



## The History of the Arts as a Core Subject Area in Minnesota

### TIMELINE

- 1985 – Perpich Center for Arts Education was established as a state agency consisting of a state library, a public arts high school, and a site for professional development for arts educators and administrators.
- 1994 – The arts were included as a core content area at the federal level when they were included in the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*. The term “core academic subjects” covered 9 subject areas at that time, in which students were expected to demonstrate competency over challenging subject matter – including the ARTS.
- 1997 – Minnesota implemented the *Profile of Learning* where the arts were included as one of 10 areas of study required for students’ learning.
- 2001 - The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized and named, *No Child Left Behind, or NCLB*. Within NCLB, under Title IX- General Provisions 11 Core Academic Subject were identified, including the arts.
- 2003 – The first Minnesota academic standards for dance, media arts, music, theater and visual arts were developed after the Minnesota Legislature repealed and replaced the *Profile of Learning* act. These new state academic standards included math, language arts, science, social studies and the arts.
- In the 2003 Minnesota Arts Standards, media arts was added as a fifth arts area at the high school level. Minnesota was the first state to include media arts as one of the core academic subject areas and has been a leader across the country. Today more than half of all states in the country have included media arts as part of their state arts standards.
- 2011 – Minnesota Statute 120B.024 requires all high school students to complete one credit in the arts for graduation.



2014 – The National Core Arts Standards were released and included media arts for the first time – eleven years after Minnesota included media arts. To develop the standards, a coalition of 10 national organizations met over the course of more than two years. Dr. Pam Paulson, Perpich Center’s Director of Professional Development and Resource Programs, served on the Governing Board. Almost immediately after completion, states began to adopt or adapt the national arts standards as their state standards.

2015 – The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized as the Every Child Succeeds Act. The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions released a report to accompany the original ESSA bill that for the first time actually identifies what is meant by the term “the arts.” The report stated that the committee intended the arts to “include the subjects of dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts, and other disciplines as determined by the State or local education agency.” (pg. 52)

2018 – Updated Minnesota Academic Standards in the Arts are released by grade level, further enforcing the importance of the arts for all ages.

Perpich Center for Arts Education employs Education Specialists for each of the 5 arts areas – dance, media arts, music, theater and visual arts, who work with the Minnesota Department of Education to establish, write, and create the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in the Arts. Our standards experts are here to serve the needs of districts, administrators, and most importantly arts educators. **Contact us to learn more about how we can help!**



Testimony for Rule-making  
Academic Standards in the Arts  
K-12  
Before Administrative Law Judge, Jim Mortenson

March 2, 2020

Your Honor, and Colleagues,

I am Dr. Pam Paulson, Director of Professional Development and Resource Programs at the Perpich Center for Arts Education. The Perpich Center was created by the Legislature in 1985, as a state agency, and has been serving students and teachers for over 30 years. I have been with the Perpich Center since its inception. We provide professional development for teachers and operate a residential arts high school for 11th and 12th grade students. We also have a state library, which includes over 13,000 titles, many of which are focused on arts education. The library serves students and staff as well as educators and citizens in rural, suburban and urban areas across the state.

I direct a team of 8 professional development staff, which includes Education Specialists for each of the 5 arts areas – dance, media arts, music, theater and visual arts, as well as the librarian. They are all engaged in supporting teachers statewide with resources and opportunities for professional growth.

We have always been pleased to collaborate with the MN Department of Education – on standards development, implementation and other opportunities over the years. Both agencies are dedicated to assuring that Minnesota students and educators achieve their highest potential.

That is why the Academic Standards in the Arts are so critical. First, since they are required of all Minnesota K-12 students, they bring both equity of access to high expectations and accountability statewide. They ensure that study in the arts is focused on the essential things that students must learn to be college and career ready, and are points of reference for assessing the results in classrooms or by school districts. The standards bring a sequenced, developmental approach to



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learning, so that no matter where you live in Minnesota, your education in the arts is not hit-or-miss, but a thoughtful progression of learning that provides equitable opportunity for all students.

The arts have been considered a core content area at the federal level since 1994, when they were included in the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. The term “core academic subjects” covered 9 subject areas at that time, in which students were expected to demonstrate competency over challenging subject matter – including the ARTS.

When Minnesota implemented the Profile of Learning in 1997, the arts were included as one of 10 areas of study required for students’ learning. Just a few years later, in 2001, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized and named, No Child Left Behind, or NCLB. Within NCLB, under Title IX- General Provisions 11 CORE ACADEMIC SUBJECTS were identified, including the arts.

The first MN standards for dance, media arts, music, theater and visual arts were developed in 2003, after the MN Legislature repealed and replaced the Profile of Learning with state academic standards in math, language arts, science, social studies and the arts. In the 2003 MN arts standards, media arts was added as a fifth arts area at the high school level. Minnesota was the first state to include media arts as one of the core academic subject areas and has been a leader across the country. Today more than half of all states in the country have included media arts as part of their state arts standards.

