



vaea

virginia art education association

Virginia Art Education Association

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

**Spring/
Summer 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 28.

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

Winter Issue: December 15

Spring/Summer Issue: March 15

Fall/Conference Issue: July 15



@VAartED

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President's Message

Cheryl Miehl

If the arts are taken away, so is possibility

As a high school art teacher, I've always believed that creativity is just as vital as literacy or math. Art fosters self-expression, problem-solving, empathy, and critical thinking—skills that extend far beyond the canvas. But in the wake of the ongoing efforts to defund the Department of Education, I've watched the fragile ecosystem of art education begin to unravel.

The most immediate impact could be funding cuts to arts programs. Schools' budgets may be slashed, and art is almost always first on the chopping block. Supplies that were once standard—clay, paints, even paper—are now considered luxuries. Field trips to museums, guest artist visits, and student art exhibitions have disappeared. Many will have to turn to crowdfunding and personal spending to provide basic materials, but that is not sustainable.

Worse still is the message this sends to students: that their creativity, their voice, doesn't matter. Many of our students come from marginalized communities. For some, the art room is the only place they feel heard, seen, or successful. Art gives them a language when words fall short. Now, that lifeline is slipping away.

When federal support for education diminishes, states and local districts are left to fill the gap—if they can. This deepens inequity. Wealthier schools may maintain their arts programs while under-resourced schools are left behind. The divide grows, and our students pay the price—not just in missed opportunities, but in stifled potential.

The long-term effects are chilling. We are raising a generation that may never discover their creative abilities. Without art, we lose future designers, animators, architects, and innovators. More than that, we lose the empathy,

resilience, and cultural richness that the arts foster.

Art isn't extra. It's essential. And as we watch funding fade and support dry up, I fear for the spirit of public education itself. We're not just losing programs—we're losing pieces of our humanity.

I encourage each of you to review the information about the Arts Education Alliance and watch for emails from NAEA when there is a call to action. We all need to participate to save the possibilities for our students. ■



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

Vice President's Message

Leigh Drake



"There are two distinct languages. There is the verbal, which separates people... and there is the visual that is understood by everybody."

~Yaacov Agam

I'm excited to embark on another year of art-making and collaboration with our incredible VAEA community. I believe that education's true purpose is to foster a group of learners who continuously strive for excellence, not only within themselves but also among their peers and within their communities. The most valuable resources we have as educators are one another. Without collaboration, our growth is confined to our own perspective.

This fall, we have an exciting opportunity to connect and grow together at the VAEA Conference, to be held at the Hilton Norfolk The Main from November 20th-22nd,

2025. Our Tidewater region is working tirelessly to put together a wonderful conference for all members. We hope you'll join us for a few days of professional development and inspiration. If you're interested in becoming more involved in the planning process, please reach out to Rebecca Davidson, our Tidewater region president and regional site chair for the event.

Additionally, the conference proposal link has been posted on our website and sent via email. I encourage you to consider presenting and sharing your knowledge, skills, and passion with your fellow art educators. This is a wonderful opportunity to contribute to the growth of our arts community.

I look forward to working with all of you across the region again as we continue to build upon and strengthen our art education network. Hope to see you all this fall in Norfolk, VA! ■



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

Advocacy

Mike Gettings



Foggy Day: A Call to Action

On a foggy day walking the beach, I could hear gulls overhead but not see them. Mist swirled around me. I knew my location and destination, yet the path remained shrouded.

I contemplated the looming challenges in art education. The future of the Department of Education is murky, with potential shifts in federal funding. This creates both obstacles and opportunities for art educators.

Here's some perspective: Seventeen years ago, a global financial crisis triggered a deep recession. I recall the desperation as jobs vanished and budgets shrank. Savings came only through layoffs. Are we ready for such an environment today? No. Institutional knowledge about preserving roles through advocacy has faded as veterans retired.

Art educators, administrators, and advocates must act

proactively. We need a plan to convince decision-makers—parents, school boards, legislators, and governors—of the arts' vital role in education and why we deserve funding amid cuts. Let's revisit past successes, adapting them

with fresh insights. Research, like Investigating Causal Effects of Arts Education Experiences: Experimental Evidence from Houston's Arts Access Initiative (Rice University, 2019) and the VCFAE's absenteeism report, shows arts improve retention, cognition, attendance, and lifelong habits—data we lacked in 2008.

The call to action? Time is critical—act now. Launch a series of articles or blurbs, shared internally and externally. Start by educating principals and parents; their support is foundational. Then inform staff and school boards. Reach out to state legislators and the governor. Our strength lies in grassroots momentum and educating these key players.

We must prove our worth to our children at every level. In 2008, we showed the arts aren't a luxury but a necessity for fostering well-rounded, resilient students. As the fog lifts, clarity will emerge—but we should already have a path charted. ■



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

Social Media

Jess Beach



Social Media Happenings

How do you use social media? Perhaps you call it your down time and scroll just to relax...or conceivably you post things that have happened in your life, either personal or professional... or maybe you utilize it to join groups with great ideas for art education. However you use it, we ask that you take a moment to follow our pages where you can find posts from VAEA Art Educators around the state with vital info. You can find us on X and Insta with **@VaArtEd** and on Facebook **@VAEA** and join our **VAEA Member Forum** in groups!

Would you like to have your art education posts reposted? If you take a moment to add #VaArtEd to each of your posts, you have an opportunity to have them reposted on VAEA's page! We love to share all of the fabulous things you are doing in your studios with our members. You can tag anything that is art ed related! Have you had a fun day testing out watercolors? Did a student of yours receive an accolade (just make sure they have a photo release)? Are you excited about a new art supply in your studio? Have you had a show of your personal work lately? All of these things would be great to share with our VAEA community.

Additionally, **ANYONE** can post within our **VAEA Member Forum on Facebook!** Many of you may be members of groups on Facebook that share within your levels. For example, I am a member of the Elementary Art Teachers group. In this group, people post successful projects and pose questions to other professionals on how to do things. Feel free to utilize our VAEA Member Forum in the same respect! If you are interested in hearing how another art teacher houses clay supplies, post the question "How do I store clay ma-

terials?" Maybe you need fresh ideas (that is the most exciting part of our jobs); post the statement "Show me your favorite project!" Posts can be submitted with just words or add a picture to catch the attention of scrollers.

Lastly, if you are curious about VAEA's posts over the years, then in your search bar type our hashtag #VaArtEd and ta-dah! A variety of posts will appear from VAEA and art teachers within our community! You will find some great sessions led by our art teachers on our monthly ThinkFASTs (Friday Art Shares for Teachers) and our MMMArts (Monday Museum Moments). Last March we also concluded a tremendous Youth Arts Month. You can also search #VaArtEdYAM25 to see some amazing things happening with our young artists.

Thank you for sharing your programs with our educators! Together we grow the potential of art education across Virginia! If you have further questions or are interested in learning more about sharing on social media, please contact Jess Beach at

jessicabeach4@gmail.com. ■



Charles, 11th Grade, Liberty High School, Ashley Hinton

Awards

Tiffany Floyd & Meghan Hamm

Hello VAEA Members! Please welcome Tiffany Floyd as the new co-chair for Awards! I am so happy to have Tiffany join the team. Hopefully, together, we will have more nominations this year. But we can only do this with your help.

