

Vermont Educator Support for National Core Arts Standards: Survey Results

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Survey research of Vermont educators commissioned by the Vermont Arts Council and the Vermont Agency of Education to test understanding of, and support for, adoption of the National Core Arts Standards by the Vermont Board of Education.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre And Visual Arts



What Are The Standards?

A process that guides educators in providing a unified quality arts education for students in Pre-K through high school.

[Read more →](#)



Creating

- Anchor Standard #1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- Anchor Standard #2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Anchor Standard #3. Refine and complete artistic work.



Performing/ Presenting/ Producing

- Anchor Standard #4. Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation.
- Anchor Standard #5. Develop and refine artistic work for presentation.
- Anchor Standard #6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.



Responding

- Anchor Standard #7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- Anchor Standard #8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- Anchor Standard #9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.



Connecting

- Anchor Standard #10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- Anchor Standard #11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

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Executive Summary

A survey of 377 Vermont educators found broad support for State Board of Education adoption of the National Core Arts Standards as Vermont's new fine arts standards. Six in ten (61%) Vermont educators responding to the survey recommended "yes" to adoption. Three in ten indicated "no opinion or not sure". Ten percent recommended "no" to adoption. Overall, 227 Vermont educators favored adoption, 109 had no opinion or were not sure, and 38 opposed state adoption.

Nearly two-thirds of K-12 arts teachers support NCAS adoption by the State Board of Education. All responding curriculum leaders support adoption. Just over half of principals favor state adoption, as do six in ten school superintendents.

Most arts teachers employed multiple fine arts standards. Two thirds of Vermont educators responding to the survey were using Vermont Fine Arts Grade Expectations to inform their fine arts curriculum development, instruction, and assessment. Nearly two thirds were already using the National Core Arts Standards. Overall about two thirds of respondents used NCAS to develop arts curricula, aid in instruction, and to design assessment. Of those using NCAS, about two in ten nearly always used the NCAS standards, a quarter often used NCAS, and another quarter sometimes used NCAS to guide curricula development, teaching, and assessment.

There is a strong positive correlation between familiarity with, and support for, adoption of the NCAS standards. Educators familiar with the NCAS standards were significantly more often in support of adoption. Over eight in ten of those very familiar with the standards favored adoption as did six in ten of those somewhat familiar with NCAS. Two thirds of those less familiar offered no opinion or were not sure about state adoption of NCAS. K-12 arts teachers and curriculum leaders were most familiar with the NCAS standards and most supportive of adoption.

Many educators supporting NCAS adoption cited benefits. Most frequently they said NCAS provide consistency within the state and nation, align with other standards, and provide common goals. NCAS are simple, clear, accessible, and easier than multiple standards; help validate or make the case to support arts education as a core subject; provide common language that facilitates dialogue and collaboration within and across disciplines; they are already using NCAS; they improve teaching and student learning; and enhance evidenced-based assessment and proficiency-based grading. Some indicated NCAS are better than other standards; provide clear expectations for students and teachers; help students learn transferrable skills; and strengthen or simplify curriculum development.

Methods

The Vermont Arts Council and the Vermont Agency of Education worked with Dreeszen & Associates to develop an online survey of Vermont educators to test understanding of, and support for, adoption of

the National Core Arts Standards by the Vermont Board of Education. In all, 377 Vermont educators responded to the survey. The survey was launched January 5 and closed January 25, 2016.

The Vermont Agency of Education sent email invitations with links to the survey through agency listservs to principals, superintendents, and curriculum leaders. The Agency sent the survey link to the Vermont Curriculum Leaders Association, which forwarded the invitation to their group through their internal email lists. The agency also asked principals and curriculum leaders to forward the link to classroom teachers. The link and reminders were also posted through the agency weekly field memo, through multiple tweets from the agency of education Twitter account.

The Vermont Arts Council distributed the survey via email to arts education administrators in the state once, sent out reminders to teaching artists on their roster by email twice. They linked the survey of blog post on their website. The Arts Council also used Twitter and Facebook to share the survey. The survey was also announced in ArtMail.

