



vaea

virginia art education association

Virginia Art Education Association

*Keely, 11th Grade,
Liberty High School,
Ashley Hinton*

Winter 2025



Our Mission

Our mission is to promote, support and advance visual arts education through leadership, professional development and service.

The VAEA News Magazine

VAEAnews is a publication of the Virginia Art Education Association, and is distributed to members three times a year: January, June and September.

Articles

Articles are submitted by the Executive Board and Extended Board members. Contact your Regional President, Division Representative, or appropriate Affiliate Liaison to offer news or photographs for inclusion in their reports.

Contact Information

See page 26.

Student Art

Members send submissions directly to Sean Collins, News Magazine Editor via the form located at vaea.org/news

Vendors

Vendors wishing to advertise should contact Peggy Wood, Executive Secretary, at wood.vaea@gmail.com

Submission Deadlines

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Spring/Summer Issue: March 15

Fall/Conference Issue: July 15



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President's Message

Cheryl Miehl

A new year highlights the critical importance of vision for art educators: shaping professional development, art programs, and student growth.

We, as art educators, face unique challenges and opportunities in the dynamic and ever-evolving world of education. As stewards of creativity, critical thinking, and cultural awareness, our role extends beyond delivering technical skills. We must have a clear, well-defined vision to guide our students toward deeper artistic understanding and personal growth. This vision encompasses not only our professional development but also the evolution of our art programs and the long-term growth of our students.

A clear vision for professional development is crucial for art educators to remain effective and relevant in an increasingly interconnected and technology-driven world. Unlike other disciplines, the visual arts are fluid, and teaching and learning methods are continually evolving. New media, emerging technologies, and shifting cultural trends demand we stay informed and adaptable.

Our vision for professional development ensures that we remain engaged in our field. It encourages continuous learning, exploration, and growth, whether through formal education, workshops, or self-directed study. A visionary educator will not only pursue traditional professional development avenues but will also seek out opportunities to explore innovative approaches in both artmaking and pedagogy. For example, educators might look into contemporary art movements, new teaching methodologies, or the integration of digital tools in the classroom. This ongoing learning benefits the educator personally while keeping the classroom experience fresh, engaging, and responsive to students' needs.

Moreover, when we have a strong vision for our growth, we set a positive example for our students. This model of lifelong learning fosters a culture of curiosity and resilience, demonstrating that growth is not only possible but essential, regardless of age or stage

in one's career.

For an art educator, having a vision for the overall art program is just as important as our development. A well-articulated vision allows us to create a cohesive curriculum that aligns with both educational standards and the unique needs of our students. This vision should reflect the goals of the program and its place within the broader educational context. It should include a roadmap for developing skills, nurturing creativity, and fostering critical thinking in students.

In terms of curriculum design, a clear vision helps to prioritize which elements are most important. An educator might ask: Should the program emphasize technical skill mastery, creative exploration, or historical and cultural awareness? Or perhaps the goal is to prepare students for higher education and professional art careers? These questions require thoughtful consideration and reflection on both the educator's philosophy and the needs of the community they serve.

Additionally, an art program that is rooted in a strong vision can adapt to changing needs over time. As the world changes, so too must the way art is taught. A visionary educator will continuously assess and refine their program, integrating new techniques, technologies, and perspectives that reflect contemporary issues such as digital art, social justice, or environmental sustainability. The flexibility ensures that the art program remains relevant, enriching, and forward-thinking.

Furthermore, a clearly defined vision for the art program can inspire and motivate students. When students understand the overarching goals and values of their art education, they are more likely to engage with the subject matter deeply. They can also see how their work fits into a larger narrative, which enhances their sense of purpose and investment in the creative process.

Ultimately, the most crucial aspect of an art educator's vision is how it supports the development of students. An effective vision for student growth goes beyond simply teaching technique—it encompasses the cultivation

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Vice President's Message

Leigh Drake



"Art has the potential to unify. It can speak in many languages without a translator." - Barbara Jordan

What a fantastic conference! First off, I would like to extend a thank you to all who have volunteered to help out during the conference. A BIG thank you to Julie Cacciola and Kelly Wasson for leading the Northern region as site chairs. The conference could not have happened without all of you. We are blessed to have your leadership and devotion to arts education in Virginia. I feel like we all left revitalized and inspired. I am already looking forward to our next great conference in fall 2025. It is always nice being together with our art tribe each year.

Thank you to our keynote and conference workshop presenter, Flossie Chua. She taught us how we can nurture good thinking and practices that develop the capacity for informed and positive action. She shared

innovative paradigms for visual artists and how we can operate in relationships with our communities and our art world.

Thank you for helping us to understand how people think and experience complex ideas and challenges in different contexts. Thank you to all our conference presenters for sharing your knowledge and expertise with our members. We had some really great sessions and I personally can't wait to take what I have learned back into the classroom.

If you are interested in volunteering for our next conference, please reach out as we determine the site. And start thinking of possibly presenting at our next conference-- be on the lookout for the conference proposal link in early spring. As Edward Everett Hale expressed, "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success." Let us continue this momentum into this new year. ■



Cami, 7th Grade, Old Donation School, Leigh Drake

Advocacy

Mike Gettings

Going Dormant (resting, quiescent, inactive)



those Youth Art Month Flag designs.

Every little thing you do will help all of your arts programs.

For many fish species, winter is a time to take it slow; going dormant. Fish decrease their activity level, growth, and feeding behavior in response as a way to survive the colder and leaner months. One fish takes it a step farther—the Antarctic spiny plunder fish goes into hibernation during the winter. Scientists believe this is in response to the loss of the sun and decrease in phytoplankton, just as bears hunker down when berries and nuts become scarce. It is the only instance of true hibernation in fish.

As you are probably aware, we are not fish and we do not go dormant during the winter!

In fact this is a pretty busy time for you as a teacher and an arts advocate.

You have been receiving Art Advocacy tips. Use 'em, pass them along and send me others that work for you.

The Virginia General Assembly is in session right now. Look for legislative alerts and be ready to pitch in with letters, comments and the like to your legislators (from your home email/address/computer).

Let's show the power and reach of art in the Commonwealth. Arts Across Virginia day is Friday, March 7, 2025. Post art happenings on social media and tag them with #ArtsAcrossVA25. Pass it on to all your friends, schools, galleries, and performing arts centers (Even some libraries and universities participated). We had almost 300 social media engagements on social media last year. Let's double that this year. Tag social media posts #ArtsAcrossVA25.

Youth Art Month is a classic. Set up those presentations, performances and events in your school, community, school board and for extra credit, your city council. Get your students involved. Ask your PTA/PTO about show opportunities. Remember

Don't be the dormant fish, look alive and make some waves for you and your students. ■

Olson, Danielle. "Winter under the Waves." Winter Under the Waves, 11 May 2023, ocean.si.edu/ocean-life/winter-under-waves.



Ryleigh, 11th Grade, Kettle Run High School, Tisha Burke

Social Media

Jess Beach



As we move forward into a new year, I can't help but look in the rear-view mirror. It has been an exceptionally busy one that makes me smile with pride. As art educators, I am sure you can all relate. It seems the world of an art teacher is always full of new and exciting adventures. Perhaps you started a new project at school this year...maybe you pitch in for events around your building...conceivably you support local arts in your community...or it is possible you find yourself saying yes to all these things? Personally, I have joined a newly formed arts commission for my community, and the enthusiasm of creating public works is palpable.

