**Subject Matter Knowledge Matrix**

**Arts Curriculum Framework**

Students in Massachusetts must meet rigorous academic standards, which are outlined in the [Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/). To do so, they must have access to educators with strong content knowledge and pedagogical skills, the building blocks of effective instructional practice.

In support of this, the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/domains/instruction/smk-guidelines.docx) set forth the content knowledge expectations for educator licensure in Massachusetts. Through these expectations, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) seeks to ensure that educators entering the workforce have sufficient content knowledge in their licensure area to support students in mastering the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

While the Curriculum Frameworks serve as an anchor, the intent is not that educators should simply know the content included in the Frameworks. Rather, educators must move beyond basic or functional knowledge to a level of fluency or expertise with the academic standards such that they can teach and support students in mastering the content.

The figure below shows a steady progression, not in the amount of information one knows, but in the depth and ability to use that information for a specific purpose. The boxes below the continuum outline some assessments that may be used to determine varying levels of content knowledge. The depth at which the knowledge and application of content knowledge must be demonstrated is dependent on the stage of development for an individual educator (i.e. Basic, Functional, Fluent, or Expert) and/or license type (Provisional, Initial, or Professional).



This worksheet should be completed for licensure programs with Subject Matter Knowledge expectations in the [Arts Curriculum Framework](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html), including:

Dance, All

Music: Vocal/instrumental/General, All

Theater, All

Visual Art, PK-8

Visual Art, 5-12

Standards for Artistic Practice

The Standards for Artistic Practice describe the skills that arts educators at all levels should seek to develop in their PK-12 students. These practices are grouped into four clusters that focus on creating, presenting/performing, responding, and connecting across the five arts disciplines (dance, media arts, music, theatre, visual art). While instructional time in the arts is comprised of these four clusters, the amount of time designated to each cluster is flexible and is at the discretion of the district. It is not expected that each cluster will receive equal time during instruction (e.g., music may dedicate the majority of its time to performance, whereas visual art may dedicate most of its time to creating). However, it is the expectation that each cluster will be represented in a meaningful way within the curriculum. For example, visual arts classes need to ensure adequate time for students to present their art to a diverse range of audiences, just as music students need to have meaningful opportunities to improvise and compose music.

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| **Instructions*:*** Initial licensure program candidates must reach a level of fluent content knowledge in order to be endorsed. They must be able to apply content in a range of contexts and vertically connect content to build students’ knowledge. As such, sponsoring organizations must have at least one course at the fluent level for each practice below.  Please list the numbers/abbreviations/titles of the **sponsoring organization’s required courses where each practice is explicitly targeted and coherently addressed**. Then, **briefly describe where in the syllabus each practice is covered** (i.e., unit name, week number, objective number). Course identifiers should match the numbers/abbreviations/titles of submitted syllabi to support DESE’s review. Practices should not be spread across too many courses.  The full [Arts Curriculum Framework](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html), including the Guiding Principles which are also available in [Appendix A](#_Appendix_A:_Arts) of this document, should be consulted when designing programs to ensure appropriate content coverage and rigor for each licensure field’s specific artistic discipline (dance, media arts, music, theatre, visual art) and grade span. |

