



NJ State Policy and Arts Education: Know the Facts

The New Jersey Administrative Code

Core Curriculum Content Standards: Content standards specify expectations in nine academic content areas: the visual and performing arts, comprehensive health and physical education, language arts literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, world languages, technological literacy, and career education and consumer, family, and life skills. (NJ Administrative Code 6A 8-1.1)

Graduation Requirements: 5 credits (1 year) in Visual & Performing Arts for High School graduation effective with the 2004-2005 grade nine class. (NJ Administrative Code 6A 8-1.1)

The New Jersey Core Student Learning Standards (NJSLS)

In New Jersey, equitable access to arts instruction can only be achieved if the four arts disciplines are offered throughout the K-12 spectrum. At the K-5 level, it is the expectation that students are given broad-based exposure through instruction as well as opportunities for participation in each of the four art forms. In grades 6-8, they should gain greater depth of understanding in at least one of those disciplines. In grades 9-12, it is the expectation that students demonstrate competency in at least one arts discipline. These expectations translate into curricular requirements for schools. (NJSLS)

Districts are expected to provide opportunities for learning in ALL four arts content areas using sequential instruction.

The New Jersey Constitution: A Thorough and Efficient Education

"The Legislature shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of free public schools for the instruction of all children in the State between the ages of five and eighteen years."

New Jersey Constitution, Article VIII, Section IV, paragraph 1

In May of 1997, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Abbott v. Burke* on the two main parts of the Comprehensive Education Improvement and Financing Act (CEIFA) signed into law in December of 1996 by Governor Whitman. CEIFA was comprised of two parts: the core curriculum content standards and a school funding formula. Justice Adam B. Handler, writing for the majority, upheld the standards, commenting in his decision that they "are facially adequate as a reasonable legislative definition of a constitutional thorough and efficient education." (Source: *Abbott v. Burke*)

It is this ruling that codifies the NJSLS as the definition of a "thorough and efficient" education as guaranteed by the state constitution. The NJSLS codify arts education as a part of this definition.