Take a moment to share what you do for art education on social media! (You may already do this with your family and friends...who most certainly are quite proud of your hard work!) But we challenge you to do one simple thing on the bottom of your posts: **ADD THE HASHTAG #vaARTed** to anything that relates to art education! All VAEA members are invited to add the hashtag. Then we can see the great things we are doing with each other! Did your students do a great project? HASHTAG IT. Did you build a set for the school? HASHTAG IT. Did you participate in an art show? HASHTAG IT. Did you go to a cool art museum? HASHTAG IT. The idea of a hashtag is that we can search it and find new posts which connect all VAEA art educators! Try searching it yourself and see what cool ideas are right here in VAEA's art educator team!

As you are searching hashtags, don't forget to look up the 2024 VAEA Fall Conference hashtag: **#vaARTed24**. Check it out and smile as you scroll through wonderful moments of art teachers celebrating each other! We have our award winners posted, moments from sessions, and all our big events! Special thank you to **Julie Cacciola** for being our online host in September when she featured the conference highlights!

That rear view mirror is also full of some fun moments on VAEA's Social Media pages! We did a

fun weekly Summer Sketch program encouraging everyone to take just 15 minutes to make art; check it out with **#vaARTedSummerSketch**. Our 2024 Monday

Museum Moments (MMMArt) featured **Mary Ladric** and **Curry Schiavone** of **Museum of the Shenandoah Valley** discussing their exhibit on **Alex Ross**, and **Phoebe Avery** of **Tephra ICA** gave us a sneak peak of their space right before the conference. Thank you to **Kelly Wasson** for hosting an information session on Youth Art Month (YAM) in our "What's the tea about YAM?" Session **#vaARTedYAM24**. Also, special shout out to our art educators who shared their expertise online during our Friday Art Share for Teachers (ThinkFAST): **Karla Kolb** discussing Free Little Art Galleries and **Erika Ogier** discussing Graphic Design for Elementary. Check them out at **#vaARTedThinkFAST**! Thank you to each of these fabulous art educators for sharing with our community!

While looking back feels prideful, looking at the road ahead offers a whole world of possibilities! Would you be interested in sharing a lesson or discussing something related to art ed? If the spotlight is not a place you prefer, consider sending some photos of your students' work! Please reach out to jessica-beach4@gmail.com. We would be happy to help you host a session or highlight your programs! ■



Nadia, 5th Grade,
O.B. Gates Elementary School, Kai Chen

Awards

Meghan Hamm

We are here to celebrate art educators nominated for an award recognized by the VAEA and NAEA at the Awards Dinner at our annual state conference. I want to share with you a little about the awards process. An adjudication at the regional level takes place and those candidates are brought forth for adjudication at the state level. This year we adjudicated using our new and improved VAEA rubric, created by Patsy Parker. This was a field test for the NAEA.

We would like to recognize the following VAEA 2023 State Award recipients who have been put forth to represent Virginia in the NAEA Southeastern Region adjudication process. Congratulations!

- **Art Educator of the Year: Kelly Bisogno**
- **Elementary Art Educator of the Year: Erika Ogier**
- **Secondary Art Educator of the Year: Dawn Vass**

We had a wonderful group of nominees this year for our state awards!

REGIONAL ELEMENTARY AWARD NOMINEES
Blue Ridge—**Carol Hostetter**
Tidewater—**Meredith Snyder**

VAEA ELEMENTARY ART EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR was awarded to **Meredith Snyder**.

REGIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL AWARD NOMINEES
Central—**Lydia Walters**
Blue Ridge—**Karla Kolb**

VAEA MIDDLE SCHOOL ART EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR was awarded to **Karla Kolb**!



REGIONAL SECONDARY ART EDUCATOR AWARD NOMINEES

Tidewater—**Samantha Wegener**

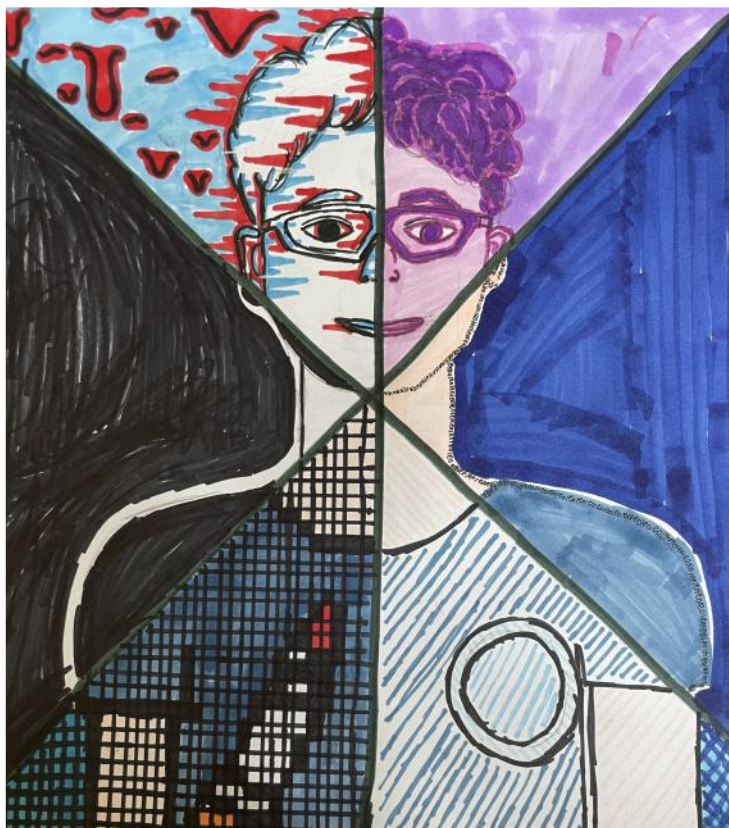
Blue Ridge—**Dawn Brown**

VAEA SECONDARY ART EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR was awarded to **Samantha Wegener**.

VAEA MUSEUM ART EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR was awarded to **Truly Matthews**.

VAEA ADMINISTRATION & SUPERVISION ART EDUCATOR AWARD was awarded to **Georgeanna Fellio**.

The **Virginia Art Educator of the Year award** is the only commendation that is generated from and voted on by the VAEA Elected Officers and Advisory Board. It acknowledges the exceptional history in NAEA, VAEA and Art education.



Harper, 6th Grade, Old Donation School, Leigh Drake

LINDA CONTI is our VAEA Art Educator of the year. Congratulations To this year's VAEA award winners! Please consider nominating someone who is deserving of this award next year! ■

Division News Elementary

Erika Ogier



Happy 2025 Elementary Art Superstars!

As we embark on a new year filled with endless possibilities, it's the perfect time to honor and reflect on the past year for elementary art educators in Virginia: a year that was nothing short of inspiring!

The year began with a new chapter for me as the Elementary Division Director. Uncertain but eager, I stepped into the role and was warmly embraced by my fellow board members. Their enthusiasm and support left me in awe, fueling my excitement to serve our community of dedicated elementary art teachers.

Youth Art Month (YAM) was a vibrant highlight. From inspiring exhibitions to engaging artist visits, students and teachers across the state came together to celebrate creativity. The flag competition entries showcased our students' imaginative spirits and highlighted the importance of advocacy for the arts. This collective effort reflected the strength of our art education community and the profound impact of nurturing young artists.

