



Advancing Art Education

NAEA PLATFORM

Preface

THE VALUE OF EDUCATION IN THE ARTS

The arts disciplines (visual arts, music, theatre, and dance) merit and require formal study. Policy makers should support studies in the arts as core disciplines, as specified in the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**, the federal legislation that sets policy and appropriations for public education. The arts merit and require study in school:

- as means of communication;
- as historical components of civilization; and
- as providers of unique forms of knowledge.

The goal of all elementary and secondary education in the arts – no matter what the career direction of the student – should be the development of basic knowledge in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts. Basic knowledge in the arts includes understandings, appreciations, and skills that focus on the artistic qualities in each discipline. Such knowledge comes from studying each art form as both a creative learner and participant. Studies in the history, literature, and analysis of the arts are equally important in the development of artistic knowledge.

The arts should be treated as core disciplines for study, not extracurricular activities or enrichments to be granted to a few. In practice, this means that effective arts education requires sequential curricula, dedicated time for instruction and learning (within each grade and across the grades), qualified teachers, and a fair share of educational resources. Similarly, arts instruction should be carried out with the same high expectations as instruction and learning in other core subjects.

Policy makers should ensure that local district and school visual arts curricula are aligned with national and state standards. They should ensure that opportunities to teach and learn are sufficient to assess the quality of instruction and achievements of students.

The National Art Education Association advocates for the importance of visual art education in public and private schools, higher education, museum education, and community-based settings.

The National Art Education Association focuses its work on systematic education in visual arts which encompasses, but is not limited to, content in:

- artmaking in both traditional and new media, art criticism, art history, and aesthetics;
- visual arts created by contemporary artists, artisans, and self-taught artists from local communities and around the world; and
- visual culture, including the built environment, mass-produced forms of artistry in products we use, and mass-circulated print and digital images.

This document, NAEA Platform and Position Statements, including the Preface and the Platform Statements in the categories of Students, Art Educators, and Relationships was reviewed and recommended by the Delegates Assembly, April 2009 and adopted by the NAEA Board, July 2009. The Platform Statements in the categories Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment were reviewed and recommended by the Delegates Assembly, April 2010 and adopted by the NAEA Board, April 2010. The date of adoption is posted beside each Position Statement. [The previous version of this preface referred to ESEA as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), the legislation's subtitle during the administration of President George W. Bush.]*

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Advancing Art Education

PLATFORM STATEMENT

Category: Students

1. Understanding of what the category is

The art educator members of NAEA serve a diverse population of learners that is inclusive of all ages in schools, universities, museums and other community settings.

Students of the visual arts include the full range of age levels that is a continuum from early childhood, throughout their education, and continuing into adulthood.

2. One statement for that category which articulates NAEA's beliefs in this category.

All students deserve a comprehensive visual art education taught by highly-qualified art educators.

Position Statements in this Category

Position Statement on Early Childhood Art Education [Adopted April 2010]

The visual arts are essential to early learning. Every child is innately curious and seeks to construct personal knowledge and understanding of the world. Children construct knowledge in meaningful social contexts with peers and adults. Children experience their environment in holistic ways that are best served by an interdisciplinary approach that includes both guided and spontaneous learning experiences. The arts support multiple ways of knowing and learning that are inherent in the unique nature of each child. The arts empower children to communicate, represent, and express their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. The arts offer opportunities to develop creativity, imagination, and flexible thinking. The arts can enrich a young child's understanding of diverse cultures. Early childhood art programs should be comprehensive in scope, including studio experiences, interactions with artists, visits to museums and art galleries, and opportunities to respond to art through conversation, storytelling, play, dramatics, movement, music, and art making.

Resource Document: For additional information, please refer to the Position Paper on the Early Childhood Issues Group section of the NAEA website.

