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## RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY OF THE ARTS

A balanced education includes a comprehensive and sequential study of all three branches of learning — the humanities, the sciences, and the arts.

Education in the fine arts — dance, drama, music, and the visual arts — aims to provide all students, not only the gifted and talented, with knowledge and skills in the arts through creation, performance, and study.

The arts provide a sense of civilization — they endow students with an ability to transcend boundaries of language, culture, time, and space.

The arts embody the human imagination — they define and distinguish us as human beings.

The arts play a role in cognition — they provide new and different ways to access meaning, to perceive, to problem solve, to understand.

The arts give students a means to express themselves creatively, in sounds, images, gestures, and words, using the vocabularies of artistic communication. They “allow humans to say things that they could not say in other ways” (Eisner).

The arts develop the critical elements necessary to interpret and respond to the artistic expression of others — they contribute to the ability to make informed opinions and choices about the products of the arts.

The arts take place in the context of real work — they allow students to make art while studying art. Learning by doing is essential in the arts.

The arts foster student motivation — the richness of art experiences enlivens learning, and provides a sense of satisfaction, joy, and personal fulfillment.

Since the arts play a central role in providing students with the resources, motivation, learning opportunities, and support that they need to be successful, no one can claim to be truly educated who lacks access to an education in the arts.

The arts carry us to the fullness of our humanity.

Therefore, the Office of Catholic Schools committed to create a tool to assist teachers, students, and parents as each contributes to the important work of learning about the arts.

Through a contractual agreement with Barbara O’Block, an Assistant Professor at Calumet College of Saint Joseph, and the assistance of elementary and high school teachers who served as responders, the Office of Catholic Schools believes that such a tool has been created.

This tool — the Fine Arts Curriculum — has been researched and designed to provide consistency, coherence, and rigor in the content and process of the teaching of the fine arts throughout the schools the Archdiocese.

## EXPECTATIONS FOR THE MASTERY OF FINE ARTS STANDARDS

### All students will:

- Show evidence of literacy in the arts and proficiency in arts-related skills and behaviors.
- Think logically, critically, aesthetically, and ethically.
- Express and interpret ideas orally, in writing, and in other appropriate media, using correct terminology.
- Apply learned skills and behaviors to real-world situations; identify and solve problems within the situation.
- Integrate learning in the arts into their everyday lives.
- Learn and contribute productively as individuals and as members of groups.
- Utilize appropriate instruments, electronic equipment, and networks to access information, process ideas, communicate learning, create and perform.
- Recognize and apply connections of important information and ideas within and among learning disciplines.
- Demonstrate an understanding and practice of the Catholic social teachings.

### All teachers will:

- Differentiate instruction to meet the diverse needs present in the student population.
- Utilize a variety of materials, resources, and assessments appropriate to student age, development, and the teaching/learning process.
- Provide varied learning situations such as flexible grouping, cooperative groups, and peer leadership.
- Use appropriate media, instruments, electronic equipment, and networks to support and integrate teaching and learning.
- Address social and media influences on student behaviors.
- Collaborate with colleagues at all levels to ensure the continuum of learning.
- Participate in ongoing professional development.
- Be skilled and certified in their discipline.
- Access appropriate communication venues to inform parents of the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the school's curricula in general and their child's progress in particular.

### All Administrators will:

- Monitor and regularly assess the written and taught curriculum.
- Monitor instruction and evaluation through regular classroom observation and the review of lesson plans.
- Provide appropriate professional and instructional resources, including technology, for all teachers.
- Design and monitor appropriate communication venues to inform parents of the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the school's curricula in general and their child's progress in particular.
- Create an environment permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and joy.
- Model and nurture Catholic values and beliefs.

### All Parents/Guardians will:

- Understand and embrace their role(s) as primary educator.
- Encourage and exemplify the reality of life long learning.
- Access all opportunities for communication with school personnel appropriately and adequately.
- Partner with school personnel in a spirit of trust and collaboration.
- Be actively involved within the school community and support local school arts programs.
- Participate in shows, exhibits, performances, and other creative enterprises.
- Model and nurture Catholic values and beliefs.

### The Office of Catholic Schools will:

- Provide the vision for curriculum.
- Initiate, develop, and publish curricula in collaboration with experts in the field, administrators, and teachers.
- Offer professional development opportunities and disseminate information regarding other available opportunities and resources for teachers and administrators.
- Encourage regular articulation among educators at all levels.
- Act as liaison with national and state departments of education regarding curricular standards and expectations for student learning.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE FINE ARTS CURRICULUM

The Archdiocese of Chicago Fine Arts Curriculum provides Catholic schools and teachers with a framework for student learning in the arts from Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12 aligned with the State of Illinois Learning Standards and the National Standards for Arts Education.

