

Secondary Spotlight

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SECONDARY DIVISION NEWS

FALL 2026



LET'S HIT THE GROUND RUNNING!

Whether your summer was filled with travel, professional learning, relaxation, or a little of everything, the new school year is here—and it's time to hit the ground running. As you prepare your classroom, organize supplies, and finalize lesson plans, don't

forget to make time to invest in yourself and your program. Start by planning your professional learning for the year. The NAEA National Convention, March 4–6, 2027, in New York City, offers outstanding opportunities to connect with colleagues, discover new ideas, and recharge your teaching. Explore district funding, scholarships, and other resources now so you don't miss important deadlines.

This is also the perfect time to think about advocacy. NAEA award nominations are open through November 2, 2026, making it an ideal opportunity to recognize outstanding colleagues, National Art Honor Society sponsors, and students considering careers in art education. If you have an innovative project in mind, don't overlook National Art Education Foundation (NAEF) grants, with applications due October 1, 2026.

A little planning today can create opportunities throughout the year. Invest in your own growth, celebrate the accomplishments of others, and stay connected with the Secondary Division.

Robin Brewer is starting her 22nd year at Garnet Valley High School in southeastern Pennsylvania and is a past president of the Pennsylvania Art Education Association.

2027 NAEA NATIONAL CONVENTION | MARCH 4-6

NEW YORK



REGISTRATION IS OPEN

Make your plans now to engage with your vibrant professional community in person at the largest gathering of visual arts education professionals in the world! Make art and lasting connections while experiencing limitless, quality professional learning options—no matter what your professional focus may be. This is visual arts education in action. Don't miss it!



Did you know that you can apply for a scholarship to attend the NAEA Convention? Check out opportunities [HERE](#).

Print this [LETTER OF SUPPORT](#) to give to your administrator when making your case to attend.



Advocacy Through AWARDS

Celebrate excellence in teaching and put a spotlight on SECONDARY arts in education!

Nominations are due November 2, 2026

[Link to more info](#)

Did you know that any NAEA member can nominate?

NAEA has a number of awards/recognitions and many that apply to the Secondary Division.
Consider nominating a colleague for one of these awards:

National Secondary Art Educator

Regional Art Educator

Regional Secondary Art Educator

New Professional Art Educator

Outstanding National Art Honor Society Sponsor

Rising Stars Recognition

(for HS students considering entering the field of art education)



The 2026-27 Awards Program is now open!

The NAEA Awards Program offers more than 100 awards at state, regional, and national levels. View descriptions and nomination details for each award on the page below.

Nomination deadline: Monday, November 2, 2026



Research Commission



Meet Your Secondary Research Commissioner

Keri Reynolds is a National Board Certified art teacher based in Houston, Texas. She has experience teaching a variety of studio art courses including drawing, painting, photography, digital art, and AP art at the high school level. In addition to serving as the NAEA Secondary Research Commissioner, Keri serves as coeditor for the Texas Art Education Association's *TRENDS* journal.

The NAEA Research Commission supports an inclusive, connective, and responsive vision of research in the field of art education.

Getting Started With Research

The NAEA Research Commission provides several [recommended publications](#) based on the following research topics:

- Assessment & Evaluation
- Social Justice
- Emerging Technology
- Demographic Data



NATIONAL
ART EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION

RESEARCH COMMISSION

Connect & Collaborate

Please reach out if you have questions or ideas for Secondary Division Research Commission topics to Keri at kereynol@ga.aliefisd.net



ED&I Commission

Meet Your Secondary ED&I Commissioner

CJ Matz (he/him) is a high school visual arts educator, bookmaker, and jeweler living and working in Allentown, Pennsylvania. In addition to serving on the ED&I Commission, he is President of the Pennsylvania Art Education Association.

His work focuses on authentic artmaking experiences, visual culture, the intersections of personal and professional identities, and engaging in critical social action as a queer, white educator. CJ recently sat on the PA Department of Education's Arts & Humanities Standards Writing Committee. He holds a BS and MEd in Art Education from Kutztown University.

ED&I: Wherever You Are in the Journey

Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion work is not a destination—it is an ongoing process of learning, reflection, conversation, and action. Whether you are a seasoned educator, a preservice student, or somewhere in between, you don't have to navigate this work alone.

