

Guidance on Ed 306:  
An Arts Education Perspective  
Minimum Standards for Public School Approval  
September 2005

The newly adopted *Minimum Standards for Public School Approval*, Ed 306, have undergone major changes. These changes to the school rules have the potential to impact every arts program in every school and affect each student and his or her ability to access an arts education. Regardless of whether or not there is agreement about the value of these changes, they now define the context in which we do our work: the education of students in the arts. As some look forward to the seasonal change and others do not, we all have to accept that regardless, the change occurs.

This guidance is designed to familiarize you with language from the newly adopted standards as well as provide a brief explanation of the impact they could have on you. Everyone is encouraged to visit the New Hampshire Department of Education website, <http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/laws/Ed306Adopted.htm> and download the entire document. If this is not possible, contact the NHDOE and ask for a copy. It is in your best interest to become acquainted with the document as soon as possible. You will be asked questions. You want to ensure that your program maintains high standards for student learning and that the changes in these rules are not used inappropriately.

This document is organized into **five** major categories or talking points. While I quote portions of the New Hampshire Minimum Standards (which are quoted in bold print), it is in the best interest of the reader to refer to the entire document.

**1 - Defining "Educator" and certified professional staff:**

**Ed 306.02 Definitions.**

**(b) "Educator" means any professional employee of any school district whose position requires certification by the state board pursuant to RSA 189:39. Administrators, specialists, and teachers are included within the definition of this term."**

**Ed 306.15 Provision of Staff and Staff Qualifications.**

**(e) Pursuant to RSA 189:24 and in accordance with Ed 500 and Ed 600, the local school board shall require that each professional staff member is certified for assignment by the department.**

This states that all arts educators must be certified in their areas of teaching

responsibility. By the end of the 2005-2006 school year all teachers will have to be certified in order to meet the *Highly Qualified Teacher* requirements of the *No Child Left Behind* Act. Arts courses (music, visual arts and theater) receiving Arts credit can only to be taught by certified personal. The course content will determine if the course is eligible for an arts credit. All courses must align its curriculum to the *NH Curriculum Frameworks for the Arts*.

At this time NH does not offer a Dance Education certification. Dance courses taught by physical education teachers can receive PE credit only. Classes such as Graphic Arts or Public Speaking cannot be granted arts credits unless being taught by certified arts teachers. Only theater classes taught by certified theater educators can be granted arts credit.

## **2 - An Arts Education Program and Distribution of Time**

**“Ed 306.31 Arts Education Program. Pursuant to Ed 306.26 and Ed 306.27, the local school board shall require that an arts education program for grades K-12 provides:**

**(a) Systematic and sequential instruction in the arts disciplines of music and visual art, while developing opportunities for dance and theatre, where students will:**

- (1) Create, perform, and respond with understanding;**
- (2) Participate actively in at least one of the art forms of dance, music, theatre or visual art;**
- (3) Analyze and evaluate works of art from structural, historical, and cultural perspectives, including acquiring the ability to understand and evaluate works of art in various arts disciplines;**
- (4) Recognize exemplary works of art from a variety of historical periods and cultures, as well as understand historical development within and among the arts disciplines;**
- (5) Relate various types of arts knowledge and skills within and across the arts and other disciplines;**
- (6) Use technology as ways to create, perform, or respond in various arts disciplines; and**
- (7) Become familiar with career opportunities in the arts or with the impact of the arts on everyday life;**

**(b) Planned curriculum that is consistent with RSA 193-C: 3, III; (Note: This refers to *The New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks for the Arts*) that will provide for:**

- (1) A variety of developmentally appropriate techniques and processes as well as learning materials such as tools, equipment, facilities and supplies, including but not limited to musical**

- instruments, current recording devices, computers and software, and expendable art-making supplies, that meet the diverse needs, interests and capacities of each student;
- (2) The best interests of students regarding safety and health issues associated with materials, tools, equipment, supplies and procedures;
- (3) The ability to guide student development in observing, imagining, visualizing, listening, transforming, and synthesizing their thoughts and ideas into artworks through traditional and nontraditional means such as, but not limited to, choreography, reading and writing music, improvisation, script-writing, set design, two and three-dimensional artworks, and media arts;
- (4) The ability to guide students in selecting and applying subject matter and movements, sounds, language, or symbols, or any combination of them, with ideas to express meaning in artwork;
- (5) Developing artistry and artistic skill sequentially over time;
- (6) Critical thinking skills and artistic choices in the creation and evaluation of artworks;
- (7) Addressing opportunities available beyond the regular classroom; and
- (8) Embedding in the students global arts-related history and culture; and

