

MEDIA ARTS

Frequently Asked Questions

National Coalition for Core Arts Standards

Revised April 6, 2012

- 1. *Why write media arts standards?*** Since the early 70's, the growing interest and use of technology in classroom instruction has gained even more momentum as a wide spectrum of creative activity in media arts has taken the education scene by storm. While general instructional technology continues at all levels of public education, there are increasingly new and vigorous experiences in media arts that includes cinema, animation, sound imaging design, virtual design, interactive design, as well as multimedia and intermedia. This content may be unfamiliar to the general public, but practitioners are already involved in its instruction and students are already engaged by it. New media arts standards will bring focus and coherence to this wide variety of experiences in Pre-K through post-secondary education. Ensuring student access to quality, comprehensive, standards-based media arts learning is at the foundation of this innovative effort. This effort, as well as new voluntary standards in dance, music, theatre and visual arts, is focused on providing artistically-based, aesthetically-oriented and creatively enriched clarity of all instructional endeavors.
- 2. *What does it take to qualify as an art form and to build or maintain an infrastructure that supports it?*** The 1994 *National Standards for Arts Education* includes Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts and expresses learning outcomes in terms of what students should “know and be able to do.” Regarding the emergence of media arts in the schools, students and their teachers are already leading the way by developing locally defined standards that describe what students should know and be able to do in media arts based on interests, available resources, and experimentation with the medium. Currently, media arts standards are included in the state standards of Minnesota, South Carolina, and in the district standards of New York City and Los Angeles. It is timely to support these innovations on a national scale with a comprehensive, sequential, and standards-based approach to teaching and learning in media arts. Creating media arts standards is the first step in preparing students for academic and career success, cultural awareness, and social development in relation to a media-centered global society.
- 3. *Is media arts a stand-alone art form or an integrated tool within the other arts or both?*** NCCAS leadership has determined that for the Next Generation Arts Standards Project media arts will be represented as both a stand-alone discipline defined by learning standards and an integrated tool that works within (and enhances) the other art forms. Media arts can be viewed as a stand-alone art form with unique characteristics and, like other art forms, media arts 1) exists as a means of creative expression, 2) involves composition and creation, and 3) is characterized by its own history and cultural development. Currently, a more time-based medium that focuses on interaction, computability, and collaborative work in media looks at the engagement of people in different modes than is presently experienced in the four traditional art forms. Media arts provide a new dynamism in thinking, is an interactive pathway between multiple content areas, and is ultimately plastic and non-linear, immersive, virtual and interactive. To get to the base of what is distinctive and unique about media arts, the work will be examined as a stand-alone effort and then deconstructed into its component elements. If the work is unique, a fifth art form will emerge, but the imbedded work within the four art forms will remain.

- ***If these media arts standards are accepted by States, who would be qualified or credentialed to teach them?*** As mentioned previously, creating standards is the first step in establishing agreed upon educational outcomes for learning in media arts. This question about who would teach moves the discussion from the “what” (content) to the “how” (process). States and territories and their educational agencies have authority over establishing standards for teacher certification as well as the process by which teachers are granted certification. Therefore, in many instances, the same individuals who are currently qualified or credentialed by individual States or territories to provide instruction in the wide range of media arts classes would be the persons qualified to teach standards-based media arts education after new standards. So, whether an elementary or secondary teaching authorization or any local exceptions is currently established at the school, district or governmental level remains true, until such times as a State or territory redefines the criteria, areas of certification, or processes through procedural changes. New media arts standards naturally put forward an expectation that instruction will be based in the creative, artistic and aesthetic dimensions of arts learning.
- 4. ***What will happen to media arts programs that are already in place in schools, districts and universities after the NCCAS media arts standards are completed?*** A natural outcome of standards development in any content area is the opportunity for program improvement; indeed, this is a main objective for any standards-revision undertaking. The same holds true for media arts education. The primary intention of developing media arts standards is to foster increased creativity, imagination and artistic expression and skills for all students. These standards will identify student learning expectations in media arts, will be aligned with the other traditional art forms, and will create a convergence of literacy across all content areas. Existing media arts programs at all levels can compare their current student achievement expectations to the new standards and decide if any changes should be made to the existing program. New standards will assist in promotion of focused professional development for faculties. It is anticipated that this will provide a unique opportunity to engage in deeper conversations at the classroom, school, district and governmental levels on the value and importance of media arts in teaching and learning.
- 5. ***Doesn't promoting a new art form distract from efforts to stabilize and grow dance, music, theatre and visual arts as they currently exist?*** Media arts is a unique medium of artistic expression that can amplify and integrate the four traditional art forms by incorporating the technological advances of the contemporary world with an emerging skill set available to students and teachers. In this way, media arts will help stabilize and promote the other arts disciplines by assuring that the most current resources are incorporated in each arts discipline's learning standards. Furthermore, a student's entree into the arts might be in any one art form. Often, students are more inclined to expand their artistic experiences to other art forms when success and engagement occurs in area. If a student engages in media arts and in doing so discovers a proclivity for another art form, then benefits are gained all around provided the local schools or communities continue to support all arts areas or build on existing programs.
- 6. ***Isn't there an over-arching media arts professional organization that can pilot this work?*** Our investigation here has pointed to many fine organizations with an interest in media literacy and technology societies with arts as an area of interest, as well as technology as a working group within the professional organizations for dance, music, theatre and visual arts. These organizations have created important provisions for the inclusion of technology and media arts at many levels of instruction and use. However, no single association has taken on the responsibility for media arts in the areas of arts, aesthetics, and education. Perhaps these new standards will encourage the creation of a new professional media arts organization that will focus inside and outside the arts and other academic content.