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| **Cluster 1: Creating with Artistic Intent.** Artistically literate students generate, organize, and refine artistic ideas using a variety of strategies and tools to serve an intended purpose for their artistic work. | **Fluent**  *Initial*  *Licensure* |
| *Example Row* | *EDU 101 – Weeks 5-7* |
| **1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.** Through exploration, students generate a wide variety of innovative ideas while expanding the boundaries of connection, style, genre, or medium. |  |
| **2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.** Using a myriad of tools (e.g., brainstorms, sketches, outlines), students plan and organize their ideas to best support their artistic intent. |  |
| **3. Refine and complete artistic work.** Through a variety of strategies (e.g., teacher or peer feedback, exploration, research, self-reflection), students conceive and revise their artistic ideas to better express, evoke, or communicate their artistic intent. |  |
| **Cluster 2: Presenting or performing artistic works to evoke, express, or communicate.** Artistically literate students share their creations with an audience or viewers to evoke, express, or communicate an intended purpose or meaning. They recognize choices and make improvements within their own work or performance aligned with their artistic intent. | **Fluent**  *Initial*  *Licensure* |
| **4. Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.** When performing work written by others, students interpret the creator’s script or score to convey the artist’s intention. When sharing their own work, students reflect on how their performance or presentation best supports their artistic intent. |  |
| **5. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.** Through the practice and development of technical skills, and the refining of details, students polish a work for presentation |  |
| **6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.** Through the presentation of an artistic work, students successfully evoke, express, or communicate the artistic intent. |  |
| **Cluster 3: Responding to arts through intellect and emotion.** Artistically literate students regularly analyze and evaluate their own and others’ works of art, including the work of peers and important artwork from varied historical periods and cultures. These students understand that artistic intent is profoundly intertwined with an artist’s cultural milieu, and they use this understanding to guide their own reactions to works of art. Learning to appreciate artistic works is a lifelong cumulative experience. It is fostered through repeated performing, listening, looking, reading, and by pondering questions such as What did the artist mean to convey? Why has this work of art endured? What makes a work of art significant to its time and place? | **Fluent**  *Initial*  *Licensure* |
| **7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.** Through observation of a completed work or exploration of the creative process, students understand how aspects of the artwork, such as the elements and principles of design, support the creator’s intent. |  |
| **8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.** Through observation, discussion, or research, students reflect on an artistic work to discern what it evokes, expresses, or communicates to them. |  |
| **9.** **Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.** Students evaluate an artwork’s effectiveness at evoking, expressing, or communicating artistic intent using either self-, group-, teacher-, or externally created criteria. |  |
| **Cluster 4: Connecting the arts to the self, society, history, culture, and other disciplines and bodies of knowledge.** Artistically literate students discern connections between personal, societal, historical, and cultural contexts as well as multi-disciplinary knowledge when they reflect upon, interpret, respond to, and create artwork. These students understand that diverse forces influence how they view their own artwork as well as the art of others. As artistically literate people, they recognize the powerful influence and impact of the arts on society, history, and culture, as well as their own lives. | **Fluent**  *Initial*  *Licensure* |
| **10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.** Students draw from their personal and artistic experiences and their multi-disciplinary knowledge when envisioning and creating original art works that reflect their own artistic identity. |  |
| **11. Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, historical, and cultural contexts to deepen understanding.** Students can articulate how societal, historical, and cultural forces have influenced artistic works, styles and genres, and vice versa. |  |

Appendix A: Arts Guiding Principles

The following principles are philosophical statements that underlie the pre-kindergarten through grade 12 Arts Framework standards and resources. These principles should guide the design and evaluation of Arts programs in both PK-12 and higher education settings.

**Guiding Principle 1. An effective arts education enables students to become artistically literate.** Artistic literacy is the knowledge and understanding required to participate authentically in the arts. Fluency in the language(s) of the arts is the ability to create, perform or present, respond, and connect through symbolic and metaphoric forms that are unique to the arts. It is embodied in specific philosophical foundations and lifelong goals that enable an artistically literate person to transfer arts knowledge, skills, and capacities to other subjects, settings, and contexts.

As a society, we need to embrace the model that continued experience leads to learning in arts, just as it does in other valued subjects, like mathematics, science, history, and language study. Arts are our human birthright—every culture throughout time and across the globe has them. They are another way of knowing, and at least as valuable as any other subject in understanding the world. As opposed to being the purview of the talented few, the arts are essential throughout everyone’s lives for understanding and appreciation, expression, social and emotional well-being, and creative opportunity.

To give every individual the opportunity to live a life enriched by artistic engagement fueled by competence and confidence, this Curriculum Framework identifies explicitly how artistic literacy is acquired and developed in Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts.

**Guiding Principle 2. An effective arts education develops students’ understanding of the concept of artistic intent.** Arts programs should focus on helping students create or perform work guided by thoughtful and intentional decision-making. Likewise, students should understand that an analysis or critique of a work of art considers artistic intent. A high-quality arts education program keeps artistic intent central by ensuring student analytical and aesthetic thinking, opportunities to share work, and conversations.

What does a classroom look like when a teacher focuses on developing artistic intent? Imagine a kindergarten teacher who inspires students to have an aesthetic response to a snowy day. The children go outside, observe the rhythms of falling snow, examine the geometry of snowflakes, hear the snow crunch beneath their boots, feel the chill and wetness of melting snow through their mittens. Back inside, children talk about the different ways they perceived snow before choosing art materials to express their own ideas of experiencing snow. The images are all likely to be different, each informed by an individual child’s desire to communicate what he or she saw, heard, or felt. The classroom gallery becomes a vibrant space as children discuss the intention behind their work (e.g., “I wanted to show how snow swirls” “I wanted to show how I shiver when it’s cold”).