To achieve the greatest reach into the community of Vermont educators, survey invitations were sent to several lists, educators forwarded the invitation to colleagues, and social media posts encouraged wide participation. Therefore, it is not possible to calculate the number receiving a survey invitation and an overall response rate. Instead, survey responses are compared below to known numbers of six key groups of Vermont educators.

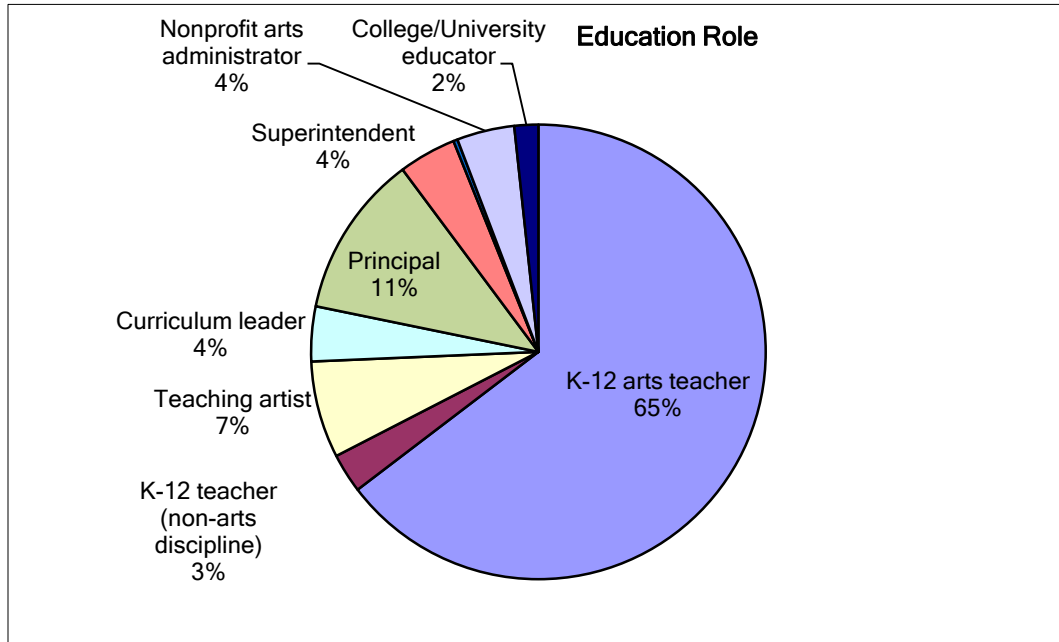
Distribution and response rate for key constituents			
	Population	Responses	Response rate
K-12 arts teachers	568	235	41%
Teaching artists	65	25	38%
Curriculum leaders	62	14	23%
Principals	324	42	13%
Superintendents	62	15	24%
Nonprofit arts educators	30	15	50%

Acknowledgements **Erika Lowe**, Arts Education Program Manager, Vermont Arts Council and **Chris Case**, Education Project Manager, Vermont Agency of Education developed the initial research questions and distributed the survey invitation. **Craig Dreeszen**, Director, Dreeszen & Associates developed the survey instrument, analyzed results, and wrote this report.