**(c) Sound assessment practices as stated in Ed 306.24.”**

This language defines what an arts curriculum and sound assessment practices should look like. The *New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks for the Arts* can serve as a good model for any district looking to refine its arts curriculum. Another noticeable change in language is the inclusive term "arts." Whereas the previous Ed 306 rules specifically articulated an art program and a music program, this set of standards aligns with the language of arts framework. Previously, the *Minimum Standards for School Approval* was the only place where curricular guidelines were in rule. Now, however, the *New Hampshire Framework for the Arts* specially addresses dance, theatre, music and visual arts standards, and the entire document is captured in the above rule (193: C, III).

**Ed 306.24 Assessment.**

- (a) The local school board shall require that each school:**
- (1) Provides for the ongoing assessment of learning outcomes through the use of local assessments that are aligned with state and district content and performance standards as provided in (b) below:**
- (b) The following elements shall be used as evidence by the department in determining whether a school complies with the requirements of (a) above:**

**(1) The school maintains a policy that articulates the process for the selection, use, and interpretation of local assessment instruments;**

**(2) The school supports the authentic assessment of student learning outcomes through multiple formative and summative assessment instruments, including, but not limited to:**

**a. Teacher observation of project-based learning, including off-site learning projects;**

**b. Competency-based assessments; and**

**c. Teacher-designed quizzes and tests;**

**(3) The school provides professional development for teachers in the use of diagnostic tools to adjust instruction to meet personalized needs of students and to monitor progress; and**

**(4) The school has a systematic process for collecting and analyzing assessment data to:**

**a. Identify needs for improvement; and**

**b. Determine the effectiveness of educational programs in meeting student performance goals.**

This language, tied to the language of extended learning (see below), affords us the opportunity to reflect on and perhaps modify our current teaching practices; align our curricula with the arts' framework; and develop our best assessment tools. It is in our best interest to have established solid rubrics and substantial goals for all our courses, especially in light of competency-based graduation requirements (see below) and extended learning. Students wishing to gain credit through extended learning opportunities will need to follow the guidelines established by local school boards. Most likely the local boards will look to you and your current grading practices as they create policy. The opportunity for school and district professional development in arts' curriculum, instruction, and assessment is ripe.

#### **Ed 306.26 Kindergarten - Grade 8 Curriculum**

**(b) The local school board shall adopt, for each school, a local time schedule which specifies the distribution of instructional time among the following learning areas to be taught in grades K-8 at all grade levels in the school: (Note-Arts Education is included in this list)**

The big change here is that there is no longer a distinction made between elementary, junior high school and middle school requirements in the arts. All K-8 schools are reliant upon the local school board to set the distribution of time among content areas. Bear in mind that an arts program should meet the requirements of Ed 306.31, so reduction in current time allotments make it difficult to deliver a quality program as

specified in these rules.

### **3 - Extended learning**

#### **Ed 306.02 Definitions.**

**(c) “Extended learning,” means the primary acquisition of knowledge and skills through instruction or study outside of the traditional classroom methodology, including, but not limited, to:**

- (1) Independent study;**
- (2) Private instruction;**
- (3) Performing groups;**
- (4) Internships;**
- (5) Community service;**
- (6) Apprenticeships; and**
- (7) Online courses.**

#### **Ed 306.25/27**

**(f/4) If a district chooses to offer extended learning opportunities in a middle/high school, the extended learning opportunities shall:**

- a. Consist of activities designed to:**
  - 1. Provide credit or supplement regular academic courses; and**
  - 2. Promote the schools and individual students’ educational goals and objectives;**
  
- b. Be governed by a policy adopted by the local school board that:**
  - 1. Provides for the administration and supervision of the program;**
  - 2. Encourages that certified school personnel oversee an Individual student’s program;**
  - 3. Requires that each extended learning proposal meet Rigorous standards, and be approved by the school prior to its beginning;**
  
  - 4. Specifies that credits can be granted for extended learning activities, including, but not limited to, independent study, private instruction, team sports, performing groups, internships, community service, and work study; and**
  - 5. Requires that granting of credits shall be based on a student’s demonstration of competencies, as approved by certified educators;**
  
- c. Incorporate student participation in selecting, organizing, and carrying out extended learning activities;**
  
- d. Provide opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and skill**

**development comparable to knowledge and skill development in courses offered at the high school; and**

**e. Be available to all students; and**

**Ed 306.27 (5) A co curricular program shall be offered that provides opportunities for all students to participate in activities designed to meet their needs and interests, including, but not limited to:**