Attending the National Art Education Association convention in Minneapolis was another standout moment. Presenting

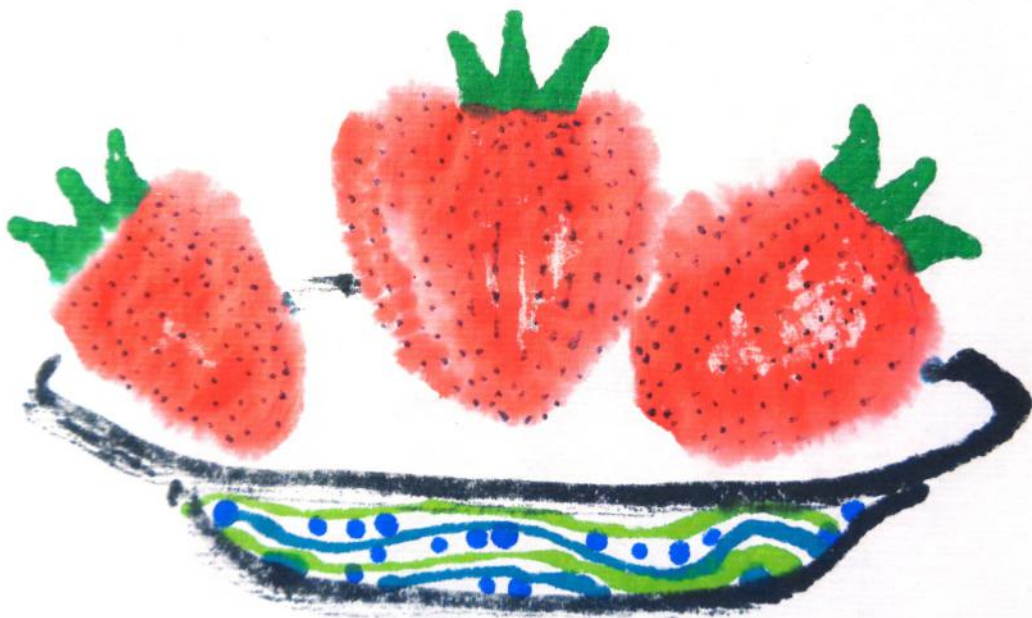
among peers was a fulfilling experience, and seeing presentations from art educators across the nation inspired innovative ideas for our classrooms. Looking ahead, I highly recommend joining us in Louisville, Kentucky, for the next NAEA convention to continue building connections and gathering fresh perspectives.

Summertime offered a chance to recharge, make art, and dive into the world of summer camps. This period of creativity and relaxation prepared us for a new school year, bringing fresh energy and renewed focus to the classroom. With the beginning of the school year, teachers embraced new projects, designed to spark curiosity and encourage growth in our students. It was time to implement plans that enriched learning experiences, setting the stage for an exciting academic year.

This year's VAEA conference, hosted by the phenomenal Northern Region, was an incredible opportunity to connect and celebrate. The presentations from remarkable elementary art educators like **Rodrick Rhodes, Jess Beach, Melanie Soscia, Kai Chen, Katie Jarvis**, and many others left us inspired. Special congratulations goes to our 2024 Elementary Art Teacher of the Year, **Meredith Snyder**, whose dedication to her craft is truly commendable.

As we move forward, let's set our sights on finishing the year strong. Consider making New Year's resolutions that focus on advocacy, professional growth, and fostering creativity in your students. Explore the wealth of advocacy resources, YAM ideas, and video sessions available on VAEA's social media platforms to stay inspired.

Here's to another year of growth, creativity, and community! ■



Zya, 5th Grade, O.B. Gates Elementary School, Kai Chen

Middle

Kirstie Sadler



Winter is upon us! I love this time of year to get cozy, reflect and create. Seeing so many of you at the VAEA conference in Reston was wonderful. As much work as it is to prepare for a planned absence with sub plans, there is no doubt that once we are in the company of our “tribe of art teachers” good energy abounds. I hope everyone left feeling energized and inspired.

A heartfelt congratulations to our middle-level award winners, Lydia Walters from Central Region and Karla Kolb from Blue Ridge Region. Karla was selected as VAEA’s Middle Level Art Educator of the Year. Congratulations to you both! VAEA is grateful for how each of you serve your students and school communities.

Highlights from my conference experience included creating a plaster LOVE sculpture, etching on plexiglass, pulling a print on a press: a process I have not done in years! Our keynote speaker, Flossie Chua, and the accompanying workshop Art as Repair: Transforming Damage using Artistic Process was a valuable experience. I closed out my conference experience being introduced to the work of Parker Palmer and The Center of Courage and Renewal in “exploring the heart of a

teacher” through collage. It was an amazing weekend, and I look forward to connecting at the conference next year.

As you consider how you can grow as an educator through the season, I would like to give a plug for your consideration of taking a class through The Art of Education University. I have committed myself to taking a few classes to reach a professional goal with AOEU and although it is a bit of extra work, the classes are affordable and relevant. Each assignment I have completed directly relates to what I can do with my students. I have found that taking these courses is igniting a spark in me that is just an awesome feeling after a long period of burnout. Check out their course offerings and see if they might be a good fit for your professional development goals.

In closing, enjoy this season. Maintain your boundaries and take good care. There is only one of you, and as an art teacher, you are a guaranteed bright spot in so many kids' schooldays. In the spirit of art education, have a restorative and cozy winter full of creating. ■



Camryn, 7th Grade, Taylor Middle School, Marissa Pappas

Division News Secondary

Tisha Burke



Fostering Creativity and Growth

Winter break – it couldn't come soon enough. We all trudged toward the finish line, looking forward to a well-deserved break from the daily grind of teaching. Like many of you, I had grand plans: time to work on my own art, organize supplies, and write new lesson plans. But did that happen for you? If you're like me, once you've had time to rest, spend time with family, and relax enough to not think about school, it's time to shift gears and jump back in. And for those of us on a block schedule, returning means new classes and new rosters—a fresh start that can feel like the beginning of the school year all over again.

As we get back into the swing, let's reflect on how art education plays a crucial role in both our students' development and our own growth as educators. The winter months invite us to nurture creativity, explore new ideas, and challenge ourselves in innovative ways.

Developing Critical Thinking Skills

Art education goes beyond the basics of drawing and painting. It nurtures essential life skills that are becoming more important in our modern world. Through art, students develop creativity, critical thinking, and the ability to solve problems in unique ways. These skills are not only valuable in the art room but across all disciplines and in everyday life.

Here's how art education helps students grow:

Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: Whether it's figuring out how to solve a technical issue in a project or interpreting a complex artwork, art pushes students to think creatively and find unconventional solutions.

- **Collaboration:** Art projects often require teamwork, whether it's working on group installations, performances, or joint design projects. These experiences help students develop teamwork skills.
- **Communication:** Art teaches students to express themselves in ways words cannot, helping them communicate thoughts and emotions visually. This is especially important for students who may struggle with traditional forms of expression.

- **Cultural Awareness:** By studying diverse artists, cultures, and techniques, students gain a broader understanding of the world. Art fosters empathy and provides students with an opportunity to appreciate different perspectives.

Curriculum Development and Student Engagement

In our recent division meeting at the VAEA conference, we discussed several key topics facing secondary art educators. Here's an outline of the areas that came up in the conversation, which may resonate with you as you plan for the months ahead:

- **Curriculum Development:** Integrating technology into our curriculum is more important than ever. Digital art tools, graphic design platforms, and other technologies provide new ways for students to create and explore. It's also essential to incorporate diverse art forms and cultural perspectives to ensure a rich and inclusive learning environment.
- **Student Engagement:** Our students have varying learning styles, and it's important to differentiate instruction to meet their needs. Fostering creativity, encouraging risk-taking, and creating an environment where students can explore are key to their success. We also must address pressures from standardized testing, which can sometimes stifle creativity.
- **Funding and Resources:** The reality of limited budgets can impact the supplies and materials available for art education. It's crucial to explore funding options, such as grants and fundraising opportunities, to support your program. Additionally, while field trips and guest speakers may be limited, virtual experiences can serve as valuable alternatives.
- **Professional Development:** Continuing education and collaboration with fellow educators can help us stay on top of trends and teaching strategies in art education. Local artists, organizations, and

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Higher Education

Abi Gomez



Happy 2025! I hope you all have weathered the winter well, and are enjoying a respite from the classroom as you renew and refresh for the upcoming spring semester.