Position Statements in this Category continue on the next page



Advancing Art Education

Category: Students (continued)

Position Statement on Graduation Requirements in the Visual Arts [Adopted March 2011]

Study and practice in the visual and performing arts facilitate the growth of a broad range of important skills in general education, including critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity and innovation. The importance of the visual culture to contemporary life makes it imperative that education includes learning to make meaning of multi-faceted visual information and experiences.

NAEA supports the formal adoption of minimum high school graduation requirements in visual and performing arts as part of a comprehensive high school education. The visual arts contribute to a well rounded education for all students, and broaden the range of learning options for meeting the individual needs of diverse student populations.

- Learning in the visual arts builds universal communication skills that bridge historic, geographic and cultural boundaries.
- Adolescent learners draw upon visual literacy skills to comprehend and articulate their world view as they move into adulthood.
- Students enrolled in visual arts courses should have experiences in creating, performing and responding to visual works of art.
- Support for minimum high school graduation requirements is predicated on the intention that elementary and middle school students have access to a comprehensive art education program.

3. Future Position Statements in this category might include:

- Children of Poverty/At-Risk
- Students with Special Needs
- Talent Development/Gifted/Exceptional Learning
- Diversity/Multi-cultural/Culturally-specific
- Lifelong Learning

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Advancing Art Education

PLATFORM STATEMENT

Category: Art Educators

1. Understanding of what the category is

NAEA members form a professional community that advances the field of visual art education by engaging in issues of curriculum, instruction, and assessment in and through the visual arts.

Professional visual art educators have the knowledge, skills and commitment to teaching the visual arts to students of all ages.

Visual art educators, as members of the broader community of educators, have insight into and understanding of human development.

Art educators come from diverse populations, viewpoints, and professional settings, including schools, museums, universities and community-based organizations.

2. One statement for that category which articulates NAEA's beliefs in this category.

Art educators believe that the visual arts are vital to the comprehensive education of all students.

Position Statements in this Category

Position Statement on Certified Visual Art Educators in Pre-K through 12 School Settings [Adopted April 2010]

The visual arts in Pre-K through 12 school settings should be taught by certified art educators. A certified art educator should have pre-service experience in the grade level area in which they are pursuing the profession. Certified visual art educators should:

- Have a thorough understanding of the visual arts including history, studio skills, and the study of visual art and cultures.
- Have an ongoing understanding of and ability to integrate current and emerging technology into their teaching.
- Understand students as learners, including diverse characteristics, abilities, and learning styles.
- Help students understand the ways in which the arts make meaning, connect with the entire curriculum, and prepare students for success in school, work, and life.
- Pursue ongoing professional development to support their continuous improvement in both teaching and the arts.

Position Statements in this Category continue on the next page

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Advancing Art Education

Category: Art Educators (continued)

Position Statement on Pre-service Education and its Relationship to Higher Education [Adopted March 2011]

NAEA supports quality pre-service education taught by experienced art educators as a foundation for the development of professional practices. Accredited higher education institutions in partnership with schools, museums, and community organizations provide the best model for generative practices applicable to shared standards. Such programs should include: clinical experiences, pedagogy courses, visual arts content courses, professional development opportunities, and student associations. NAEA believes that comprehensive pre-service education engages learners in inquiry, advocacy, and leadership in relation to the following domains:

The Profession:

Pre-service art education programs prepare art educators to -

- Recognize their role as leaders in their schools and communities.
- Exhibit professional dispositions defined by state, national, and professional standards.

These include exemplifying professional values and qualities, engaging in reflective practices associated with life-long learning, advocating for excellence in their schools and communities, and participating in, as well as taking on leadership positions in their local, state, and national associations.

The Learners:

Pre-service art education programs prepare art educators to -

- Understand their students from theoretical and practical perspectives.
- Understand factors such as diverse learning styles, developmental variance, social conditions, and family and cultural values that might affect learner performance in the visual arts.