NAEA offers a growing collection of tools and resources designed to help educators build their understanding of ED&I and consider how these ideas intersect with their own teaching practice. ED&I work can invite us to examine the systems, assumptions, identities, and experiences that shape our classrooms—including our own.

Not sure where to begin? Start with a question.

What identities and experiences do we bring into our educational spaces? How might our positionality influence the way we teach, interpret student work, or understand our relationships with students? Whose perspectives are represented in the visual culture and curricula we bring into our classrooms—and whose might be missing? How can we create opportunities for students to question, challenge, and make meaning from the world around them?

These questions don't always have simple answers, and engaging with ED&I does not require us to have everything figured out before we begin. Instead, they can become starting points for reflection, dialogue, and continued learning.

NAEA's [ED&I resources](#) offer opportunities to explore these questions alongside the work of other art educators. Looking for a specific topic? Explore the [ED&I HUB](#) for available resources. Want to connect with others doing this work locally? Meet your [state ED&I liaison](#). Have a resource, article, lesson, or perspective that has informed your own thinking? Consider [submitting it and contribute](#) to the collective knowledge of our field.

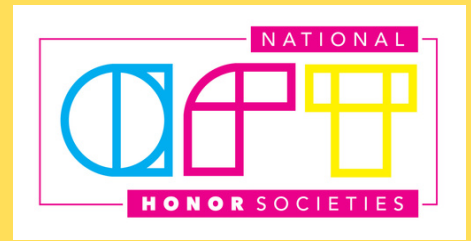
Explore. Connect. Reflect. Act.



Your ED&I journey can begin with a single question—and NAEA is here to help you explore where it leads.

Contact CJ with Secondary ED&I-related questions, concerns, or ideas at charlesmatzj@gmail.com.

National Art Honor Society Updates & Resources



The National Art Honor Society is a great way to advocate for your students and your program. Take a look at the opportunities coming up including scholarships and awards.

Students making zines during the National Student Arts Leadership Conference in DC this past July!



Save the dates for the 2026–2027 school year!



Artist Connections: Open Studio Conversations is an exclusive online series for middle and high school students who are members of the National Art Honor Societies. The series begins with a 30-minute artist talk and concludes with a 30-minute Q and A/interview session led by middle and high school students.

Artist Connections will take place on Thursday, November 19, 2026, at 7pm ET and Thursday, April 22, 2027, at 7pm ET. Registration information can be found [HERE](#).



[NAHS News](#)

See what other chapters are up to!



The annual call opens in November and closes in February.

Visit [Start a New Chapter](#) for resources to get a chapter started at your school. Find out more about NAHS [STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES!](#)

Secondary SLAM 2027

**Apply to present with the Secondary Division
at NAEA NYC 2027!**

**Share your best AP Art or
AP Art History strategy.**

**This is your chance to join the Secondary Division during our
PechaKucha-style session to share AP strategies!**

**This session will be fast-paced. Seven Secondary Division AP
teachers will be chosen to give a 3-slide, 5-minute presentation
of ONE effective strategy.**

**Requirements (if you are chosen to present with us):
You are committing to attend the NYC Convention and prioritize
this session as a co-presenter.**

**You are committing to turn in slides by the mid-February
deadline.**

**You will abide by the 3-slide, 5-minute guideline to allow equal
time for all presenters.**

To apply for this opportunity:

Fill out this [GOOGLE FORM](#) by JANUARY 29, 2027

Acceptance notifications will go out by FEBRUARY 5, 2027

Thoughts From Your Secondary Division Team

Latonya Hicks



Director-Elect

Latonya Hicks is a visual artist, fine arts educator, public speaker, and passionate arts advocate whose work is rooted in storytelling, memory, and human connection. As an artist, her current body of work explores themes of memory, resilience, cultural inheritance, and legacy, inviting viewers to reconsider the significance of the everyday objects we carry through our lives. By day, Latonya serves as the secondary visual arts coordinator (teacher on special assignment) for Pinellas County Schools, where she supports curriculum development, mentors high school educators, and advocates for high-quality visual arts education across secondary programs. She holds a Master of Fine Arts from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University and is a recognized leader in arts education at the state and national levels. She is the immediate Past President of the Florida Art Education Association and serves as the National Art Education Association Secondary Division Director-Elect. In addition, she is an AP Art & Design Exam Leader, consultant, mentor, and Development Committee member for the College Board, where she contributes to the ongoing development and advancement of AP Art & Design for ALL students.