The term “fine arts” refers to Dance, Drama (theatre), Music, and the Visual Arts. In this curriculum, *art* means two things: (1) creative works and the process of producing them, and (2) the body of work in the four art forms that makes up our human intellectual and cultural heritage.

The arts are an integral part of the human journey; to be successful in life our students will not only need to earn a living but to live their lives rich in meaning. The study of the arts aims to cultivate the whole child. To be schooled in the arts is to experience and develop a unique literacy of expression and communication.

The Fine Arts Curriculum provides a framework to help students understand:

- The arts have both intrinsic and extrinsic value.
  - The arts play a valued role in creating cultures and building civilizations.
  - The arts are a way of knowing.
  - The arts have value and significance for daily life.
  - Lifelong participation in the arts is a valuable part of a life fully lived.
  - Appreciating the arts means understanding interactions among the various professions and roles involved in creating, performing, studying, presenting, and supporting the arts.
  - Folk arts and their influence deepen respect for one’s own community and for other’s communities.
- Respect for work, openness, and contemplation when participating in the arts as an observer/audience member are attitudes that enhance enjoyment.
  - The arts are indispensable to freedom of inquiry and expression.
  - Those who study the arts become acquainted with many perspectives on the meaning of “value.”
  - The methods and mode of thinking in the arts can be used to creatively solve situations in other disciplines.
  - Self-discipline, a cooperative spirit, perseverance, and other attributes necessary to the arts can transfer to the rest of life.
  - The arts provide forms of nonverbal communication that strengthen the presentation of ideas and emotion(s).
  - The arts encourage responsibility for advancing civilization itself, and provide the skills and perspective for doing so.

*National Standards for Arts Education*

### BENEFITS TO SCHOOLS

The Fine Arts Curriculum helps schools:

1. Include all National Standards for Arts Education and the Illinois Learning Standards for the Fine Arts at each grade level.
2. Sequence content and skills in the arts for the five National Standards and the three Illinois State Learning Goals without undo repetition from grade to grade.
3. Prioritize the importance of specific arts content and skills at each grade level, identifying what is *critical for mastery* at the grade, what is *significant to develop*, and what is *useful to know* if time allows.
4. Use sample assessments to help teachers clarify and understand the desired student learning stated in each outcome/standard.

5. Spark ideas for making connections with other subject areas, Catholic identity, and core values.
6. Teach students why and how the arts are valuable to them as persons and as participants in a shared culture.
7. Support efficient and effective communication between teachers at the same grade level and from grade level to grade level in sequencing and reinforcing learning, in developing student assessments, and in working together to design and use teaching materials.
8. Collaborate with other Catholic schools in developing effective assessments and learning activities at each grade level.

## UNDERSTANDING THE FRAMEWORK

The following points of information will help schools understand and use the Fine Arts Curriculum:

- The Fine Arts Curriculum is organized by grade level (Pre-School through grade 12), and by the Illinois Learning Standards for the Fine Arts, Goals 25- 27. It also references the National Standards for Arts Education.
  - The curriculum is available to schools in three formats: 1) printed form, organized by grade level; 2) CD, organized both by grade level and Illinois Learning Standards; and 3) on the Archdiocesan Web site ([www.archchicago.org/schools](http://www.archchicago.org/schools)), ready to download either as a Word document or a PDF file, sorted by grade level or Illinois Learning Standards.
  - For each goal at each grade level, the curriculum identifies the standards/outcomes for that grade level, aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards.
  - The standards/outcomes are sorted by importance into three categories: 1) *critical for mastery* at the grade level; 2) *significant to develop*; and 3) *useful to know*. If there are no standards/outcomes in one of these categories at a particular grade level, that category will not appear.
  - Each standard/outcome has been assigned a unique identifying number for easy reference wherever the standard/outcome appears. The first digit in the standard/ outcome ID represents the grade level (P, K, 1, 2, 3 and so on) followed by a period. The second digit represent the Illinois Learning Standard (25 - 27) followed by a period. The third digit represents the number of the outcome within a particular goal at a particular grade level. For example, standard/outcome 1.25.3 refers to Grade 1, Standard 25, Outcome 3. For example, standard/outcome 6.27.10 refers to Grade 6, Standard 27, Outcome 10.
- This reference is included so that schools may demonstrate easily to accreditation/review teams that the Fine Arts Curriculum includes all the relevant Illinois Learning Standards at each grade level. It is also helpful for reviewing alignment with *standardized testing* in relation to the Illinois Learning Standards.
- For each standard/outcome the curriculum provides a sample assessment. There are two types of assessments used: content standards – what students should know and be able to do in the arts disciplines; and, achievement standards – the understanding and levels of achievement students are expected to attain in the competencies for each of the arts. In many instances, more than one assessment is given for a single standard/outcome.
  - Sample assessments reflect a variety of formats in keeping with best practices. For example, as evidence of learning students may be required to use real life problems, to use technology, to work in teams, to write about or explain their thinking, to engage in critical observation/reflection, to perform or demonstrate a particular skill or ability.
  - The curriculum suggests possible connections of standards/outcomes with other subject areas, with real life experiences, and/or with Catholic identity, and core values. These connections are by

no means complete. They are intended to spark teacher creativity in planning instruction in the arts that integrates learning from other disciplines and from the students' experiences outside of school — in their families and communities — emphasizing the Gospel values that are at the core of Catholic schools.