Survey Results

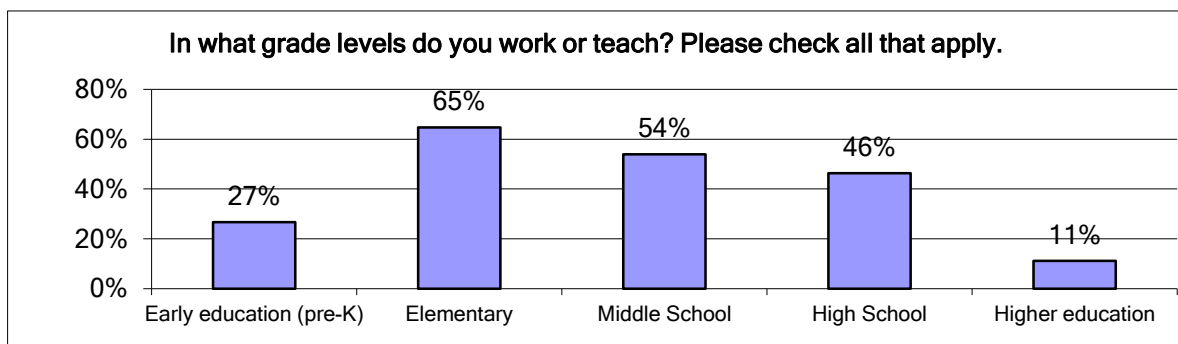
Role of survey respondents

Nearly two thirds (65%) of survey respondents were K-12 arts educators. Another 11% were principals, 4% were superintendents, 4% were curriculum leaders, 4% were nonprofit arts administrators, 3% were non-arts classroom teachers, and 2% were college/university educators. A few others included mostly out-of-school time teachers and two retirees. N = 363.



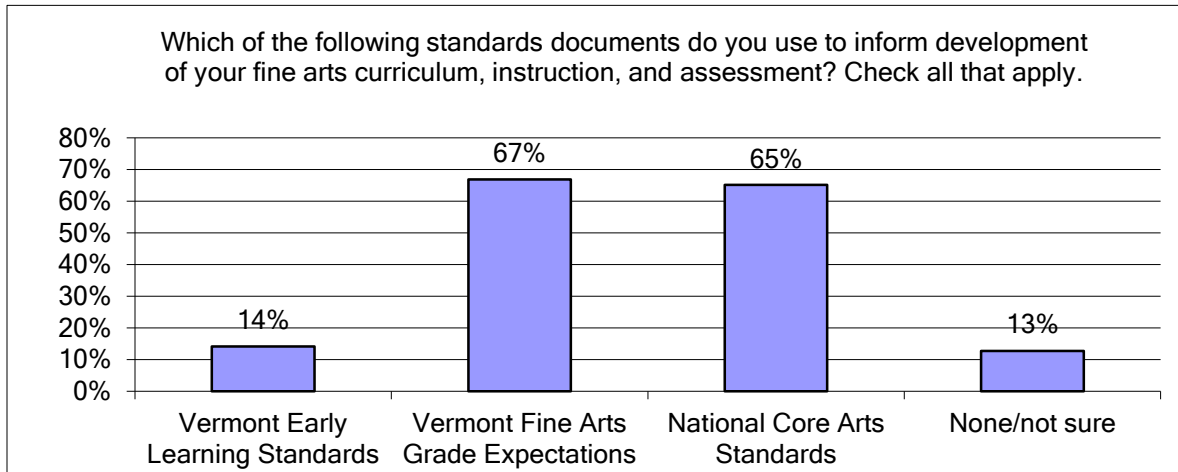
Grade levels taught

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents worked or taught in elementary schools. Just over half (54%) worked in middle schools while nearly as many (46%) worked in high schools. About a quarter (27%) worked in early education, and 11% in higher education. Respondents could indicate multiple roles so percentages exceed 100%. N = 371.