Before the school year comes to an end, please think about nominating a fellow art educator for a VAEA award. You may know extraordinary Art Educators in your Region who merit recognition for their advocacy, leadership and contributions to the field of art education. Please visit the VAEA website for more information. <http://www.vaea.org/awards1.html>

August 15- Regional Presidents and Division directors receive packets

September 10- Awards Chair receives packets for adjudication



Nomination packets include: (on VAEA website under Awards)

1. Nomination Form
2. Nomination letter
3. NAEA Vita
4. 2 letters of recommendation
5. Digital image of nominee
6. Pictures and video clips of nominees in the art room/ special projects, student/ personal artwork, etc.

Please consider nominating a fellow art educator or nominating yourself for an award this year! And, please let me know if you need any assistance or have questions about the awards process. ■



Lily, 3rd Grade, O.B. Gates Elementary School, Kai Chen

Division News Elementary

Erika Ogier

It's summertime! A perfect time for rest, reflection and visiting those local galleries and museums!

During a recent visit to the Frida: Beyond the Myth exhibition at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA), I found myself deeply moved by the story and work of Frida Kahlo. Her ability to transform pain, heritage, and identity into powerful self-portraits and symbolic imagery reminded me just how essential it is to bring meaningful, expressive, and culturally rich artists into the elementary art classroom. Kahlo's life and work demonstrate how storytelling, symbolism, and emotional honesty can connect even with our youngest students.

In thinking about how Frida's voice can be echoed in my teaching, I began reflecting on other contemporary artists whose practices are not only inspiring but also highly influential, offering dynamic opportunities to spark creativity, cultural understanding, and personal expression in young learners.



Shinique Smith

Shinique Smith is known for her vibrant, expressive works made from textiles, found objects, calligraphy, and paint. Her large-scale installations and paintings often reflect themes of identity, memory, and material culture. In the elementary classroom, Smith's use of fabric and personal items can inspire a lesson in found-object sculpture or collage. Students could create "memory bundles" or collaged self-portraits using repurposed materials from home, learning how everyday objects can tell personal stories. Her colorful aesthetic and emphasis



Shantell Martin

on movement also invite lessons on pattern, rhythm, and texture.

Shantell Martin is a British artist known for her black-and-white line drawings that explore identity, storytelling, and movement. Her spontaneous, free-flowing style of drawing can easily translate into student projects focused on continuous line drawing, visual journaling, or mural-making. Martin's philosophy encourages students to ask big questions like "Who are you?" and "Are you you?" which ties beautifully into SEL (social-emotional learning) and identity exploration. Her work empowers children to see drawing as a powerful thinking tool, not just a skill.

Wendy Red Star

Wendy Red Star, a multimedia artist and member of the Apsáalooke (Crow) Nation, uses photography, sculpture, and installation to explore Native identity, history, and contemporary life. Her work often includes humor, historical imagery, and bold color. In the classroom, Red Star's art encourages important conversations about Native American culture and storytelling. Students can create their own "family history" photo collages or symbolic self-portraits using mixed media, connecting to heritage and narrative in a respectful and engaging way.

Each of these artists, like Frida Kahlo, offers a window into how personal voice and cultural context enrich artistic expression. By incorporating their work into our curriculum, we not only teach art—we help students find and share their own voice.



Middle

Kirstie Sadler



As I settle in to write this article, I am fresh off the heels of attending the NAEA conference in Louisville, Kentucky. There is nothing like being around thousands of art educators with a shared commitment to art education. Being there reignited my passion for the profession and led me to consider the core values of NAEA: Creativity, Interconnectivity, Inclusivity, Ingenuity and Responsibility and how I can nurture them in my own practice. Considering these values, I developed guiding questions to consider as I plan for next school year. Here they are:

Creativity: How can I encourage students to take risks and recognize when they are engaged in the creative process? **Interconnectivity:** Who can I connect with in my community, both inside and out of school, to make great things happen for my students? **Inclusivity:** How can I foster a welcoming classroom environment where diverse learning needs are consistently met and no child is ever excluded or belittled by another? **Ingenuity:** How can I advocate for a visual art community where students are celebrated? **Responsibility:** Where have I set boundaries on my time and interactions so that I can show up each day with a positive mindset and clear focus to serve my students and school community to the best of my ability?

Read more about these guiding values on the NAEA

website. I also encourage you to check out their on-demand learning webinars. I recently watched The Benefits of Fan Art in the Classroom, and it helped shift my perspective quite a bit on student drawings of manga and anime characters, which many of our middle school kids love and we sometimes cringe. Check out VAEA's VAEA website, and Instagram and Facebook groups. There are so many wonderful resources and connections to tap into out there!

Feeling burned out? Get yourself to the VAEA conference in Norfolk on November 20-22, where you will be surrounded by hundreds of art educators from around our state. It is a genuinely beautiful time to spark creativity and ignite inspiration to take with you through the year ahead! ■

Continued from E. Ogier

What contemporary artists have you found to be especially impactful or accessible for your elementary students, and how have you incorporated their work into your lessons? Let me know at VaeaElemDivision@gmail.com! I look forward to hearing from you! ■

Image 1: Shinique Smith, Arcadian Cluster, 2006 - Installation view MOMA PS1 Contemporary (from website- <https://www.shiniquesmith.com/sculpture>)

Image 2: Wendy Redstar The Last Thanks, 2006 Archival pigment print (from website- <https://www.wendyredstar.com/the-last-thanks>)



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

Division News Secondary

Tisha Burke



Rejuvenation and Inspiration: Springtime Reflections

As we bid farewell to another successful Youth Art Month, the energy and enthusiasm from our all-county arts festival still lingers, giving us the push we need to navigate the final months of the school year. March continues to be a celebration of creativity, a showcase of our students' talents, and a reminder of the profound impact that art education has on young minds. Now, as spring unfolds, we find ourselves reflecting on the year's successes while looking ahead to fresh opportunities for growth, both for our students and ourselves as educators.

Spring is a season of renewal, making it the perfect time to reinvigorate our teaching practices and artistic passions. The longer days and warmer weather invite us to explore new projects, experiment with different media, and incorporate outdoor inspiration into our lesson plans. Whether it's plein air painting, nature-inspired mixed media, or collaborative public art projects, the season offers endless creative possibilities.

Beyond the classroom, many of us are making summer plans that include professional development, personal artistic endeavors, and well-earned travel. Personally, I am excited about traveling to Italy with a Nancy

