Visual and Performing Arts Education eUpdate

Colorado Academic Standards | All Students All Standards

April-Summer 2026



Artwork by Sierra Wheeler, Fort Collins High School, *Parade of the Mind*, Digital Painting, Drawing & Collage, Colorado Art Region of the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, Gold Key & Best in Grade 11

How the Colorado Art Awards Uplift Youth and a More Creative Future

The Colorado Art Awards has been celebrating young artists since 1947, making the program 78 years old this year. Each year, the program receives around 5,000 submissions of artwork from 7th to 12th graders all over the state, all with the hope of recognizing originality, skill, and voice. Winning works get to be displayed at statewide exhibitions, like at the Denver Art Museum and 40 West, with the possibility to earn national recognition...

Click here to read the entire article by Ayah Al-Masyabi, Colorado Scholastics Gold Alumni.

NEWS

Important information from CDE Standards and Instructional Support

Feedback Needed: 2026-27 Arts Professional Learning

The CDE Arts Team wants your feedback - **especially Music, Drama/Theatre and Dance teachers!** Take two minutes to complete our survey and help shape next year's arts-focused professional development in Colorado.

The survey will be open until April 15th. Give your feedback by **clicking here**.

MORE NEWS

Creative Conversations

The Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) Creative Conversation Series wraps up with one final arts-focused professional development session. Don't miss this last opportunity to earn 1.5 hours of license renewal credit and gain inspiration across Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts.

REGISTER TODAY!

Building an Arts Community from the Inside Out

Thursday, April 23, 2026, 4:30-6:00 pm, virtual, via Zoom.

This multi-faceted session explores ways arts educators elevate the impact of arts on communities and how to build relationships that benefit student learning. The first half of the session explores the "why" of strong in-house partnerships and strategizes how to connect work happening in arts classrooms to other content areas or school-wide goals. The second half supports educators as they develop goal-oriented program outreach that brings community partnerships to their students and student learning into the community.

Click here to register.

Colorado Standards Revison Updates

Colorado's Visual and Performing Arts

Spring 2026 update:

CDE is conducting a national benchmarking report comparing Colorado's standards with those from New Jersey, North Carolina, Australia and the National Core Arts Standards. These were selected for their rigor, relevance, depth and breadth, and coherence, and all are leading examples of arts standards. With the exception of the National Core Arts Standards, all have been recently revised. This work, led by members of the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE), will help guide upcoming revisions.

Fall/Winter 2026 Opportunities to Participate:

A public survey will be released this fall to gather feedback on the current standards. All stakeholders are encouraged to participate and share input to help inform potential revisions. Watch your inbox for more information in the coming months.

Resources for EDUCATORS

The Art of Education Community

The Art of Education (AOE) invites you to join a vibrant community of art educators who share ideas, celebrate creativity and support each other every step of the way. Here are a few reasons over 8,000 art educators have joined this community:

- Connect with art teachers in your grade band: Elementary, Middle or High School
- Find resources, playlists and networking opportunities
- Enter weekly giveaways for fun prizes and surprises
- The monthly Art Club activity allows you to virtually connect with other art educators and create some art

To learn more and join the community, visit this AOE webpage.

Preschool Partnership Program Grant

The Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities is seeking applications for $1,000 per classroom grants to support Early Childhood Educators and their students in accessing high quality arts programming. The grant creates a partnership between Pre-K classrooms and the Arvada Center to bring multi-disciplinary arts programs (including music, visual arts, drama and movement) to students throughout the 26 - 27 school year. Please complete the application with as much detail and information as you can give at this time. We look forward to learning more about you, your students and our potential partnership.

Visit the **Arvada Center webite** for more inforamtion and to apply.

STEAM Arts Grants Available for Schools

The Educational Services Consortium (ESC) is offering $100,000 in grants for the 2026 school year to support participation in STEAM On Tour, a program that combines art appreciation, STEAM integration, school beautification and community art exhibitions to help transform school culture.

For more information and to apply, visit the **Natural Forces website**, click “How to Apply” and scroll to “Downloads” for eight documents outlining the grant process.

Applications will be accepted until May 1, 2026.

Resources for EDUCATORS

Free Digital Opera Resource for K-12 Educators

Avalable through June 30th

Introduce your students to the vibrant world of opera with an unforgettable free digital learning experience from Opera Theatre of Saint Louis! With one simple registration, you'll unlock a student-friendly, abridged performance of Scott Joplin's Treemonisha – this uplifting opera celebrates community, education and the power of perseverance.

Learn more and request the program by visiting the **Opera Theatre of Saint Louis Website.**

Celebrate 250 Years Through Student Art

Engage your students in MY AMERICA 2026, part of the U.S. 250 celebration of our nation's birthday. Students can submit original artwork, poems or messages for a nationwide flag mosaic made up of thousands of tiles from across the United States. Classrooms can request free tile packages that will then be added to the large-scale mosaic.