## USING THE FRAMEWORK

The following guidelines will help teachers use the Fine Arts Curriculum when planning instruction at their schools:

- **The Fine Arts Curriculum provides the starting point and the ending point for arts education instruction at each grade level.** At a minimum, teachers should provide instruction in such a way that students can demonstrate **solid mastery of all the critical** standards/outcomes at the grade level, and can demonstrate at least a **beginning mastery of all the significant** standards/outcomes. The useful standards/outcomes will help students prepare for the next year's learning and should be included whenever time permits.
- Teachers can refer to the sample assessment(s) for each standard/outcome to verify what they need to observe students doing to show that they have mastered the standard/outcome. Teachers may choose to use the sample assessments given and/or they may design their own, following the model.
- Teachers can refer to the connections identified to help them plan arts instruction in ways that integrate the arts with other disciplines and/or with school events, service projects, and student experiences.
- Teachers may plan instruction in the arts by integrating information and activities from multiple sources.

## USING LEARNING-CENTERED CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING: “BACKWARDS DESIGN”

The Fine Arts Curriculum supports instructional planning in the “*Backwards Design*” model. In this model, the teacher plans instruction by repeatedly asking and answering three questions, **in this order:**

1. **What is the intended learning?**  
(**Outcome/objective:** What should students know, understand, and be able to do?  
This is stated as observable behavior — use an active verb).
2. **What will count as evidence that students can do it?**  
(**Assessment:** What will students do to demonstrate they have acquired and can use the knowledge, skills, and understanding in the outcome)?
3. **What will I do to help students be ready to show evidence of their learning?**  
(**Strategies:** What teaching and learning activities, resources, field trips, etc. will help me teach the knowledge, skill, and understanding in the outcome so that students will be able to give the evidence of learning asked for in the assessment(s) I have designed)?

The Fine Arts Curriculum provides the *starting and ending answers* for questions one and two. Teachers develop intermediate mastery objectives and matching assessments as they teach specific knowledge and skills throughout the year. The standards/outcomes will make it much easier for teachers to develop the intermediate objectives; the standards/outcomes then provide a final checkpoint to make sure that teachers have included everything that is important for the grade level.

The sample assessments and connections in the Fine Arts Curriculum offer suggestions and cues about useful and appropriate strategies, question three.

**SOURCES USED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
FINE ARTS CURRICULUM**

- American Alliance for Theatre and Education
- MENC: The National Association for Music Education
- National Art Education Association
- National Dance Association
- National Standards for Arts Education
- Standards for Excellence in Education
- State of Illinois Learning Standards

*“A person should hear a little music,  
read a little poetry,  
and see a fine picture everyday  
in order that worldly cares may not obliterate  
the sense of the beautiful  
which has been implanted in the human soul.”*

Goethe

## NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ARTS EDUCATION

**National Standard 1:** Students should be able to communicate at a basic level in the four arts disciplines – dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts.

**National Standard 2:** Students should be able to communicate proficiently in a least one art form.

**National Standard 3:** Students should be able to develop and present basic analyses of works of art.

**National Standard 4:** Students should have an informed acquaintance with exemplary works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods.

**National Standard 5:** Students should be able to relate various types of arts knowledge and skills within and across the arts disciplines.

*“We use a mirror to see our face and the arts to see our soul.”*

George Bernard Shaw

## ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS

### FINE ARTS

#### STATE GOALS AND DEFINING STANDARDS

**STATE GOAL 25:** Know the language of the arts.

**Learning Standard A:** Understand the sensory elements, organizational principles, and expressive qualities of the arts. (25A)

**Learning Standard B:** Understand the similarities, distinctions, and connections in and among the arts. (25B)

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**STATE GOAL 26:** Through creating and performing, understand how works of art are produced.

**Learning Standard A:** Understand processes, traditional tools, and modern technologies used in the arts. (26A)

**Learning Standard B:** Apply the skills and knowledge necessary to create and perform in one or more of the arts. (26B)

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**STATE GOAL 27:** Understand the role of the arts in civilizations, past and present.

**Learning Standard A:** Analyze how the arts function in history, society, and everyday life. (27A)

**Learning Standard B:** Understand how the arts shape and reflect history, society, and everyday life. (27B)