**a. Intramural and interscholastic athletics;**

**b. Performing groups;**

**c. Academic clubs and societies;**

**d. Student government;**

**e. Activities and services that afford students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate; and**

**f. Any other activities that:**

**1. Supplement and enrich regular academic courses;**

**2. Provide opportunities for social development;**

**3. Encourage participation in the arts, athletics, and other cooperative groups; and**

**4. Encourage service to school and community.”**

This language should inform any discussions of extended learning (aka Real World Learning) in your local district. Familiarize yourself with all of it and be prepared to act as the advocate in your school district. Before it comes up for discussion at your local school board level, be prepared to answer questions and to offer suggestions and/or leadership in crafting new polices that deal with the provision and implementation of the standards. Note that the decision to offer or not offer extended learning opportunities is left up to your local school board. If your district chooses to offer extended learning, then your district's policies should include language about background checks for anyone who is interacting with students on behalf of the school, potential non- compliance of the background check, safety and health issues of the student's, possible “union” policies about employees allowing students to work at their job sites, and liability issues around transporting students to and from their extended learning opportunities.

Students wishing to gain credit through extended learning opportunities will need to follow the guidelines established by your local school boards. Most likely the local boards will look to you and your current grading practices as they create policy. It is also important to note that the extended learning policy in these rules align with current NEASC standards

(Standard #2 Curriculum and Benchmark #6. The school shall provide opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus.)

#### **4 - Core Competencies**

**“By the 2008-2009 school year, the local school board shall require that a high school credit can be earned by demonstrating mastery of required competencies for the course, as approved by certified school personnel. Until the 2008-2009 school year, the local school board shall require that a high school credit can be earned as provided in (1) or (2) below, or both:**

**(1) Attendance at a course scheduled to meet for no less than 135 clock hours of instructional time if the school operates on an 8-period schedule or for no less than 150 clock hours of instructional time if the school operates on a 7-period schedule; or**

**(2) If a competency assessment is in place as provided in (i) below, by demonstrating mastery of required competencies for the course, as approved by certified school personnel.**

**(i.) If the local school board adopts a policy that would allow students to graduate from a high school as a result of demonstrating mastery of required competencies, the policy shall require students to meet both state and local standards. By the 2008-2009 school year, the board shall require that a high school have in place competency assessments for all courses offered through the high school.**

This is a major shift in the way we report out to students, parents, administrators and school boards. Grades do not reflect what it is that a student has learned. Teachers are going to be asked, what they teach and how they measure student progress. The outcomes-based practice/reflective process that started with a reflective practice of what an arts education should look like now becomes an individualized program for every student. Teachers will be asked to develop competencies that define what a student needs to demonstrate mastery of a subject and what means that teacher uses to measure those competencies.

Theses competencies will need to be defined, written, discussed and measured. The *New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks for the Arts* can serve as a model for districts that are looking to build course competencies.

Assessment tools can be researched on-line where publications and articles are readily accessible. The NH Department of Education is another good resource for professional development in assessment and assessment systems.

## **5 - Defining the School Year and Instructional Time**

**Ed 306.02 (d) “Instructional time” means the period of time during which pupils are actively working toward achieving educational objectives under the supervision of a teacher or other staff member.**

**Ed 306.18 School Year.**

**(a) Pursuant to RSA 189:1 and 189:24 each school shall maintain a school year option as provided in either (b) or (c) below.**

**(b) Each school with a school year option based on hours shall be subject to the following requirements:**

- (1) The school shall maintain in each elementary school, a school year of at least 945 hours of instructional time;**
- (2) The school shall maintain in each middle and senior high school, a school year of at least 990 hours of instructional time;**
- (3) The school day of an individual student shall not exceed 8 hours of instructional time; and**

**(c) Each school with a school year option based on days shall be subject to the following requirements:**

- 1) The school shall maintain a standard school year of at least 180 days of instructional time;"**

Not all school districts are going to make radical adjustments to their school calendars, as this will involve major language revisions in local master agreements. However, this policy does allow for flexibility, and some school districts will explore options.

The new minimum standards are in place and, as stated, serve as a baseline for local school districts. They will generate discussion, debate, and disagreement and, ultimately, change for our students and us. It is better to be leading the change and framing the discussions than, to be waiting for someone to state what those changes are and directing how and when to implement the changes.

Now is the time to investigate the intentions of your local school board; advocate for your program using these standards as a basis for your argument; rally parent groups and build their understanding of these rules; and consider what changes you need to make to improve the curriculum, instruction, and assessment for your students.

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