When the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized in 2015, as the Every Child Succeeds Act, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions released a report to accompany the original ESSA bill that for the first time actually identifies what is meant by the term “the arts.” The report states the committee intended that the arts “may include the subjects of dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts, and other disciplines as determined by the State or local education agency.” (pg 52)

Based on this quick history, it is clear that for a long time Minnesota has defined the arts as core subjects, required for all K-12 students, including a credit in the arts, required for High School graduation. MN has been on the leading edge of arts



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education ensuring that all students benefit from learning in the arts and demonstrate achievement in the arts as part of a complete education.

The introduction to the 1994 national arts standards describes some of the contributions the arts make :

“The arts are one of humanity’s deepest rivers of continuity. They connect each new generation to those who have gone before, equipping newcomers in their own pursuit of the abiding questions: Who am I? What must I do? Where am I going? At the same time the arts are an impetus for change, challenging old perspectives from fresh angles of vision, offering original interpretations of familiar ideas. . . .

For all these reasons and a thousand more, the arts have been an inseparable part of the human journey; indeed, we depend on the arts to carry us toward the fullness of our humanity. We value them for themselves, and because we do, we believe knowing and practicing them is fundamental to the healthy development of our children’s minds and spirits. That is why, in any civilization – ours included – the arts are inseparable from the very meaning of the term, ‘education.’ (pg 5)”

Elliott Eisner, renown arts educator, shared some of the more specific benefits of arts education (not to say that the arts have the exclusive domain of these areas – other subjects may address some of these areas as well.) Eisner says:

- The Arts teach children that problems can have MORE than ONE solution and that questions can more than one answer.
- The arts celebrate multiple PERSPECTIVES. One of their large lessons it that there are many ways to SEE and INTERPRET the world.
- The arts make vivid the fact that neither words in their literal form, nor numbers exhaust what we can KNOW. The limits of our language do not define the limits of our COGNITION.
- And finally, the arts teach students to think through and within a material. All art forms employ some means through which IMAGES become REAL.



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Knowing all of these important things that the arts bring to education, excites arts educators to make sure students have opportunities to learn in and through the arts. Again, in the introduction to the 1994 national arts standards it says, “The more students live up to these high expectations, the more empowered our citizenry will become. Indeed, helping students to meet these Standards is among the best possible investments in the future of not only our children, but also our country and civilization.” (pg 9)

I served on, and still do sit on, the Governing Board for the National Core Arts Standards.

To develop the national arts standards, a coalition of 10 national organizations met over more than two years. The national standards were released in 2014. It took much dialogue, some arguing and certainly compromising to get to the point where the standards were ready to be published online. We knew they were not perfect, but they were an important update to the previous national arts standards. And almost immediately states began to adopt or adapt the national arts standards as their state standards.

The 2014 National Core Arts Standards, included media arts for the first time - eleven years after MN included media arts. The Coalition of organizations approved a Media Arts Committee, which I chair, to be on the Governing Board, based on the fact that media arts – the combination of art and technology – is a distinct arts discipline. Minnesota had demonstrated leadership for this a fast-growing area by developing standards for elementary and middle school students. Media Arts provides learning in a creative art form and preparation for innovation in a variety of careers.

We also hoped that each time the national standards were adapted they would be improved. So, in the process of adapting the national arts standards for MN, the writing teams were able to look at other state documents that had preceded the MN revision process. Now that the MN Arts Standards are close to being released, I can say that they represent an improvement to the 2008 MN standards and they also have components that are an improvement to the national core arts standards. They are more clear and specific, with fewer redundancies, as well as having the overarching anchor standards that identify the most important learning for students from kindergarten through 12th grade. They also help ensure that the learning



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expectations are consistent across all five arts areas, which our previous MN arts standards also did, but were more ambiguous. The new arts standards provide benchmarks specific to each arts area that make the intended learning much clearer.

I am very proud of the exceptional team that worked to review and recommend these new arts standards. The review team was made up of leaders from across the state, whose demonstrated expertise was brought to the table in this process, including a couple of members of the Perpich Center Professional Development staff. They examined current research from the College Board and others as they undertook the revision. As a result of their work, the new standards are solid and will promote increased learning in the arts for all of our MN students, as they are implemented with fidelity.

The Perpich Center is ready to assist educators with implementation of the new arts standards. Perpich Center Leadership has prioritized this work and is committed to supporting educators statewide. We have a team of professionals that are anxious to help teachers and administrators understand the new standards and incorporate them into their curriculum, instruction and assessments. Perpich Center facilitates regional educator networks in all parts of the state and have arts education specialists on our staff, available for technical assistance and professional development. The Regional Arts Teacher-Leaders work to support educators in their region and assist with development of resources available statewide. We have what they say are, “boots on the ground.”

Thank you to everyone who has brought us to this point in the process of reviewing and proposing revisions to the arts standards. Thank you for this opportunity to share these perspectives with you today, as a collaborating partner with the MN Department of Education. This work is one of the most important things our agencies do, because it has an impact on the learning of every student throughout our state.

Thank you very much.

Dr. Pam Paulson  
Director of Professional Development and Resource Programs  
Perpich Center for Arts Education

Perpich Arts High School  
Perpich Arts Outreach  
Perpich Arts Library

6125 Olson Memorial Highway  
Golden Valley, Minnesota 55422  
perpich.mn.gov

Telephone: 763-279-4200  
Toll Free: 800-657-3515  
TTY/TDD (MN RELAY SERVICE): 711