

LAWS OF DELAWARE  
VOLUME 85  
CHAPTER 271  
153rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
FORMERLY  
SENATE BILL NO. 260

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO THE DELAWARE CERTIFICATE OF ARTS EXCELLENCE.

WHEREAS, the arts are fundamental to a comprehensive and balanced education, fostering creativity, critical thinking, cultural awareness, and academic achievement among students of all ages and backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, arts education has been proven to enhance student engagement, improve graduation rates, and develop essential skills including collaboration, communication, problem-solving, and innovation that are vital for success in the 21st-century workforce; and

WHEREAS, the Creative Economy Advancement and Tourism Expansion (CREATE) Plan identifies Delaware's creative economy as a significant and expanding sector of this State's economy and calls for strengthened education-to-career alignment to support its continued growth; and

WHEREAS, the report issued pursuant to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 109 recommends expanding creative economy pathways, strengthening work-based learning, and developing additional mechanisms, including consideration of a state-approved arts certificate program to formally recognize student achievement and connect arts education to workforce systems; and

WHEREAS, such recognition would enhance the visibility and value of arts education within our communities, demonstrating that arts instruction is not supplemental but central to student development and academic success; and

WHEREAS, establishing a Delaware Certificate of Arts Excellence will provide a structured, statewide method of recognizing sustained engagement and achievement in dance, music, theater, media arts, and visual arts; and

WHEREAS, a statewide Certificate of Arts Excellence will elevate the visibility and value of arts pathways and align with Delaware's broader workforce, education, and economic development strategies; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of this State to formally recognize and celebrate student excellence in the arts while strengthening the pipeline from K-12 education to postsecondary study and creative economy careers through the establishment of a Delaware Certificate of Arts Excellence.

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

Section 1. Amend Subchapter III, Chapter 1, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

§ 152A. Delaware Certificate of Arts Excellence.

(a) For purposes of this section, "Department" means the Department of Education.

(b) The Department shall establish the Delaware Certificate of Arts Excellence to recognize students who graduate from a high school in this State and who demonstrate sustained engagement and achievement in the arts.

(c) The Department shall do all of the following:

(1) With the consent of the State Board of Education, adopt minimum requirements for the Certificate of Arts Excellence.

a. The minimum requirements for the Certificate of Arts Excellence may include a combination of academic classwork and real-life learning experiences in the arts.

b. The minimum requirements for the Certificate of Arts Excellence may include recognition of school or community involvement in arts or culture, work-based learning experiences, portfolio development, and other measures of college and career readiness.

c. At a minimum, the Certificate of Arts Excellence must be available to a student studying dance, music, theater, media arts, or visual arts.

(2) Design a certificate for the Certificate of Arts Excellence.

(3) Deliver the certificate designed under paragraph (c)(2) of this section to each high school in this State with a high school student who is awarded the Certificate of Arts Excellence by the Department.

(d) Beginning with the 2027 through 2028 school year, a student at a high school in this State may apply for a Certificate of Arts Excellence by submitting an application to the Department through the student's high school under paragraph (e)(1) of this section.

(e) Beginning with the 2027 through 2028 school year, a high school operated by a school district, charter school, or private school with a student that submits an application under subsection (d) of this section shall do all of the following:

(1) Determine if the student meets the requirements adopted under paragraph (c)(1) of this section to be awarded the Certificate of Arts Excellence and, if so determined, submit the application to the Department.

(2) If the student is determined under paragraph (e)(1) of this section to meet the requirements adopted under paragraph (c)(1) of this section, award the student, on graduation from high school, the Certificate of Arts Excellence.

(f) The Department, with the consent of the State Board of Education, may adopt regulations to implement, administer, and enforce this section.

Approved May 21, 2026