

## ***Essential Elements of a Quality Visual and Performing Arts Program***

Developed by the South Carolina District Arts Coordinators (SCDAC) with support from and in collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Education  
The SCDAC is a committee of the South Carolina Alliance for Arts Education

The South Carolina Department of Education recognizes the importance of the visual and performing arts in the development of all students. *The Essential Elements of a Quality Visual and Performing Arts Program* serves as a recommended model for a quality, standards-based arts education program. The accompanying checklist is a diagnostic tool for evaluating and improving school and district programs.

### **Endorsed by**

South Carolina Department of Education  
Arts in Basic Curriculum Project  
South Carolina Arts Alliance  
South Carolina Alliance for Arts Education  
South Carolina Art Education Association  
South Carolina Dance Education Organization  
South Carolina Music Educators Association  
South Carolina Theatre Association

Visual and performing arts instruction reaches students in innovative ways by energizing, educating, and introducing them to a variety of content. Curricular balance is achieved through creative problem-solving strategies, higher order thinking skills, and differentiated learning styles that are inherent in the arts. By learning in and through the arts, both the “group” and the “individual” are emphasized. Support of these essential guidelines will ensure a thorough and creative learning experience for all South Carolina students.

- A comprehensive, sequential, standards-based visual and performing arts program is defined as an instructional program in dance, vocal and instrumental music, theatre arts, and visual arts, providing for every student in traditional and non-traditional schools (including but not limited to charter, virtual, magnet, and other schools of choice).
- An arts coordinator will be established as a district-level position. The coordinator will be a certified arts instructor. The responsibilities will include but not be limited to:
  - leadership of arts personnel,
  - research and grant writing,
  - coordinate arts purchasing,
  - intricately involved with the selection of arts educators and scheduling of arts classes,
  - attend local/state meetings for all arts disciplines,
  - inform district as well as arts educators about legislature relating to the arts,
  - serve as liaison between the community, the arts, and the district.

## ***PreK and Kindergarten***

- An early childhood arts program should be provided for pre-k and kindergarten students within the pre-k/kindergarten curriculum and within the pre-k/kindergarten physical classroom.
- Instruction should be provided by the certified pre-k or kindergarten educator in consultation with the certified arts educators.
- Funds for arts education are to be included within the pre-k/kindergarten budget.
- Protocols as outlined in the *Good Start, Grow Smart Early Learning Standards*, and *The Guidebook to the Kindergarten Standards* will be followed for arts instruction.

## ***Elementary Grades 1 Through 5***

- The minimum requirements for all students in grades 1 through 5 must include dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.
- The minimum scheduled time for students in grades 1 through 5 in visual and performing arts classes is 40 continuous minutes per week.
- The ratio of visual and performing arts teachers per school is: 1 teacher per 500 students, per discipline.
- The maximum number of classes taught per day for a visual and performing arts teacher is seven. One uninterrupted planning period equal to one teaching period will be included in the day.
- Duties assigned by the principal will not exceed the duties assigned to other academic teachers.
- Travel time and a separate lunchtime will be included as part of the daily schedule for itinerant teachers.
- Self-contained students attending visual and performing arts classes will be served as a class, not to be combined with other classes or divided except for the accommodation of space and with the exception of mainstreamed students.
- Consultation between visual and performing arts teachers, special education teachers, and appropriate related service personnel is essential to ensure appropriate, active participation of students with special needs.
- Para-professionals assigned to special needs students should accompany the students to all arts areas.
- Visual and performing arts teachers will be involved in the IEP process to ensure appropriate placement of all special needs students in arts classes.
- The visual and performing arts classes are standards-based instructional periods. Students should not be withheld from the visual and performing arts classes for remediation, pullout programs, or discipline. On some occasions such as state testing, assemblies, and early dismissal days, students may miss their visual and performing arts class as they would other core classes.
- To provide quality visual and performing arts programs, access to funding resources will be available. Therefore, a minimum of 1% of instructional money of the per pupil allocations will be devoted to each arts discipline

based on class enrollment per year for supplies, equipment, and materials. Additional allocations will be a necessity to fully equip each discipline.

- Equitable access and funding will be available for:
  - instructional resources such as technology, textbooks, audio-visual equipment, media center resources, etc.,
  - ongoing visual and performing arts professional development, such as local, state, and national conferences, workshops, institutes, etc.
- All visual and performing arts instruction will occur in an appropriate learning environment as specified in the *Opportunities to Learn Standards for Arts Education*.
- Performance goals for arts education will be included in the district strategic plan and each school renewal plan.

