

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

704 KAR 3:303, Kentucky Core Academic Standards (Arts; Second Reading)

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 156.070, 156.160

Action Question:

Should the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) approve the proposed changes to 704 KAR 3:303?

History/Background:

Existing Policy. The current *Kentucky Core Academic Standards for the Arts* were written prior to the passage of Senate Bill 1 (2009), when Kentucky had mandated statewide testing in the arts at grades 5, 8, and 11. Those standards were intentionally designed to be measurable using the pencil and paper testing format that Kentucky had at that time. Although the standards were built around Big Ideas and larger concepts, the focus remained primarily on preparing students to demonstrate knowledge and some degree of application of knowledge on the state assessment.

In SB 1 (2009), a seventh goal was added to the six pre-existing goals that specifically establishes a direction for arts education in Kentucky. Under “158.6451, Legislative declaration on goals for Commonwealth's schools,” the following was added:

“7. Express their creative talents and interests in visual arts, music, dance, and dramatic arts.”

This statement designates that arts education in Kentucky should focus on creative expression (i.e., making or “doing” the arts). With the passage of SB 1, arts standards, along with all other content area standards, were to be revised.

The original *National Standards for Arts Education* were published in 1994. Much has changed in arts education since that time. A national coalition of arts education stakeholders came together in 2011 to reconsider the 1994 standards. The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards was formed as an organization to promote the development of new national arts standards which reflect current research, pedagogy, and learning in the arts.

Work began in September 2011 toward the development of the National Core Arts Standards. Five writing teams were recruited from more than 450 applicants to write standards for dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts. It was determined that the new standards would be more focused on process with less emphasis on content. This aligns with the 7th goal in SB 1, in that these standards are designed to engage students in the processes used to create and understand artistic expression.

Writing was continually supported by research as the College Board conducted a number of studies to specifically inform the work as writers were drafting the standards. This enabled writers to respond to research as the standards were being developed and incorporate research findings into the drafts.

It also was determined that Model Cornerstone Assessments would be developed to accompany the standards. Developing those assessments involved the standards writers to ensure that the assessments truly provide a way of measuring student progress toward meeting the standards. The assessments and the standards are voluntary. They are designed to be classroom-based and to engage students in authentic performance tasks.

During the writing process a conceptual framework was developed to define artistic literacy and the role of quality arts education in the development of artistically literate citizens. The standards are built on philosophical foundations and lifelong goals in the arts for all citizens.

As the standards were being drafted, four public reviews were conducted to gather input to inform the writers. These reviews resulted in thousands of comments and suggestions which were synthesized by researchers and brought forward to the writers to consider as they made edits and modifications to the standards. The reviews were conducted to provide transparency and to ensure that the standards meet the needs of the field. Kentucky was well-represented among those providing feedback.

The National Core Arts Standards (Attachment A), released to the public on June 4, 2014 via a website, have met all of the criteria set forth in SB 1 (2009) for guiding the revision of content standards, which include the following:

- A focus on artistic expression;
- Fewer, but more in-depth standards to facilitate mastery learning;
- Standards supported by research;
- Consideration of international benchmarks;
- Alignment from Pre-K through postsecondary;
- Participation of practicing elementary, secondary, and postsecondary teachers in writing the standards;
- Consideration of national standards; and
- Wide dissemination of the proposed standards for feedback.

In response to feedback from the Local Superintendents Advisory Council and the Kentucky Board of Education, an online review was opened from November 1 through December 4, 2014, to gain additional feedback from Kentucky stakeholders on the National Core Arts Standards. Highlights of the feedback are listed below.

- 982 stakeholders viewed the standards offering 299 comments.
- Each art form (dance, media arts, music, theatre, visual arts) was reviewed separately. Reviewers had the option to review as many art forms as they wished.
- An example of respondents (visual arts) included: 31% KY parents, 27% KY citizens, 57% visual arts teachers, 21% teachers in other content areas, 5.25% higher education,

2% business/industry, and 2.5% KY partner/advocacy groups. Other art forms reflected a similar breakdown in percentages with the exception of media arts.

- Range in agreement with the standards (“OK as is”) was 89.47% to 96.7% across the five art forms, with an average approval across all arts standards of approximately 93.14%.
- 124 of 173 KY school districts were represented across all of the art forms.
- The lowest rated standard was a 4th grade dance standard dealing with creating and solving a dance problem using the elements of dance with an agreement rating of 68.42%. No comments were offered.
- Expressed areas of concern not directly related to any specific standard centered on the need for professional learning and program support.

A comprehensive analysis of and responses to comments was conducted and is found in Attachment B.

Staff Recommendation(s) and Rationale(s):

Staff recommends that the KBE approve the proposed changes to 704 KAR 3:303. These arts standards meet the requirements of SB 1.

Groups Consulted and Brief Summary of Response:

Local Superintendents Advisory Council (LSAC)

LSAC will provide a letter to the board expressing its input prior to the June meeting.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

The updated arts standards will enable teachers to better prepare students to express their creative talents and interests in the various art forms.

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Commissioner of Education

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