# Theatre

We, the Steering Committee, are pleased to offer the following writing suggestions to help develop new and relevant standards for Maine Learning Results. While our comments come from a careful review of the MLR and newer systems of standards that have been developed since 2007, we appreciate that you, the Writing Committee, are tasked with the challenging work of developing the actual language of new theatre standards for Maine students. You have our enduring gratitude!

The Steering Committee is asking you to change the overall structure of the Maine Learning Results to reflect the work of the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) from 2016. The Steering Committee believes the focus on the four artistic processes and eleven anchor standards (with the accompanying Essential Questions and Enduring Understandings) included in the NCCAS model provide an excellent overall structure that would work well for Maine theatre students, offering clarity of purpose and meaningful connection to their lives, and supporting the Maine Guiding Principles. We encourage you to examine the Performance Expectations carefully and revise them accordingly to ensure an appropriate developmental progression for Maine students in each Performance Expectation from K through 12.

Thank you for your commitment to this project. We look forward to seeing your work!

General

* Use the NCCAS Theatre Standards as a guideline for structure and language, including the four “artistic processes” and eleven “anchor standards”, making adjustments at the “performance expectation” level that address specific concerns of the MLR and to meet the needs of Maine students.
* Incorporate Essential Questions and Enduring Understandings for each anchor standard as alternative ways to help understand the intent of the standard (not as additional requirements beyond the text of the standard).
* Include a glossary. (consider NCCAS model)
* In general, raise the level of rigor in Theatre performance expectations..
* For Theatre specifically, develop a way that students can meet the standards in multiple ways (acting, directing, technical, play writing, play analysis, etc). Keep PE’s clear and specific, perhaps by offering a general suggestion of how to interpret PE’s between these different ways of participating and learning.
* Create unique performance expectations for each discipline under the standards, using NCCAS and multiple sources for reference. Do not create common performance expectations, as in Strands C, D, and E of the current MLR.
* Use open, inclusive language that allows for opportunities that may not exist yet. Consider VPA as the role model for inclusivity.
* Include a focus on ‘Making Meaning”, communicating intent/artist’s purpose through VPA (See NCCAS Standard #6)
* Research other states’ VPA standards for structure and language guidance, especially states that have used but modified the NCCAS standards (hybrids). Look at California, Texas, Colorado, New Jersey.
* Please organize your document by grade area so teachers could print out the standards that are appropriate for them.

Theatre Introduction

* Include a statement attesting that students can meet standards in multiple ways but encourage the need for well rounded theatre study.
* Reiterate, this is a guide not a curriculum.
* Include an explanation of why arts are important in education (the advocacy piece) as an explanation but not a justification. Use positive language and avoid defensive posturing. The introduction should present the assumption that Visual and Performing Arts are required core subjects.
  + Why Theatre specifically is vital to education. Include social and emotional learning and language about teaching the whole child.
* Incorporate the Guiding Principles into the introduction and throughout the standards.
* Consider theatre’s potential for interdisciplinary work, creative problem solving and integrated drama.
* Explain how the Guiding Principles are incorporated into the standards, refer to SEL
* Explain how the four Artistic Processes (from NCCAS) are used to direct and group the eleven anchor standards.
* Include a statement along these lines: Maine has a long and rich theatrical history which has had a major impact on the nation through the work of playwrights, actors, designers, and technicians. The University of Maine’s Maine Masque Theatre is the oldest academic theatrical organization in the country. Many theatre professionals have received their start with Maine summer stock companies such as Ogunquit Playhouse and Brunswick’s Maine State Music Theatre or the Theatre at Monmouth. Maine playwright, Jon Cariani’s “Almost, Maine is one of the most often produced dramas nationally and Patrick Dempsey is but one in a long line of fine actors Maine claims as its own. The quality and excellence of theatre education in Maine schools is a major contributing factor to the overall success of these individuals and to the contributions they have made to American Theatre.

Strands: Create, Perform/Present, Respond, Connect

* Replace strand titles with Create, Perform/Present, Respond, Connect.
* Align anchor standards with the four strands, approx. 3 standards per strand, similar to the way NCCAS does.
* Group performance expectations as they best fit under the anchor standards.
* Address issues of safety in Strands A & B
* Keep the focus of the “connecting” strand on Connecting. Some of the current performance indicators (E3 & E5) seem to have been thrown in here. The concepts of E3 & E5 are important but belong in Strands related to Creating or Presenting/Performing.
* Include three levels of meeting standards at high school level- proficient, accomplished, advanced- with an explanation in either the introduction or an appendix to explain how to use these advance levels of meeting/exceeding standards
* Include the language of the four Artistic Processes in the titles of each Standard to help clarify how each Standard represents their intent.

Anchor Standards:

* Adopt the NCCAS anchor standards. Adjust language as necessary to fit the grade level format of the MLRs.
* Include Essential Questions and Enduring Understandings, similar to the NCCAS document
* Create appendices that include examples, exemplars, potential modifications, model lesson plans or curricula, etc.
* Consider the NCCAS Performance Expectations for each discipline and be free to revise, reword, edit, add, or delete as needed to meet the needs of Maine students and other criteria established in the writing guidelines
* Performance expectations should be specific and focus on the demonstration of learned knowledge and skills, rather than activities students should complete. (Ref. Theatre B3 Improvisation as an example of an activity, rather than knowledge and skills: “Students will improvise through theatre games or productions to address unforeseen circumstances”)
* **I**n writing the developmental requirements for each PE, be careful that language and requirements are consistent and scaffold coherently toward higher level Bloom’s Taxonomy HS-level requirements, without resorting to a shallow use of Bloom’s language to describe the progression (i.e. describe, analyze, evaluate, create, etc.). Focus should be on self-expression.
  + For the most part, NCCAS does this well. Use NCCAS as a guide and adapt/revise as necessary for the needs of Maine students. Consider best practices for guided drama experience.
* Consider new technologies when writing Theatre performance expectations
* Maintain the ideas of Strand D in the new standards (analysis, reflection, response, aesthetics, criticism, etc) as part of NCCAS strand C: Respond
* Use language that makes the process of reflection meaningful to students
* Continue to integrate reading research literacy and disciplinary culture
* Be sure performance expectations can be accomplished in a classroom setting. (Current MLR makes this difficult).