



Arts Ed NJ Testimony: Wendy Liscow, July 1, 2026

Good afternoon Commissioner and Members of the State Board of Education.

My name is Wendy Liscow, and I am the Executive Director of Arts Ed NJ. Through partnerships across the state, Arts Ed NJ works to ensure every New Jersey student has access to the high-quality, sequential arts education required in state code. Since 2007, we have partnered with the Department to advance arts education through research, professional learning, and the Governor's Awards in Arts Education.

I am here today to reiterate Arts Ed NJ's strong support for adoption of the revised 2026 Visual and Performing Arts Standards. As I shared in my January testimony, these revisions bring additional clarity, coherence, and equity to the already strong 2020 standards and should be adopted.

I am, however, concerned about one significant change: the proposal to move the developmental progression charts from the standards document into supplemental materials.

To be clear, our concern is not that the charts will disappear. It is that they may disappear from practice.

Educators pay attention to what is presented as central to the standards framework. Materials embedded within the standards are understood as essential for interpretation and implementation. Materials placed in supplemental resources are often perceived as optional enhancements or "nice-to-have" supports, and many educators may never encounter them at all.

That would be unfortunate because the developmental progression charts are not merely supporting materials. **They are one of the clearest tools for understanding and implementing the VPA standards as intended.**

These at-a-glance charts make visible the sequential nature of arts learning and help educators understand how artistic knowledge, skills, and habits of mind develop from kindergarten through grade twelve. They connect individual performance expectations into coherent programs, curriculum, and instruction across grade bands.

This is especially important in arts education, where artistic literacy develops through a progression of creating, performing, responding, and connecting. **The charts transform the idea of sequential learning from an aspiration into a practical roadmap for implementation.**

Educators have especially valued the Essential Questions and Enduring Understandings contained within the charts. These conceptual anchors help teachers understand not only what students should learn, but why the learning matters and how it develops over time.

The charts also advance equity. By making developmental progression visible, they help educators interpret and implement the standards more consistently across districts and schools.

In districts with experienced arts supervisors, educators may already have support for interpreting and implementing the standards. But many New Jersey educators in our school districts work without arts-specific instructional leadership. For those educators, the charts provide access to the same developmental guidance and implementation support available elsewhere in the state.

If these tools become less visible or are perceived as optional resources, we risk reversing some of the equity gains these standards were designed to achieve.

For these reasons, Arts Ed NJ believes the developmental progression charts should remain embedded within the standards document.

If the Department determines otherwise, we respectfully urge that they remain highly visible and prominently linked alongside the standards on the standards website and that STAMP resources explicitly identify them as essential implementation tools rather than optional supplemental materials.

Preserving the prominence of the developmental progression charts will help ensure New Jersey fully realizes the promise of these standards for all students.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to arts education in New Jersey.

Wendy Liscow

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