



## Introduction

---

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) remains committed to providing rigorous academic standards to the highest quality. The Colorado Academic Standards in Dance were approved by the Colorado State Board in 2009. CDE has requested third-party experts conduct a formal study to identify the quality of the Dance standards being implemented since the 2009 school year, and to determine how and to what degree Colorado's current Dance standards compare with the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS), as well as the Dance standards of higher-performing states and countries.

The Colorado Department of Education engaged the services of the State Education Agency Director of Arts Education (SEADAE) to conduct an external review; benchmarking the Colorado Academic Standards in Dance against the National Core Arts Standards, Arizona Academic Standards in the Arts, Delaware Content Standards for Visual and Performing Arts, and the K-12 Create Arts Continuum, a syllabi developed by the Board of Studies, State of New South Wales (Australia).

The Colorado Department of Education approached SEADAE for the review of the Colorado Academic Standards in Dance because of its history of high-quality work involving arts education standards, assessment, and instruction, as well as the deep content expertise of its members. SEADAE members are those persons at state arts education agencies who are charged with oversight of educational policy and practice in the arts (Dance, Media Arts, Music, Drama and Theatre Arts, and Visual Arts).

### **Methodology** (p. 6-11)\*

The Arts were organized in to grade-band clusters of PK-2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8 and Dance High School Generalist and Performance Pathways for the review. The elements of the standards identified for review include: Academic Standards for Dance, Prepared Graduate Competencies; High School Expectations; Grade Level Expectations; and Evidence Outcomes. While important to understanding the current CAS standards, the following elements in the standards were not included in the review: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and Readiness Competencies; Inquiry Questions, and the Nature of the Discipline.

Colorado Academic Standards in Dance Review: A review of the internal quality of the Colorado Academic Standards in Dance with respect to the degree of rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence of the Standards. A four-point rating scale was used (3-Strong, 2-Moderate, 1-Weak, 0-Not Found). Rating were found for each of the following:

- Rigor – “...instruction, schoolwork, learning experiences, and educational expectations that are *academically, intellectually, and personally challenging...*”
  - Active language for learners to demonstrate declarative and procedural knowledge and skills
  - Developmentally appropriate
  - Enable and encourage students to build upon prior knowledge and transfer or adapt appropriate grade-level constructs to new situations, thereby fostering creativity and adaptive innovation
  - Promulgate age appropriate arts literacy and fluency
- Depth – “...robust, well-integrated understandings of fundamental concepts essential to the attainment of literacy and fluency music...”
  - Deep investigation and multiple perspectives
  - Deep investigation of developmentally appropriate literacy and fluency
  - Reinforce and revisit core concepts and transfer of prior knowledge



- Promote inquiry-based learning
- Specific learning objectives with levels of student mastery
- Breadth – “...a logically scaffolded and sequenced set of standards in which essential content is explored through a wide array of interrelated ideas, facts, and perspectives.”
  - Build learner knowledge and skills through a variety of related experiences over time
  - Provide interrelated ideas, facts, and perspectives
  - Continuum of knowledge and skills necessary for progressively sophisticated levels of literacy and fluency.
- Coherence – “...a progression of instruction in which each lesson builds on previous lessons, moving students from simpler concepts to more complex and challenging concepts from lower-level thinking to higher-level thinking as they progress through their education.”
  - Systematic, intentional progression of learning that builds on previous Standards, with a logical pathway for learning and mastery
  - Construction parallel to that of other standards and concurrent knowledge and skills required for mastery
  - Cognitive ability increases for content mastery

Arizona, Delaware, National Core Arts Standards, and State of New South Wales (Australia): CDE selected external referents to which the CAS-Dance would be compared. Included in the selection criteria was (1) the time of the adoption/adaption of these standards, as CDE was looking for recently adopted/updated standards, (2) relevance and coherence of the content-area learning objectives, (3) suggestions from the CDE staff, and (4) consist use by other experts in the field. Analyst’s used a four-point rating scale (Very Similar, Similar, Dissimilar, or Very Dissimilar) when comparing CAS-Dance to the referent exemplars, along with the lenses of rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence.

## Findings & Recommendations

### OBSERVATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

In sum, the complete document of CAS for Dance provides teachers and students with a great many essential and cognitively demanding concepts, skills and understandings to harvest a robust set of learning experiences.

#### Standard 1: Movement, Technique, and Performance

Grade Level Expectancies (GLE’s) must build towards the goal of this standard and need more clarity. Consider how to better scaffold the knowledge and skills already present in GLE’s and align more tightly to developmental milestones (or progressions of learning) within the grades. Skills need to be described with greater clarity.

#### Standard 2: Create, Compose and Choreograph

Clearly articulate expectations around the process of transforming movement into choreography and attending to choreographic intent when creating dances. Review clarity, use outcome-based language, better scaffolding of essential knowledge and skills across grade spans.

#### Standard 3: Historical and Cultural Context

NCAS embeds social and historical context into Connecting and relegates aesthetic evaluation, perceiving, analyzing, and interpreting to the Performance Standards (i.e., grade-level expectations) in Responding. Having this historical and cultural Standard as one fourth of the dance content places a great deal of emphasis on social and world dance. Conceptually, the objectives of this Standard could be expanded by adding "personal" context (Personal, Historical, and



---

Cultural Context). This would parallel the NCAS concepts reflected in Connecting and provide an opportunity to build out the content and equalize the weight of this Standard compared to the other three Standards.

Standard 4: Reflect, Connect, and Respond

GLE's for this standard need a greater emphasis on developing dance vocabulary and understanding dance through observation, discussion, reflection and critique.

Prepared Graduate Competency (PGC) "Participate in dance production" is listed in full set of PGC's, but not included in the subset under each standard.