

New York State Arts Education Requirements

The New York State Education Department's (NYSED) Instructional Requirements for the Arts outline the continuum of educational experiences students need for their academic and social development. All New York City public schools are expected to meet the NYSED Instructional Requirements for the Arts as outlined below. These requirements are included in each school's Annual Compliance Review and are a component of principals' annual performance evaluations. The DOE uses the NYSED Instructional Requirements for the Arts as the foundation for sequential arts education instructional programs because they are developmentally appropriate, and because we know that teaching and learning in these subjects is essential for our students.

In the early grades, the study of dance, music, theater, and visual arts enriches student learning across the entire curriculum while developing students' ability to express themselves and build skills and knowledge in a variety of forms. As students move from elementary to middle school, the arts become an important vehicle for self-expression and provide an opportunity for students to focus on a particular art form along with like-minded peers, giving them sense of belonging within the school community. Finally, at the high school level, students can pursue the study of a particular art form in greater depth and consider the options available for advanced study, the possibility of a career in New York City's vibrant arts community, and the opportunity to earn a Certificate of Advanced Designation through the Arts.

State and City Requirements and Guidelines

PREK–K: Each school operating a pre-kindergarten or kindergarten program shall establish and provide an educational program based on and adapted to the ages, interests, and needs of the children. Learning activities in such programs shall include dramatic play, creative art, dance and music activities.

GRADES 1–3: In grades 1 through 3, all students shall receive instruction that is designed to facilitate their attainment of the State elementary learning standards in the arts, including dance, music, theater, and visual arts. Twenty percent of the weekly time spent in school should be allocated to dance, music, theater, and visual arts. In New York City, this is the equivalent of approximately 186 hours throughout the entire school year equally allocated between dance, music, theater, and visual arts.

GRADES 4–6: In grades 4 through 6, all students shall receive instruction that is designed to facilitate their attainment of the State elementary learning standards in the arts, including dance, music, theater, and visual arts. Ten percent of the weekly time spent in school should be allocated to dance, music, theater, and visual arts. In New York City, this is the equivalent of approximately 93 hours throughout the entire school year equally allocated between dance, music, theater, and visual arts.

GRADES 7–8: All students shall be provided instruction designed to enable them to achieve, by the end of grade 8, State intermediate learning standards in the arts, including one-half unit of study in the visual arts and one half-unit of study in music. In New York City, one half-unit is the equivalent of approximately 55 hours of instruction by a licensed, certified arts teacher and may be offered in dance, music, theater, or visual arts.

GRADES 9–12: New York State graduation requirements for the arts include one unit (one year) in visual arts and/or music, dance, or theater. In New York City, one unit of credit is the equivalent of approximately 108 hours of instruction by a licensed, certified arts teacher.

Availability of Arts Sequences NYSED Requirement: High schools have the option of fulfilling the graduation requirement through either one half-unit of credit (one semester each) in both visual arts and music, or one unit of credit (one year) in one of the four arts forms. All public school districts shall offer students the opportunity to complete a three- or five-unit sequence in the arts (dance, music, theater, or visual arts).

Arts Education Requirements

Summary Chart

Grade Level	Requirement
PreK-K	Instruction in the content areas ... and the arts, including dance, music, theater and visual arts; that is designed to facilitate student attainment of the State learning standards and is aligned with the instructional program in the early elementary grades
Grades 1-3	186 hours throughout the year equally allocated among dance, music, theater, and visual arts.
Grades 4-6	93 hours throughout the year equally allocated among dance, music, theater, and visual arts.
Grades 7-8	One half-unit of music One half-unit of visual arts (NYC schools have permission from New York State to offer a half-unit each of any two art forms, dance, music, theater, or visual arts.) Courses must be taught by a licensed, certified arts teacher to carry credit.
Grades 9-12	One unit (two credits) in the arts (dance, music, theater, and/or visual arts) Courses must be taught by a licensed, certified arts teacher to carry credit.
Availability of Sequences	Each school district shall offer at least one three- or five-unit sequence in each arts discipline, taught by licensed, certified arts staff.