The Teaching Contexts:

Pre-service art education programs prepare art educators to -

- Understand that community values contribute to the guiding principles of the educational settings.
- Become highly skilled in curriculum development, assessment procedures, standards application, and instructional strategies.
- Deliver curriculum through both historical and emerging technologies.
- Understand and explore a variety of student engagement and classroom management strategies.

The Content:

Pre-service art education programs prepare art educators to -

- Have a strong knowledge base of traditional and emerging practices understood through studio experiences, historical lenses and collaborative inquiry.
- Explore the complexity of art making as it relates to creative problem solving, problem finding, visual literacy, technical proficiency, cultural context, and identity formation.
- Become fluent in interpreting works of art and other visual images, objects, experiences, and environments in relation to cultural and historical contexts.
- Prepare students with skills that will enable their success in the 21st century.

Position Statements in this Category continue on the next page

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Advancing Art Education

Category: Art Educators (continued)

Position Statement on Professional Development [Adopted March 2011]

NAEA asserts that professional development opportunities, targeted toward the visual arts and visual arts education, are essential to the life long learning of art educators. Examples of professional development opportunities include: studio practices; engagement with contemporary and traditional art forms; contemporary curriculum design and instructional methods; technologies and their relation to art and education; and theories of learning related to lifespan, cognition, ethical standards, and human development.

NAEA supports opportunities for building enriched relationships between theory and practice. NAEA recognizes these opportunities can take place in a variety of contexts and between novice and veteran professionals. NAEA believes that optimal professional development opportunities are generative practices that can take place through self-study and self-initiated outreach, participatory learning communities, mentoring relationships, and formal presentations and events.

NAEA believes that dynamic professional development opportunities take place as visual arts educators and organizations partner toward shared professional goals. These opportunities can take place among colleagues, as well as with universities, museums, galleries, community groups, government agencies, and philanthropic organizations; between NAEA divisions; as well as with non-visual arts professionals. NAEA promotes the development of these opportunities through conferences, web-based platforms, institutes, in-services, workshops, and retreats.

3. Future Position Statements in this category might include:

- Culture/Climate (working conditions)
- Attracting Diversity into the Profession

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Advancing Art Education

PLATFORM STATEMENT

Category: Relationships

1. Understanding of what the category is

Internal Relationships

NAEA members serve in a variety of capacities including visual art teachers, curriculum specialists, administrators, professors, students, art museum educators, artists, and researchers.

NAEA's structure includes individual state associations that enable members to have a connection with their colleagues at the district, state, region, division, as well as at the national level.

External Relationships

NAEA provides leadership for both state associations and other groups as the primary voice and advocate for visual art education.

NAEA cultivates and values its relationships with a variety of associations and organizations, including the media, that have the potential to share NAEA's interest in the advancement of arts education.

These organizations include other entities, both nonprofit and for profit, that advocate for the arts in the schools. They have shared values with NAEA members and the potential to collaborate with NAEA, including the capacity to provide additional services and resources to its members.

2. One statement for that category which articulates NAEA's beliefs in this category.

NAEA is empowered by developing its current and potential relationships, which further the association's leadership role in service to its members and their students.

Position Statements in this Category

Position Statement on College and University Art Museums [Adopted April 2010]

College and university museums of art, along with museums of other disciplines and libraries and archives, provide an essential component to a high quality and well rounded education. By preserving, providing access to, and interpreting objects of visual art and material culture, they offer valuable learning opportunities for students, faculty, and the broader community that cannot be replicated through other means. Like other museums, college and university museums are stewards of our shared past; the collections they house are repositories of our collective human creativity, knowledge, and history in all its diversity. College and university collections should be viewed not as disposable assets, but as resources that are essential to the education of future generations, and as such should be protected and maintained to honor the public trust.