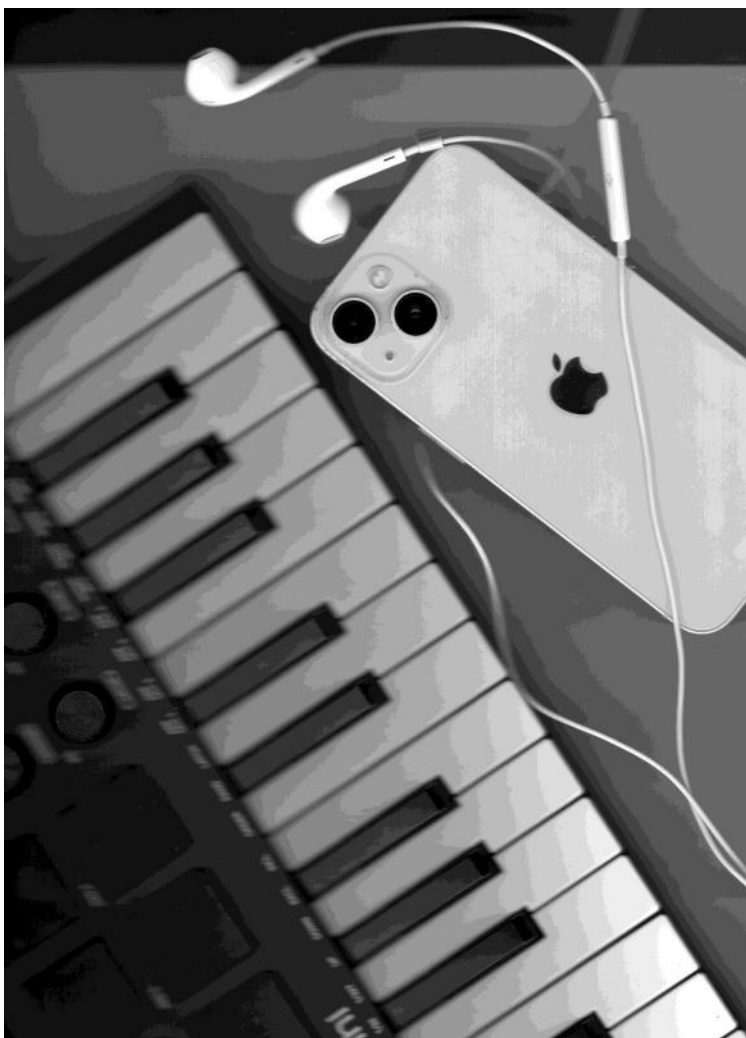
Walkup group of art educators in July. This opportunity to immerse myself in the rich artistic heritage of Italy will not only be an incredible experience but will also provide fresh insights and inspiration that I look forward to bringing back to my students and colleagues. Whether

attending conferences, enrolling in workshops, or simply dedicating time to our own creative pursuits, these experiences enrich our artistic journeys and equip us with new ideas and fresh energy to share in the fall. Take advantage of the wealth of opportunities available to refresh and expand your teaching practices.

As we move forward, let's embrace this season of renewal with enthusiasm and open minds. Take time to celebrate the progress your students have made, explore new creative outlets, and plan for the future with excitement. By nurturing our own artistic spirits, we ensure that we can continue to inspire and guide the next generation of young artists.

Wishing everyone a rejuvenating spring and a summer filled with artistic inspiration!

REMINDER: Please visit the shared Google Drive set up in response to our discussion at Conference. Please use this space to share strategies, resources, and successes to help each other navigate the challenges we face as secondary art educators. <https://bit.ly/VAEAhsResources>



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

Continued on page 23

Higher Education

Abi Gomez



I hope everyone is having a great end of the semester! As spring continues to bloom across the commonwealth, I find myself in a curious phase. I am curious about the future of public education, and higher education. I am curious about how you all are navigating the times we find ourselves in, maintaining optimism and tireless advocacy for the arts and arts education. What are you doing to fortify yourselves? What is the brightness that still brings you joy every day?

I wasn't able to attend the NAEA Convention this year, but the photos and stories shared were wonderful! An amazing collection of speakers and presenters created an artistic respite that it feels like everyone needed. I was curious if any other higher education VAEA members usually attend the national convention? I wonder how it compares to more academic conferences, or conferences hosted by government entities (like state arts agencies)? If anyone would like to share their thoughts or opinions, I would love to hear them!

Other curiosities that have sprung up revolved around the upcoming summer. I'm a nine-month employee, and summer usually turns into the time when I can focus more on the arts nonprofit I founded, plus lean into summer camp season. What do you like to do during the summer term? Do you

teach? Engage with community arts? Find professional development workshops? Focus on making art? On family? Vacation? Or do you like to prioritize rest?

Rest, I believe, is one of the most important things we can do to ensure we're able to face any challenges that lay ahead. I'm curious, what fortifies you? How do you ensure that you stay steadfast and resilient? Again, I'd love to hear from you all. I believe connections and community are another important element of the fortifications we need to develop in our field, in our workplaces, and in our lives. It's galvanizing to know that we are a part of a field that is incredibly passionate, creative, and unwavering in conviction, especially about the power and purpose of the arts! I hope you stay engaged and inspired, and let the arts continue to bring you fulfillment and joy throughout the year.

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



4th and 5th Grade Collaboration, O.B. Gates Elementary School, Kai Chen

Division News Museum Education

Emily Cayton



Teaching in any setting is a reciprocal exchange of ideas, and I wanted to use this article to share a specific successful project to show how learning in museums is expansive and surprising. This project relies on a school-museum partnership and collaboration. As an acknowledgement to the reader, I also want to pose big questions to consider in your own teaching space.

Inspired Wearable Arts

Fashion shows are a multisensory display of wearable art. Museums around the world have dedicated large gallery spaces to fashion displays ranging from high-end couture to period clothing or armor. By featuring what people wear, museums celebrate this complicated lineage of designing, constructing, and wearing art. These static displays are often theatrically presented with dramatic lighting and posed mannequins—but the movement of the fabric as well as the personality of the garment and wearer is up to the imagination. If only there was an opportunity to see wearable art as it was intended—strutting down a runway!

Each year, the Chrysler Museum of Art has an annual wearable arts show in partnership with The Governor's School for the Arts. Liana Courts, Visual Arts Department Chair for GSA, along with the full visual arts faculty support the museum and the students every step of this partnership. The process begins in December with gallery time and presentations from curators to discuss a theme and how works of art in the museum connect to that big idea. Over one hundred visual arts students enrolled at GSA visit the art museum to sketch, seek inspiration, and begin the design process. Through this project, young artists use the museum for research that will yield a unique wearable art connected to something they found in the galleries. From first fitting to runway display, this project binds the participating students together in enriching and special ways. They encourage and support each other throughout and share their knowledge during critiques, fittings, and more.

To highlight the reciprocity of this program, the museum learns from the students about what they see in the works on view. After the fashion show wraps, all the wearable arts go on view in the Museum's galleries. Each day, guests are amazed that high school students not only created these looks, but also anchored their concepts in an artwork or exhibition currently on view. The cycle of inspiration to concept and back is an exciting way to experience the museum's offerings. In closing, this model of a school using the museum as classroom/studio is extremely meaningful for all involved.

Big questions:

How do you set up opportunities for learners to find their own inspiration, beyond an online search?

In what ways do you as an educator help to harness this interest into the student's work of art, or series of works?

What makes wearable art special? What big ideas would be uniquely suited to explore through wearable art?

What local resources do you have that might be a catalyst for a partnership?

How might a museum, gallery, or historical site enhance an existing unit or project? ■



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

Supervision and Administration

Amber Hester



As we enter into spring and begin to wrap up another school year, it's essential to take time to reflect and thank our colleagues and art teachers for their outstanding work within our local divisions and also for the work that is being done on the state and national level through local chapters, VAEA, and NAEA. As leaders, we understand that our job is essential, yet it becomes even more challenging during the busy art show season. Mentoring, coaching, planning professional development, community collaboration, and working directly with administrators and teachers as we promote and advocate for art education within our community. We acknowledge the challenges you face and appreciate your dedication.

This brings me to the focus of this article, which is crucial in supporting our work in promoting the arts, as their benefits extend beyond the confines of our schools. A recent national news program highlighted how engagement in the arts can significantly improve

our health and contribute to the creation of healthier communities. In the realm of education, social and emotional learning has taken precedence. The fine arts, and their profound impact on us socially and emotionally, is something we as art educators are well aware. The program featured One Nation-One Project, Arts for Every Body, which emphasized "arts participation" as a healthy lifestyle and benefit.

"The current study found that creating original art within a narrative-based programme encouraged self-reflection and enhanced the development of a professional identity dedicated to compassionate, collaborative, and professional patient-centred care." (Jones, Kittendorf, Kumagai, 2016).

Arts participation is the focus. It becomes essential to plan opportunities for teachers and students and create programs for our students to attend. Attending field trips to local museums and community events, learning about the arts through theatre, music, and dance, all have benefits which researchers are taking. As coordinators, we can promote opportunities within our division to align and advocate as to why the arts in education are so important.

Reflecting on our recent NAEA Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, I was deeply moved by the resilience of Roberto Lugo. He used art as a tool to transcend poverty and cultural barriers, serving as a testament to the transformative power of community arts. His story is a testament to how art can give voice to our narratives. Keeping the arts vibrant in our schools and community is of utmost importance. As we continue to design our programs and empower our teachers, we are constantly seeking new ways to inspire and motivate. ■

Jones, E. K., Kittendorf, A. L., & Kumagai, A. K. (2016). Creative Art and Medical Student Development: A Qualitative Study. *Medical Education*, 52.

Sonke, J., Rodriguez, A. K., Colverson, A., Akram, S., Morgan, N., Hancox, D., Wagner-Jacobson, C., & Pesata, V. (2023). Defining "Arts Participation" for Public Health Research. *Health Promotion Practice*, 15248399231183388.



Arabella, 4th Grade, O.B. Gates Elementary School, Kai Chen



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



Emma, 6th, Old Donation School, Leigh Drake



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



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



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



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



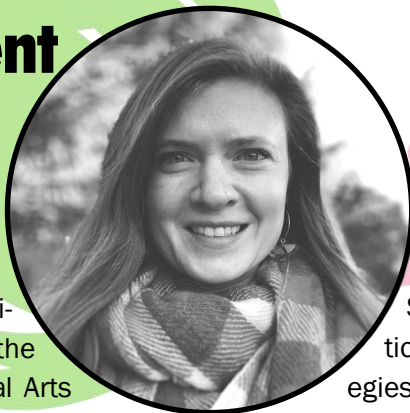
Keely, 11th Grade, Liberty High School, Ashley Hinton



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

Virginia Department of Education

Kelly Bisogno



The Virginia Department of Education Fine Arts Program is pleased to announce the release of Instructional Guides for Visual Arts education. Instructional Guides, companion documents to the 2020 Fine Arts Standards of Learning, amplify the standards by defining the core knowledge and skills in practice, supporting teachers and their instruction. The newly released Instructional Guides are housed on the Fine Arts page of the VDOE website. Additional instructional supports are accessible in the VDOE Fine Arts Resource Hub in Canvas. Instructional Guides support decisions school divisions make concerning local curriculum development and how best to help students meet the goals of the standards. The local curriculum should include a variety of information sources, readings, learning experiences, and forms of assessment to create a rigorous instructional program. The Instructional Guides are divided into sub-sections for each strand: Understanding the Strand,

Standards, Concepts, Supporting Questions, Student Look-fors, Assessment Strategies, Content Connections, and Instructional Supports.

Instructional Guides are living documents that will be updated periodically. You can provide feedback for the next iteration of the Guides directly to kelly.bisogno@doe.virginia.gov. ■



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

Archivist

Angie Salerno



"SPARK!" is the theme of our upcoming VAEA Conference and it has "sparked" an interest in past conferences. In 1970, the conference theme was "Aesthetic Education and Humanization: A Catalyst for Change". "Art is Alive for 75" was the theme in 1975, followed by "Meditation-Creativity" in 1976. "Art for all in the Eighties" was the theme in 1982. "Valley Visions" was the theme in 1985 when the conference was aptly held in Harrisonburg. In 1984, "Virginia - the State of Art" was the theme. "Art in the schools: discipline or experience?" was the chosen theme for 1986, while "Art Teachers: The Key to Quality Art Education" was chosen for 1987. When the conference was held in Virginia Beach in 1989, the theme selected was "An Art Sea Afair". In 1990, "A Monumental Experience" was chosen when the conference was in Richmond. "Encourage Excellence: Art Education into the 21st Century" was 1994's theme. Here are

several from the early 2000's - "Thinking Through Art", "Learning Through Art", "Art: the First Language", "Renew, Reflect, Reconnect", "Inspire, Create, Advocate". While we have had many different themes all surrounding our chosen profession of art education, I can think of no better theme for this year's conference than what was chosen: "SPARK!". Many surprises are on the horizon for the upcoming conference and I hope this trip into our past will inspire you to get excited about getting together in November to spark your imagination, spark new friendships, and spark a love of teaching art!

Hope to see you in November. ■

Policy

Barbara Laws



This past legislative session was more interesting (and challenging) than usual. On the last day allowed, SB 1437 was filed. This legislation sought to amend § 22.1-253.13:2.C in the Virginia Code Standards of Quality which proscribes teacher-student ratios and would have removed limits on class size caps in all 6th grade fine and performing arts classes with the following language:

...25 to one in grades four through six with no class, except for any fine or performing arts class offered in grade six, being larger than 35 students.

We learned that the bill was requested by Stafford Schools, which is in the district served by the bill's patron, Senator Durant.

The ins and outs of the saga are too lengthy to list here in detail, but it is important to note that the Virginia Coalition for Fine Arts Education and its members, especially the VAEA and the Virginia Music Educators Association, worked collaboratively with each other and Sen. Durant to amend the legislation and make it mostly palatable to all of the arts disciplines. Visual arts, theatre, and dance were removed from the legislation. Music ensemble classes remained but with a cap of 45 – not a perfect solution for them given the need for a larger number of smaller beginning instrumental classes and larger ensemble classes that together create a pipeline for upper-level classes – but the best we could do under the circumstances. The bill passed the Senate unanimously but was referred from the House education applicable subcommittee and committee and ultimately was passed by for the day after the 2nd reading and failed to pass so the language remains the same as it was before, i.e., the above quote without the italics which sets the cap at 35 and does not mention the arts.

As part of the advocacy and policy influencing, we self-reflect on the process for lessons and observations. Following are some of our takeaways, many of which are familiar and consider in our planning.

- considering multiple viewpoints on policy wording from stakeholders
- developing a clear concise position statement

- entering into good faith negotiations
- listening carefully (We learned the patron was an educator and two other Senators on the Education Committee were music educators.)
- paying attention and ensuring timeliness (The timeline between the filing and the first Senate subcommittee meeting was less than a week and we almost missed it.)
- being prepared including knowing how to write position statement
- initiating calls for action
- making and having friends and access to those with vested interest
- recognizing opportunities when they appear and following up (We have requested a meeting to discuss unintended consequences and diploma seal.)
- continuing to develop relationships with decision makers
- maintaining clear communications and training with state board

We hope that you will also look at the list, consider the strategies – whether you are advocating at the school level or beyond – and reflect on your experiences. In most school divisions this time of year there are opportunities to develop those relationships. We hope you will also consider connecting now or over the summer with your legislators. ■



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

Membership

Patsy Parker



"The mission of the VAEA is to support, promote, and advance VISUAL ARTS EDUCATION through professional development, leadership, research and service."

As a NAEA member, you are connected to exceptional resources, opportunities, and innovations that inspire your career, your creativity, your work with students, and beyond! You are a critical part of our vibrant professional community, an organization that has been advancing visual arts education and shaping human potential for over 75 years!

By maintaining your membership with the National Art Education Association, you can rely on NAEA to stay ahead of developments in the field of visual arts education. You can trust NAEA to deliver a broad perspective of current research, issues, and policy to colleagues around the globe who, like you, are passionate about the integral role of the visual arts in ensuring all students receive a high-quality, effective and well-rounded education.

