

ARTS EDUCATION – HIGH SCHOOL REQUIREMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will an arts education requirement cost money and is there time in the school day?

A student must take 6 electives to graduate from high school. The high school arts education requirement would change that to 5 electives. A required credit does not change the number of students who need to be served (i.e. more teachers and more money), but it does change the allocation of existing resources.

What must a student have to graduate?

Beginning freshman class of 2009-2010:

4 units in English

4 units in Math

3 units in Science

3 units in Social Studies

1 unit in PE

Any combination of two credits from:

Arts

Foreign Language

Vocational Education

Doesn't this structure assure students have access and opportunity to take an arts credit?

To enter North Carolina's University System, a student must have 2 credits of a Foreign Language. Therefore college bound students fulfill their elective requirement through their language study. Students who are not college bound are encouraged to enter vocational education programs. Both these factors heavily influence the availability of arts electives to meet the elective requirement.

How can the credit be implemented effectively?

Senate Bill 66 requires that a Work Group be appointed from Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Cultural Resources to consider implementation strategies. Suggestions have been made that curriculum and arts programs are considered and evaluated for their relevance to arts education standards and the definition of an arts credit. By January 2011, the Work Group would report back to the House and the Senate on their findings.

Are there enough qualified teachers to address the arts credit requirement?

University programs respond to market demands. More job opportunities = more students electing arts education as a major.

Artists can work with both DPI and Cultural Resources to fulfill the requirements of highly qualified teachers.

Why the credit instead of other arts education policy options?

The issue of a high school graduation requirement in the arts was raised when the State Board of Education elected a new framework for high school graduation. Because the credit was not included in the new framework, the Legislature appointed a Study Committee that recommended the introduced legislation. In 2009-10, the Senate bi-partisan vote on SB 66 (HB149) was 39-10.

Seven key areas will remain on the arts agenda – the high school requirement is the first leg of a comprehensive arts education policy for North Carolina:

- Public and private university adoption of arts integration in teacher training and support for A+ Schools as an integrated approach to effective outcomes
- Equitable opportunity for music, theatre, visual, and dance experiences in grades K-5 (see BEP, only with funding)
- Required middle school elective
- **High school graduation requirement**
- Arts programs as retention and graduation strategies
- Academic and accelerated arts achievement programs (NCSA, Scholars program, Career pathway)
- Increased support for arts and education “after school”, early learning, and community based programs.

Will schools lose their higher level arts classes to utilize teachers for the basic courses?

Arts programs are extremely vulnerable because no policy exists to ensure availability of arts choices at any level.

The question can only be answered to the degree that parents and the community are willing to advocate for healthy, dynamic arts programs with their local school boards.