To order tiles and learn more, visit the **MyAmerica2026 website**.

Job Opportunity:
Curriculum Development Assistant for Dance Archive

The Dance Archive (TDA) at the University of Denver is hiring a part-time Curriculum Development Assistant to support its work developing curriculum using materials from TDA's collections. Reach out to Kate Crowe, Curator (**katherine.crowe@du.edu**) with questions.

Position closes April 13.

For more information and to apply, visit the **Jobs at DU webpage.**

Events for EDUCATORS

Shakespeare & Violence Prevention Showcase

April 25, 2026, Boulder Public Library

Join us for a free showcase of an arts education program that aligns Shakespeare's plays with violence prevention research. The Shakespeare & Violence Prevention program is a collaboration between the Colorado Shakespeare Festival, the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, and the CU Boulder Theatre Department. Actors from the Colorado Shakespeare Festival will perform an abridged Hamlet, followed by a panel discussion featuring CSF artists and violence prevention experts. Boulder Bookstore will be onsite to sell the new book: Shakespeare & Violence Prevention: A Practical Handbook for Educators, and author Dr. Amanda Giguere will be onsite for book signing.

Register using this **Colorado Shakespeare Festival** form.

Colorado Thespians Tech Educator Bootcamp

June 20-24, 2026, Cherry Creek High School & Metro State University, Denver

Colorado Thespians hosts its second annual tech bootcamp for theatre educators. This weeklong summer event is like camp for thareeatre teachers! Immerse yourself in learning centered on technical concepts and execution including lighting, sound, construction and shop safety. Continuing clock hours/continuing education units available.

Learn more and register at **Educator Tech Bootcamp - Colorado State Thespians**.

Registration closes April 15th.

EDUCATION IN MOTION:

A Professional Development Seminar for PK-12 Educators

June 15–18, 2026, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins

Join Colorado State University (CSU) Dance faculty, regional educators, and guests for four days of interactive workshops and presentations exploring strategies and tools for integrating movement at all levels of learning.

CSU invites Colorado PK-12 educators and administrators to join us in person for presentations, exploration, sharing resources, and expanding our awareness and knowledge of the benefits of movement in the classroom. Guest speakers, university faculty and education specialists will present the latest research and tools to help you reach more students, offer innovative ways to teach core curriculum and learn how our state supports our efforts.

For more information and to register, visit the CSU Dance webpage.

Events for EDUCATORS

Orff Schulwerk Workshops

June 29–July 10, 2026, Metro State University, Denver

Attend Orff Schulwerk Levels I, II, & III in Denver at Metropolitan State University of Denver. Registration is still open and limited spots available.

If you have already taken Level II and/or III, you can refresh your practice by re-taking Level I for just $450! This is a wonderful chance to revisit the Schulwerk, gain new insights and feel re-energized heading into the next school year.

You can learn more on the **MSU Website.**

Institute for Creative Teaching

June 9–11, 2026, Universtity of Northern Colorado, Greeley

The 2026 Institute for Creative Teaching (ICT) is intended to provide a place of safety, kindness and acceptance for us all to take time to replenish, to allow the influx of healing new ideas and to experience the power that comes from making and being listened to. You'll be joined by keynote speakers Danielle SeeWalker and Eiko Otake, alongside other teaching artists and practitioners who will lead you through this restorative hands-on experience.

ICT 2026 will take place June 9th to 11th, 2026 at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). This program is open to educators of all subject areas and grade levels. Participants will earn up to 21 hours toward educator re-licensure and will have the option of registering for 1 continuing education graduate credit from UNC for a small additional fee. Register today through May 1st to receive our early bird rate of $190. After May 1st, registration fees will increase to $205.

Visit the **Think 360 Arts** website for more information and registration details.

Events for STUDENTS

Math in Visual Arts: Student Exhibition

NCSM: Leadership in Mathematics Education has an amazing opportunity to showcase your artwork!! We want to show the world that math can be fun through the talents of our amazing Colorado students. Can you help us out by sending in digital copies of your best math-inspired art? Some ideas might be fractals, perspective drawings, mandalas, transformations (reflections, rotations, translations, dilations), etc. The art will be displayed at the (formerly) National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics (NSCM) Annual Conference in October 2026 in Denver, Colorado, where math leaders from all over the country will have a chance to see your work.

The deadline for submissions is June 30th.

Send all questions, photos, and digital artwork to NCSM Local Arrangements Chair, Tabitha Nickerson at **tnickerson@mathedleadership.org**.