Bulletins / messages from NAEA are sent to your email to keep you current with a variety of areas concerning multiple issues that may affect you directly. If you are not receiving any information, please check your trash or spam filter, in case your mail has been directed there instead. If you use your work email address, their stringent spam filters may keep you from receiving any communications. Please consider providing your personal email address to NAEA the next time you renew your membership. It is the best way to receive the benefits your membership affords you. Translation: You are not getting the most out of your professional art education association... support you have already paid for.

Orchestrating a state conference provides leadership and service opportunities not available to the non-member classroom art educator. Collegial liaisons form and new friends become bonded over common passions. While other state associations meet annually at the same central site, VAEA has traditionally rotated the location of the state conference among the regions. This makes attendance and session presentation financially easier for our participants and takes advantage of the unique highlights available surrounding the conference location. The Norfolk conference introduces the new "hot box" (glass blowing building) just completed at the Chrysler

Museum.

For VAEA, a state conference (on a much smaller scale than a national convention) is the perfect opportunity to benefit from what VAEA has to offer. When the conference comes to your region, your regional board officers put out the "all call" for volunteers...please join a committee and help with in the planning. It takes a lot of expertise in many different areas and a lot of members to make our two and a half day "machine" work smoothly. You will never be asked to give up chunks of time during the conference and there are many time slots that need your expertise.

Please consider including yourself! ■



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

Research

Kelly Nelson



Call for Conference Proposals

Calling one, calling all artists, teachers, educators, administrators, curators and art lovers to submit proposals for the 2025 VAEA State Conference. Share your artistic talents, your educated observations, your refined pedagogy, your reflective practice and your valuable time. Your contributions matter, for you are the present and future of art education.

The VAEA surveyed members to glean concerns and professional development needs. This article reports on the first few answers that had significant support, so each answer may have a varied number of popular responses. The following lists four survey questions with results:

1. Please select the top 3 areas related to curriculum and instruction that you would like to have more information about as it relates to your teaching/administering.
 - a. Art and media technology
 - b. Choice-based art
 - c. Contemporary artistic practice
 - d. Creative and critical thinking
 - e. Curriculum: high school
 - f. Art skills and knowledge
 - g. Special education
2. Please select the top 3 areas related to social and civic concerns that you would like to have more information about as it relates to your teaching/administering.
 - a. Cross-curricular understanding
 - b. Advocacy
 - c. Student access to the arts
 - d. Civic/community engagement
 - e. Lifelong learning
 - f. Arts education policy
 - g. Disability studies

3. Please select the top 3 areas related to student personal development that you would like to have more information about as it relates to your teaching/administering.

- a. Student engagement
- b. Social/emotional learning
- c. Student growth
- d. Collaboration management
- e. Learner development
- f. Classroom management

4. What are your top 3 preferences for professional learning?

- a. Hands on workshops
- b. Face to face workshops

The VAEA survey also asked recipients for further comments or questions. Some responses are listed below:

- a. Critical thinking, analyzing art work
- b. Mitigating burnout to increase retention
- c. Research support through learning communities
- d. High ability visual arts
- e. STEM research
- f. Action research
- g. More studio involvement
- h. SHoM research
- i. East Asian art workshops
- j. Art museum integration
- k. Research translated into classroom practice

What makes the VAEA State conference special and meaningful is your participation. While members are very interested in the above professional development content and delivery, we want to be as open and inclusive as possible. Please create a proposal and share your passion, expertise and love of learning. If you are interested in the topic, others will be too. We are excited to continue working with our seasoned art teachers who have experience presenting at our conferences.

Continued on page 27

Regional Messages Northern

Kelly Wasson



in Northern Virginia.

Hello Art Besties, I am thrilled to introduce myself as your new regional president, Kelly Wasson. It is an honor to take on this role after being a dedicated member of VAEA for the past 18 years. Over time I have had the opportunity to connect with so many talented and passionate educators, and I look forward to continuing that tradition as we explore new opportunities together.

As we transition into spring, I am excited to announce plans for several upcoming regional events. One of my primary goals is to foster community and collaboration among our members through engaging workshops and activities. We are currently considering organizing a fall /winter workshop that promises to inspire creativity and professional growth. Additionally, I am exploring the possibility of a group trip to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) to see the highly anticipated Frida Kahlo exhibition this summer. These events will not only enhance our skills as educators but also strengthen the bonds within our art education community.

Now, as we move forward from Youth Art Month (YAM), I encourage each of you to start putting together a small portfolio for your school or county. This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase the incredible work our students have created and contribute to what will be the state portfolio. Your contributions will highlight the unique talents of our young artists and represent the vibrant art education happening



Lastly, I want to remind you to consider attending the upcoming conference in the fall. It will be an excellent opportunity for professional development and networking within our field. If you're feeling inspired, why not take it a step further and consider teaching a session? Sharing your knowledge and experiences can be incredibly rewarding, and it would greatly benefit our community.

Thank you for your continued dedication to art education in Northern Virginia. Together, we can cultivate an enriching environment that nurtures creativity and passion in our students. I look forward to embarking on this journey with each of you. ■



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

Central

Mary Melissa Johnson



This spring, CVAEA celebrated Youth Art Month (YAM) with a student art exhibit at the Visual Arts Center of Richmond. The reception, held on March 15th, brought together over 100 guests—students, families, educators, and community members—all there to celebrate the incredible creativity and dedication of young artists from across our region.



The show featured artwork from eight counties across the Central region, representing a full spectrum of student voices—from kindergarten through 12th grade. The diversity of media, subject matter, and style spoke volumes about the thoughtful instruction happening in our classrooms and the unique perspectives of our students. The work on display was a beautiful reminder of why we do what we do.

We were also thrilled to recognize Kelly Bisogno as our 2024 CVAEA Art Advocate of the Year. Kelly's steadfast support for arts education and her ongoing efforts to champion the role of visual art in public education are truly appreciated by all of us in the field.

As art educators, we know how much coordination and time goes into preparing for Youth Art Month—not to mention the daily work of cultivating creativity, skill, and confidence in our students. This exhibition would not have been possible without the passionate teachers who took the time to mat, label, and prepare student work for display. A special thank-you goes to our amazing art specialists who transported the artwork and installed the entire show during the school day! Your efforts made this celebration possible.

Huge thanks to everyone who contributed to this year's success, and to the VisArts for hosting us once again in such a stunning and professional space. ■

Blue Ridge

Melissa Combs



Welcome to spring in the Blue Ridge Mountains! Thank you to our regional members who represented us in so many different ways during youth art month



in March. There were local and regional art exhibits, activities and celebrations both virtually and in person. As the end of the year approaches, school districts (including mine) are still having those celebrations well into May.

While planning a potential spring 2025 retreat, the location we had initially thought would work fell through. We are again looking for a way to have a retreat in an accessible location to all members at an affordable price. We are also looking for a topic and leader for that retreat. We have a very large area to cover within our region which makes picking a location for retreats and workshops challenging. Know that your regional board is not ignoring this challenge but still working it out as both the landscape of teaching and the distance people are willing to travel changes. So much is available online for professional learning, but meeting in person provides fellowship in a way that really benefits art teachers working in isolation at their schools.

With that in mind, the idea of a workshop made of 'watch parties' came up from one of our members. Having one instructor teach live virtually to a few remote locations where teachers gather together. Maybe we send some supplies to each of those locations for teachers to use during the workshop. It is an idea that solves many of the issues we are currently facing.

All these plans cannot happen if we don't have people to lead workshops, though. If you are interested in leading a workshop (or know someone who is) for a weekend, a day or virtually, please reach out to a board member. What is old hat to you may be groundbreaking to someone else. Having some time with fel-

Continued on page 27

Southwest Matt Bolen



Greetings from Southwest VAEA. Here in the western part of the state the mountains are in bloom, bursting with color and bustling with activity. Trees are budding and pressing into the warming sun. Perennials are pushing through the hard packed impervious rock and clay. It's not just the mountains that are putting on a display either. Spring also brings with it art exhibition and competition season. At this point in the year our classrooms are also humming with activity and our walls, gyms, and various other display areas are being brought to life by artwork created throughout the year. It's busy, it's exciting, it's exhausting, and it is deeply rewarding to see our communities turn out to support our students' hard work and creative achievements.

This year our local art show is focusing on process, emphasizing the work that goes on behind the scenes when creating a work of art. It occurred to me as we've been planning and organizing this event that processes abound in education, and that we are always engaged in them in one way or another. Playing a part in the growth and formation of our students is

Continued on page 27

Tidewater Rebecca Davidson



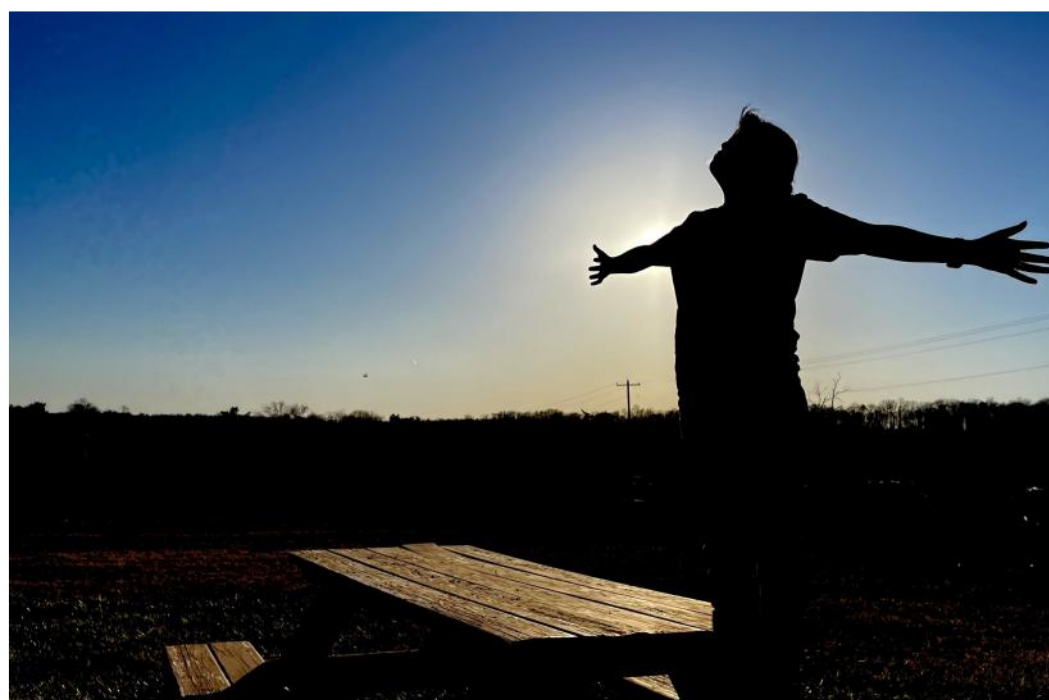
As spring turns to summer, the Tidewater Virginia Art Education Association and its members are already hard at work preparing for our annual VAEA Conference. This event brings together art educators from every corner of the state to connect, reflect, and recharge. The VAEA conference promises to be an inspiring and energizing experience.

This year's theme, **Spark!**, celebrates the energy, creativity, and innovation that art educators bring to their classrooms and communities. The conference will be held November 20–22 at Hilton Norfolk The Main, right in the heart of downtown Norfolk. It's a space to reignite your passion for teaching and making art. It is perfect for those looking to reconnect with colleagues and find fresh inspiration.

We're especially excited to welcome Julia and Robin Rogers, acclaimed glass artists and educators from the Chrysler Museum of Art's Perry Glass Studio, as our keynote speakers. Their work explores collaboration, performance, and the transformative power of art.

In addition to gathering together, the fall conference is a time to recognize the outstanding contributions of art educators across the state through the annual VAEA Awards. These honors celebrate excellence in every division and shine a light on those who inspire, advocate, and lead in their schools and communities.

We encourage you to **nominate a colleague or yourself** for one of these awards. Many educators hesitate to self-nominate, but your achievements deserve recognition. Award categories include Elementary, Middle, Secondary, Higher Ed, Supervision/Administration, Retired, and Museum Ed. The nomina-



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

Pre-Service

Grace Smith



As the semester ends, we get closer and closer to graduation! I'm sure we are all looking forward to our next chapter after graduation. It will be here before we know it! We just had our NAEA convention and are now preparing for our VAEA conference in November. I strongly encourage you to get involved now! Come with a classmate or a friend who might also be interested in going. There will be glass artists, Robin and Julia Rogers of the Chrysler Museum, who will be presenting when workshops exclusively for conference attendees begin. A Q&A event is also being planned for Pre-Service and Retired Art Educators.

More information on upcoming dates and events can be found on our Instagram (vaarted) and Facebook. This is a great opportunity to ask the millions of questions you might have, in a safe learning environment, with other Pre-Service educators, who probably have the exact same millions of questions. You can start setting an example for your future students

by being a practicing, questioning, and ever-evolving human being. You'll be surprised how much insight you can gain from events like these, not to mention the connections you make along the way. Events and conferences can be intimidating to attend but you are not alone! It's important to remember educators are needed now more than ever.

So, hold tight to the reasons you chose this path, and trust that you have something meaningful to offer. Let's remember we have each other for guidance, support, and encouragement throughout this journey. Our community is strong and here for you no matter what. I hope to see you in November. Have a great summer! ■

DEIA

Margaret McDonald



As Chair of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) Division of the Virginia Art Education Association (VAEA), I am honored to address you on this platform dedicated to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment within our art education community.

At VAEA, we recognize that diversity enriches our collective experiences and perspectives. We are committed to ensuring that every individual—regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic status, or background—feels valued and has access to the transformative power of the arts.

Our commitment aligns with the National Art Education Association's (NAEA) position on diversity and inclusion, emphasizing the importance of creating inclusive learning communities and empowering participation.

We understand that achieving accurate equity requires ongoing effort, reflection, and action. Therefore, we are dedicated

to:

Providing Resources and Support: Offering materials and guidance to help educators incorporate DEIA principles into their curricula and teaching practices.

Facilitating Professional Development: Organizing workshops, seminars, and conferences on DEIA topics.

Encouraging Open Dialogue and Collaboration: Creating safe spaces for discussions about diversity, equity, inclusion, and access where all voices are heard and respected.

We invite you to join this ongoing journey and vital work. Your insights, experiences, and feedback are invaluable as we strive to create an art education landscape that truly reflects and respects the diversity of our art education communities across Virginia. ■

Youth Art Month

Kaitlyn Canter & Karla Kolb



We are thrilled to announce that we are your new Youth Art Month Co-Chairs. Karla teaches middle school art at Auburn Middle School in Fauquier County and Kaitlyn Canter teaches middle school art at S. Gordon Stewart Middle School in Augusta County. We would like to give a HUGE thank you to Kelly Wasson for being our YAM Chair this past year and for teaching us the ropes of our new gig. She did an amazing job as YAM Chair and was honored recently at the NAEA National Conference by The Council for Art Education with the Award of Excellence as the Youth Art Month Chair for the Virginia Art Education Association (VAEA). This recognition was for her efforts in developing the state digital portfolio.