Standards currently used

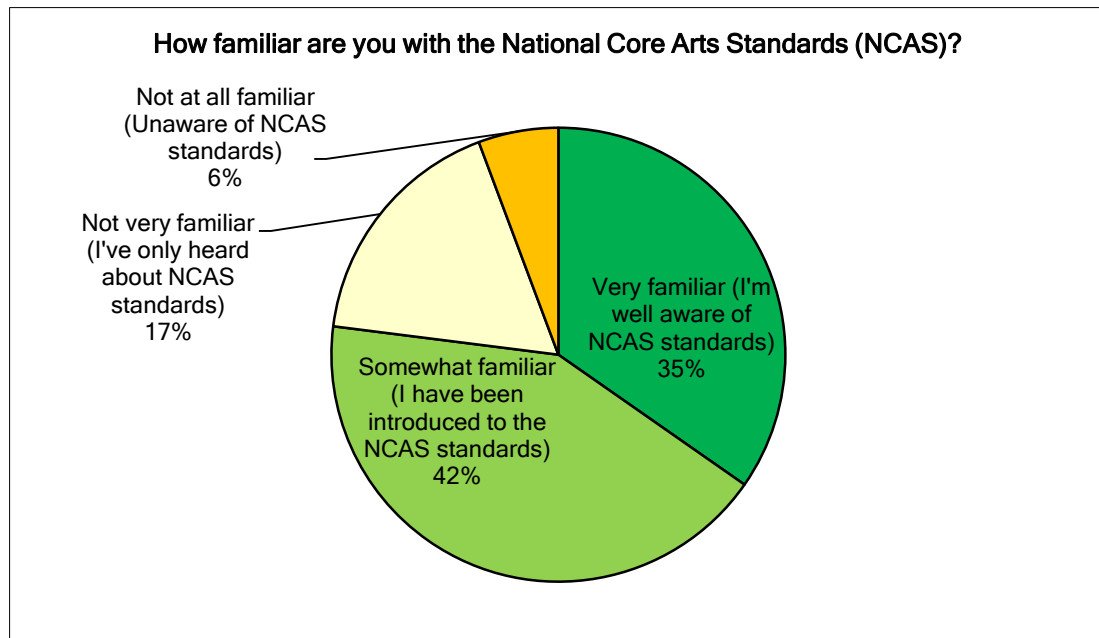
Two thirds (67%) of Vermont educators responding to the survey were using Vermont Fine Arts Grade Expectations to inform their fine arts curriculum development, instruction, and assessment. Nearly two thirds (65%) were using the National Core Arts Standards. Another 14% used Vermont Early Learning Standards. Comments indicate some were using discipline-specific standards from national arts service organizations like the National Art Education Association. Thirteen percent indicated none or not sure. They could indicate multiple standards, so percentages exceed 100%. N = 370.



Familiarity with NCAS

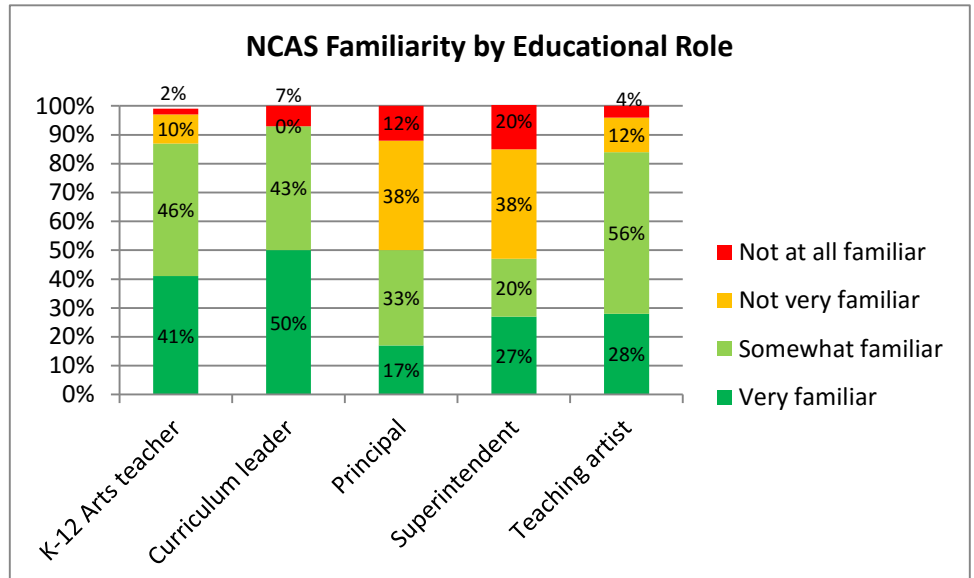
Over three quarters of respondents were familiar with the NCAS standards. Of these, about four in ten (42%) were somewhat familiar with NCAS and just over a third (35%) of respondents were very familiar with NCAS. Another 17% were not very familiar, only having heard about NCAS. Just 6% were unaware of NCAS.

N = 369.



Familiarity by educational role

K-12 arts teachers and curriculum leaders are most familiar with the NCAS standards as about nine in ten are at least somewhat familiar with NCAS (87% of arts teachers and 93% curriculum leaders are familiar). Half of Principals (50%) and Superintendents (52%) are not familiar with NCAS standards.

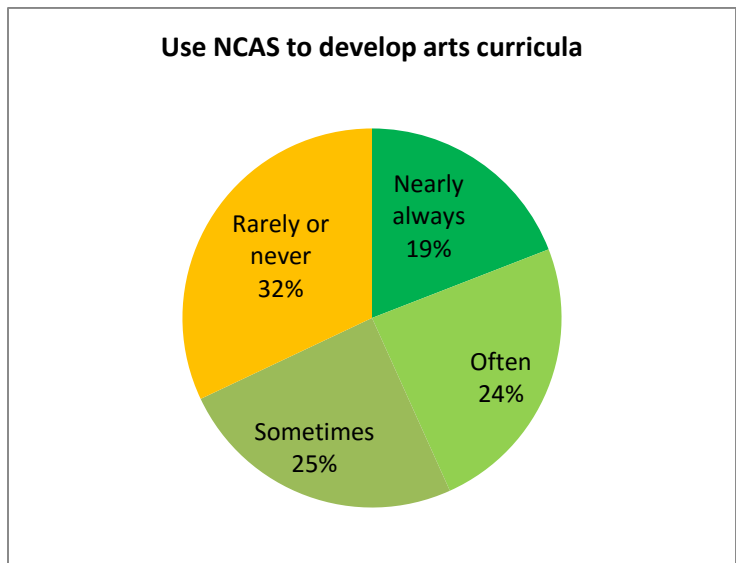


Use of NCAS

Overall about two thirds (62-68%) of respondents used NCAS to develop arts curricula, aid in instruction, and to design assessment. About a third (32-37%) rarely or never did so. Of those using NCAS about two in ten nearly always did so, a quarter (24%) often did so, and a quarter (25%) sometimes used NCAS to guide curricula development, teaching, and assessment. N = 362.

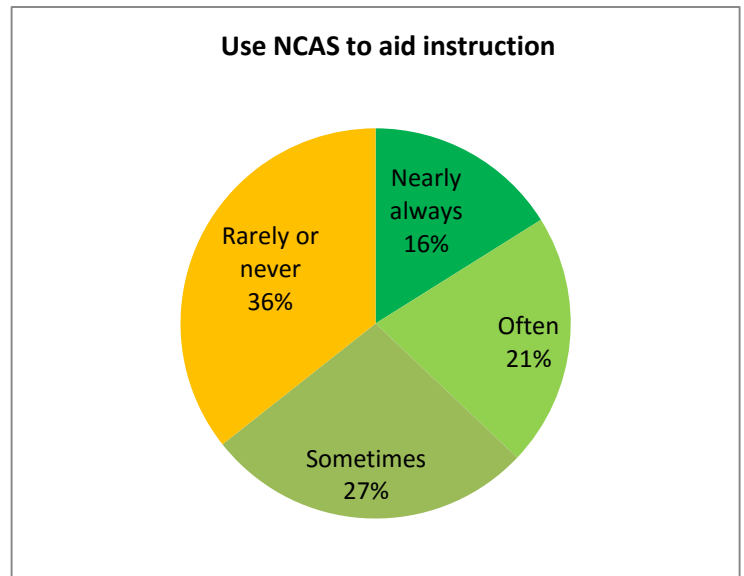
Developing arts curricula

Over two thirds of the educators used NCAS to develop arts curricula. Of these about a quarter sometimes (25%) or often (24%) did so. Nearly two in ten (19%) nearly always used NCAS to design their curricula. Another third (32%) rarely or never did so.



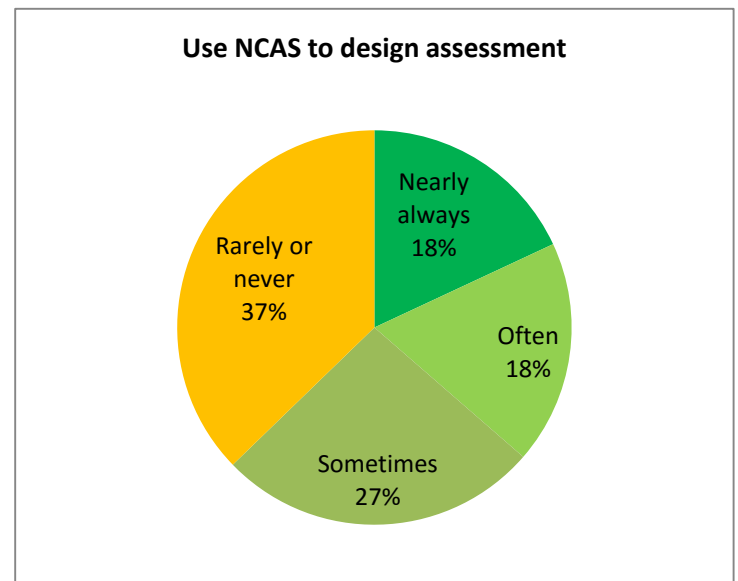
Aiding instruction

Nearly two thirds (64%) used NCAS to aid instruction. Of these 27% sometimes used NCAS to aid instruction, 21% often did so, and 16% nearly always did so. Another 36% rarely or never used NCAS for instruction.



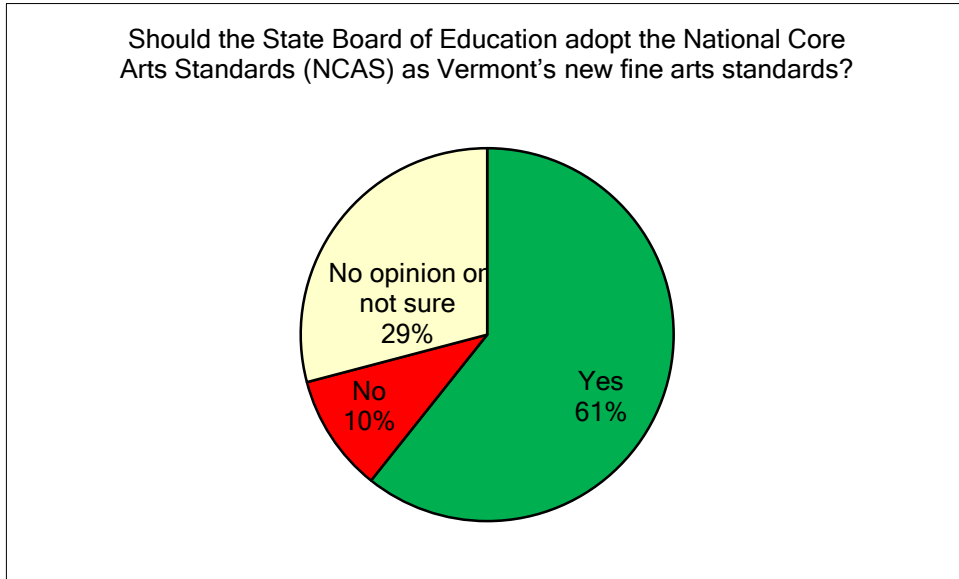
Designing assessment

Over six in ten (63%) used NCAS to design assessments. Of these, 27% sometimes used NCAS to help design assessments, 18% often did so, and 18% nearly always did so. Another 37% rarely or never used NCAS for student assessments.