To recap the last quarter of 2024, the most notable event was the Virginia Art Education Association's annual Conference in Reston, hosted in early November. Virginia higher ed art professors gathered for the weekend, along with hundreds of other arts educators, to connect, learn, and grow through arts education and community. A few sessions were offered that were specifically geared towards the higher ed/preservice crowd, including my offering, titled "COIL and the Visual Arts: A Collaborative Virtual Educational Exchange Program," which examined leveraging technology to facilitate international collaborative visual art projects. Another session, "Getting Hired: Supervision/Administration Q & A and Pre-Service Showcase," led by Amber Hester, Karin Tollefson-Hall, and Justin Sutters helped generate connections and leads for future arts educators and employers. Dr. Karin Tollefson-Hall also graciously led the VAEA Higher Ed business meeting, where topics such as provisional licensure, accreditation, and paying student teachers were discussed. It was also shared that ODU is hiring a tenure-track position in Art Education (link to apply here: <https://jobs.odu.edu/postings/22078>). They are accepting applications through January 15th, 2025.

For those who were able to attend the conference, do you have any feedback? Any sessions or conversations you'd like to see included in the future? What types of offerings would be the most helpful for VAEA Higher Ed members?

As we look forward to 2025, we know that ever-shifting policies and administrations will likely have an impact on the arts and art education as the year progresses. But there are so many glimmers of hope and joy to keep us grounded and steadfast in these changing environments. One of the initiatives that is giving me hope and bringing me joy is the newly launched "prescriptive-arts" program in Massachusetts, led by Mass Cultural Council and healthcare partners. It is the first statewide social prescribing solution in the US, and connects healthcare, the arts, and public health stakeholders to provide

healing arts experiences and interventions to patients in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The pilot program was resoundingly successful, and showed health and quality of life improvements for many participants.

This type of innovative and creative thinking underscores what we already know about the arts: that art heals, it makes us more whole, more happy, more human. And if programs like this continue to expand across the US, it could result in a more universal understanding that the arts are integral to human health and well-being, and that the arts need to continue to be offered (if not expanded) in K12 (K16) settings. This potential shift in attitude and understanding of the power of the arts might result in the need for even more art education positions. Just imagine how many would benefit from a universal rollout of this type of program! To learn more about this initiative, check out this press release: <https://massculturalcouncil.org/blog/introducing-the-first-statewide-social-prescribing-solution-in-the-u-s/>

So, VAEA Higher Ed membership: What are some of the issues that are rising to the surface in higher ed art education in 2025 that are giving you pause? What advocacy issues would you suggest bringing to Arts Advocacy Day in Richmond in late January? What do you expect will be your biggest challenge this spring? What are you looking forward to the most? Most importantly, how can VAEA help support you in 2025? Would facilitated conversations or virtual points of connection be of benefit? Would having a quarterly happy hour on zoom be of interest? Let me know what you are looking for from your VAEA membership, as we continue to craft opportunities for connection and support for our membership.

I look forward to hearing from you. As always, please feel free to reach out with any comments, suggestions, or ideas you'd like to discuss or share: agomez@su.edu. Have a wonderful winter break/ term, and start of the spring semester! ■

Division News Museum Education

Emily Cayton



Connecting to the Wider Field of Museum Education

Winter is a fabulous time to reflect on previous successes while planning for future projects, registering for professional development opportunities, or strategizing advocacy efforts. In the field of museum education, national organizations are offering exciting ways to connect with professionals and dig into the issues and opportunities most pressing. Consider participating or accessing resources from these upcoming sessions:

Museums Advocacy Day, American Alliance of Museums: February 24-25 in Arlington, VA and Washington, DC

<https://www.aam-us.org/programs/museums-advocacy-day/>

For over 15 years, Museums Advocacy Day has been providing the essential training and support advocates need to meet effectively with members of Congress and their staff. This is a unique opportunity to unite with museum colleagues and supporters from across the country as one voice to reaffirm our essential value, collective contributions, and aspirations.

Museum Education Division Preconvention, National Art Education Association Integrating Universal Design Principles into Museum Programs: Enhancing Accessibility for All Audiences

Wednesday, March 19, 2025 | 8:45am–5:00pm ET

In Person | Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY

<https://my.arteducators.org/naea25precons>

Join the Museum Education Division of the National Art Education Association (NAEA) for our NAEA25 Preconvention offering hands-on, in-depth exploration of integrating Universal Design principles into museum programming and ensuring accessibility for diverse audiences.

If you do enroll or participate in any of the offerings,

please reach out to me, your Museum Education Division Director, to share your experiences. To reflect on the fall VAEA conference, we all get so much out of experiences that bring people together with shared passions. The two above offerings are uniquely suited for that kind of idea exchange, and these help us reconnect with what we love about our work in cultural institutions and with people.

Check out your regional offerings as well. Tidewater VAEA is hosting professional development at the Mary M. Torggler Fine Arts Center. Museums in your area host open-to-all-teachers events, workshops, and more throughout the school year. When your district coordinators are planning future outings, social events, or professional development sessions, suggest a museum or gallery as a space to learn and grow.

Museum Educator of the Year: Truly Matthews

I am quite confident that one of the reasons you love going to museums is because of a museum educator who is thinking about you. Thinking about your curiosity, your learning style, your interests, and your perspective, museum educators consider how you show up in the space and how to create entry points that are wide and narrow. These professionals care—deeply—about you.

Truly Matthews is one of these thoughtful, intentional, considerate people. She's one of the best in the business, clearly since she is an award recipient from this esteemed organization. VAEA is in good company in recognizing Truly Matthews. In 2024, she has also received awards from the Virginia Association of Museums and the Women's History Month Certification of Excellence from the Lambda Gamma Omega chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

Her hard work and dedication to the field of art education is exemplified in her commitment and contribution to this very organization, where she served as an executive board member from 2017 to 2023, first as Museum Education Division Director and later as Treasurer. Congratulations to Truly! ■

Supervision and Administration

Amber Hester



Nearly fifty years ago, education philosopher Elliot Eisner criticized art educators for being overly focused on historical art and that of the past (Eisner, 1972). Looking to

the past has its merits; it builds the historical knowledge that one needs to move forward.

Since that time, numerous art education practitioners and thinkers have directed their attention to the present by creating art curricula that draw upon contemporary art practices, current social issues, and emerging technologies and visual for-

mats (Kraehea 2020). While both the past and present serve as valuable frameworks for crafting art curricula, what happens when we shift our focus to “the next”? How can we envision the art curriculum of the future?

On a recent trip to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, I stumbled across a fascinating activity. Children as young as four and adults were actively engaged and mesmerized by a life-sized tablet on which they could draw and digitally paint. How wonderfully engaging and inspiring! Of course, how do we get these in schools? Imagine an interactive center in every elementary art room. What an immersive opportunity to engage our young creators as they learn about art through different platforms, including digital.

Are we providing sufficient digital opportunities along-

side our traditional studio classes at the secondary level? Are our art teachers sufficiently skilled?

The integration of digital arts into secondary high school curricula has become increasingly significant as technology continues to evolve and shape contemporary artistic expression. Digital arts encompass various creative practices, including graphic design, digital photography, animation, video production, and interactive media. This modern approach to art education not only engages students in innovative ways but also prepares them for future careers in various fields. One of the primary benefits of incorporating digital arts into high school programs is the accessibility it offers. Students can create and experiment with different mediums without the need for expensive materials traditionally associated with art, such as paint or sculpture supplies. With just a computer and software, they can explore their creativity, making art more inclusive and approachable for all learners.

Furthermore, digital art encourages collaboration and communication among students. Many digital tools facilitate group projects, allowing individuals to share their ideas and skills in real-time. This collaborative environment fosters a sense of community and can lead to more enriched learning experiences. Students learn to appreciate different perspectives, negotiate roles within a group, and develop interpersonal skills that are essential in today's workforce.

Additionally, digital arts education equips students with critical skills necessary for the 21st-century job market. Knowledge of digital media tools, editing software, and design principles not only enhances students' artistic capabilities but also makes them more competitive in various careers, such as graphic design, marketing, game design, video production, and more. Introducing digital arts in schools prepares students for post-secondary education in these fields and provides a foundation for lifelong learning.

Moreover, integrating digital arts into the curriculum

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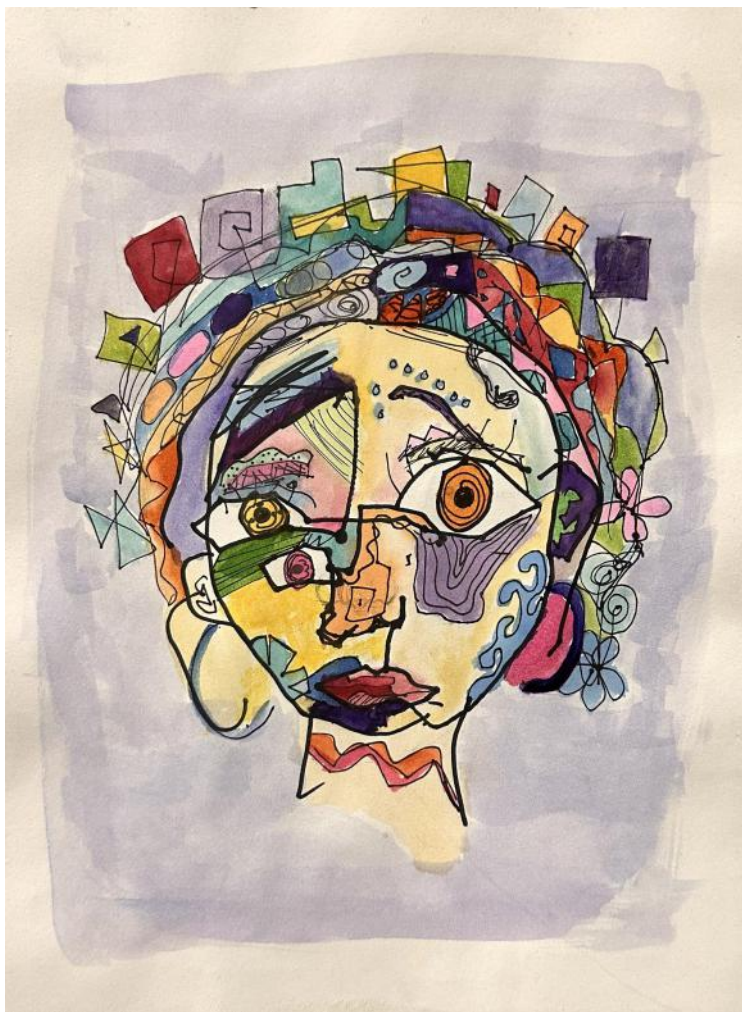




Ha, 6th Grade, Old Donation School, Leigh Drake



William, Kindergarten, Harry E. James Elementary School, Kelly Cullum



Hayden, 10th Grade, Liberty High School, Heather Deeny



Shruti, 6th Grade, Old Donation School, Leigh Drake



Gayle, 12th Grade, Liberty High School, Ashley Hinton



Zya, 5th Grade, O.B. Gates Elementary School, Kai Chen



Katherine, 11th Grade, Kettle Run High School, Tisha Burke



Darlin, 11th Grade, Liberty High School, Heather Deeny

VAEA Distinguished Fellows

Class of 2024

VAEA Distinguished Fellows are members of any division who are recognized for their long-term service to the profession and to the Association. Their leadership, scholarly, creative, instructional, and advocacy accomplishments and contributions include exemplary service and practice in visual arts, design, and/or media arts education at the state, district, local/community, and/or national levels.

This year we are recognizing Fellows who have been elected to the Class of 2024: **Kelly Bisogno, Jauan Brooks, and Linda Conti.**

Kelly Bisogno, the Virginia Department of Education Coordinator of Fine Arts, is a visionary thinker and thoughtful advocate for quality arts education and has distinguished herself from the beginning of her career. She has led us through a reimagining of the 2020 SOLs framework, has been a leading partner for the Arts Education Data Project, is an ex officio member of the VAEA Board and the VA Coalition for Fine Arts Education, and serves in leadership roles at the national level with the Arts Education Partnership and State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education. She invites arts educators with a variety of experience to be involved in projects, consults stakeholders on important issues, designs initiatives to communicate the importance of arts education to folks outside of the profession, and supports arts education association advocacy initiatives.



Jauan Brooks, Harrisonburg High School art teacher, and leader in developing and implementing the



high school's Fine Art Academy, is described by her nominator as having a "passion for arts advocacy, dedication to students and community, and a limitless work ethic". She has served critical roles in VAEA as conference committee chair and as a 6-year national award-winning YAM cochair. Her nominator also mentions her exceptional work as clinical faculty for JMU and describes her as a "compassionate educator/mentor with rigorous standards, high expectations, and unwavering dedication to her profession, illuminated in countless hours spent on student exhibitions throughout the year" and her five-year STAR teacher school recognition nominated by students.

Linda Conti, retired from the JK-8 independent Hill School, is an analytical, thoughtful, strategic, straightforward, and compassionate leader in and for art education and VAEA. Her nominator says, "I could not overstate how fortunate we are to have had Linda in VAEA leadership roles for almost twenty years...but a listing of titles only tells part of the story. Twice she has stepped in and taken over responsibilities during a period of crisis and made sure that the association would thrive." Linda also understands the need for an outward focus of the VAEA and has supported advocacy and policy influencing activities, including the VAEA's participation in the Virginia Coalition for Fine Arts Education. Finally, and as important as her other qualities, Linda is a collaborator. She is not afraid to ask questions or get advice, works to build leadership skills in others, honors others' accomplishments, and recruits others to contribute wherever needed based on their strengths and interests.



We thank Kelly, Jauan, and Linda for their service to the Association and to our profession. Congratulations!



Policy

Barbara Laws



It's that time again. The 2025 General Assembly session convenes on January 8, 2025, and runs through February 22. Folks from the VAEA and Virginia Coalition for Fine Arts Education (VCFAE) are already reviewing prefiled motions – some new and others continued from last year – for potential direct or indirect impact on arts education. Last year we looked at over 2,000 titles and headings and (when needed) legislation summaries, full texts, and amended versions, ultimately tracking the progress of 39 bills. This year we expect about the same, although, since it's an odd year, the session is scheduled for an extendable 30 days, half the length of even years.

While pre-filed bills will continue to dribble in, we expect the bulk of the legislation to drop on January 8th and 9th and are prepared to review it as much as possible in real time. We'll develop responses – either positive or negative – and contact General Assembly committee chairs, committees, and bill patrons as needed. We may, depending on the urgency of the

situation, call on you to contact your representatives and would hope that you respond since legislators value the opinion of their constituents.

Important information will be posted on the VAEA and VCFAE websites.

If you haven't, you may want to consider connecting with your Delegate, Senator, and other decision makers by inviting them to your student activities and informing them of your school events. Relationships are important. It is much easier to make a request or have your opinion heard if you have a positive connection in advance. As we have found in the VCFAE, collaborating with your colleagues in the other arts will make your voice stronger and give you common language.

We're still working on the fine arts diploma seal and are looking for a legislator patron to help move this important student recognition through the House of Delegates and Senate. We'll keep you informed. ■

Archivist

Angie Salerno



Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the digital archives! I received a lot of information at the conference. There is still so much work to do, but I am excited about the work. When you've been around the organization for a while, it's wonderful looking back at what has been accomplished and the people who got us to where we are now. My next goal is to make contact with VCU Arts to make a partnership to digitize the records that are already there in storage.

