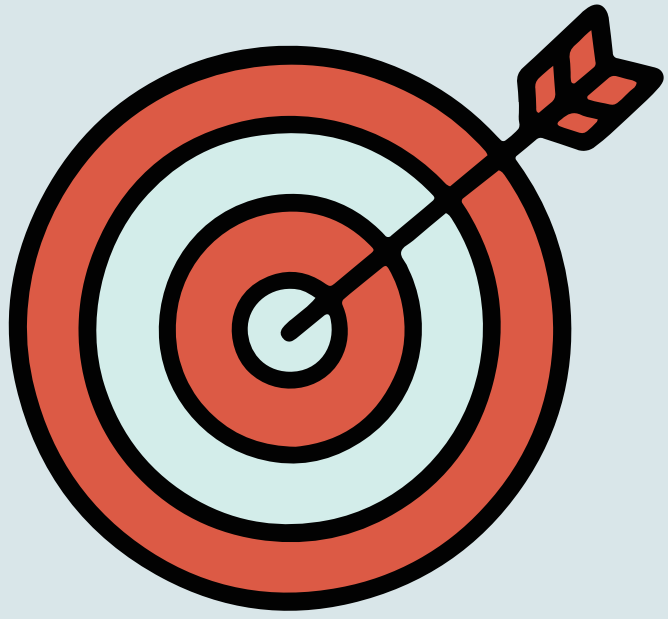


105 ILCS 5/27-1

Illinois School Code
Areas of Education
Taught



Purpose:

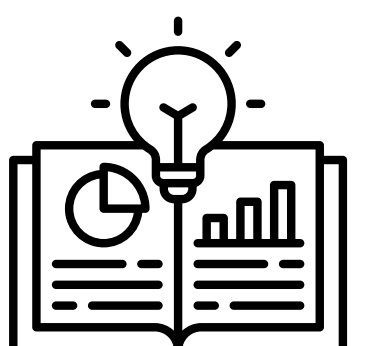
105 ILCS 5/27-1 establishes the areas of education that Illinois public schools are expected to provide as part of the state's public education system. The law identifies the fine arts as one of the fundamental areas of education, alongside language arts, mathematics, science, and physical development and health. By recognizing the fine arts as an essential area of schooling, Illinois policy places arts education within the broader academic mission of public education rather than treating it solely as an extracurricular activity.

Context:

Illinois' education system establishes statewide learning expectations for what students should know and be able to do across different subject areas. Under the Illinois School Code, fine arts are included among the areas of education necessary for students' continuing development and preparation for the world of work. The Illinois State Board of Education provides specific learning standards for music, establishing expectations for student learning in music across grade levels.



Illinois' Music Learning Standards emphasize the development of musical knowledge, skills, creativity, performance, composition, and the ability to respond to and understand music. These standards provide a statewide framework that schools can use to guide music instruction and curriculum development.



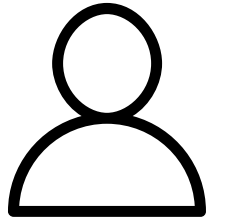
What is the impact?



Policy Actions

- The Illinois State Board of Education establishes statewide goals and learning standards that define the knowledge and skills students are expected to develop, including learning standards for music within the Illinois Learning Standards.
- School districts must make instruction in the six fundamental learning areas, including fine arts, available to all students. Districts are also responsible for establishing local learning objectives that align with state standards and developing assessment and reporting systems to measure and communicate student achievement.
- Illinois law also directs school districts to prioritize resources—including funds, instructional time, personnel, and facilities—in fulfilling the primary purpose of schooling. These requirements provide a statewide framework for supporting arts education while allowing districts flexibility in how programs are implemented.

Who is affected?



All public school students are affected because Illinois requires school districts to provide instruction in six fundamental learning areas, including fine arts. Music is included in the Illinois Learning Standards for the Arts. School districts, administrators, and educators are responsible for aligning instruction with state standards and establishing learning objectives, assessment, and reporting systems.

The Illinois State Board of Education establishes statewide learning standards, while music educators and curriculum leaders use these standards to guide music instruction.

Why does this policy matter?

By identifying fine arts as a fundamental area of public education, Illinois policy recognizes that a well-rounded education extends beyond traditional academic subjects. Music education provides students with opportunities to develop creativity, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and artistic expression.

The policy also establishes a statewide foundation for music learning. Illinois provides learning standards that define what students should know and be able to do in music, creating a common framework for music education across the state. This helps support consistent expectations for student learning while allowing local districts flexibility in how programs are implemented.



Limitations:

Although Illinois recognizes fine arts as a fundamental area of education, it does not guarantee equal access, instructional time, or quality of music education across districts. Local flexibility can lead to differences in music programs statewide.

Sources:

- <https://www.ilga.gov/Legislation/ILCS/Articles?ChapterID=17&ActID=1005&Chapter=SCHOOLS&MajorTopic=EDUCA>
- <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Music-Standards.pdf>