, and Tennessee schools offer a rich history of supporting arts education. Tennessee is recognized nationally for significant contributions in arts and culture, and the state academic standards for arts education contribute to increased student access for quality arts education that impacts college, career, and life readiness for Tennessee students. While Tenn. Code Ann. §49-6-1025 speaks to visual art and music instruction for grades K-8, schools also offer courses in dance, theatre, and media arts instruction.

- (a)** The course of instruction in all public schools for kindergarten through grade eight (K-8) shall include art and music education to help each student foster creative thinking, spatial learning, discipline, craftsmanship and the intrinsic rewards of hard work.
- (b)** Local boards of education are encouraged to fully implement the art and music curriculum adopted by the board of education through art and music classes, as well as integration into other core academic subjects.

In addition, Tennessee graduation requirements stipulate one full credit of fine arts, and many students elect to focus concentration on sequential course offerings in multiple arts disciplines, including visual arts, dance, media arts, theatre, and vocal and instrumental music. As the economic development of Tennessee becomes increasingly dependent upon skills and outcomes that are embedded in the Tennessee Standards for Arts Education, such as critical and creative thinking, problem solving, collaboration, reflection, and persistence, it will become even more important to ensure that Tennessee students are engaged in sequential standards-based arts instruction.

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