

## Focusing on the Classroom: The 2014 Music Standards

The comprehensive, voluntary *National Core Arts Standards (NCAS)* were released publicly in June, 2014. Created by the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, these standards are framed by a definition of **artistic literacy** that includes “philosophical foundations and lifelong goals, artistic processes and creative practices, anchor and performance standards that students should attain as well as model cornerstone assessments by which they can be measured” (NCAS 2) In musical terms, **artistic literacy** requires that students become involved in active music-making processes.

### What are the 2014 Music Standards?

The new 2014 Music Standards are all about Music Literacy. Created under the leadership of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), they emphasize conceptual understanding in areas that reflect the actual processes in which musicians engage. The standards cultivate a student’s ability to carry out the Artistic Processes of:

- Creating
- Performing
- Responding
- Connecting\*

*\* The music standards consider Connecting to be embedded in the processes of Creating, Performing, and Responding.*

The above processes are those that musicians have followed for generations, even as they connect through music to themselves and to their societies.

Students need to have experience in creating to be successful musicians and to be successful 21st century citizens. They need to perform – as singers, as instrumentalists, and in their lives and careers through a variety of music-making opportunities. Finally, students need to respond to music, as well as to their culture, their community, and their peers.

### Anchor Standards

Each of the **Artistic Processes** splits into several **Anchor Standards** that describe the general knowledge and skills that teachers should expect students to demonstrate throughout their education in the arts. The Anchor Standards are the same across artistic disciplines, allowing music educators to converse with their other artistic colleagues regarding standards-based learning in their school and/or district.

## STUDENTS WILL:

### Create:

- Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

### Perform:

- Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.
- Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
- Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

### Respond:

- Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

### Connect:

- Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art
- Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding

## Standards Organization

Following the Anchor Standards, shared across all artistic disciplines, are found performance standards for all the art forms. The performance standards are organized as follows:

- Grades PreK – 8th grade: Grade by grade level standards for general music classrooms
- Novice – Advanced: Proficiency based performance standards for music classrooms, through high school. For all arts disciplines, proficiency based performance standards exist at the high school level. The high school level standards represent proficient, accomplished and advanced levels – or 3 levels of standards. Obviously, in high school you can't offer grade by grade level standards because students do not attend music classes in grade level cohorts. Instead, we have proficiency-leveled ensembles, or at times, ensembles with multiple levels of proficiency all in one classroom.

Below you will see the definitions of the levels found in the NCAS music standards. Novice and Intermediate were included for music because many of our ensemble classes, and sometimes our harmonizing instrument classes (e.g. piano, guitar), begin prior to high school.

<b>Novice</b>	Beginning or an equivalent to 2 years of study in an ensemble in addition to general music
<b>Intermediate</b>	Middle level or an equivalent to 4 years of study in an ensemble in addition to general music
<b>Proficient</b>	One or more years of high school study
<b>Accomplished</b>	Proficiency exceeding average performance proficiency for high school study
<b>Advanced</b>	Preparing for collegiate study in music

- Content Strands: Along with general music grades PreK-8, the 2014 Music Standards include strands of music study often offered in secondary school settings. These include: Performing Ensembles – both traditional ensembles (choir, band, orchestra) and Emerging Ensembles (mariachi, world drumming); Harmonizing Instruments (keyboards, guitars); Music Theory and Composition; and Music Technology.

**Want more tips for keeping music strong in your schools?**

Visit the site devoted to all things music advocacy: [www.supportmusic.com](http://www.supportmusic.com)

**TIP 2**

## Model Cornerstone Assessments

**Model Cornerstone Assessments** (MCAs) in music have been organized and developed by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME). MCAs are authentic, instructionally embedded assessments for music classrooms. The intent in developing these assessments is to provide music educators with examples of what rich assessment practice in music can look like in the classroom, as well as illustrative student examples of what students meeting standard look and sound like as they develop their musical literacy. Student work samples from elementary grades can be found at [www.nationalartsstandards.org](http://www.nationalartsstandards.org).

Sample MCAs, complete with worksheets and scoring device rubrics to use in the music classroom, are available to download through the NAfME website and can be used as teachers develop their own classroom-embedded assessments.

NAfME continues to be of great assistance in providing numerous resources for standards implementation and adoption. The information specifically related to the 2014 Music Standards can be accessed at: <http://www.nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/>

## Implementing the 2014 Music Standards

So how can you determine what you need to do to ensure that you are teaching through a **Music Literacy** lens? As you plan lessons/rehearsals, consider addressing each of the three **Artistic Processes** of Creating, Performing and Responding.

Young people are **creating** their own music more than ever and many of them are not in our music classes. What is it about creating music that leads so many young people to experiment with and dabble in this process? Ask your students. Encourage them to come up with their own creations (compositions) and ask students to provide a video recording of them performing their works with their peers. They will be excited by the challenge and you will be amazed by the outcome.

Delivering a high level of performance from our students is something that most of us are already

experts at achieving but responding may be new to your bag of pedagogy tricks. Encourage your students to think about how they choose music to experience. How does it make them feel? Why? Is there a common thread to the music that they choose? Is there a cultural significance to the music that they choose to listen to and does it elicit a specific response? (joy, relaxation, locomotion, etc.)

Next, ask students to explore how this relates to the **creative** process? In other words, do composers **create** music to elicit a specific response from the audience? Also ask students to also relate how their own responses to the music being rehearsed? Can they draw a relationship between how they feel about the music they are learning to how the audience thus **responds** to it?

There are certainly many directions to go with this approach to teaching in the ensemble setting. Many view this as restricting what they think can be accomplished in the rehearsal but in actuality, it allows students to receive a more expansive, in-depth experience. Those directors who have chosen to use a more comprehensive approach are finding greater joy in the process of developing the music-making skills of their students.

## Resources: (To be included in the margin)

The additional resources listed below may be viewed online at: [www.nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/](http://www.nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/)

- 2014 Music Standards
- State Standards Adoption Toolkit
- 2015 Opportunity to Learn Standards
- Developing Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions
- Student Assessment/Model Cornerstone Assessments (MCAs)
- National Coalition for Core Arts Standards Information
- Searchable Database of the Standards in all the Arts
- Videos, FAQ and General Information on how the Standards Structure Works in Practice
- Standards Resources, Workbooks, and Video Package on how to Implement the Standards
- Copyright Information

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