One archive fact: did you know that before computers, we had physical scrapbooks for each region to make the Youth Art Month book? A few of these examples are in the archives! ■



Nico, 2nd Grade, O.B. Gates Elementary School, Kai Chen

Membership

Patsy Parker



VAEA is the 4th largest affiliated (state/province and national membership) association of the NAEA. To ensure our longevity as a professional art education association, we have made a commitment to bringing our preservice/students to the state conference by lowering their registration expense and promoting our Silent Auction to defray the cost of their attendance. In doing so we are introducing them to their professional art education association that is geared towards assisting them in the needs and demands of the education systems of today's world. The schools represented are Christopher Newport/5, George Mason/11, James Madison/5, Longwood/5, Old Dominion/6, Radford/3, Randolph/1 and Shanandoah/1. Longevity continues for our membership by annually orchestrating the state conference and weekend workshops in different locations, hopefully making it logistically less difficult to attend professional development sessions and workshops. Did you know that every member may attend any region's weekend workshop?

OK, I promised you numbers...so here's some more! The Regional Membership breakdown includes Blue Ridge Region/78, Central Region/172, Northern Region/232, Southwest Region/56 and Tidewater Region/117. The overall state membership is comprised of 516 Active Professionals, 7 Associates, 17 First Year Professionals, 35 Retired members and 60 Preservice/Students. The breakdown of involvement levels is: Elementary/203, Middle Level/80, Secondary/189, Higher Education/33, Museum Education/17 and Supervision/Administration/38.

Not all our members are public school art educators. The concern is that art educators at private schools may experience isolation just like that of art educators in small counties in Virginia. This is the opposite experience of members working in large cities with art department supervisors. We all benefit from the variety of sessions and workshops offered at regional workshops as well as the annual state conference with the exchange of ideas, sparking conversations, experimentation of new/different media techniques and enhanced depth and breadth of art curricula. Our group of private art educators continues to grow with the Virginia Association of Independent Schools/27, Independent Schools/6, Private Schools/5 and Religious Affiliated Schools/21members. It's never about

where you work. It's about how rich you make your art program for your students.

During this past calendar year new members joined in January-5, February-9, March-3, April-4, May-12, June-13 July-4, August-8, September-22, (Fall Conference) October-58, November-12. (NAEA December rosters had not been reported when this column was written.)

Thank you for your patience wading through the numbers! You just might have a clearer picture of our professional education association, of how and where we accomplish our commitments and especially the difference we make in art education. ■



Carden, 7th Grade, Old Donation School, Leigh Drake

Research

Kelly Nelson



Prioritizing Research

In the prior article Art Historical and Art Making Research, I addressed art research that often only occurs during the summer months, to help you prepare for next summer's work. This article addresses the need for research during the school year and suggests one method to accomplish said research.

I am grateful I attended the presentation Get to Work: A Framework for Consistent Creativity by Eric Scott at our 2024 conference. Eric shared information on how teachers can develop consistent creativity in their students as well as themselves. A free download of Eric's creativity rules was shared and available at his website, ericcottart.com, as well as Sister Corita Kent's Ten Rules that you may want to post in your classroom, studio and office to serve as a visual reminder of your creativity priorities. Attendees also shared their creativity tips and tricks with most agreeing it is time that is the most difficult and needed commodity to pursue creative endeavors. To prioritize your creativity time, see the following call for the VAEA Research Modified Pomodoro.

Join the VAEA Research Modified Pomodoro!

Do you want to prioritize working in the studio? Do you have a research paper that needs attention? Do you want to finally apply for that artist residency? Join the VAEA Research Modified Pomodoro to help you accomplish your research goals. The Pomodoro Technique is a short period of time in which you work intensely, take a break, then return to your work, usually in twenty-five-minute intervals. The VAEA Research Pomodoro will be a modified, virtual version. VAEA members will meet through zoom a couple of times a month to work on self-directed, important projects. If you are more likely to work because you have a commitment to others, this modified pomodoro is for you. Come join the modified research pomodoro and see how much you can accomplish in connection with your colleagues.

Step-by-step Process of VAEA's Modified Pomodoro Technique:

1. Choose a project you want to work on and join the zoom meeting.
2. Group members share their project step with others.

3. Work on your project step for 35 minutes, zoom camera and sound off.

4. Share your accomplishment with others and your next project step.

5. Take a short break with zoom camera and sound off.

6. Work on your project step up to 35 minutes, zoom camera and sound off.

7. Share your accomplishment with others and sign off of zoom with a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

Research Pomodoro will meet 7:00 – 8:30 pm. Here is the zoom link:

<https://longwood-edu.zoom.us/j/92453430235?pwd=cGKoZomhcaXxtb9cOTHYpuXhpLxO.1>

Current dates for the VAEA Research Modified Pomodoro:

Wednesday, Jan. 8th
Monday, Jan. 27th
Wednesday, Feb. 5th
Monday, Feb. 24th
Wednesday, March 5th
Wednesday, March 19th
Wednesday, April 9th
Wednesday, April 23rd
Wednesday, May 7th
Wednesday, May 21st

If you have any questions regarding the Pomodoro, please email Kelly Nelson at nelsonkm@longwood.edu. ■



Regional Messages Northern

Julie Cacciola

Greetings from the North! I know I may be in the minority, but I absolutely love winter. Sure, it would be better with snow (and perhaps as you are reading this we may have had some), but the fresh cold air and shorter days make it a great opportunity to get into some of my own art making. Often, as art education is our priority, many of our personal art making takes a backseat. Winter is a great time to slow things down and focus on our own art. For those of you who have a hard time with the cold dark months, perhaps carving out some time for your art making can brighten things up.

I certainly hope many of you were able to attend our professional conference in November. This was the first time our region hosted in quite some time, and it was amazing! Thank you to those who presented, as well as the many committee members who gave time to make it a meaningful and engaging event. Flossie Chua from Harvard's Project Zero was our keynote speaker. She gave a wonderful talk on transformative repair and the ways we can grow and heal through our trials. Another highlight of the conference was our own Linda Conti being honored as the VAEA State Art Educator of the year. Anyone who has spent time with Linda knows that she is an inspiring educator who helped our region and state organization grow and thrive. Congratulations Linda!!

It has dawned on me that this is my last article as Northern President. It has been a wild ride these past 4 years and I will forever be grateful and honored to be a part of VAEA. This organization is indeed family. Built strong by many dedicated individuals who love teaching art and helping others to do the same. Thank you all for allowing me to be in this role. I have created amazing relationships and built great memories.

I would like to take this moment to introduce our incoming NVAEA Board. I will be staying on as vice president, but I am very excited to be working under Kelly Wasson. Kelly will be our new Northern Region President. The first work that comes to mind when I



think of Kelly is "giver". Not only is she an amazing art educator, but the dedication and spirit that Kelly has brought to our region is excellent. She has also served as our state YAM chair. Furthermore, have any of you been fortunate to find one of the little treasure prizes at the conference? That is all Kelly! I can't wait to see where she takes us Northerners!!

Serving as our treasurer is Vicky Eichler. Vicky has many years of experience teaching art and working with the VAEA. She has been a wonderful support to the Northern Region Board and her enthusiasm and willingness to help has been so beneficial over the years. I am pleased that she is stepping into this leadership role.