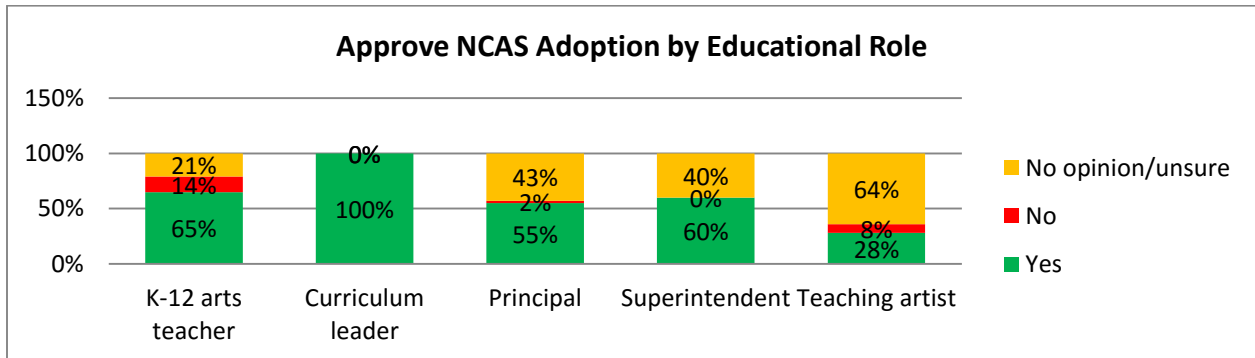
Recommendation to Adopt NCAS in Vermont

Six in ten (61%) Vermont educators responding to the survey recommend the State Board of Education should adopt the National Core Arts Standards as Vermont’s new fine arts standards. Three in ten (29%) had no opinion or were not sure. Ten percent (10%) did not recommend NCAS adoption. N = 374.

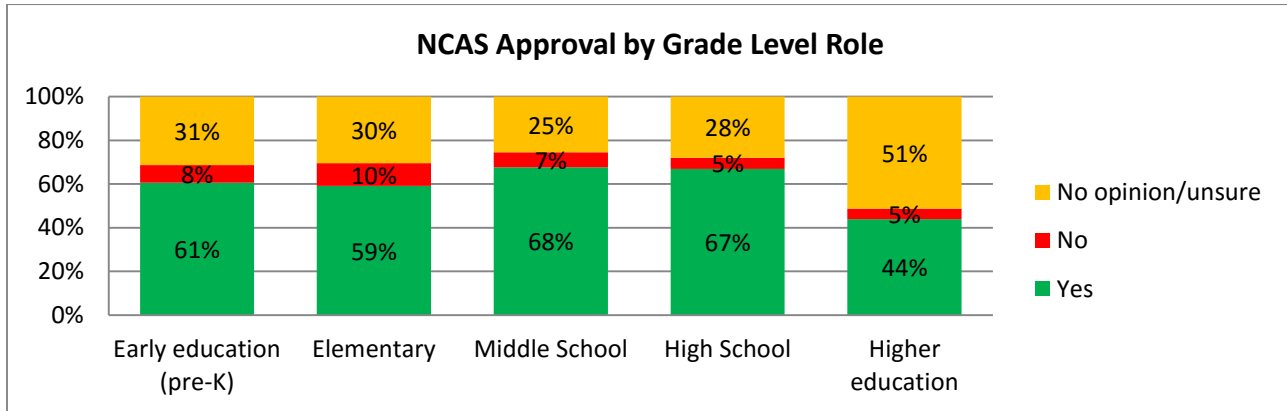


Comparison of key education roles with support for, and familiarity with, NCAS adoption

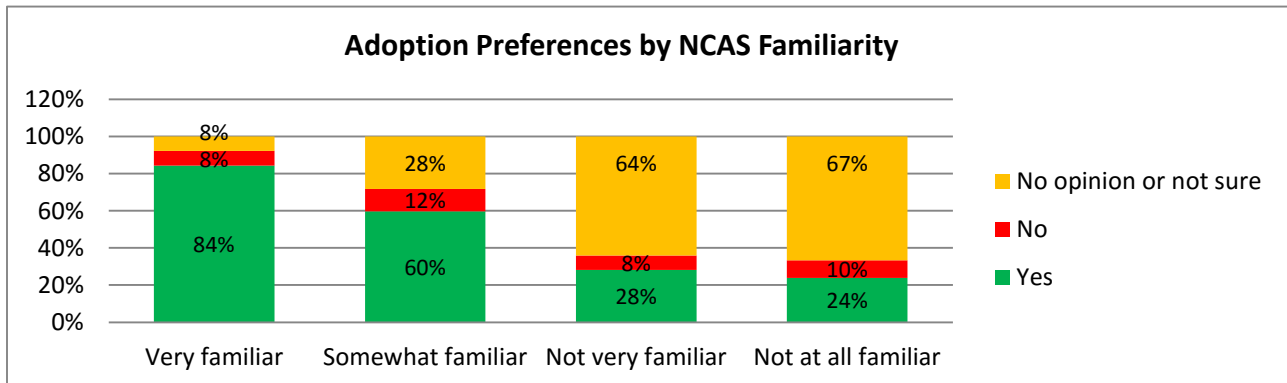
Nearly two-thirds of K-12 arts teachers support NCAS adoption. 100% of curriculum leaders support adoption. Just over half of principals (55%) favor state adoption as do 60% of school superintendents. Teaching artists are less certain as 28% support adoption and 64% are not sure. A small, but significant number of K-12 arts teachers (14%) do not support adoption.



The majority of Vermont educators approve adoption of the standards in all grade levels except higher education where slightly more report no opinion/not sure.



Those familiar with the NCAS standards were significantly more often in support of adoption. Over eight in ten of those very familiar with the standards favored adoption. Six in ten of those somewhat familiar also preferred adoption. Two thirds of those less familiar offered no opinion or were not sure. Two thirds of those less familiar offered no opinion or were not sure.



Comments from educators favoring NCAS adoption

Those who answered “Yes,” the State should adopt NCAS were directed to another question, “How would state adoption of National Core Arts Standards benefit your work in education?” 183 responded with comments (N = 183). Following is a summary of the most commonly repeated comments, listed in the order of frequency, with the number of similar responses (in parentheses).

- ❖ NCAS provides consistency within the state and nation, aligns with other standards, provides common and coherent goals (cited 76 times)
- ❖ NCAS -- simple, clear, accessible, easier than multiple standards (35)
- ❖ Helps validate or make the case to support arts education as a core subject (27)
- ❖ Common language facilitates dialogue and collaboration within and across disciplines (23)
- ❖ Consistent with current teaching practice, already using NCAS (19)
- ❖ Improves teaching and student learning (17)
- ❖ Enhances assessment, a research-based approach to evidenced-based assessment and proficiency-based grading (17)

Comments from opponents of NCAS adoption

Those who answered “No”, the State should not adopt NCAS were directed to the open-ended question, “Please tell us why you do not support state adoption of the National Core Arts Standards?” Thirty five responded (N = 35). Following is a summary of the most commonly repeated comments, listed in the order of frequency, with the number of similar responses (in parentheses).

- ❖ NCAS may not be developmentally appropriate for all students, especially the youngest (Cited 9 times)
- ❖ Want flexibility, local control, freedom (8)
- ❖ Too much emphasis on higher-order thinking, not enough on creativity, art making (4)

Survey Questions

1. Please tell us what is your role in education? Please select your primary role.

- K12 arts teacher
- K12 teacher (nonarts discipline)
- Teaching artist
- Curriculum leader
- Principal
- Superintendent
- School board member
- Nonprofit arts administrator
- College/University educator
- Other (please specify)

2. In what grade levels do you work or teach? Please check all that apply.

- Early education (preK)
- Elementary
- Middle School
- High School
- Higher education
- Vermont Early Learning Standards
- Vermont Fine Arts Grade Expectations

3. Which of the following standards documents do you use to inform development of your fine arts curriculum, instruction, and assessment? Check all that apply.

- Vermont Early Learning Standards
- Vermont Fine Arts Grade Expectations
- National Core Arts Standards
- None/not sure

4. How familiar are you with the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS)?

- Very familiar (I'm well aware of NCAS standards)
- Somewhat familiar (I have been introduced to the NCAS standards)
- Not very familiar (I've only heard about NCAS standards)
- Not at all familiar (Unaware of NCAS standards)

5. How, if at all, do you use the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS)?

	Nearly always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely or never
Use NCAS to develop arts curricula				
Use NCAS to aid instruction				
Use NCAS to design assessment				

6. Should the State Board of Education adopt the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS) as Vermont’s new fine arts standards? [Skip logic question]

- Yes
- No
- No opinion or not sure

Skip logic: Answered only by those who indicated “Yes” State should adopt NCAS

8. How would state adoption of National Core Arts Standards benefit your work in education?
Open-ended comment

Skip logic: Answered only by those who indicated “No” State should not adopt NCAS Open-ended comment

9. Please tell us why you do you not support state adoption of the National Core Arts Standards?

Skip logic: Answered only by those who indicated “No opinion or not sure”

10. What additional information would help you decide about supporting the National Core Arts Standards?