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## **CONTENT STANDARDS FOR FOLK ARTS AT FACTS**

### **THE FOLK ARTS STANDARDS (5/13/08)**

#### **Content Standards for Folk Arts at FACTS**

- 1. Understanding who I am and who is around me.**
- 2. Learning how I can explore folk arts and folklife, and sharing what I know.**
- 3. Recognizing folk arts as an active force in our society and the world around us.**
- 4. Becoming an active, respectful culture-maker.**

#### **Content Standard 1.**

##### **Understanding who I am and who is around me.**

Students are able to identify and appreciate who they are – both in terms of cultural traditions and folk groups or communities, and in terms of their own gifts, skills, choices and interests.

Students come to know more about who they are in the world, through the arts, beliefs and practices that express and shape their identity and those of others.

##### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 1A – Identify and appreciate who they are and their place in the world.**

###### 1A Benchmarks

- 1A.1 Name and describe folk groups to which they belong.
- 1A.2 Inventory and describe folk arts (traditions, beliefs, practices) of their own folk groups and those of others.
- 1A.3 Recount a genealogy and family history (their own or that of someone else), or a history of a folk tradition.
- 1A.4 Use the term “folk groups” appropriately to define their own membership in one or more folk group.
- 1A.5 Describe their relationship to on one of their folk groups, or the influence of one of their folk groups on them.

##### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 1B – Understand what communities and folk groups do and how do they work**

## 1B Benchmarks

- *1B.1 Identify cultural treasures and demonstrate understanding that all people have objects and practices made special by the stories and experiences behind them.*

- 1B.2 Explore the role that language plays in fostering a sense of who they are.

- 1B.3 Analyze the values underlying various folk life traditions and distinguish between those values that they share and those that they question or reject.

## **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 1C – Learn about the group memberships of those around us and in the world**

### 1C Benchmarks

- 1C.1 Identify and describe other folk groups around them

- 1C.2 Place their cultural communities within larger contexts.

- 1C.3 Demonstrate understanding that there are surface cultural markers and there are deeper meanings and beliefs

- 1C.4 Students will be able to analyze the various ways folklife traditions are practiced and perceived.

#### Draft Indicators:

Students engage on the topics:

What's the difference between copying folk artists and practices to learn and copying to mock or make fun?

Describing the range of ways folklife traditions are practiced and perceived: making invisible, discounting, shallow mimicry, appreciation, affirming and critically honoring,

## **Content Standard 2.**

### **Learning how I can explore folk arts and folklife and sharing what I know.**

Students are able to find, recognize, respect, and study folklife and folk traditions around them.

#### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 2A:**

**Students recognize that valuable knowledge can be found within their local communities.**

#### 2A Benchmarks:

- 2A.1 Students can recognize and name people around them who are cultural resources and understand that important knowledge does not come only from books or museums but can be found within our own communities.

*(e.g. I recognize that my mother the gardener knows valuable things. There is a person in my community who knows how to prepare for important celebrations. I see folk artists at FACTS who have special skills that are valued in their communities.)*

- 2A.2 Students are able to figure out what people know that is valuable (to them and to their community), to recognize elements of traditional and folk arts exist within mass culture as well as in everyday life.

### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 2B:**

**Students are able to identify and use appropriate tools for answering their community-based research questions.**

2B Benchmarks:

- 2B.1 Students understand that different tools are appropriate for gaining different kinds of knowledge. *(There are things you can learn from oral history that you cannot learn from the internet. There are times to read a book and times to observe things first hand.)*
- 2B.2 Students are able to use appropriately one or more community research tools (oral history, ethnography, survey, direct participation, etc.)
- 2b.3 Students develop documentation skills and ability to use recording tools (audio, video, writing) to document folk arts.

### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 2C:**

**Students preserve and pass on local knowledge they gain by sharing what they learn with others.**

2C Benchmarks:

2C.1 Students pass on or act on knowledge gained from community elders, artists and other community members. Every student gains genuine experience at least one time before they graduate from FACTS in identifying, researching and sharing some aspect of local community heritage knowledge.

## **Content Standard 3.**

**Recognizing folklife as an active force in our society and the world around us.**

Students recognize the range of folk art expression and the range of human experience encompassed by folklife; understand how folk arts are created, transmitted and transformed, and how folklife can be a sustaining and enriching force in communities.

### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 3A:**

**Students discuss and document examples from the spectrum of folklife traditions (e.g., verbal, belief, dance, music, art...)**

3A Performance Benchmarks:

- 3A.1 Describe different types of folklife from one folk group.
- 3A.2 Investigate and identify key types of folklife within a folk group.
- 3A.3 Recognize a wide range of musical/ artistic traditions
- 3A.4 Know one artist's "voice" / style from others' (and know something about their artistic family tree)

### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 3B:**

**Students explain the functions of folklife and the relationships between folk artists and their communities.**

3B Benchmarks:

- 3B.1 Reflect on the social responsibility of artists.
- 3B.2 Recognize how and when pressing needs and issues have been addressed and made visible through cultural practices.
- 3B.3 Analyze how folk art can be a way to take a stand, recognizing how upholding cultural expression is standing up for our selves and others.
- 3B.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which communities and folk groups nurture and sustain artists and the ways artists nurture and sustain communities.
- B.5 Distinguish between mass commercial culture and folk arts, exploring questions of; Who is creating the message?, What is its purpose?, How is it transmitted?, What power and resources lie behind it?
- 3B.6 Analyze the values reflected in and underlying specific folk arts practices, and contrast with those of mass media messages.
- 3B.7 Be able to express opinions on the question of how particular traditions support or hurt the practice of fairness, equity, empathy and peace.

### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 3C:**

**Students identify people and groups who carry on traditional arts and culture.-Students explain the processes by which specific traditions are created, maintained, altered, lost and revived. Students understand how traditional art forms are shaped by and respond to social, political, economic, and natural conditions.**

3C Benchmarks

- 3C.1 Record and present the folklife of a group in our school and describe how traditions in that group are shared, stay the same and change over time.
- 3C.2 Tell or write about a folk artist or folklife practitioner, including how they learned their art or practice and the value of that art or practice means to their communities.
- 3C.3 Research and discuss the role that a folk artist plays in creating, maintaining, reviving, or changing an art or practice.

### **CONTENT STANDARD 4.**

**Becoming an active, respectful culture-maker.**

Students know that everyone has creative power and that this power can help make our communities healthier. Students possess the capacity and courage to be artists and culture makers.

#### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 4A:**

**Students express themselves appropriately within a wide range of culturally meaningful artistic traditions.**

4A Benchmarks:

- 4A.1 Participate actively and appropriately in a range of folk art and expressive genres.
- 4 A.1 a. Have the opportunity to travel from introduction to a degree of competence within a folk art form [age appropriate].\*
- 4A.2 Able to articulate criteria for excellence in the folk art forms they study.
- 4A.3 Develop their own creative voice and vision.
- 4A.4 Work in ensemble and collaboratively.
- 4A.5 Respectfully engage with elders and others, within and across communities.

\* *Questions remain about how to implement.*

#### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 4B:**

**Students will have a sense of their capacity as active agents and learners and their ability to impact the world.**

4B Benchmarks:

- 4B.1 Students perform multiple roles as participants in folk arts: performer, helper, hearer, ally, teacher, etc
- 4B.2 Students demonstrate use of learner tools: discipline, patience, persistence, perseverance, engagement, and humility
- 4B.3 Display a sense of their own responsibility as culture makers and show awareness of the impact of their work.

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## **II. ABOUT THE STANDARDS: BACKGROUND & CONTEXT**

**Some overarching goals:**

- **Help students extend the range of places and circumstances where they feel that they belong and can contribute.** *[This involves helping students to feel themselves to be active agents, able to participate in and to build community, able to be a contributing part of a team, working and caring together with others. It reflects our hope to build students' familiarity with, and respect (and affection) for diverse communities, arts and people in our school and outside.]*
- **Deepen young peoples' powers of observation, mental and emotional presence, and curiosity, all of which are fundamental to being life-long learners.** *[This reflects our*

*sense that paying attention, cultivating ways of seeing, hearing and understanding (especially of local issues and folk arts) open fundamental ways of making sense of, and organizing the world. And it reflects our sense that the learning and teaching of folk arts can offer particular avenues to development of observation skills, presence and curiosity.]*

- **Build students' capacity to see, value, respect and sustain local peoples' community heritage and cultural knowledge.** *[This reflects our hopes of nurturing awareness of the taken-for-granted, the too-often-dismissed, the everyday: all that meaning around us which comes from peoples' lives rather than from mass media, or larger structures. It reflects our desire to give students meaningful avenues for making sense of these community-grounded ways of being, and the capacity to critically question and challenge those structures and practices that diminish or disrespect local lifeways.]*

### **A. Understanding who I am and who is around me**

*A positive sense of self is the foundation of a healthy lifestyle through which our children are able to maintain their social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual wellbeing. Folk arts are important ways of naming: ways that people often use to define self (and other) and to create and sustain community. We want our young people to be able to see how folk arts are used in these (positive) self-generating, boundary-making (and community-making) ways, and also to be able to recognize (and critique) stereotypic and problematic uses of "othering." We want students to be able to draw on positive ways of imagining themselves as active contributing members of communities.*

