

Middle School Colorguard

Exploration is an important part of a middle school arts program, and should include all the requisites of the standards-based elementary-level program with essential additions. The Visual and Performing Arts Framework is a California document that classifies all the appropriate learning objectives for any student in public school grades K-12. These learning objectives, most commonly called Standards, are written so that every student obtains the appropriate knowledge for each subject. The great thing is that there are standards written for each grade level, and most of the standards builds upon previously learned concepts. This spiral sequence allows the students to learn the basics at a younger age, and continue to develop these skills into greater depth as they mature. Students may experience one or all four arts disciplines to expand their knowledge and skill and to make personal connections with the world, the school, and themselves. Colorguard emphasizes much of the dance discipline found in the arts curriculum. This is one discipline that is primarily taught in a unit of PE, while the other disciplines; (Art, Theater and Music) are possible electives offered at your school.

In middle school colorguard, teachers should direct students to achieve the content standards within the appropriate disciplines, primarily in the dance and theater arts genres. To help focus your curriculum, the state has delineated Key Standards for each genre and grade level. These are your primary focus. Additionally, other standards by genre and grade level are offered, and as you develop your teaching you will be able to incorporate more if not all of the standards in an academic year. Middle school students should begin to develop a firm foundation in the arts disciplines to be prepared for more focused study in one or more of the arts in high school. Accordingly, articulation (communication of course expectations between grade levels) needs to occur between the middle school and high school arts teachers. It is imperative that teachers communicate with the high school to identify what skills it will take to be successful at the high school level. This process must take place to legitimize your program at the middle school.

These are the guidelines for implementing a comprehensive, standards based visual and performing arts curriculum as written in the CA Performing Arts Framework.

At the classroom level teachers will:

- **Design and conduct instructional activities aligned with the standards.**
- **Evaluate student work and make fair and credible judgments of quality.**
- **Manage data and plan instruction accordingly**
- **Communicate specific expectations and provide explicit feedback to students.**
- **Use student feedback to improve arts instruction.**
- **Teach students to evaluate their own work.**
- **Be relentless in pursuit of improved performance.**
- **Understand the community's expectations for student performance.**

Listed in the following pages you will find excerpts from the CA Visual and Performing Arts Framework. The standards listed below are from the Dance genre, and are for grades 7 and 8. The items listed in bold are the key standards. This list also has a detailed description of how a teacher can utilize these standards within their middle school colorguard program. You will find that there are many things that you already do within your program that are aligned with the CA standards, and you may find some things that you can do within your program to foster mastery of all the Visual and Performing Arts standards. Every school is different, every program is different, but remember that you may be the only person that teaches them these learning objectives. PE curriculum is rapidly being decreased due to lack of funding, and your student may never have an opportunity to learn these things unless you teach them. Congratulations on becoming a Performing Arts Teacher, aka Colorguard Instructor, and the best of luck to you and your students!

Dance Standards 7th Grade

1.1 Demonstrate increased focus, physical control, coordination, skill, and accurate reproduction in performing locomotor and axial movement.

Encourage students to focus during rehearsals by eliminating distractions in their environment. (e.g. cell phones off, quiet area to rehearse, etc) Encourage students to look for details while watching movement. Articulate for them where their head, hands, and feet are, and any other details needed to accurately reproduce movement.

1.2 (*Artistic Perception*) Demonstrate increased ability and skill to sustain longer and more complex movement sequences for expression in a variety of dance styles.

This could be done by increasing the length of movement opportunities (phrases) within the context of your training program. When teaching movement phrases, strive to increase the length of movement opportunities. This standard could also be accomplished by offering more combinations in across-the-floor exercises. After teaching a few exercises, combine all of them as a combination to allow for more complexity. Do this with several styles of dance and tempos.

1.3 Demonstrate risk taking in generating bigger and stronger movements through space in rehearsal and performance.

Encourage students to reach beyond what is comfortable in their movements and in their performance. Allow for errors in the beginning stages of learning, so students can take risks while within a safe environment (free from critique).

1.4 Identify and use a wider range of space, time, and force/energy to manipulate locomotor and axial movements.

Strive to offer changes in speed and time within choreography of dance and equipment phrases. Encourage students to understand how using different muscles can change how their bodies and their equipment move in space and time.

