




# Understanding the Arts Education Opportunity to Learn Standards

Opportunity to Learn (OTL) Standards identify the resources that teachers, schools and districts need for all students to achieve at or above the levels suggested in the [2014 National Core Arts Standards](#). With the passage of the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA) and the widespread adoption or adaptation of the National Core Arts Standards across the United States, defining the resources required to achieve literacy in each arts discipline is especially important and timely. OTL Standards serve as a key component in the fair and reliable evaluation of arts educators and arts programs.

-  To learn more about ESSA, visit the Arts Education Partnership's [ESSA and the Arts](#) webpage.
-  To learn more about the adoption of new arts standards in your state, visit the [National Coalition for Core Arts Standards page](#).
-  Explore how your state's policies address the arts in education with [ArtScan](#).

In addition to helping guide state implementation of standards, OTL Standards are essential in the basis for a district's arts education assessment — a key component in collecting data about access to arts education and securing funding through ESSA to improve learning experiences for students. Specifically, ESSA requires districts to identify requirements to support well-rounded subject areas, including the arts, as part of a needs assessment for Title IV, Part A funding.

The four national arts education professional organizations in dance, music, theatre and visual arts created OTL Standards that define the necessary resources for students to achieve artistic literacy in the four component artistic processes identified in the National Core Arts Standards: Creating, Performing/Presenting/Producing, Responding, and Connecting.

## View each organization's OTL Standards:

[National Dance Education Organization](#)

[National Association for Music Education](#)

[Educational Theatre Association](#)

[National Art Education Association](#)



## OTL Standards:

- ④ Support teachers seeking to meet national or state arts standards.
- ④ Articulate what basic and quality programs look like for all students.
- ④ Serve as a needs-assessment tool for Title IV-A funding under ESSA.
- ④ Help define professional development and resource needs addressed in reliable and ongoing teacher evaluation.

OTL Standards do not require specific curricula, but do address five fundamental resource needs. To help students achieve literacy across arts disciplines, these components must be in place and monitored on a regular basis to continue to best meet the needs of educators and students:

- ④ **Curriculum and Scheduling** — Curriculum reflects a vision for achieving learning goals. Schedules provide sufficient time for students to apply component artistic processes.
- ④ **Staffing** — Content delivered by qualified teachers, supplemented by additional school and community resources, supported by thoughtful evaluation and professional development.
- ④ **Materials and Equipment** — The proper tools are critical to arts education standards-based learning and teaching.
- ④ **Facilities** — Learning and creating in the arts requires appropriate space for classroom instruction and active exercises.
- ④ **Safety** — Access to training and resources helps create a safe environment for physical, emotional and intellectual expression.

Additionally, OTL Standards for the visual arts identify specific needs related to Organizational Structure and Budget.

**OTL Standards aim to ensure that all students have meaningful learning experiences in each of the artistic processes by outlining the necessary resources to administer basic and quality arts programs for all students.**

Developed in  
partnership with:

