



PREPARING FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

TIPS FOR STATE AND REGIONAL LEADERS

OVERVIEW:

While we navigate through these unprecedented times as leaders in the field, our attention is focused on preparations and plans for the 2020–21 school year. As you consider alternative supports, convenings, and a variety of school schedules/approaches due to COVID-19–related limitations on gatherings and travel, NAEA stands beside you with guidance and considerations to assist you. This guidance is based on member input and organized around four key areas for consideration: Membership; Conferences and Convenings; School-Based Preparation, Planning, and Scheduling; and Communicating and Advocating.

This document will be updated regularly and is intended for use in tandem with “Tips for Returning to the Visual Arts and Design Classroom” and “Tips for Teaching Visual Arts and Design in a Distance-Learning Environment” in [NAEA’s Remote Learning Toolkit](#). State and regional arts leaders are essential supports to members and educators, offering guidance, solutions, and much-needed connection and camaraderie.

MEMBERSHIP:

NAEA and our state associations are committed to the success and sustainability of the field of art education. Through membership engagement, leadership, training, study, and practice, we are collectively empowered to effect learning, change, and growth for our learners, our educators, and the field at large. Our current members have consistently invested in our associations and are a strong foundation for us to build upon as we consider reaching art educators who are non-members. These individuals can benefit from our supports, camaraderie, and advocacy voice as well as contribute to broadening and diversifying our perspectives, policies, and practices. The following guiding questions are provided to aid you in analyzing and addressing membership needs for your state and community.

1. **Data, Data, Data:** In order to gauge your current membership performance, consider comparing your membership levels across a 3- to 5-year window of time as well as across a year, looking for trends in numbers across months and seasons as well. We know that the location of the national convention can impact local numbers. What other significant factors come into play? Can this information help you to predict moments during the year that will need additional focus or support? Does this help you to target a high-renewal season? What kinds of incentives, promotions, or partnerships might be possible to attract, retain, or engage members?
 - Consider exploring access to broader education market data and purchasing mailing lists, from a firm like **Market Data Retrieval (MDR)**.
 - State Association Partners—NAEA can provide potential and lapsed member lists.
2. **Just-in-Time Supports:** Are there unique services and supports you might offer to members at this time that are an incentive to join and/or renew? How are you keeping your finger on the pulse of member needs? What kinds of “just-in-time” supports might you offer? Is a working group or subcommittee structure possible for addressing these emerging needs? Is there a specific regional need that you might be able to address? Are these supports transferrable across settings? Distance learning requires adaptability, modification, and a flexible mindset. Support those in the classroom by promoting advance preparation of lessons and a nimble approach in the moment, in order to provide both group and individualized instruction as well as on-the-spot feedback and redirection
3. **Peer Perspectives:** How are you staying informed of other peer associations’ actions and initiatives? Simply by connecting with colleagues, scanning the web, checking **ASAE**, and following trends can spark ideas and new strategies—as well as act as a barometer for decision making. Consider creating a “kitchen cabinet” of informal advisors that can provide perspective, direction, and alternative solutions. Oftentimes there’s no need to reinvent the wheel; instead you can borrow a process or approach from a peer or colleague.
4. **Adjusting Expectations and Practice:** Given that this is a year unlike any other, how might you right-size your expectations to align to current trends in membership? Might there be an alternative business model or targets for the year that are adjusted to match the current moment? Consider both the benefits and challenges of alternative solutions; for example, the NAEA Board voted in July to enact a Fiscal Impact Committee to review and study membership, including understanding the pluses and minuses of alternatives like new tiers of membership, multi-payment plans, and/or auto-renew options. How might these types of changes affect you at the state level?*
5. **Growing Leadership:** What systems and structures do you have in place to identify and grow leadership from across your organization? Are leadership pathways explicitly clear? Have you designed an onboarding process and orientation? How are you storing and sharing critical documents and efficiently transferring this knowledge during board transitions? How can you ensure that a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion and that your membership and leadership reflect the demographics of your learner populations?
6. **Connecting the Dots:** Utilize existing resources from NAEA, like President Thom Knab’s **Open Letter**, or draft specific materials that explicitly describe the benefits of national and state associations in the lives of visual arts educators in order to inform school leaders and decision makers of this worthwhile and critical investment.

