



## North Carolina Theatre Arts Educators

P.O. Box 16662, Asheville, NC 28816-0662 — [nctae.com](http://nctae.com)

# Arts Education Graduation Requirement

Ten years ago, the NC Arts Education Task force, led by Representative Carney and Senator Dorsett, presented the idea of a Comprehensive Arts Education plan. This original incarnation brought forth the idea of the arts as a required part of a well-rounded education, consisting of equal parts arts education, arts integration, and arts exposure. After ten years of bipartisan support without an adopted law, S681 passed in June of 2020 and became Session Law SL2020-78 in July.

This is exciting news for all arts educators and practitioners in North Carolina. As the bill traveled a long and winding road to passage, there are many misconceptions and outdated views of what exactly this graduation requirement means for K-12 education. To help clarify, NCDPI arts education consultant, Brandon Roeder, has pulled together the following FAQ:

### **What is in the law?**

In the most basic distillation of the law, students who enter grade 6 in the fall of 2022 or later will be required to take at least one arts course during their 6-12 educational experience. The law also gives NCDPI the authority to establish the criteria for the requirement: how it is tracked; what courses count; and the timeline of implementation. Your NCDPI Arts Education team, along with our Department of Natural and Cultural Resources partners will also be required to give a report to the General Assembly on how well Comprehensive Arts Education is operating in the state. As part of this requirement, we are revisiting the original implementation report and will be rolling out exciting opportunities for our schools, teachers, and students. More on this, soon!

### **How will the requirements be implemented?**

Even though this is a new process for us in Arts Education, public school units across the state go through a process of changing and applying graduation requirements *every single year*. *Your LEA is set up to handle this change already, as is the NC Department of Public Instruction. There are strict policies and regulations in place which guide our work to ensure that the requirement will be implemented with fidelity.*

At this time, our working group is engaged in ensuring that every student's completion of the arts education graduation requirement will be tracked through course codes in PowerSchool as part of the established graduation plan process (NCSBOE Policy GRAD-004). Students will be able to complete this graduation requirement at any time within their 6-12 education. Only those courses with officially recognized course codes (those starting with a "5") will be automatically tracked in PowerSchool. *This means that it is imperative to use the correct course codes for your students - DO NOT use course codes beginning with "9". You can learn more about the NCDPI Arts Education Course Coding structure at [bit.ly/NCArtsEdCourseManual](http://bit.ly/NCArtsEdCourseManual). More information regarding which course codes will apply to the requirement will be provided later this school year.*

(more)

**Our Mission:** The North Carolina Theatre Arts Educators seeks to advance the quality and scope of theatre education in North Carolina schools through professional development, collaboration, and empowerment of Theatre Arts Educators



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### **Are there exceptions to the requirement?**

Yes! Students moving from another state to North Carolina in the ninth grade or later may be exempt from the arts education graduation requirement if requiring them to do so would keep them from graduating with the cohort to which they are assigned. Given the differences in graduation requirements from state to state, schedules may not allow a student who has carefully followed a previous system's requirements the opportunity to take one credit of arts education. Instead of preventing a student from graduating with their class to take one credit of arts education in the fall, a student can be made exempt from this graduation requirement, allowing them to graduate on time, without an arts education credit. Except for this extreme circumstance, every effort should be made to enroll every student in at least one credit of arts education.

### **When will we know more?**

Once we present our implementation proposal to the NC School Board of Education this fall, we will send a brief to the field. We will provide support for central office leadership, school-based data managers, school counselors, and arts educators to ensure that everyone understands the parameters of the new requirement.

*Brandon Roeder is the K-12 Music and Theatre Arts Consultant with the Division of Academic standards, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. He may be reached at [Brandon.Roeder@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:Brandon.Roeder@dpi.nc.gov).*