Position Statements in this Category continue on the next page

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Advancing Art Education

Category: Relationships (continued)

Position Statement on Community Collaborations, including those with Cultural Organizations [Adopted March 2011]

NAEA recognizes that the visual arts are grounded in the communities from which they come. Communities may be defined by the many ways that they bring people together; they are complex, dynamic, and diverse in the ways they function. NAEA supports art educators' efforts to collaborate with community and cultural organizations to further the mission of visual arts education. NAEA members are encouraged to work with local, state, and national organizations that share common visions and goals. Resulting community arts collaborations can be nurtured through partnership projects and advocacy efforts. Community-based needs can be addressed through diverse efforts that contribute to civic engagement and life-long learning through creative expression.

Position Statement on Freedom of Speech [Adopted July 2011; Update of 1991 Statement on Censorship and the Arts]

Freedom of expression is guaranteed by the Constitution. Free communication is essential to the preservation of a free democratic society and a creative culture. The visual, performing, and literary arts are among our most effective instruments of freedom. They are powerful means for making available ideas, feelings, social justice, the envisioning of new possibilities for humankind, solutions to problems, and the improvement of human life.

As the professional association for visual art educators, NAEA supports the following:

Freedom of expression in the arts must be preserved.

The individual has the right to accept or reject any work of art, but does **not** have the right to suppress works of art for or by others. The free individual and the free society do not need a censor to tell what should be acceptable or unacceptable, and should not tolerate such censorship. Censorship is contrary to democratic principles.

Educator Responsibility:

It is the role of the art educator to expose students to a diversity of art experiences and to help students develop the ability to interpret and to think critically. The art educator need not like or endorse all images, ideologies, and artists made available to students, but should both allow and help equip the individual student to choose from among widely conflicting images, opinions, and ideologies. While some works of art may indeed be banal and trivial, and some works may be repugnant and unacceptable to some individuals, the art educator should responsibly support the right of every individual to freely express and create in his or her own way and to experience, accept, or reject any particular work of art.

The art educator should impress upon students the vital importance of freedom of expression as a basic premise in a free democratic society and urge students to guard against efforts to limit or curtail that freedom.

In practice, art educators must consider age appropriate content, and be sensitive to the distinct nature of their community and education system, as they support their students in freedom of expression. Art educators guide students toward understanding, recognizing, and acknowledging the power of visual art.

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Category: Relationships (continued)

**Position Statement Regarding the Use of Race Based Mascots in Educational Settings
[Adopted April 2010]**

NAEA considers Race-based Mascots in educational institutions to be representations that can be seen as derogatory. Visual art educators are encouraged to support their communities in addressing how such images impact all lives. Race-based Mascots offer teachable moments for art classrooms; opportunities to explore the complex and problematic ways that ethnic mascots and similar visual representations convey information about people, communities, cultures, and civilizations. For Example, Visual art educators working in non-Native American schools with Indian mascots are encouraged to ask their school to consult with and be informed by Native American Tribal Councils, and to participate in identifying new positive images worthy of representing their school and communities.

Resource Document: The Committee that prepared this Position Statement has also developed a resource document that is posted on the NAEA website within the area where the NAEA Platform and Position Statements can be found.

3. Future Position Statements in this category might include:

- Media Relationships, in general
- Families – Parent Teacher Groups
- Relationships with Teacher Unions
- Corporate Sponsors and Vendor Relationships

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Advancing Art Education

PLATFORM STATEMENT

Category: Curriculum

1. Understanding of what the category is

All students receive a high quality, comprehensive, sequential visual art program of study, pre-school through higher education, recognizing that effective art curriculum is a core component of 21st century education. A strong visual arts curriculum is designed to:

- Provide students with skills and knowledge in the visual arts in accordance with rigorous national, state, and local standards.
- Provide opportunities for students to experience a wide variety of media, including traditional materials and new technologies as means of human expression.
- Reflect knowledge of the historical timeline, aesthetics, criticism and cultural diversity, incorporating these elements within authentic assessment.
- Be complemented with access to art museums and community education programs.

2. One statement for that category which articulates NAEA's beliefs in this category.

When expertly taught by visual art educators, and authentically assessed, the visual arts curriculum will be part of a high quality, effective and balanced education of all students.