Please Note: We are currently engaging members for feedback and ideas to shape the next 5-year NAEA Strategic Vision. Early input has identified membership as a key area to further explore, and this is the right time to **share your questions and feedback on this topic.*

CONFERENCES AND CONVENINGS:

Summer and fall are especially busy times for state leaders to convene their members at regional conferences, and many are currently planning for a variety of gatherings, from smaller in-person conferences to going completely virtual or hybrid/blended, as well as considering postponement and other avenues. This section details some guiding questions to utilize in negotiating your options in this new territory as well as best practices in live and virtual settings. Without any of us having concrete knowledge of what’s to come, we suggest exploring multiple plans and options to ensure optimal outcomes.

1. **Timing:** The time of year that you're considering will play into your decisions. More immediate dates may call for virtual formats, hybrid/blended (mix of live and virtual), or potentially postponing to a future date.
2. **Space and Location:** State by state we see a range of spaces utilized for conferences, from hotels, convention centers, and universities to schools and community spaces. Review the agreements/contracts with these spaces to understand your flexibilities. If you are looking to go virtual this year but have a venue contract already, ask if that contract can be pushed to a future year. It ensures that the venue still earns your business while you can avoid the risks of an in-person conference.
3. **Contracts:** If you need to negotiate an existing contract, consider these areas of potential flexibility; know your penalty dates for decision making; timing (postponement); reducing the reservation to a smaller size; or other strategy. Is there a termination clause that includes acts that are outside of your association's control (force majeure)?
4. **Survey:** Engage with members to understand their comfort levels and needs. Consider pulse surveys and hosting virtual listening sessions/town halls to gauge the interest of stakeholders for travel and in-person meetings. Include your exhibitors and sponsors in your survey strategies—they are likely a key component of your overall conference/convening experience.
5. **Registration:** How will the registration process stay the same or change? If members typically pay for their membership dues at the same time as conference registration, how are you planning to address if there are changes?
6. **In-Person Conferences and Meetings:**
 - **Healthy Guidance:** Follow the most up-to-date **CDC** and **WHO** guidelines when considering in-person gatherings, including guidance on social distancing, masks, and sanitation.
 - **Make a Plan:** Ensure that you not only have a plan in place for content, but for safety and precautions as well. Follow and align your plans with local district and state guidance.
7. **Virtual Conferences and Meetings:**
 - **Choose Your Platform:** Shop around, attend other virtual conferences, consider what *bells and whistles* are critical for your group (breakouts, chat features, posting and sharing, polls, accessibility features, security, live sessions or prerecorded sessions, etc.). Consider partnering/collaborating with other states for your conference if you are unsure of whether you can put together a virtual conference on your own.
 - **Synchronous or Asynchronous:** Think through how you might offer synchronous virtual and live sessions happening simultaneously or how asynchronous offerings might best serve your members.
 - **Recording:** Many presenters are recording their keynotes/presentations in advance, then "hosting" them live by appearing before for welcoming and afterward for Q&A. Provide presenters with VERY specific details on how long videos should be, programs to record videos, how and where to upload videos, and how the videos will be used. Consider using speaker agreements that explicitly give the association permission to record live content and to share recorded content post-event. Not all presenters are willing for their presentations to exist online in perpetuity.
 - **Build a Team and Delegate:** Associations may need to develop new positions within your committee structure and/or board to support a virtual conference. Consider the supports you will need for a virtual conference, and create job titles that correspond to those specific needs. For example, technology support will likely be a different need—specifically, presenters may need support in creating asynchronous video presentations. These efforts require the utmost teamwork and collaboration, as even the best-laid plans arrive with new technological surprises and uncertainties.
 - **Be a Good Host:** Designate specific hosts for sessions. Hosts are your technical eyes and ears in each session room. Session hosts are responsible for logging on early, making sure the presenters are logged on, and that share screen functions work. Hosts are great resources to start sessions, record, and to end sessions.

- **Add a Moderator:** Designated session moderators are responsible for speaker introductions, monitoring and responding to chat features, and for engaging with attendees. Provide your moderators with language or slides for making your audience comfortable and welcomed into the virtual space (using the mute feature while others are speaking, how to “raise their hand,” turning microphone and video on/off, etc.). Your moderators can assist with speaker readiness and test runs, if needed, leading up to your event.
- **Go Here for More Resources and Comparisons:**
 - » Moving from live to virtual [here](#)
 - » Explore and compare platforms [here](#)

8. **Hybrid/Blended Conferences and Convenings:** You’ll want to consider details outlined under in-person and virtual and find the right mix for your audience.

