



ESSA AND ARTS EDUCATION

ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS

With the adoption of The Every Student Succeeds Acts (ESSA), **accountability requirements** are much more **flexible** than they were with No Child Left Behind and have potential to be tied to the arts. Tests in reading and math are still required, but states are now given the ability to define and include additional measures, such as student achievement, school climate/culture and student engagement. The arts can play a role in achieving these, something we explored and can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/29rVoRW>. States can also choose to include a measure that directly references whether the arts are available in schools. Three states have explicitly factored the arts into their accountability systems in varying ways. These states, Connecticut, New Jersey and Kentucky, provide an example for ways the arts can be included in accountability systems.

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut designed their system of 12 indicators to focus on incorporating multiple facets of a well-rounded education, which includes the arts. They aim to create students that will *"think critically, learn joyfully, express themselves creatively, and contribute meaningfully to their communities"*. To achieve this, Connecticut breaks down the 12 indicators and aligns them under one of three overarching goals. Under the goal to *"prepare well-rounded, civically engaged students,"* one of the factors is *"arts access."* This measures the percentage of students in grades 9 through 12 that partake in at least one dance, theater, music or visual arts course during the year.

- For more information on Connecticut's 12 indicators and how they fit together, visit <http://bit.ly/2aTKCmJ> to view their press release and <http://bit.ly/2axuR09> for slides that break down the entire system.

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey has included the visual and performing arts in their Core Curriculum Content Standards since 1996. Arts course credits are also required for graduation. New Jersey research regarding the educational benefits of student involvement in the arts shows that there are link between involvement in the visual and performing arts and improved attendance, school engagement, academic performance, and higher levels of postsecondary attendance. The arts also provide skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration. New Jersey now includes measures of arts participation in the New Jersey Performance reports for middle and high school. They include rates of participation in each





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of the four arts areas as well as an overarching rate of participation in any visual and performing arts class.

■ For more information on New Jersey's system, visit <http://bit.ly/2aLWpSz> to view their press release and <http://bit.ly/2aIBxTI> to view their Performance Report guide.

KENTUCKY

Kentucky takes the comprehensive approach to their evaluation of arts education. They not only expect the arts to be a part of student's school days, but conduct program reviews. Program reviews are a *"systematic method of analyzing components of an instructional program, including instructional practices, aligned and enacted curriculum, student work samples, formative and summative assessments, professional development and support services, and administrative support and monitoring."* They aim to use these reviews to help improve programs and their benefits to students. Especially, to improve quality teaching and learning for students, to ensure equitable access to all students, to allow students to demonstrate knowledge and learning beyond a paper-and-pencil test, and to ensure school-wide integration of the programs skills beyond the program areas. The reviews of the arts and humanities programs are on-going and year round. The in-depth reviews allow for identification of areas of weakness in need of growth.



■ For more information on Kentucky's system and their program reviews, visit <http://bit.ly/1YbpDvY> to view their program review overview and <http://bit.ly/2aWrROL> to view their arts & humanities program review plan in detail.