Finally, we will have Pamela Calore serving as our secretary. Pam is a middle school art educator in Alexandria City schools. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to VAEA. Her presentations at conferences have been engaging and informative. I am so excited that she will be serving on our Northern Region Board. ■



Carden, 7th Grade, Old Donation School, Leigh Drake

Central

Alex Labarr

Hello Central Region!
As my term as your Central Region president comes to an end, I wanted to express how much I've enjoyed being part of this wonderful

region and board for the last several years. We have accomplished a great deal over the years, and that was only possible thanks to your support. I'm confident that CVAEA will continue to thrive under the leadership of your newly elected incoming president, Mary Melissa Johnson. She has many wonderful ideas for future endeavors, and I'm excited to see what she accomplishes! As we embark on a new year, I wish you all the best as you prepare for a fresh start in your classrooms. May this year bring you joy, fulfillment, and many rewarding experiences with your students. Thank you again for your unwavering support and dedication. I will deeply miss serving as your president, but I look forward to continuing to support CVAEA and VAEA as a member.

Sincerely, Alex LaBarr ■



Blue Ridge

Melissa Combs

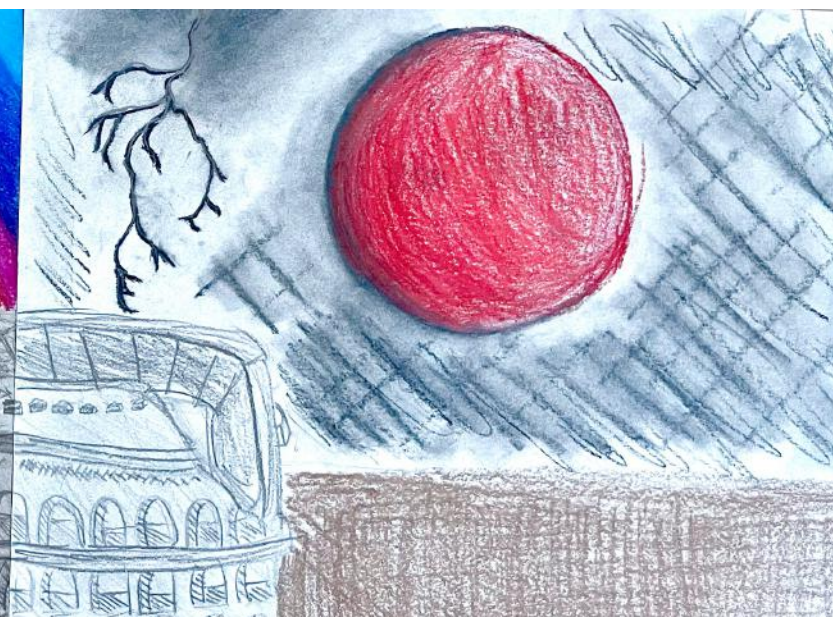
In the flurry of activity that happens every fall, it is easy to forget how beneficial the state conference is to our teaching. Whether you are a seasoned teacher or

new to the profession, whether you have attended every conference or are considering going for the first time, most agree it is worth the effort. Northern Region members certainly did a wonderful job this year hosting and I hope all members found as many useful sessions as I did.

Blue Ridge regional members represented well in attendance and presenting. The regional meeting was well attended and I appreciated the great feedback about our events planned for next year that are still in the works. Many regional members also were able to carve a bit of time for some socializing at our evening gathering.

In two years, the conference will be back in our region, which would be a good time to plan on attending if the idea of travelling isn't your thing. It is always a worthwhile way to spend a weekend. For the coming year, the regional board is planning several professional development opportunities, including a retreat. If you would like to teach a workshop or have an idea of a possible topic, please let me know! There are only 4 people on the regional board and we don't like making choices for the entire region all by ourselves. In order to plan events that work for you and are beneficial for you, we need your input! Any and all suggestions are welcome.

Check your email in the coming weeks for details on events coming in 2025 for our region! ■



Carden, 7th Grade, Old Donation School, Leigh Drake

Southwest Lauren Balint



This article is the last article I will write as SWVAEA's President. I have enjoyed getting to know art teachers throughout our region, hanging out at conference and having great conversations. The most recent VAEA conference in Reston truly re-energized my teaching practices and began dialogues that I want to continue in the future; I hope if you attended you feel the same.

I am excited to announce the incoming leadership team for the coming year! Please join me in welcoming our board members who will serve the Southwest Region:

- **Matt Bolen, President**
- **Sierra Frazier, Vice-President**
- **Jennifer Fitzgerald, Secretary**

I am confident that under their leadership, our group will thrive and evolve. The new board brings fresh perspectives and new energy, and I know they will carry forward our mission with dedication and passion.

Thank you all for your support and collaboration over the past year. It has truly been a privilege to work alongside such passionate, committed educators. I am excited to see all that you will continue to accomplish, and I look forward to watching the growth of our SWVAEA region in the years ahead.

Wishing you all continued success and creativity in this second semester; I hope that your art shows, YAM festivities, and the end of the school year activities are amazing! I'll see you in 2025!

Tidewater Rebecca Davidson



As we kick off the new year, let's take a moment to reflect on all the amazing accomplishments from last year—what an inspiring year it was!

A special highlight was seeing four of our Tidewater art educators receive state-level recognition in the fall. Join us in celebrating:

Meredith Snyder, VAEA Elementary Art Educator of the Year
Samantha Wegener, VAEA Secondary Art Educator of the Year
Truly Matthews, VAEA Museum Art Educator of the Year
Georgeanna Felio, VAEA Supervision Art Educator of the Year

Their passion for transforming students' lives through art inspires us all, and we are so proud to have them in our community.

Last year also brought exciting changes, like moving our Summer Workshop to the fall. This shift allowed us to overlap with the ViBe Mural Festival and the Neptune Festival—what a perfect combination! It was wonderful to see so many of you at our cyanotype workshop.

We also saw record attendance at our Winter Workshop, with more participants than ever sharing ideas and inspiration. Let's keep that momentum going this year!

The 2024 TVAEA Winter Workshop returns to the Torggler Fine Arts Center at CNU on Saturday, February 1st, from 8:30 AM to 2:00 PM. This year's sessions include creating Comfort Boxes, intro to Wheel Throwing, making DIY Gelli Plate Printing, and more!

It's a perfect opportunity to connect, learn, and grow with fellow art educators in a fun and creative setting.

Save your spot by registering at bit.ly/TVAEAWW25.

Here's to another year of creativity, connection, and success in art education. Feel free to share ideas for workshops, events, or gatherings—we value your input as we plan for the year ahead! ■



VAEA Elementary Art Educator of the Year, Meredith Snyder, being honored at a VBCPS School Board meeting. Left to right: Superintendent Dr. Robertson, Meredith Snyder, School Board Chair Kimberly A. Melnyk

Continued from T. Burke

mentorship opportunities provide valuable support networks to help us grow in our practice.

Mental Health and Well-being

Art education is not only beneficial for student growth but can also serve as a tool for mental health and well-being. The winter months, with their shorter days and colder weather, can impact both students' and teachers' emotional well-being. Art allows students to process their feelings, reduce stress, and engage in meaningful expression.

Here are some ideas to help students through creative outlets:

- **Therapeutic Art Practices:** Art-making can help students work through their emotions, providing a space for self-expression and healing. Techniques like art journaling or color therapy can be especially helpful for students dealing with stress or anxiety.
- **Social-Emotional Learning:** Incorporating art into SEL lessons can provide students with a constructive way to express themselves and develop emotional resilience.

Community and Parental Involvement

Building a strong support network is key to the success of any art program. Engaging with the local community, involving parents, and showcasing student work can create a culture that values art education. As we move into the new year, consider ways to build stronger relationships with your community, such as:

- **Community Collaborations:** Partner with local art institutions or artists to enrich your curriculum and provide students with real-world experiences.
- **Parent Engagement:** Communicate the value of art education to parents and involve them in school events or showcases.

Sharing Resources and Best Practices

To help us move forward into 2025, I've set up a shared Google Drive with resources covering many of the topics we discussed, including curriculum development, student engagement, and funding opportunities.