The young child who learns that making art is purposeful creative work has taken the first step to becoming an artist and comprehending the power of the arts to inspire creative expression. As President John F. Kennedy wrote, “If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him. We must never forget that art is not a form of propaganda; it is a form of truth...”

**Guiding Principle 3. An effective arts education fosters a coherent and rigorous progression of learning.** Each lesson of an arts program should build upon previous lessons to create a coherent progression of learning. This framework presents the artistic processes of creating, presenting/performing, responding, and connecting from the National Core Arts Standards in 11 Standards of Artistic Practice that are applicable to all the grades. It also includes Content Standards that specify what students should know and be able to do in the arts disciplines at various points in their school experience. The Content Standards and Practice Standards are designed to be used together to connect knowledge, skills, and practices that build into a coherent, sequential, and rigorous program. Using the structure of Content and Practice Standards, educators express their own creativity in choosing resources and materials to implement aligned lessons, units, and assessments in creating a coherent program that builds on the learning from previous lessons and units to promote the development of students’ artistic literacy.

**Guiding Principle 4. An effective arts education is relevant to students’ interests.** We live in a world full of music, images, words, and movement. Most students already have deep and personal relationships with the arts—they are apt to have passionate opinions about favorite musicians or actors. A high-quality arts program supports educators in becoming familiar with the popular art forms students already value and makes authentic efforts to include these genres and styles where appropriate, not just as a strategy for engagement, but as legitimate forms of contemporary expression. Teaching with students’ interests in mind might mean assignments in which students design their own superhero figures, compose a musical hook, research the interaction of social movements and visual memes, or perform spoken word poems with a distinctive contemporary beat.

This guiding principle is challenging. What engages students one year may not interest students the following year. Educators need not become experts in every emerging art form, but they should become skilled at helping students understand how to express themselves in ways that are most authentic to them.

**Guiding Principle 5. An effective arts education provides students with broad and frequent access to great works of art from the past and present, across genres, time periods, and styles, and represents diverse cultures in the United States and from around the world in order to develop an appreciation for the richness of artistic expression, understand the connections between art and history, and cultivate one’s own sense of beauty.** Encouraging students’ artistic interests and their need for self-expression should be complemented by an introduction to enduring art from a wide variety of perspectives and cultures throughout history. Although “beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” great works of art not only reflect technical mastery, they also make visceral connections with their audience. Great art can inspire or provoke; it can reveal hidden truths or awaken the imagination; it can engender joy or sadness; it can produce serenity or awe. Regardless of their subject or form, accomplished works of art can communicate intellectually and emotionally in ways that are powerful and moving, and uniquely human.

In order to recognize the beauty and impact of art, students at all grade levels must have regular opportunities to experience important works of art, appropriate to their age. In doing so, they will also learn about the artistic techniques and aesthetic sensibilities that can help them to develop their own distinctive perspective and voice.

The arts from all over the world are an important part of our complex heritage. Integration of the arts and the history and social science curricula can help students understand the scope and breadth of human history, while at the same time providing a basis for understanding the context and themes of artworks that have become historical and cultural touchstones. For example, in the Grade 1 standards of the History and Social Science Framework, students look at the meaning of symbols in the lyrics of American songs such as “America the Beautiful.” This is an opportunity for collaboration between the music and history/social science educators. In the course of a well-designed pre-K to grade 12 arts program, arts curriculum designers have tremendous opportunities to motivate students to explore and perform works from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, as well as Europe and the Americas.

The twenty-first-century classroom and workplace includes people from diverse cultures and experiences and perspectives who must learn and work together. To be college and career ready, students need to understand and appreciate other perspectives and cultures. One way in which students learn about views different from their own is through the examination and performance of artistic works from varying cultures, historical periods, and genres. Deep study of works of art from around the world helps students become aware of how their own culture shapes attitudes and aesthetic values.

Studying a wide range of art forms helps students understand cultural allusions that they will encounter elsewhere in conversation and study. For example, the student who has discussed Salvador Dali’s 1931 painting, “The Persistence of Memory,” will recognize its melting clocks and bleak landscape as examples of surrealist imagery. Students who have performed and learned about a variety of musical styles will hear how composer/lyricist Lin-Manuel Miranda has incorporated musical elements from hip-hop, rhythm and blues, pop, soul, and show tunes into the musical Hamilton.