Hit the Ground Running: Learning the Language of Leadership

As art educators, we often become fluent in the language of creativity, process, and student voice. This year, challenge yourself to become equally fluent in the language of your leadership. School improvement plans, district strategic goals, graduation rates, attendance, student engagement, career readiness, literacy, and enrollment are more than administrative buzzwords—they are the metrics that drive decision making. The stronger we become at connecting our visual arts programs to these priorities, the more effectively we can advocate for our students and ensure our programs continue to thrive. Take time early in the year to read your school's improvement plan and your district's strategic priorities. Ask yourself: How does my program contribute to these goals? How can I demonstrate that contribution in ways my administrators already value? If you look, you will see that the connections are already there.

Every exhibition, critique, community partnership, interdisciplinary lesson, student leadership opportunity, and family event is more than a memorable experience—it is evidence. Start collecting it from Day 1. Document student participation, attendance, community engagement, partnerships, scholarship awards, exhibition visitors, certifications earned, service-learning hours, and postsecondary successes. Pair compelling student stories with quantitative data that demonstrates impact. When budget discussions arise or enrollment decisions are made, you'll have more than anecdotes—you'll have evidence. By learning to communicate the value of your program in terms that resonate with school, district, and state leaders, you become your program's most effective advocate. This year, don't just create incredible learning experiences. Capture them, measure them, and share them. Your story—and your students' success—is one worth telling.

To learn more about collecting and leveraging data contact Tina Atkinson at: questions-dr.tinaatkinson@gmail.com

Eastern Region

Zines on Day 1: What a Supply Delay Taught Me About My Students

Time: Two classes

Focus: Visual symbols, hierarchy, and communication. Use 2 or more materials.

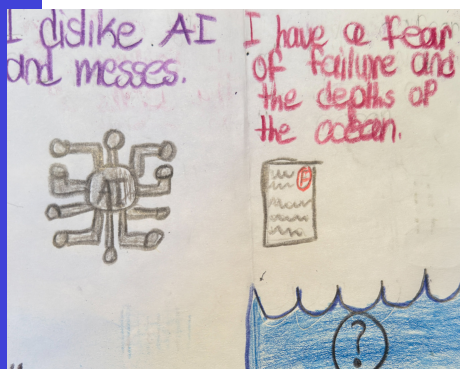
- p. 1: Cover - Name
- pp. 2-3: Likes & Interests
- pp. 4-5: Dislikes & Fears
- p 6: Strengths
- p 7: Challenges
- p 8: Back Cover

Materials:

- Computer paper
- Watercolor & Colored Pencils
- Collage Papers
- Markers



Heidi O'Donnell
heidio.me@gmail.com



Over the summer, I had the privilege of attending the NAEA National Leadership Conference. A presenter on the final day, Jennifer White-Johnson, shared with us how she uses zines to help advocate for her son's disability. Her son would create an annual zine outlining various resources for his teachers, including what accommodations he needs, best ways to communicate with him, and more. She would then photocopy it and give one to each of his teachers.

I've taught for 30 years, and I've always been a dive-right-in kind of teacher, starting a big unit on Day 1. My supplies were delayed this year, and while I could have easily moved a few units around, I decided to give my students a 2-day zine project to help me get to know them better.

This will definitely be a repeat project for me! My students thoroughly enjoyed it, and I was able to get to know them quickly—who could or couldn't follow directions, where different skill sets lie, and how students approach creative problem solving right out of the gate. Next year, I'll make copies for their teachers!



Southeastern Region

Sarah Horn



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I have been teaching art for 23 years, and the 1st day of school is still a mixed bag of emotions. Is this the year you need to challenge yourself? Is this the year you need to make more room for self-care? Can both be true at the same time?

One thing that always keeps me on track is my village of art teachers. My fabulous Kentucky art education colleagues, the connections made at NAEA conventions, this wonderful group of Regional Secondary stars...the art ed community keeps me inspired, hyped up, and sane!