### ***Middle School Grades 6 Through 8***

- The minimum requirements for grades 6 through 8 will include dance, vocal and instrumental music, theatre, and visual arts.
- Minimum scheduled time for visual and performing arts will be equivalent to other core academic subjects, and the teacher will have at least one uninterrupted planning period per day.
- Enrollment in music performance classes may accommodate a maximum of 250 students daily, based on a 5-day week. Class size will be determined by the faculty member with consideration given to student needs and performance grouping. Enrollment in dance and theatre classes will accommodate one hundred square feet of space for each student. Non-performing arts classes such as visual arts, general music, and arts appreciation will not exceed a 1 to 25 ratio.
- The visual and performing arts teachers will follow the same class schedule as other core academic teachers.
- Duties as assigned by the principal will not exceed duties assigned to other academic teachers.
- Para-professionals assigned to special needs students will accompany the students to all arts classes to facilitate their active participation.
- Visual and performing arts teachers will be consulted to assure appropriate placement of all special needs students in arts classes.
- The visual and performing arts classes are sequential, standards-based instructional programs. Therefore, class enrollment will be determined by the student's performance level, and pre-requisites will be honored.
- Students will not be withheld from the visual and performing arts classes for remediation, pull-out programs, or discipline. On some occasions, such as state testing, assemblies, and early dismissal days, students may miss their visual and performing arts classes as they would other classes.
- To provide quality visual and performing arts programs, access to funding resources will be available. Therefore, a minimum of 1% of instructional money of the per pupil allocations will be devoted to each arts discipline based on class enrollment per year for supplies, equipment, and materials. Additional allocations will be a necessity to fully equip each discipline.
- Equitable access and funding will be available for:

- instructional resources such as technology, textbooks, audio-visual equipment, media center resources, etc.,
  - ongoing visual and performing arts professional development, such as local, state, and national conferences, workshops, institutes, etc.
- All visual and performing arts instruction will occur in an appropriate learning environment as specified in the *Opportunities to Learn Standards for Arts Education*.
- Performance goals for arts education will be included in the district strategic plan and each school renewal plan.

### **High School Grades 9 Through 12**

- The minimum requirements for grades 9 through 12 must include dance, vocal and instrumental music, theatre arts, and visual arts (both performance and non-performance classes in all disciplines).
- Minimum scheduled time for visual and performing arts classes will be equivalent to other core academic subjects, and the teacher will have at least one uninterrupted planning period per day.
- The following considerations determine the maximum teacher load for visual and performing arts classes:
  - enrollment in music performance classes may accommodate a maximum:
    - 240 students daily for schools with traditional 6 classes per day schedules or A/B block schedules, both with year-long classes.
    - 120 students daily per semester for schools with block scheduling.
 Class size will be determined by the arts instructor with consideration to student needs and performance grouping,
  - for student enrollment in dance and theatre classes; one hundred square feet of space for each student will be provided,
  - non-performing arts classes such as visual arts and arts appreciation shall not exceed a 1 to 25 ratio.
- The visual and performing arts teachers will follow the same schedule as other core academic teachers.
- Students will not be withheld from the visual and performing arts classes for remediation, pullout programs, or discipline. On some occasions such as state testing, assemblies, and early dismissal days, students may miss their visual and performing arts classes as they would other classes.
- To provide quality visual and performing arts programs, access to funding resources will be available. Therefore, a minimum of 1.75% of instructional money of per pupil allocation will be devoted to each arts discipline based on class enrollment per year for supplies, equipment, and materials. Additional allocations will be a necessity to fully equip each discipline.
- Equitable access and funding will be available for:
  - instructional resources such as technology, textbooks, audio-visual equipment, media center resources, etc.,
  - ongoing visual and performing arts professional development, such as local, state, and national conferences, workshops, institutes, etc.

- All visual and performing arts instruction will occur in the appropriate learning environment as specified in the *Opportunities to Learn Standards for Arts Education*.
- Performance goals for arts education will be included in the district strategic plan and each school renewal plan.

Sources:

Ratios and per-pupil allotments were taken from the State Board of Education's *Code of Regulations of South Carolina, Section 43* and *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards for Arts Education* that were developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations.

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