



National Coalition for **CORE ARTS** Standards

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 9, 2011

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New coalition will lead the revision of the National Standards for Arts Education

A newly formed partnership of organizations and states will lead the revision the 1994 [National Standards for Arts Education](#).

The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) plans to complete its work and release new, national voluntary arts education standards in fall, 2012. The standards will describe what students should know and be able to do as a result of a quality curricular arts education program.

The current National Standards for Arts Education have been adopted or adapted by forty-nine state departments of education, and have become the benchmark document by which K-12 arts learning is measured in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. Curriculum designers, teacher training programs, funders, and federal and state policy makers have relied on the 1994 national arts standards to help guide their decision-making.

NCCAS is committed to developing a next generation of voluntary arts education standards that will build on the foundation created by the 1994 document, support the 21st-century needs of students and teachers, help ensure that all students are college and career ready, and affirm the place of arts education in a balanced core curriculum.

Membership in the coalition was formalized and a strategy framework developed following a February meeting at the New York City headquarters of the College Board. NCCAS governing organizations are:

[American Alliance for Theatre and Education \(AATE\)](#)
[Arts Education Partnership \(AEP\)](#)
[Educational Theatre Association \(EdTA\)](#)
[The College Board](#)
[MENC: The National Association for Music Education \(MENC\)](#)
[National Art Education Association \(NAEA\)](#)
[National Dance Education Organization \(NDEO\)](#)
[State Education Agency for Directors of Arts Education \(SEADAE\)](#)

The College Board gathering of the coalition was the culmination of a state-led organizing process that began in May, 2010, at a meeting convened by SEADAE in Washington, D.C. and attended by the above groups, eighteen state departments of education, and eight other national arts and education organizations. In the past year, state directors of arts education and the NCCAS partners have held a series of web-based meetings designed to help refine the needs, expectations, and timeline in the arts standards rewrite process.

A recent SEADAE survey of arts education directors in forty-three state departments of education indicated that nineteen of the states planning revision of their arts standards in the next two years are willing to postpone that process until the new national arts education standards are complete so as to inform their efforts.

NCCAS will make the creation of the new arts standards an inclusive process, with input from a broad range of arts educators and decision-makers. The revised standards will be grounded in arts education best practice drawn from the United States and abroad, as well as a comprehensive review of developmental research.

The College Board is currently gathering and organizing childhood and higher education data—including international standards research, a child development and the arts literature review, a 21st-century skills gap analysis, and a review of college-level arts standards—with the expectation that this process will be completed by mid summer.

In creating the next generation of core arts standards, the primary goal of NCCAS is to help classroom educators better implement and assess standards-based arts instruction in their schools. Toward that goal, the revised arts standards will address 21st-century skills, guide the preparation of next-generation of arts educators, and embrace new technology, pedagogy, and changing modes of learning.

To take full advantage of today's digital information tools, the new arts standards will exist in an online "evergreen" format, allowing for periodic, scheduled reviews and updates, and wiki-environments where student work, lesson plans, and new research can be posted to support standards-based teaching and learning.

An NCCAS committee has begun work on a report that will summarize the current status of arts education in America; the status of arts education standards in the states; the context of arts education in a well-rounded education; and an analysis of the needs for the

next generation of arts standards. The report will be made public in late summer or early fall.

NCCAS's current timeline includes the creation of discipline writing teams in November, 2011, which will be followed by a six-month period of writing, review, and revision draft work.

Jonathan Katz, CEO of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), expressed strong enthusiasm for NCCAS's arts standards revision plan: "Designing standards takes broad and deep knowledge of subject matter, an informed understanding of the kind of guidance educators need, and creative imagining of which competencies will best prepare students for the future challenges they will face. All students learn using some combination of the arts, numeracy and literacy. The resource for learning that this group, representing teachers of the arts and arts education policy makers, is in a position to provide is tremendously important."

Virginia M. Barry, New Hampshire Commissioner of Education, also stated her support for revision of the art standards. "I'm very encouraged that NCCAS has taken the first steps towards re-imagining the arts standards for our students and teachers," she said. "When you have rich and clearly defined standards, you create expectations and can begin the process of articulating measurable learning in arts education. The arts are truly special—dance, music, visual art, and theatre give students a voice they might not otherwise have and integrate new technology in ways that truly engages and energizes learners. New Hampshire believes that all students should have access to a well-balanced curriculum that supports whole-person development—arts are critical to a sense of competence, through discipline, dedication, diligence and commitment."