1.5 (*Artistic Perception*) Use appropriate dance vocabulary to describe everyday gestures and other movements observed in viewing live or recorded dance performances. (Descriptions may take the form of a drawing or video/computer documentation.)

Correct vocabulary and terminology should be used and taught by everyone in an instructional capacity. Students can then describe what they see in a live performance of another school, a video taped performance of another school, or they can describe another student's movement at a practice. This can be done orally or written.

2.1 Create, memorize, and perform improvised movement sequences, dance studies, and choreography with dynamic range and fulfillment.

This can be achieved during your training program. Encourage the students to create their own across the floor exercise.

2.2 Demonstrate the ability to use personal discovery and invention through improvisation and choreography.

This standard can be achieved by allowing the students to create their own routines within groups. This can be done in the off-season.

**2.3 (*Creative Expression*)
Demonstrate the ability to use dance elements to develop dance phrases reflecting various musical rhythms, styles, and dynamics.**

With some direct instruction, students can be given the opportunity to choreograph movement phrases that reflect the rhythms, styles and dynamics presented in the music.

2.5 Demonstrate performance skill in the ability to interpret and communicate through dance.

Discuss with students how their bodies and their equipment communicate happy, sad, mad, etc. This can be done as a game with the other students, "Guess what emotion?" or as an enrichment discussion to encourage more performance out of their show.

2.6 Collaborate with others in preparing a dance presentation for an audience (short informal dance, lecture/demo, evening concert).

Students can be given the opportunity to present a lecture about what colorguard is at a parent meeting, recruitment fair, etc.

2.7 Demonstrate increased originality in using partner or group relationships to define spatial floor patterns, shape designs, and entrances and exits.

Strive to articulate the relationships between students within drill patterns on the floor. "I am across from Sue, and in between Jane and Claire."

4.2 Identify assessment criteria used for outstanding performances in different styles of dance (e.g., theatre, social, ceremonial).

Encourage the students to articulate what they value in a performance. What made one routine/show better than the other? This can be a discussion held after a contest, or while watching a video.

4.3 Explain and analyze the impact of live or recorded music on dance performances. (Recorded music is consistent. Live music can be altered.)

Recorded music is consistent and can be relied upon; usually routines are well rehearsed and practiced. Live music can be altered; and is not as consistent. Dancers can use this for improvisation or it can be manipulated to accentuate the dancer's actions.

4.4 Explain how different venues influence the experience and impact of dancing (e.g., a studio setting, traditional stage, theater in the round).

This standard can be achieved by analyzing the different venues that colorguard performs in; a street (Parade), a stadium (Field), a gym (Winterguard), even the blacktop (rehearsal or assemblies). Ask the students to discuss how the venue impacts their performance.

5.1 Identify and use different sources to generate ideas for dance compositions (e.g. Poetry, photographs, political/social issues)

As you are designing a Winterguard show, explore options around which the music might be centered. Can you use that within the context of the performance, maybe not as a prop but as a theme? This standard can be achieved by centering a beautiful song with a poem, or a happy song with a picture of your grandmother, etc.

5.2 (*Connections, Relationships, Applications*) Describe how dancing builds physical and emotional well being (e.g., positive body imaging, physical goals, creative goals, focus/concentration).

Encourage students to use colorguard as an emotional outlet. Also allow time for the students to talk about how they are feeling, and give them the opportunity to channel that into their rehearsal/performance. Also, strive to be considerate of all body types when designing costumes to facilitate positive body imaging.

5.3 Appraise how time management, listening, problem solving, and teamwork skills used with other dancers in composing and rehearsing a dance can be applied to other group activities.

Articulate to parents and students that the skills used in colorguard and being on a team, spill over into their academic life. Cooperation, Respect, and Practice are the building blocks for a successful academic career.

5.4 Research and compare careers in dance and dance related fields.

Encourage the students to research what opportunities are out there in the dance field. You may also want to share with them the opportunities available to them in colorguard after Middle School or High School.

Dance 8th Grade

1.1 Demonstrate increased ability and skill to apply the elements of space, time, and force/energy in producing a wide range of dance sequences.

Encourage the eighth graders to expand on what they already know and use that as a foundation to choreograph a wider range of movement sequences.

1.2 Demonstrate Capacity for centering/shifting body weight and tension/release in performing movement for artistic intent.

