

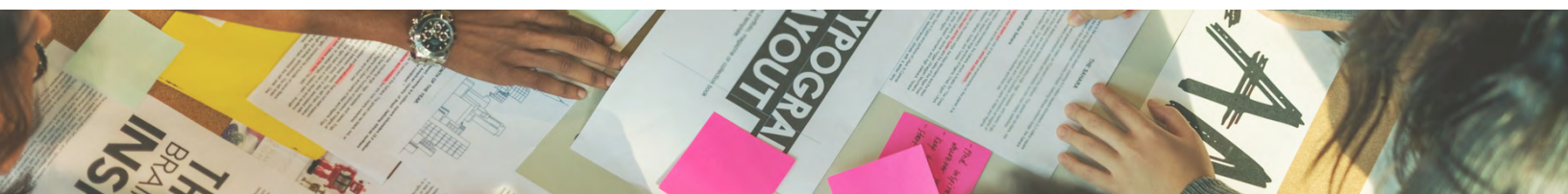


NATIONAL  
ART EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION

# **GUIDANCE DOCUMENT** *for* **School Administrators** *and* **District Leaders:**

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**The Importance of Hiring Fully  
Certified/Credentialed Visual Arts Teachers  
in K–12 Schools**



Visual arts education is a fundamental component of a comprehensive curriculum, broadening students' knowledge and skills. To maximize these benefits, it is essential to hire fully certified and credentialed visual arts teachers with professional expertise and pedagogical training.

Although qualified with specific skills, teaching artists and general education teachers do not possess the specialized training and expertise of fully certified visual arts teachers. Fully certified art teachers are uniquely equipped to meet students' developmental, academic, and creative needs through a robust and standards-based visual arts curriculum.

This document highlights the significant advantages of hiring fully certified visual arts teachers and provides best practices to support this initiative. By employing and investing in certified visual arts educators, school administrators ensure the arts remain integral to K–12 education, enriching students' personal and academic growth while fostering a vibrant school community.

## Why Fully Certified Visual Arts Teachers Are Essential

### Specialized Training in Visual Arts Pedagogy and Teaching Methods

Fully certified visual arts teachers are rigorously trained in both artistic techniques and educational pedagogy tailored specifically to visual arts, design, and media arts instruction. They understand how to support diverse learning styles, scaffold instruction effectively, and create lessons aligned with visual arts educational standards.

Their training equips fully certified visual arts teachers to:

- Engage students with various art forms.
- Utilize a range of materials, techniques, and teaching tools.
- Designing age-appropriate lessons that build artistic skills progressively.
- Teach diverse student populations.
- Adapt instruction to various learning needs.
- Foster a positive, inclusive classroom environment.

### Comprehensive Knowledge of Student Visual Arts Development and Learning

Fully certified visual arts teachers receive in-depth training on child and adolescent visual arts development, enabling them to address students' cognitive, emotional, and social needs at each grade level.

This expertise allows fully certified visual arts teachers to:

- Nurture technical skills while building students' confidence in self-expression through art.
- Create structured, engaging, and developmentally appropriate learning experiences for K–12 learners.

### Knowledge of Visual Arts Curriculum and Standards

Certified visual arts teachers are trained to design and implement curricula that align with state and national standards, ensuring students are prepared for creative careers, artistic pursuits, and self-expression. Through curriculum maps and skill progression plans, they ensure students build a strong foundation from elementary through high school. Employing fully certified visual arts educators ensures students receive a structured, meaningful art education that supports both academic achievement and personal growth.

A well-designed visual arts curriculum broadens students' knowledge and skills by:

- Encouraging critical thinking and innovation.
- Fostering artistic literacy and helping students appreciate art's role in society and culture.
- Developing the skills necessary for advanced study and creative exploration.
- Preparing students for careers in the growing creative economy.
- Creating interdisciplinary opportunities, connecting art with subjects like history, science, and literature to deepen students' understanding of broader concepts.

### Visual Arts Assessment and Evaluation Expertise

Fully certified visual arts teachers are trained in assessing and evaluating students' artistic growth in ways that are developmentally appropriate and based on clear standards.

Fully certified visual arts teachers understand how to:

- Use formative and summative assessments to gauge students' understanding of visual arts concepts.
- Integrate best practices in assessment and evaluation to effectively monitor and support student progress.
- Support students in reflecting on their work.

### Expertise in Unique Classroom Management

The art room is a dynamic space where students use diverse materials, explore creativity, and work independently or collaboratively.