**Guiding Principle 6. In effective arts education programs, students have the opportunity to experience different artistic roles, groupings, and uses of media.** In addition to exposure to a variety of genres and styles, students should learn about many different kinds of work artists do and the different media they use. This will mean different things for different disciplines. Students should have experiences in different roles such as that of a dancer or choreographer in dance, or a stage manager or costume designer in theatre. Students should explore different instruments in music, produce a range of interactive or design projects, or use an array of visual arts media in both two- and three-dimensional work. This guiding principle is particularly important in the elementary and middle grades. By high school, especially in advanced courses, it is appropriate for students to focus on deep mastery of a particular role or medium, whether it is playing the flute, lighting a theatrical production, sculpting in wood, painting, or animating a short film.

Across the arts program students should have a wide range of experiences working independently and with different size groups. For example, in visual art classes where students usually work independently, educators can design small and large collaborative group projects that reflect how contemporary professional artists complete major works and installations. In music and dance programs where students usually perform as large group ensembles, educators explore opportunities for small group and solo performance opportunities.

**Guiding Principle 7. An effective arts education makes connections with other disciplines and bodies of knowledge.** An effective arts curriculum provides opportunities for students to make connections among the arts, with other academic subjects, and with arts resources in the community. Arts Integration is a method of teaching and learning that links curricular content with artistic discipline, creative expression, and individual inquiry. Consulting the grade-level and course topics and standards in the Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering, Mathematics, English Language Arts and Literacy, History and Social Science, Digital Literacy and Computer Science, Foreign Languages and Comprehensive Health Frameworks helps arts teachers find opportunities for collaborating with teachers of these subjects. Creative exploration helps students find personal connections to content knowledge, enhances comprehension, and develops students’ point of view, making academic content compelling and memorable.5

Connecting the arts to other disciplines sets the expectation that students will learn about their artistic heritage. They will investigate the historical and cultural contexts of the arts, learn about the arts in their communities, and use their knowledge of the arts in the study of other disciplines.

**Guiding Principle 8. An effective arts education promotes family and community engagement.** In order for students to have authentic opportunities to share their artistic work, effective arts education programs create opportunities to engage with families and the community. Family members often have arts backgrounds to share with students. Local artists and performers, museums, performance spaces, cultural organizations, and arts-related businesses can also contribute to the richness of a school or district arts program. In particular, there should be opportunities for music, theatre, and dance students to perform for families and the community and for visual and media arts students to exhibit their work beyond the school community.

**Guiding Principle 9. An effective arts education supports social and emotional growth.** Students develop their social and emotional skills through every subject. The arts are unique because they offer so many opportunities for students to lead others and to practice collaboration. The arts also help students develop their own self-awareness, confidence, and persistence. In doing so, the arts help to deepen respect for others’ ideas, cultures, and perspectives. For example, actors develop empathy when they assume roles of characters whose personalities and situations are markedly different from their own. Group performances require cooperation, concentration, listening to colleagues. The thrill of an excellent performance boosts self-confidence. Former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan observed that diverse artistic experiences foster flexibility: “The arts can help students become tenacious, team-oriented problem solvers who are confident and able to think creatively.”

Performing and exhibiting artistic work also requires a level of bravery. Psychologist Dr. Carol Dweck of Stanford University, who studies motivation, personality, and development, says the belief that success in the arts is based on talent, rather than effort, leads to thinking that “arts are for some.” In contrast, Dweck’s “incremental” model proposes that learning results from effort, hence that “arts are for all.” Everyone has the capacity to learn any subject at any time, if they have the opportunity to study with a capable teacher and are motivated to learn. As in any subject, all students learn the arts at their own rate. Most accomplish proficiency, and quite a few even reach mastery levels in a given art form.

**Guiding Principle 10. An effective arts education program is inclusive; all students participate and benefit.** Effective arts programs provide the necessary supports for all students to meet the standards. The standards allow for the widest possible range of students to fully engage and benefit from the outset with appropriate accommodations as needed while taking into account that not all participants engage in the same manner. Inclusive arts education programs are based in the philosophy that all students can and have the right to express themselves in and through the arts. Such programs ensure maximum participation of students with disabilities, English learners, students with minimal experience with the arts, and students who have completed advanced arts training. In the arts, as in any other academic subject, some students may require assistive technologies, others may need more time, practice, or individual help. Regardless, all students must feel welcome in the arts studio, in the practice room, on the stage, or at an exhibition and valued for their artistic insight.