UNC Greeley Jazz Festival

April 23, 2026, Universtity of Northern Colorado, Greeley

The largest event of its kind in the nation, the UNC Greeley Jazz Festival brings together internationally recognized artists, jazz lovers, award-winning clinicians and over 150 college, high school and middle school big bands, combos and jazz vocal groups from across the country. Each year, over 4,000 participants enjoy mainstage concerts, after-hours sessions, non-competitive daytime performances and educational workshops. School groups get valuable feedback on their performance and an individual clinic session with our top-notch lineup of artist-clinicians.
Learn more at the **UNC website**.

CSU Jazz High School Honor Band

April 13 & 15, 2026, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO.

The CSU Jazz High School Honor Band Festival will assemble the top high school jazz students in Colorado for an educational experience focused on strengthening students' ensemble and improvisational skills while building community among young Jazz musicians. Students will work with CSU faculty for instrumental sectionals and full-ensemble rehearsals.

For more information, visit this **CSU Music webpage**.

Events for STUDENTS

Percussion Ensemble Competition & Festival

April 25, 2026, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO.

PAS Percussion Solo and Ensemble Festivals and Competitions give students throughout the United States opportunities to learn music and percussion through performance and expert adjudicator feedback. CSU is excited to host the competition and festival again in 2026.

During the day, high hchool ensembles receive feedback from guest clinicians, master classes are presented by guest artists, and clinics on primary percussion instruments are included. A concluding concert at 6 p.m. in the Instrumental Rehearsal Hall features the CSU Percussion Ensemble.

For more information, visit this **CSU Music webpage**.

Organ Week

June 7-12, 2026, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO.

Organ Week is designed for high school students interested in expanding (or beginning) their organ study. Led by a faculty of prominent concert and church organists, the program features one-to-one instruction, masterclasses, and recitals on the finest pipe organs in northern Colorado, including CSU's Casavant organ.

Study the art of organ building, develop skills in choral conducting and harpsichord, and improve your organ playing with a faculty of concert organists including Ken Cowan and CSU's chair of organ, Joel Bacon.

Applications are due by June 1, 2026.

For more information and to register, visit the **Organ Week webpage**.

Events for STUDENTS

Summer Jazz Workshop

June 10-12, 2026, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO.

Join CSU Jazz Faculty for the fourth annual CSU Jazz Summer Workshop. The workshop will focus on small-group jazz playing and improvisation. Students will also study jazz history, listening and theory, and attend instrument-specific masterclasses. Full schedule details will be released after registration closes.

This is an excellent opportunity for middle and high school students to unravel the mystery of jazz improvisation by working with our excellent jazz faculty at CSU. We can help you make sense of those chord changes and equip you with tools and strategies to improvise better and improve over time. This workshop will provide the information, practice techniques, and experience to grow as a Jazz musician.

Applications are due June 5, 2026.

For more information and to register, visit the **Summer Jazz Workshop webpage**.

Dance Lab: Summer Immersive

August 2-15, 2026, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO.

CSU Dance Lab is a college preparatory summer program offering immersive study in classical and contemporary dance forms, repertory, theory and composition. In addition to dance classes and rehearsals, students will attend lectures, develop artist statements, choreograph solos, and present a public performance. Mentored by CSU Dance faculty, renowned guest artists, and current dance majors, attendees expand skills and knowledge while contributing to a collaborative creative process. Intermediate-advanced level dancers ages 14+ are invited to register for our two-week in-person intensive. To ensure individualized attention, registration is limited to 24 dancers admitted on a first-come-first-served basis.

Registration Deadline June 15, 2026

For more information and to register, visit the **Dance Lab webpage**.

We Want to Hear from You!

Send Us Your Happenings!

The CDE Arts Education e-Updates are sent **five times** during the school year:

August/September, October/November, December/January, February/March, and April/May/Summer.

Send information to Latva_L@cde.state.co.us **by the 1st day of the month** for your news to be included in an edition.

Featured Artwork Submissions

Send us a photo of a student artwork or performance to be featured in our eUpdate!

Submissions should include ***Title, Name of Artist, Grade, Media, School***. One school will be featured in each bi-monthly eUpdate.

Send submissions to Latva_L@cde.state.co.us by the 1st of the month.

Colorado's Visual and Performing Arts

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Colorado State Arts Partners

Colorado Creative Industries

Think 360 Arts

Colorado Arts Associations

Colorado Arts Education Association (CAEA)

Colorado Music Educators Association (CMEA)

Colorado State Thespians

Colorado Dance Education Organization (CoDEO)

CDE Quick Links

CDE Arts Webpage

Colorado Academic Standards

Student Success Guides

Student Success Guides are designed for parents, guardians, caretakers, and communities. They act as a toolkit of questions and activities to support students' learning in alignment with the Colorado Academic Standards.