7. ***How were the media arts standards writing team members selected?*** In August of 2011, the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards convened a Media Arts Investigation Committee consisting of media arts leaders from the field including a broad spectrum of representatives from gaming, design, theatre, media, media literacy, public education K-12, higher education, film, cinema, animation, digital imagery, photography and State Directors of Arts Education. The Media Arts Investigation Committee appointed a smaller sub group of five representatives, including two national representatives who had experience in media arts standards in public education, to review the 52 applications received from media arts educators during an all call out to the field in September of 2011. The resulting twelve member writing team was chosen after a rigorous selection process using criteria designed by the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards. The writing team represents the depth, breadth and scope of the field as well as diverse geographic locations around our country and diverse teaching experiences in media arts at all grade levels, K- Higher Education.
8. ***Who will have input on the draft media arts standards?*** Since the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards is committed to a transparent process of standards writing, quarterly updates to the field are streamed live from National Coalition meetings and questions, comments or suggestions from the field are logged and passed on to the writing team chairs. Once the draft standards are completed a review process will begin. Please watch the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards website for more information.
9. ***Will States be required to accept media arts as a standards-based teaching/learning endeavor?*** The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards is creating voluntary standards in dance, media arts, music, theatre and visual arts as a part of the revision of educational expectations in the arts, nationally. There is currently no requirement to use any of these standards in whole or part at the State or territorial level. NCCAS hopes that the next generation of arts education standards will be used to guide and develop appropriate State and local initiatives.
10. ***Will media arts be added to the ESEA authorization language to qualify for funding and support?*** The 2001 Elementary and Secondary Education Act's *No Child Left Behind*, which is still in law, includes the arts in its definition of core academic subjects meaning the arts may be eligible to receive some federal funds as part of specific federal programs. However, individual state Departments of Education identify specific disciplines when defining the "arts." Teacher certification or credentialing may be used as the basis by which the arts are defined at the state level. Therefore, state education agencies may have more influence regarding media arts classification systems, implementation, and compliance than the federal government.
11. ***How can I find out more information or get involved?*** The website for NCCAS is <http://nccas.wikispaces.com/>. This wiki-space includes information about all partnering organizations, writing teams, leadership, meetings, calendars, resources and research related to the next generation of arts standards. As well, contact can be made at **800-587-6814**.
12. ***Who are the members of the Media Arts Sub-Committee for the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards?*** NCCAS members on the Media Arts Sub-Committee with affiliations are:

Richard W. Burrows, Arts, Education & Community Strategist*

Amy Jensen, Advocacy Director, American Alliance for Theatre and Education

Marcia McCaffrey, Arts Consultant & School Improvement, New Hampshire DOE, SEADAE member

Pam Paulson, Senior Director of Policy, Perpich Center for Arts Education, SEADAE member*

Nancy Rubino, Director, Office of Academic Initiatives, The College Board

Cory Wilkerson, Project Manager, State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education

*Denotes NCCAS Media Arts Leadership Representative