Fully certified visual arts teachers are trained to:

- Manage the safe use of art supplies, tools, and spaces.
- Foster a studio environment that balances safety, structure, collaboration, and creativity.
- Adapt to various learning needs to support all students.
- Handle multiple projects and activities simultaneously while maintaining organization.

### Long-Term Impact on School Culture and Student Outcomes

Fully certified visual arts educators are committed to creating lasting arts programs that benefit the entire school community. Their contributions extend beyond lesson planning to include school-wide events, exhibitions, community partnerships, and advocacy, enriching school culture and fostering a sense of community.

The impact of fully certified visual arts teachers includes:

- **Enhanced Student Engagement and Academic Performance:**
  - » Arts education improves achievement across disciplines.
  - » Certified visual arts teachers integrate critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, and collaboration.
  - » Quality arts education increases student engagement, attendance, and motivation, while reducing behavioral issues.
- **Social and Emotional Development:**
  - » Visual arts foster self-expression, empathy, and resilience.
  - » Teachers guide students through creative exploration of emotions and ideas.
  - » Brave spaces for collaboration help develop confidence, perseverance, and communication skills.
- **Support for Students' Future:**
  - » Teachers prepare students for arts-related college and career readiness, including portfolio development and scholarships.





- » Teachers help prepare students for college and careers outside the arts by strengthening their critical thinking, creative problem-solving skills, and appreciation for art.
- » Extracurricular opportunities in the arts provide a space for extended engagement and can open doors to opportunities such as internships and competitive programs.
- » Creative skills are highly valued in various fields, such as technology, marketing, and design.

- **Commitment to Equity and Inclusion in the Arts:**

- » Certified teachers deliver culturally responsive instruction, incorporating diverse perspectives and art forms.
- » They foster inclusive environments that promote empathy and respect.
- » Ongoing professional development ensures deep knowledge of diverse art histories and cultures.
- » Teachers expose students to various cultural traditions, promoting diversity and inclusion in the classroom.

## Recommendations for Hiring Fully Certified Visual Arts Teachers

- **Advocate for Arts Education Funding:**

- » Secure funding to hire certified visual arts teachers and support robust arts programs.
- » Secure funding to support growing arts programs with materials and resources that encourage innovation in teaching and learning.

- **Prioritize Certification:**

- » Ensure that candidates hold state-recognized certification or credentials in visual arts education.
- » Support arts educators in the recertification process.
- » Look for and support teachers who demonstrate proficiency in both teaching and visual arts.

- **Value Professional Development to Ensure Continuous Growth:**

- » Art educators have opportunities to meet with other visual arts specialists, as well as specialists in other subjects.
- » Visual arts educators have opportunities for professional development and participation in professional learning communities.
- » Professional learning enables the development and alignment of curriculum collaboratively across preK–12.
- » Professional learning provides opportunities to learn about portfolio development, college admissions criteria, and career readiness for visual and media arts pathways.

- **Recognize Visual Arts Teachers as Core Professionals:**

- » Acknowledge visual arts teachers as essential, highly trained professionals in the school community.
- » Nurture meaningful relationships with educators outside of the field to build rapport for the profession and the field.
- » Commit to consistent hiring and assessment practices for art educators, ensuring that all students have access to highly qualified art educators.



# Resources:

## NAEA Position Statements:

- [Certified/Licensed Visual Art Educators in Pre-K through 12 School Settings](#)
- [Scheduling, Time, Enrollment, Facilities, Funding and/or Resources for Visual Arts Education](#)
- [Visual Arts as Part of a Well-Rounded Education](#)
- [Importance of Visual Arts Supervisors/Administrators in PreK-12 Education](#)
- [Positive School Culture and Climate](#)

## NAEA Publications:

- [NAEA Policies Related to School Art Program Standards](#)
- [Purposes, Principles, and Standards for School Art Programs](#)
- [Design Standards for School Art Facilities](#)
- [National Visual Arts Standards Handbook](#)
- [NAEA Art Teacher Recruitment & Retention Task Force, Supporting Our Current & Future Visual Arts, Design, & Media Arts Educators: Report & Recommendations](#)

## Research on the Benefits of Arts Education:

- [Arts Education Partnership, The Arts Count](#)
- [Arts Education Partnership, Visual Arts Matter](#)
- [The Arts Advantage: Impacts of Arts Education on Boston Students](#)

