

Frequently Asked Questions

about the

New York State P12 Learning Standards for the Arts

Last July, 24 NYSSMA members gathered in Rochester to receive training on presenting the new state standards. This group, the NYSSMA PD Team, is responsible for delivering information on the standards to music educators throughout the state. As turnkey trainers, many have already provided professional development through sessions sponsored by school districts, regional symposium, and BOCES districts.

The following questions are among those which have often been asked in these settings. We believe that sharing these questions and answers will be informative and helpful to other educators, as we all strive to implement these new standards.

- **What is the timeline for implementation of the NYS Arts Standards?**
 - 2017-18 School Year — TRANSITION YEAR:
Arts educators receive professional development, and practice understanding and applying the new standards
 - 2018-19 School Year — FULL IMPLEMENTATION:
Arts educators begin incorporating the new standards into their instruction

- **How has the 2017 NYS Standards been updated from the 2014 National Core Arts Standards?**
 - Performance Indicators more logically sequenced
 - Change the word ‘compose’ to ‘create’
 - High school electives aligned with General Music strand PreK-8
 - Harmonizing strand aligned with elementary as of Grade 5
 - Revised ‘Connecting’ Performance Indicators to better align with NYS Standards

- **How was the review process carried out for finalizing the NYS Learning Standards for the Arts?**
 - Conducted field review in January 2017
 - Revise document in June 2017 to reflect teacher input

- **We start performance ensembles in 7th Grade. Will those students be considered “Novice” or “Intermediate”?**
 - The level “Novice” describes achievement in the first years of study. The goal is to achieve mastery at each level before moving on to the next. Therefore, students beginning in 7th Grade would be considered “Novice.”

- **What about instrumentalists beginning in high school?**
 - Students who begin instruction at any level are considered “Novice.” We expect that older students will move through the achievement levels at a quicker pace due to maturity and motivation. Therefore, high school students may progress more rapidly out of the achievement level “Novice” to achievement level “Proficient.”

- **Should we redesign our whole curriculum at this point?**
 - You may. But, rather than starting over completely, it might be a better idea to review the new standards to determine what areas of your current curriculum you need to adjust in order to simply incorporate these new expectations. Your district might employ a gap analysis process to examine your current curriculum.

- **Why are we getting new standards? Weren’t the old ones good enough?**
 - The previous standards were written 20 years ago! The new standards reflect development in:
 - Educational research
 - Child development
 - Learning styles
 - College and career readiness in a 21st century, globally competitive world
 - Critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and communication
 - Modern technology

- **Do I have to totally redesign the way I teach and create new lessons?**
 - You’ll probably discover that you are already teaching many of the aspects included in the standards. Carefully compare the new requirements to your current lesson plans, and simply adjust your instruction as needed, to better reflect the new standards.

- **Why should I care?**
 - These standards are designed to help you implement the most current thinking and instructional strategies into your classroom practices.

- **Where do I start?**
 - We recommend starting by selecting a single aspect of the new standards to include in your lesson planning. Begin using standards vocabulary in your instruction, around the classroom, and even with your supervisor. Over time, you’ll become more comfortable with the expectations and eager to incorporate additional features into your teaching.

Consider this a transition that can be made in stages as your school and district revise curricula and practice new teaching strategies. Examine the new standards to best determine how you can begin to include them into your current teaching.

- **What are the similarities between the older (1996) standards and the new ones (2017)?**
 - Philosophical foundations
 - Lifelong goals
 - Glossary
 - Parallel format among arts disciplines
 - Discipline specific performance indicators

- **What are the major differences?**
 - Five arts disciplines
 - Four common Artistic Processes
 - Eleven common Anchor Standards
 - Discipline-specific Enduring Understandings
 - Discipline-specific Essential Questions
 - PreK–8 by grade level
 - High school at three achievement levels
 - Web-based
 - Traditional and contemporary approaches for Artistic Literacy in a digital age

- **Where do I go if I need help?**
 - The State Education site has all the material regarding the standards. The Implementation Guide included on that site provides guidance on many aspects of the new standards. Please visit this site at this link: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/arts/standards/home.html>
 - The NYSSMA Curriculum Committee web page provides many additional documents to help you make this transition: <https://www.nyssma.org/committees/curriculum-committee/>