March is a vibrant month in Virginia, as communities across the Commonwealth come together to celebrate Youth Art Month (YAM). This annual observance highlights the significance of art education and provides an arena for young artists to showcase their talents. Virginia's commitment to fostering creativity in its youth is evident through various exhibitions and events across the Commonwealth.

Once again, we received statewide recognition and support from Governor Glenn Youngkin as he officially recognized March as Youth Art Month in Virginia, through a signed proclamation emphasizing the importance of art education in developing students' creative potential and critical thinking skills. The proclamation highlights the role of art in enhancing students' understanding of beauty, order, and expressive qualities, reinforcing its value in the educational landscape.

There were many local celebrations across Virginia:

- **Harrisonburg:** The Valley Mall hosted the 29th Annual Youth Art Month Exhibit, featuring over 200 student artworks from Harrisonburg City Public Schools. The exhibition ran from March 1 to April 21, 2025, offering a diverse array of media, including drawings, paintings, sculptures, fabric arts, and digital images.
- **Rockingham County:** The Arts Council of the Valley hosted its annual "artVISION" at the Smith House Galleries in Harrisonburg. The exhibition fea-

tured 100 works by students from Rockingham County Public Schools and was open to the public March 7-28, 2025.

- **Fauquier County:** The All-County Arts Festival at Liberty High School showcased student artwork from every school and grade level. The event, held on March 28 and 29, 2025, featured a variety of mediums and included musical performances, highlighting the county's rich artistic talent.
- **Winchester:** ShenArts partnered with the Winchester Sheriff's Office to host a juried Youth Art Month exhibition at the Winchester Courthouse. The display, held from March 5 to 31, 2025, offered a unique setting for student art and included an opening reception with awards and refreshments.

We would also like to highlight and congratulate our Youth Art Month Flag Contest Winners. We had 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place winners at elementary, middle, and secondary levels as pictured (see photos). Sarah Hairston from Turner Ashby High School in Bridgewater, VA was the overall winner. Her teacher is Erin Whetzel. Sarah's design was made into a flag that was flown at the NAEA National Conference in Louisville, KY this March. Youth Art Month in Virginia serves as a testament to the state's dedication to nurturing the artistic talents of its

Continued on page 27



Overall Flag Winner, Sarah Hairston
Turner Ashby High School, Teacher: Erin Whetzel

Retiree News

**Ginna Cullen &
Carla Jaranson**



It seems that the retired art educators in the VAEA and especially on the VAEA Board have all failed retirement. They are active making art and involved in art education, providing a strong support for the organization. Retirees stay young by taking on new challenges. They love working with younger artists and educators showing a great ability to accept change and use it to solve problems. We would love to hear from our retired art educators. Please share your story so that we can pass it on to our membership, to bring a smile, offer inspiration, delight and perhaps some fun. Spring is a time of new life, growth, new challenges and fresh opportunities. We hope to hear from you. ■



1st Place Winners



Elementary School: Liliana Lowe

Teacher: Pat Hill, C. Hunter Ritchie Elementary

Middle School: Ella Parker

Teacher: Kaitlyn Canter, S. Gordon Stewart Middle

High School: Felix Kotanis

Teacher: Tisha Burke, Kettle Run High



3rd Place Winners



Elementary School: Myka Gangcuangci

Teacher: Patt Hill, C. Hunter Ritchie Elementary

Middle School: Jeanna Makwamba

Teacher: Margaret Miller, Wilson Middle School

High School: Chelsea Cavazos

Teacher: Emily Quesenberry, Turner Ashby High



2nd Place Winners



Elementary School: Lila Blaemire

Teacher: Carol Hostetter, Greenville Elementary

Middle School: Chloe Change

Teacher: Brian Lidenberg, Marshall Middle

High School: Piper Blackburn

Teacher: Catie Bare, Mills E. Godwin High



4th Place Winners



Elementary School: Cora Porterfield

Teacher: Patt Hill, C. Hunter Ritchie Elementary

Middle School: Lily Berry

Teacher: Kaitlyn Canter, S. Gordon Stewart Middle

High School: Sylvia Babcock

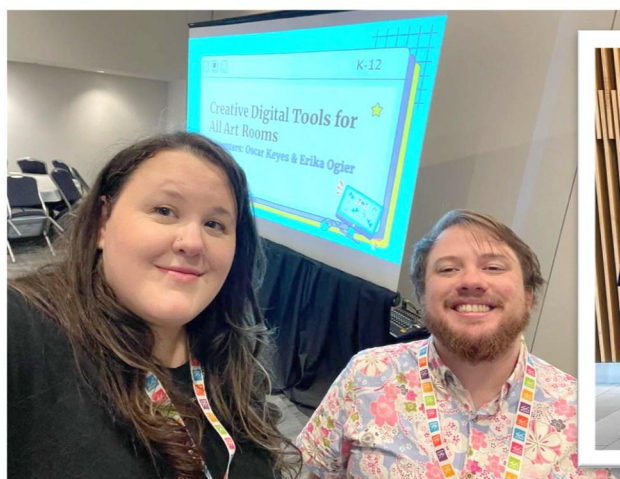
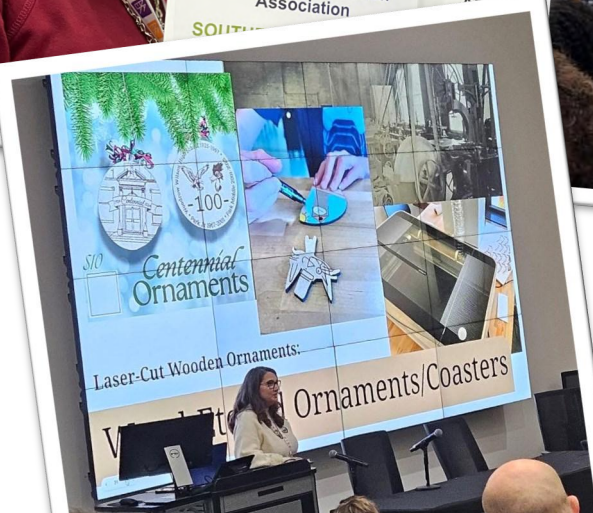
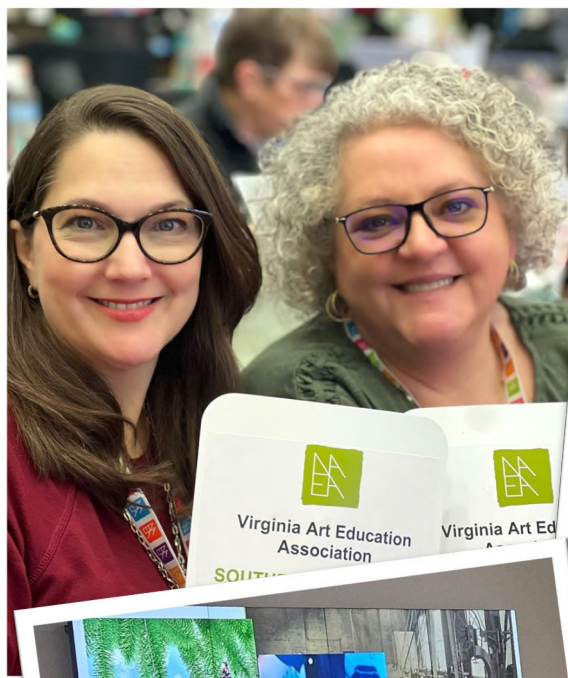
Teacher: Jessica Kovalick, Churchland High



2025 VIBRANT

NAEA NATIONAL CONVENTION | MARCH 20-22

LOUISVILLE, KY



Continued...