PREPARATION, PLANNING, AND SCHEDULING FOR THE ART CLASSROOM:

Whether in person or virtual, preparing to return to the arts classroom may seem daunting, but it can be successfully tackled by systematically addressing each component of a teacher’s instructional plan. Encourage art educators to volunteer and get involved with school planning efforts—including scheduling, supply ordering and distribution, and room setup/organization. Urge art educators to think through scheduling, managing materials and supplies, and designing lessons. Test your lessons virtually and think through tips for identifying lessons that use common household items for greater accessibility of materials for all learners.

As arts educators who likely know a significant portion of their student bodies, our members can provide valuable insight as well as creative problem solving across grade levels, subjects, and classrooms. As for materials and supplies, individual student kits may best serve students, and organizing them can require coalescing school-wide resources—especially if supply orders for the school year have already been placed. Reach out to administrators to discuss costs, budgets, and alternative solutions. Consider a distribution process of individual art kits that is similar to the successful distribution of lunches and meals that schools have provided. See the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) and [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) guidelines for current guidance on safe handling and disinfection of materials and objects.

Support early planning and a flexible mindset, as many material-rich lessons may need to be modified. When looking at lesson plans and curriculum, teachers should include social–emotional learning standards (SEL); see [CASEL](#), alongside arts and academic standards, to ensure a 360-degree approach to each student. Not every aspect has to be a daunting task. Please keep joy in the mix and plan time and space for the inherent gratification and connection tied to art learning and artmaking.

1. **Get a Head Start:** Create plans as early as possible for preparation, planning, and scheduling during COVID-19. As a leader, these types of resources for art educators will be well received by your members.
2. **State-by-State Plans:** The Arts Education Partnership (AEP) and the Education Commission of the States (ECS) developed a [suite of resources](#) to track state-by-state plans. Please review your state’s plans in detail.
3. **Safety in the Art Room:** Develop school guidelines for safety requirements in art classrooms that are aligned to local, state, and national guidelines and best practices. Keep systems and rules as simple and straightforward as possible.
4. **Be Inclusive:** Connect members to resources to ensure their plans are developed through a lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Let’s focus on LIVING ARTISTS and BLACK ARTISTS, teaching empathy, and social–emotional learning activities. See NAEA President-Elect James Haywood Rolling, Jr.’s Open Letter [here](#).

5. **Polish Up:** Review best practices for delivering art classes remotely and through online platforms. Look at training, designing, and promoting innovative programs, as well as expanding skill sets to make sure that lessons and content are as relevant as possible to learners.
6. **Virtual, Live, or Hybrid:** Be flexible in the resources you develop. Include resources that focus on an in-person/hybrid model, as well as distance learning.

COMMUNICATING AND ADVOCATING TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **The Arts & ESSA: Connect the arts to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).** NAEA already offers resources and support for considering the arts as part of a well-rounded education plan.
2. **Existing Advocacy Tools:** Use NAEA advocacy resources. The **NAEA Advocacy Toolkit**, “Visual Arts Matter” publication, White Papers, and position statements are available to support you in making the case for visual arts and design education and programs.
3. **State and Local:** As a leader in your state and community, reach out to your local and state education agencies and offices for up-to-date information and to ensure that the arts are well considered in **plans for reentry** and continued distance learning environments. Take part in planning efforts. Offer to support school leadership in planning and establishing schedules and routines for the coming school year. In many cases, especially preK–8, art educators know the majority of the student body and can be very helpful in considering creative scheduling solutions that are inclusive of the arts.
4. **Inform School Leaders:** It is critical to advocate and explicitly communicate the importance of active membership to school administrators, boards of education, and decision makers. Utilize existing resources and develop your own methods of telling the arts education story in compelling terms in order to increase value and support of teaching a full art and design education curriculum (creating, presenting, responding, and connecting), maintaining staffing, schedules, and resources, as well as attending NAEA professional development offerings and events.
5. **Follow up-to-date health and safety guidance:**
 - Centers for Disease Control: **Specifically for schools**
 - World Health Organization, specifically for schools: **Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools**
 - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: **EPA**

Founded in 1947, the National Art Education Association (NAEA) is the leading professional membership organization exclusively for visual arts/design educators, advancing visual arts education to fulfill human potential and promote global understanding. Find out more at www.arteducators.org.



SUPPORTING YOU AND YOUR LEARNERS DURING THIS UNPRECEDENTED TIME.

The *Remote Learning Toolkit* is a repository of resources curated to help visual arts educators navigate challenges and opportunities within and beyond the classroom in the 2020-21 school year.



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