The drive is still in its early stages, but it's a space for us to share strategies, resources, and successes to help each other navigate the challenges we face as secondary art educators.

By working together, we can help each other with an opportunity for growth, creativity, and collaboration. Here's to a fresh start, full of inspiration and new possibilities! ■

<https://bit.ly/VAEAhsResources>

Continued from A. Hester

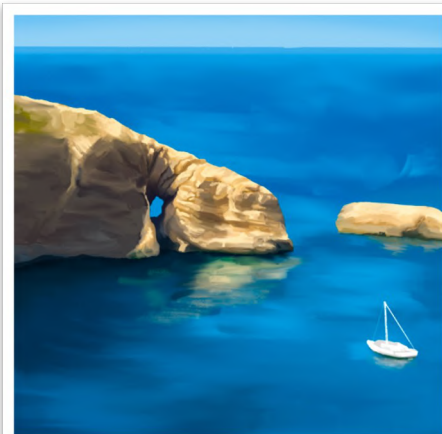
allows for a unique exploration of contemporary social issues. Students can utilize their work to comment on societal challenges, engage in discussions about culture, and express their views on pressing matters. This aligns with the current trend in art education, which focuses not only on the making of art but also on the critical theory behind it and its potential for social impact.

In conclusion, incorporating digital arts into secondary high school curricula can significantly enhance students' art educational experiences. By embracing technology and contemporary practices, schools can nurture creativity, improve collaboration, and equip students with relevant skills for the future. As we move forward in an increasingly digital world, the importance of digital arts education will only continue to grow, shaping the next generation of artists, thinkers, and innovators. ■

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Youth Art Month

Kelly Wasson



Greetings from your friendly Youth Art Chair. I am still on a high from our amazing VAEA Conference this past month. The atmosphere was electric, filled with an extraordinary enthusiasm for the arts. The collaborations and exchange of knowledge were absolutely remarkable! But the real stars of the show? You amazing art educators! Hanging out with you all was like a song for my soul. What an unforgettable three-day joyride!

For those who were not able to come you missed some very deserving Youth Art Month Awards that were given out at the Awards Dinner. These awards were for counties and schools that help contribute to the very impressive award that Virginia was granted. Virginia took the lead nationally as our Youth Art Month Portfolio documenting YAM 2024 across the commonwealth was given the Award of Excellence. We will receive the official award from the Council for Art Education at the National Art Education Conference in Louisville, KY.

The following counties and schools received the following awards:

Impact Awards: OB Gates Elementary, Lafayette High School, Virginia Beach City Schools, Riverside High School and Harry E. James Elementary;

Bronze Award: Harrisonburg City Schools;

Silver Award: Chesterfield County Schools;

Gold Award: Fauquier County Schools.

Thank you for your contributions. Without the excellent documentation from many schools and counties we could not have compiled such a wonderful portfolio.

If you have not yet thought about how

Youth Art Month can happen in your classroom, school, division or region, now is the time to research ideas, get together with colleagues or just figure out which of your existing programs you are going to highlight and document, simply document what you already are doing. This month marks my final term as the YAM Chair, as I'm preparing to transition to a new role on the board. I've truly enjoyed my time in this position, but I'm excited to take on the role of President of the Northern Region. Beginning in January, Kaitlyn Canter and Karla Kolb will step in as the new co-chairs for Youth Art Month. I'll still be here to assist and answer any questions you may have about YAM at any time! ■



Reagan, 7th Grade, Taylor Middle School, Marissa Pappas

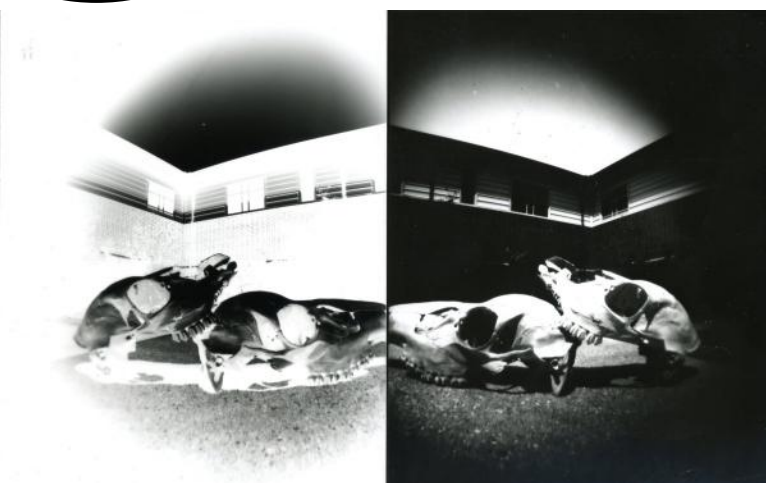
Retiree News

Ginna Cullen &

Carla Jaranson

What a joy it was for the retired art educators who attended the VAEA retired meeting to meet with the pre-service college students. Each student was given a slip of paper and asked to write a question about teaching. Ginna read each question out loud to the group and the retirees gave their opinions. There were many great questions and multitudes of answers that took up most of the time. At the end of the session, names were called for attendees to select door prize items. It was an excellent meeting for all who attended.

Students and new teachers are reminded that retired art educators are a fountain of knowledge about teaching art and are happy and honored to share. ■



Celeste, 12th Grade, Kettle Run High School, Tisha Burke

Continued from C. Miehl

of creativity, self-expression, and critical thinking. Art education is about developing skills that empower students to communicate complex ideas, explore their emotions, and reflect on the world around them.

A visionary art educator sees every student as a potential artist with a unique perspective. This means providing students with the tools and guidance they need to explore their ideas, take risks, and think critically about their work. It also means creating an environment where mistakes are seen as part of the learning process, and where students are encouraged to experiment and push boundaries without fear of failure.

In addition to fostering creativity, our vision should aim to develop students' ability to think critically and analytically. This is achieved not just by teaching students to observe, interpret, and create art, but also by helping them understand the historical, cultural, and social context in which art is made. By integrating these perspectives, we can guide students toward a deeper appreciation of art's role in society and encourage them to think about the impact of their work.

Moreover, a visionary art educator understands the importance of emotional and social development.

Through art, students can explore complex feelings and experiences in ways that may be difficult to express verbally. A supportive, inclusive, and empathetic environment nurtures these emotional explorations, which are vital to students' overall development as individuals. Art becomes a vehicle for self-discovery, resilience, and confidence building.

A vision for professional development, program growth, and student success is essential for us to thrive in our multifaceted roles. By maintaining a clear and evolving vision, we can ensure that our teaching remains dynamic, that our programs remain relevant, and that our students grow into confident, creative, and thoughtful individuals. In an age where creativity is increasingly recognized as a key driver of innovation and problem-solving, our role as art educators has never been more important. It is through vision—an intentional, forward-thinking approach—that we can shape not only the future of our students but the future of art itself. ■



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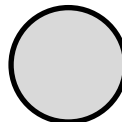
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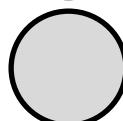
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*2025 Board Contacts will appear in the Spring/Summer 2025 issue. Updated contacts are available at vaea.org

Funhouse Portrait

Lesson Plan for Grades 5-12



Grid: Draw a grid directly onto an 8" x 10" portrait printout.



Create: Create two funhouse grids, one with wavy lines, and one with angled lines.



Draw: Draw the portraits using the gridded photograph as a reference.

Get wacky in this exploration of graphite forms and tools.

Using a grid system of drawing, students step out of line and into distortion with a variety of graphite materials.

CHECK OUT NEW lesson plans and video workshops for students of all ages at DickBlick.com/lesson-plans.



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Melody, 12th Grade, Mills E. Godwin High School, Catherine Bare