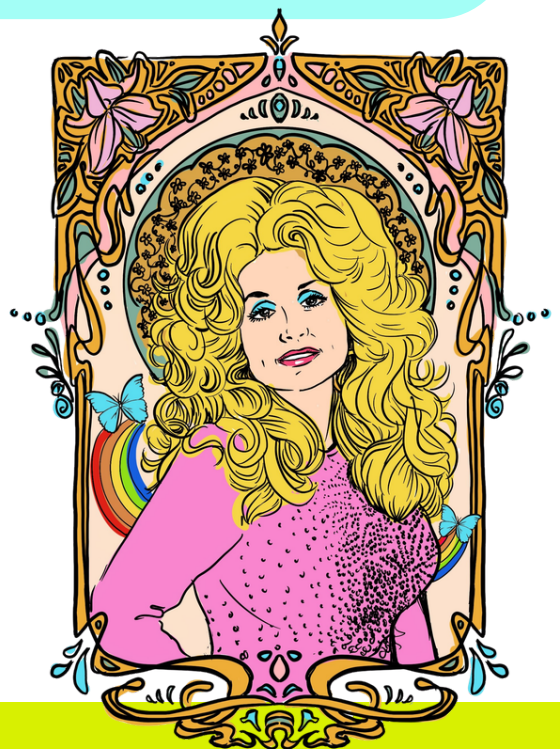
Here's my tips for hitting the ground running this year:

- Start an NAHS Chapter if you don't already have one
- Make space in your schedule to make art
- Stay hydrated
- Prioritize good sleep
- Eat your lunch! The copies can wait.
- Find Mindful Moment exercises that you like and do them regularly
- Share the load! You don't have to do it all yourself
- Talk to adults at least once a day
...and
- Check your state org for conference and PD dates

And when all else fails.,
just think:
What would Dolly do?

(Anyone else have to
make art to process?

Just me?)



Western Region



As the Western Region Secondary Director, Gayle Trueblood brings 27 years of art education experience. Gayle currently teaches sculpture, ceramics, jewelry, and fashion in Lima, OH. Gayle serves as the Past President of the Ohio Art Education Association (OAEA); State Speakers Chair; Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (ED&I) State Liaison to the National Art Education Association (NAEA); and the Western Region VP-Elect for NAEA.

Gayle's leadership journey is grounded in building community and advancing equity through the arts.

Most and collaborative leadership.

Outside of the classroom and boardroom, Gayle enjoys balancing life through teaching yoga, pilates, and personal training as well as spending time with her children and her partner, Matt.

Looking ahead, Gayle is helping shape OAEA's upcoming statewide conference this November in Cincinnati, OH. With the "Arts in Action" theme, the 2-and-a-half-day event promises to deliver high-impact learning, meaningful collaboration, and plenty of fun as educators from across the state reconnect and reenergize.



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Pacific Region

Elise Hansen

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Adventures From the Summer



Summer
2026...
More Troll
Hunting
and LAKE
Time



As Pacific Regional Secondary Director, Elise Hansen has over 16 years of experience in visual arts education and is passionate about art for all in Arizona and nationally. She is currently in a mentoring role supporting teachers while continuing her involvement with the Arizona Art Education Association. Elise enjoys ceramics, fiber art, travel, family, and developing her personal art studio.

Pacific Region

WELCOME

to the

2026–2027 school year!

As we start a new school year, please reach out to your state associations for extra guidance and involvement. As visual arts teachers, we provide valuable support and opportunities to develop the whole student. We have and use different strategies to help the students think outside the box. We build confidence and different experiences through our lessons for every student. There are so many things that you do for every student within your school!

You are valuable!

[Check out your State Organizations](#)

Programs through your state could include state conferences, art experiences, mentorship programs, connections, and more.

(each state offers different opportunities. Please use link above to get in touch with your state organization.)

What's Next?

Look for our January issue of ***Secondary Spotlight*** featuring a sneak preview of our 2027 NYC Convention Secondary Sessions!

Remember: Your NAEA membership comes with many professional development opportunities besides the annual Convention. Check out arteducators.org to find events and resources.



Engagement and empowerment are not just for students! Join us on FB and Instagram to connect with other secondary art educators. And please reach out if you are interested in volunteering or getting more involved and don't know where to start.