Position Statements in this Category

Position Statement on 21st Century Skills and Visual Arts Education [Adopted April 2010]

As a national collaborator on the Arts Map for the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and as a signatory to the Partnership for 21st Century Skills' National Action Agenda, NAEA recognizes the importance of having all students leave school prepared with the skills and knowledge to address the challenges that await them. To that end, we support the following PRINCIPLES:

- That the arts, including the visual arts, dance, music, and theatre, are recognized as core subjects in the framework of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills' Framework for 21st Century Learning.
- That the visual arts provide opportunities for all students to build their skills and capacity in what the Partnership for 21st Century Skills calls "Learning and Innovation Skills," specifically Creativity and Innovation; Critical Thinking and Problem Solving; and Communication and Collaboration.
- That the visual arts provide opportunities for all students to build their skills and capacity in what the Partnership for 21st Century Skills calls "Information, Media and Technology Skills," specifically Information Literacy, Media Literacy, and ICT (Information, Communications, and Technology) Literacy.

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Advancing Art Education

Category: Curriculum (continued)

Position Statement on 21st Century Skills and Visual Arts Education (continued)

- That the visual arts provide opportunities for students to build their skills and capacity in what the Partnership for 21st Century Skills calls “Life and Career Skills,” specifically, Flexibility and Adaptability; Initiative and Self-Direction; Social and Cross-Cultural Skills; Productivity and Accountability; and Leadership and Responsibility.

Position Statement on Visual Arts as a Core Academic Subject [Adopted March 2011]

NAEA defines visual arts as a core subject, basic to the education of all students. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, passed by the US Congress in 1965 and reauthorized in regular intervals, recognizes the visual arts as a core academic subject.

NAEA supports inclusion of a rigorous, high quality, comprehensive, sequential, and authentic visual arts program in every school for every child. Visual arts education provides every student opportunities to develop the global 21st century skills of communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving. Visual arts education provides richness and complexity to learning by engaging students in the study of artistic processes, the construction of knowledge, and critical reflection.

3. Future Position Statements in this category might include:

- Learning in a Visual Age
- Technology
- Research informing practice
- Adapting the Visual Arts Curriculum for Special Needs Learners – Differentiation - what do we do to adapt the curriculum for all learners?
- Arts Integration (Curriculum Integration)

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Advancing Art Education

PLATFORM STATEMENT

Category: Instruction

1. Understanding of what the category is

Characteristics

The craft of teaching of art requires sensitivity to quality and maintaining rigorous standards for self and students.

Quality art instruction uses a variety of teaching methodologies, which incorporate reflective practice and assessment.

Quality art instruction differentiates among student needs, provides choices for students in creative thinking and problem solving, and supports improvisation.

Art educators are responsive to students, include students in planning their learning, and encourage collaboration to develop a community of learners.

Content

Quality art instruction requires a varied and deep understanding of the visual arts, sets a high standard of excellence and demands planning.

Art educators engage all students in learning that promotes the arts to enrich their lives using examples reflective of the real world and its diversity.

Quality art instruction inspires students to understand art making, the world of objects, the impact of visual images, and performances that incorporate the visual arts.

Art educators are aware of the relationship between the students and the specific art making materials they are using to create work.

Learning Environments

Quality art instruction takes place in a variety of places, including classrooms, museums, and community settings.

Learning environments dedicated to the arts are properly equipped and provide access to a variety of media and technologies.

It is important that these environments create a stable, safe, and equitable space that values the arts and supports the exploration of new ideas, creativity, and innovation.

Quality art instruction allocates equitable time to support a standard of excellence and achievement for all student learners.

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Advancing Art Education

Category: Instruction (continued)

2. One statement for that category which articulates NAEA's beliefs in this category.

Quality visual art instruction is vital to the development of individuals, communities, and society through creative expression and critical processes.