This goal explores self and identity by paying attention to processes of folk arts and culture-making

- It introduces folk arts as meaningful parts of culture: as resources, processes we can use.
- We see culture as active, dynamic, in flux (as something we make).
- We want students to see that they have choices and responsibilities in defining themselves and in figuring out who they are and who they can be.
- We want to focus attention on ways that folk arts opens our eyes to how groups work, to the nature of community, and to collective arts and action.
- We want to build awareness of the diverse, multiple and distinctive local communities, cultures and subcultures around us.
- We hope to encourage students to be able to see and develop their own gifts, skills and interests.
- We see character and community development, and the cultivation of enduring values (respect for self and others, patience, persistence) as part of folk arts. (Some of these values are named in Learning Area IV, too.)

### **B. Learning how I can explore folk arts and folk culture, and share what I know**

*In the current context of globalization with its increasing pressures towards uniformity and the commercialization of culture, students at FACT Charter School will understand that they have a role to play in the preservation and passing down of local knowledge.*

This goal focuses on critical inquiry, and on helping students to develop tools for gathering first-hand evidences from community and neighborhood life about what people hold to be important. It directs our attention to the processes by which we help students find, recognize, document, evaluate, assess and build on community knowledge around them. We count FACTS as a community whose health we cultivate and whose culture(s) we can attend to: we can model here

how to build a school community where we learn to listen to one another, build understanding of different perspectives, value people for what they know and can contribute, and become stronger for our diverse commitments to a common good for all.

- Here, we hope to engage students with primary sources, helping them to think about who and what to notice, how to pay attention (and care), what and how to ask and listen, how to identify, notice and cultivate community assets and resources— as more than evidences.

We hope for young people to develop solid observation and documentation skills, including

- attention skills (caring, awareness of genre/pattern, detailed looking, surveying instruments, ability to notice what isn't said/present [negative space, silence]),
- documentation in multiple media (sound, images, video, writing: connection to technology),
- transcription and reporting skills (awareness of fidelity, pattern and meaning)
- critical skills
- [a sense of what is alternative and why]

### **C. Recognizing folk arts as an active force in our society and the world around us**

*Participating in the community, having meaningful interactions with elders, and learning how to be a good communicator (about and within folklife traditions) students learn to be active agents/actors in community building.*

Here, students learn to recognize the range of human experience encompassed by folklife and the range of folk art expression around them. We aim to build their understanding of how folk arts are created, transmitted and transformed, and how folklife can be a sustaining and enriching force in communities. Students learn to explain processes by which specific traditions are created, maintained, altered, lost and revived. They learn to recognize how traditional art forms are shaped by and respond to social, political, economic, and natural conditions. Here, our focus is on recognizing folklife, and on the utility and meaningfulness of folk arts: students have opportunities to see and show how and why alternative and minority traditions function, how folk arts may be good equipment for living. We hope for young people to:

- Gain significant knowledge about the traditions practiced: be able to recognize a range of folklore genres, understand how and why they are used, be aware of contexts of use.
- Understand what is at issue in use of folk arts: how recourse to traditions may serve in everyday community life, and in movements and struggles occurring around them.
- Consider what they choose to preserve and why.
- Understand who folk artists are at FACTS and in their families and neighborhoods: know why and how they are important; be aware of the background, training, and experiences of the artists; understand the challenges and possibilities in the folk arts people practice
- Value and respect elders and those around them – including others in the school community – for what they can each contribute [to IV?]

### **D. Becoming an active, respectful culture-maker**

*All our children need the capacity/courage/ability/permission to try: knowing and believing that everyone can have responsibility and creative power and can help make our communities healthy,*

As part of helping our students to develop multicultural awareness and competences, and out of the belief that doing is an important pathway to learning, we want to create ways for students to 1) be exposed to, 2) have chances to try, and 3) be able to make significant progress in learning a range of traditional folk art forms— in particular, music, dance and crafts/visual arts. We want students to be able to show others (including other students) their skills in heritage languages and arts, and to be good representatives of these forms, capable in doing, knowing what they are doing, and knowing about these arts and where/who they come from.

*Developed by the Folk Arts Committee at the Folk Arts – Cultural Treasures Charter School, 2008. Section 1: Janeya Hisle. Germaine Ingram, Eric Joselyn, Debora Kodish, Neeta Patel, Dawn Pratson, Ellen Somekawa, Deborah Wei. Section 11: Debora Kodish. For information: [pfp@folkloreproject.org](mailto:pfp@folkloreproject.org)*