In movement training, strive to instruct students to maximize their use of centering/shifting body weight and tension/release. Training the students to engage their abdominal muscles in turns and tosses can do this for centering. Allow them to also explore how much weight to put on a foot if they are to change weight quickly. Tension/Release can be explored in tossing technique by describing the tension required for setting up the toss and the release of tension when you let go.

1.3 Demonstrate greater technical control in generating bigger and stronger movements through space in rehearsal and performance.

Eighth graders are more physically and emotionally mature now, so encourage them to push past their limits in rehearsal or performances.

1.4 Analyze gestures and movements *viewed* in live or recorded professional dance performances and apply that knowledge to dance activities.

Encourage students to “actively” watch other performances, analyzing the details of others performances. Have the students share what they liked and use it in rehearsal.

1.5 Identify and analyze the variety of ways in which a dancer can move, using space, time, and force/ energy vocabulary.

Promote an environment where the students can learn and use their movement vocabulary. Encourage the students to assist with the less experienced members

2.1 Create, memorize, and perform dance studies, demonstrating technical expertise and artistic expression.

A well-choreographed routine that is within the technical and emotional range of the performers achieves this standard.

2.2 Expand and refine a personal repertoire of dance movement vocabulary.

Have the students keep a vocabulary book. They could do this after a rehearsal or after being taught a new exercise. Strive to use this new vocabulary frequently within rehearsal.

2.3 Apply basic music elements to the making and performance of dances (e.g., rhythm, meter, accents).

Instruct your students how the music relates to the choreography. A particular syncopated section has more punctuated choreography, etc. Have them use this knowledge when they are choreographing their own routines.

2.4 Record personal movement patterns and phrases, using a variety of methods (e.g., drawings, graphs, words).

Have the students draw a particular basic exercise labeling all the checkpoints. Each page can be a count, etc., resembling a "dot book". This can also be done with a particular section of a performance.

2.5 Demonstrate performance skill in the ability to project energy and express ideas through dance.

Encourage students to project themselves while performing. Emphasizing posture, energy, and motivation.

2.6 Demonstrate the use of personal images as motivation for individual and group dance performances.

Use imagery to help students identify with the mood of a performance. "Waking up on Christmas morning", "Breaking up with a boyfriend/girlfriend", "Losing a family member"; each of these examples can help create a unified emotional setting.

2.7 Demonstrate originality in using partner or group relationships to define spatial patterns and the use of overall performing space.

When designing the show, strive to use more partnering or large groups. Using the space as another element in your design process, close in proximity, sharing equipment while partnering; these all are original ways to use spatiality.

4.1 Identify preferences for choreography and discuss those preferences, using the elements of dance.

This can be achieved by leading a discussion about the differences between competing scholastic groups and styles of colorguard. Using the elements of dance, students can identify what the different design preferences are.

4.2 Explain the advantages and disadvantages of various technologies in the presentation of dance. (e.g., video, film, DVD, computer, recorded music)

This standard of dance can also be achieved by another discussion of how DVD's, videos etc. can alter the mood, or add special effects/lighting to a dance to enhance a mood.

4.3 Describe and analyze how differences in costumes, lighting, props and venues can enhance or detract from the meaning of dance.

Encourage discussions with your students about how costumes and props affect a performance. Does it detract or enhance the performance?

5.1 How learning habits acquired from dance can be applied to the study of other school subjects (e.g., memorizing, researching, practicing).

Articulate to the students how memorizing routines/combinations is very similar to how you memorize other things for school. You do repetitions, vocalize the counts, use drawings (if applicable), teach it to someone else, etc. All of these are the educational aspects of colorguard that enhance learning in all subjects.

5.2 Describe how dancing builds positive mental, physical, and health-related practices (e.g., discipline, stress management, anatomic awareness).

Encourage students to use colorguard as an emotional outlet. Also allow time for the students to talk about how they are feeling, and give them the opportunity to channel that into their rehearsal/performance. Also, strive to be considerate of all body types when designing costumes to facilitate positive body imaging.

5.3 Research and explain how dancers leave their performing careers to enter into alternative careers.

You can be a role model here. Initiate conversations with your students on how you became an instructor. Encourage dialogue about what other careers could you have chosen after performing.