Position Statements in this Category

Position Statement on PreK-12 Teacher Evaluation in the Visual Arts [Adopted March 2011]

The purpose of evaluating PreK-12 teachers is to ensure high quality art education that meets the needs of all students. Quality evaluation must be a collaborative process between art educator and evaluator(s) with a clear understanding of the distinctive characteristics of the visual arts and the creative process. Using this collaborative process, art educators should receive regular feedback that helps them grow as professionals.

Evaluation should be used to provide information to build the strongest possible instructional teams and hold school leaders accountable for supporting each educator's professional development. Ultimately, the evaluation processes should focus on making sure every student receives high quality instruction and meets with success in the discipline.

Key elements of quality teacher evaluation should include:

- An annual process that is based on clearly focused rigorous performance expectations
- Multiple measures should include things such as student growth, classroom observations centered on student learning, district or teacher generated assessments
- Regular feedback from instructional managers that include the educator in conversations about student progress and the educator's long and short term goals
- Proficiency ratings that provide the educator with a clear picture of their current performance in a variety of areas
- An individualized professional development plan that supports the continued growth and improvement of the educator

Position Statements in this Category continue on the next page

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Advancing Art Education

Category: Instruction (continued)

Position Statement on Scheduling, Time, Funding and/or Resources for Visual Arts Education [Adopted March 2011]

NAEA recognizes the need for sufficient (or ample) funding and equitable scheduling for visual arts programming in preK-12 educational settings. Instructional time and funding for visual arts must allow for student success in meeting national, state and local standards.

Regularly scheduled class periods allow for quality student learning by providing sufficient time for instruction, art production, reflection, and assessment as well as the routines necessary for a well organized art class.

- NAEA recognizes ratios of educators to students differ from state to state and district to district. The quantity of visual arts educators is sufficient to meet the basic quality standards for curriculum, time and scheduling for each grade level. The average teaching load for art educators is commensurate with that of educators in other disciplines.
- Instructional contact time of art educators is equal to but does not exceed the maximum contact time required of all instructional staff.
- Planning and preparation time and additional duties are commensurate with other instructional staff.
- A minimum of five minutes should be scheduled between classes to allow for clean-up and preparation for succeeding classes.
- Art class enrollment should be limited to sizes that reflect the capacity of the facility and assure a safe working environment for students and educator.
- Art facilities provide adequate, safe and secure storage for equipment, supplies, instructional resources, and student work.
- Students who have an aide assist in other classes should be accompanied by their aide to assist in art classes.
- Art class enrollment and attendance are consistently maintained in order to support sequenced instruction. Students should not be removed from art class as punishment or for remediation in other subject areas.

Supplies, equipment, and technology purchased for the art program should be sufficient to meet National and State Standards, achieve local curriculum goals and meet all required safety regulations.

The budget is sufficient for the art program established in the curriculum plan, includes consumable supplies, instructional resources, new or replacement equipment, repair and maintenance of equipment, and is equitable across the school district.



Advancing Art Education

Category: Instruction (continued)

3. Future Position Statements in this category might include:

- Equity and safety - what instructors need to do for kids
- Media and Technology
- Instruction in Museums
- Visual literacy



Advancing Art Education

PLATFORM STATEMENT

Category: Assessment

1. Understanding of what the category is

Assessment measures student learning in the visual arts and informs best practices in art education.

Quality assessment is critical to effective instruction and comprehensive delivery of the visual arts curriculum.

Authentic assessment in the visual arts can take many forms (formative, summative, program assessment, portfolio assessment, peer assessment, quality scale or 'rubric', self-assessment).

2. One statement for that category which articulates NAEA's beliefs in this category.

NAEA believes that a variety of authentic assessments which are developmentally appropriate for all learners are vital to best practices in art education.

3. Future Position Statements in this category might include:

- Statewide Assessment
- Assessment in non-test subjects
- Assessment included in grade point average and honor roll calculations for students
- NAEP Assessment

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