



POSITION STATEMENT ON HIGH SCHOOL FINE ARTS GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

According to a 2017 report by the National Center for Education Statistics, 26 states require course credits in the fine arts for high school graduation....and Virginia is not one of them.

The Virginia Coalition for Fine Arts Education strongly recommends the new Virginia diploma requirements be revised to allow the fine arts be assigned one full credit for graduation, not to be shared with career and technical education, foreign language, or any other discipline.

Rationale:

- Music and the arts are cited specifically in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act as subjects which are necessary both for student success and as part of a well-rounded education. Study and practice in the visual and performing arts facilitate growth directly aligned to the 5C's of Virginia's profile of a graduate. The fine arts provide ideal pathways to the 5C's of critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, civic and community engagement.
- The fine arts - dance arts, music, theater arts, and visual arts - are essential in preparing the Commonwealth's K-12 students for the twenty-first century, which will require expanded literacy skills in images and sound as well as text.
- Research shows that when instruction provides opportunities for students to experience learning through the fine arts, they make curricular connections with English, mathematics, science, history and social science in deep and meaningful ways and are more engaged in the learning process.
- As we strive to increase high school graduation rates and ensure that all students are college and career ready, it is important to note that research also strongly suggests that students who participate in quality fine arts programs are more engaged, attend school on a more regular basis, and develop leadership capacity and they are more likely to stay in school, graduate on time, and go on to graduate from college.
- College Board data indicate that the more students are involved in fine arts coursework and activities the higher their SAT scores are, not only in Virginia but nationwide.
- R. Benjamin Knapp, Director of the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology (ICAT) at Virginia Tech, maintains that, "Creativity is essential in everything we do. Cultivating creativity, on all kinds of levels, flexes our thinking, opens us up to growth, and motivates us. In addition to the inherent benefits of the skills, knowledge, and understandings gained through participation in art and music, students involved in the arts develop creative problem solving skills, exercise perseverance and persistence, work collaboratively, and take responsibility for learning independently."

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Statement supported by: Virginia Art Education Association
Virginia Music Education Association
Virginia Theatre Association