Continued from K. Nelson

It's always a pleasure to attend their sessions. They are the backbone of our conference. But we are also excited to embrace first time presenters! Do you feel nervous, first time presenters? No worries. Why don't you consult a seasoned presenter, or collaborate with a peer? It's so beneficial to work collaboratively. VAEA members, bombard us with conference proposals! This year's conference will be held at Hilton Norfolk The Main, Norfolk, November 19th through November 22nd. Proposals are due June 15th. Please visit the VAEA Website for more information. ■

Continued from M. Bolen

very much a process and, just like making art, sometimes that process gets messy. Sometimes it feels like there is something that we're not getting quite right, so we end up doing the same thing over and over again. Sometimes we have to experiment and try something in a completely new way. Sometimes at the start things feel exciting and inspired, but at some point, that excitement gives way to frustration and impatience.

Then it happens: there is a shift and something changes. That student you couldn't seem to get through to for months suddenly becomes engaged, inspired, and wildly productive. The one that said (in no uncertain terms) "I'm not really the artsy type" becomes the best ambassador you have for the art program. They become your wingman and start doing everything they can to help you set up for the exhibition. They start showing their pieces off to other teachers and friends, and inviting family to the opening. Suddenly the ones who didn't seem to care about being there at all are excited and proud. Proud of something they've made and more than that, proud of themselves. The season's change seems to also bring a change to motivation, to creativity, and to the student who maybe just needed a little extra time to break through some tough soil, to receive some warmth, and to blossom. Then again, I guess that is all just part of the process. ■

May this Spring be one of joy and inspiration, and may your messes be few.

Connect with us:

- Instagram: [@swvaea](#)

- Email us: SWVAEA@gmail.com

Continued from R. Davidson

tion process is simple, and details are available on the VAEA website. The TVAEA Board is here to help you along the way. Don't miss this opportunity to highlight the fantastic work being done across our organization.

As we look ahead to November, we hope you'll plan to attend, participate, and celebrate with us. Let this be the year you share your spark, lift others through nominations, and re-energize your teaching practice. VAEA's strength lies in the passion and creativity of its members, and we can't wait to see what you'll bring to this year's conference. ■

Continued from M. Combs

low art teachers to just gather and create is well worth the time. We can help coordinate supplies and signups; we just need people to teach!

On a different note, the art teacher exhibition in Harrisonburg was wonderful! So many teachers from our region submitted their artwork to be showcased at the Art Council of the Valley's Smith House Galleries. Many more came in April to see the artwork of their colleagues. When I went to the opening it was a full house! Thank you to Emily Quesenberry for applying for this opportunity on our behalf and to her small team of teachers who hung up all the work. We look forward to the next opportunity to display all that our regional teachers have to offer.

Happy Spring! ■

Continued from Canter & Kolb

young residents. Through exhibitions, festivals, and innovative events, communities across the Commonwealth provide platforms for students to express themselves and gain recognition for their creativity. As these celebrations continue to grow, they reinforce the vital role of art education in shaping the minds and futures of Virginia's youth.

As art teachers in Virginia, we can continue to support the arts by signing the Endorsement Form and submitting a digital portfolio for your school or district following the guidelines found on the VAEA Youth Art Month Page on the VAEA Website. Thank you for your support! ■



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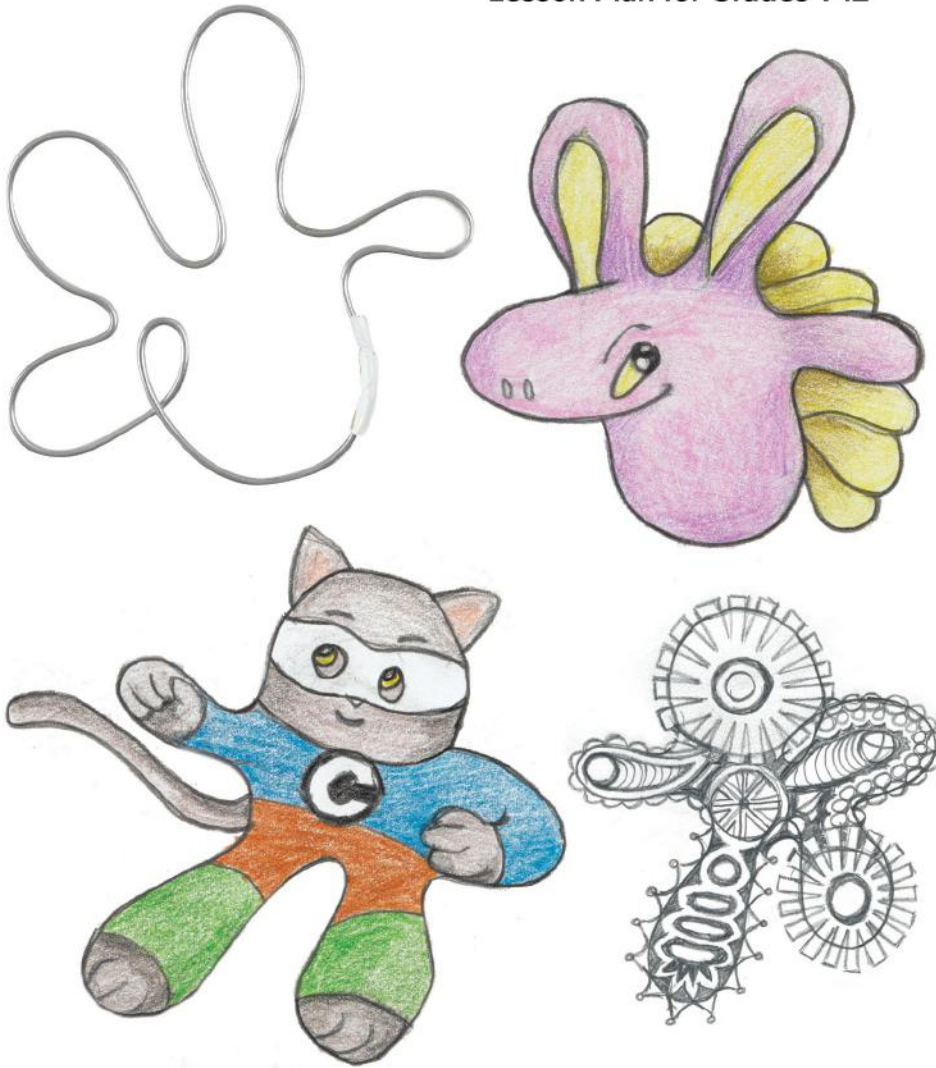


Youth Art Month

Karla Kolb (Co-Chair)
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Contour Collaborations

Lesson Plan for Grades 1-12



Shape: Form wires into abstract shapes. Share shape with another member of the group.



Analyze: Trace the shape onto paper and study the outer contours.



Create: Draw images and designs using contour lines to define the inside of the shape. These images can be refined later with colored pencils or markers.

Spark creativity and fire-up imaginations with this “wired” surrealist-type activity.

Wires are bent and formed to create shapes, then shared and traced. The shape then becomes the contours of... what? That's entirely up to the artist!

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



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SPARK

VAEA
2025

2025 Fall Professional Development Conference

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Hilton Norfolk The Main

vaea.org/professional-development

