

MAEA GUIDELINES FOR VISUAL ART EDUCATION IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Massachusetts educational communities are currently tasked with designing learning models during the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout this process, it is of vital importance to continue the arts as essential learning for the development of the whole child, while centering access, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Since the school closures began, the arts have taken on new meaning, appreciation, and involvement within the lives of families across Massachusetts. While we do not know exactly what the challenges this coming school year will present, we do know that visual art will continue to have a vital role in shaping each learner's positive outlook of school, and in contributing to their overall success. By maintaining access to safe and meaningful visual art learning, art educators will continue to support the artistic, academic, social, and emotional development of learners, schools, and communities throughout Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Art Education Association (MAEA) is aligned with [The Massachusetts Arts Coalition](#) in our beliefs that:

- Funding and staffing for arts education must be maintained at levels at least equal to those prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Students must have continued access to arts education through periods of distance learning and altered school schedules.
- Arts educators must be included in planning. Learning environments and materials can vary considerably from non-arts classrooms.
- Professional development must be provided to arts educators, so that they may develop strategies for the delivery of arts instruction that can be adapted to a variety of learning environments and conditions.
- The arts are a cultural necessity that belong to everyone.

MAEA acknowledges that the challenge to reopen schools safely in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic is daunting as we address the needs of our educational communities. Across the state, school districts, independent schools, and educators are charged with problem-solving and decision making in an ever-evolving landscape of data and medical knowledge. This situation is fluid and may be difficult to navigate. These recommendations consider former best practices, recognize new and emerging methodologies, and provide a vision for visual art. This document is intended as a guide for planning your educational community's visual art program.

MAEA acknowledges that adjustments made to art education programming in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic are temporary. It will be necessary for art educators and their administrators to reevaluate and readjust art programs upon the safe return to school buildings to resume full-time, in-person instruction.

Philosophical and Pedagogical Flexibility

This document provides practical guidance for preK-12 educators as they seek to provide meaningful art instruction for learners of all ages and grade levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this unique time, art educators are modifying their practices not only in teaching, but also in classroom orientation, cleaning, spacing, and management. It's understood that art educators, as trained professionals, are committed to offering the very best instruction so all learners can learn and grow in their knowledge, understanding, and love of the arts. This guide asserts that art educators can still do that, but also acknowledges that how we teach may be different than in the past.

This period of adjustment compels art educators to bring optimistic spirits to the work of serving our learners, especially our most marginalized, while confronting the complications of teaching and learning during a pandemic. The most reasonable and realistic approach to success, especially during this time, is to do fewer things and do them well.

Visual art educators must make strategic reductions across the curriculum to focus on fewer standards more deeply and on a smaller number of well-crafted lessons and experiences that nurture relationships, support youth resilience, and build knowledge and skills.

Visual art educators are often the only art teacher in their school, especially at the elementary level. During this time of adjustment to accommodate in-person, hybrid, and remote modalities of education, visual art educators may be utilized at different grade levels than they customarily teach or in different teaching models, including co-teaching, within their grade span certification. In Massachusetts, visual art educators are certified for either grades PreK-8 or 5-12, or both.

Priorities for Curriculum Design

Visual Art Educators need to blend synchronous and asynchronous learning that is developmentally appropriate and provides access to all learners. Educators may find it helpful to temporarily shift their focus from the Creating standards of the [MA Visual Arts Frameworks](#) to the other three standards: Presenting, Connecting, and Responding. Educators should consider the following questions when thinking about developing curriculum during COVID-19: **What matters most in the design of our curriculum for the coming year? What are our learners experiencing during this time?**

CREATING	CONNECTING	PRESENTING	RESPONDING
<p>Utilize a sketchbook that can easily be brought to and from school to respond to artistic challenges and draft possible solutions and revisions.</p> <p>Provide opportunities to safely incorporate hands-on materials whenever possible with the understanding they may be more limited when learners work remotely.</p> <p>Share demonstration videos for remote or hybrid instruction.</p> <p>Utilize outdoor spaces whenever lessons and weather permit for socially distanced yet immersive art experiences.</p>	<p>Engage learners with diverse visual representations and meaningful discussions about anti-racism, anti-bias, trauma, and COVID-19 to inform their artwork.</p> <p>Guide learners to consider and discuss their own preferences in art (e.g. style, genre, or materials) from those of others (e.g. friends or family). (3-4.V.Co.10)</p> <p>Support learners in making connections between personal experience and artworks to use as inspiration for their own artwork. (1-2.V.Co.10)</p> <p>Encourage learner voice and expression through art making to assist in the development of social emotional learning (SEL), goal setting, and risk-taking skills.</p> <p>Introduce learners to digital images, videos, and other online resources to explore the work of historic and contemporary artists and traditions, reflecting diverse voices and varied methods of production.</p> <p>Schedule virtual field trips, conversations, and demonstrations in collaboration with museums, exhibits, events, artist studios, and artists to enhance curriculum.</p>	<p>Utilize outdoor community spaces to display artwork to allow audiences to experience exhibits safely.</p> <p>Develop or continue to develop learner-created digital art portfolios, digital displays, and virtual exhibitions to collect and share images of created artworks.</p> <p>Utilize a variety of options to provide learners opportunities to share their intentions, artist statements, and reflections. (e.g., oral, written, or video artist statements, and digital platforms)</p>	<p>Engage learners in analyzing how aesthetic elements are used to demonstrate intent. (e.g., responding to contemporary issues and/or cultural context) (3-4.V.R.07)</p> <p>Engage learners in developing criteria for evaluating a collection of artworks and utilize that criteria in determining virtual exhibitions. (7-8.V.R.09)</p> <p>Create opportunities for collaborative discussions and an awareness of acceptance and embracing diversity.</p> <p>Analyze the ways one's own cultural and personal perspectives and biases affect understanding of a visual work. (A.V.R.08)</p>

Materials and Supplies

Each educational community in Massachusetts will approach the use of art materials and supplies differently based on their school community needs and budget. We expect that educational communities, especially those that implement hybrid and remote learning programs, will ensure that all learners have equitable access to needed materials and supplies. To ensure equity and the safety of all participants we recommend:

- Order pre-packaged or prepare individual art supply kits from bulk orders with supplies for use in learning modalities. (in-person/hybrid/remote)
 - Provide general guidelines for use, care, and return of all supplies going to and from school using CDC guidelines, ensuring those materials remain with the individual.
 - Supplies included in each kit would match each grade level and skill set of the learner that could include but are not limited to pencils, erasers, scissors, rulers, markers, brushes, drawing materials, paper, glue sticks, watercolors, and sketchbooks.
 - Learners should have a sketchbook and/or portfolio for ongoing classwork that can travel with them for use remotely and/or in the classroom.
 - If regular sketchbooks are unavailable, alternatives such as notebooks or copy paper can be used in the same manner.
 - Portfolios may be created and supplied for the safe exchange and movement of artwork to and from school.
- Coordinate supplies for art kits with other educators to avoid duplication and to maximize the art budget. (e.g. pencils, rulers, and markers being purchased for other classes can also be used for art)
- Prioritize the use of single-use supplies.
 - Dry media (e.g. paper cups, paper plates, cotton swabs, etc.)
 - Wet media (e.g. clay, paper mâché, plasticine clay, etc.)
- Help learners identify what devices they can use to capture images for documenting work.
- Use technology in the absence of art supplies to infuse art history/art culture into lessons.
- Avoid having learners assist with distribution and collection of materials.

Professional Development

- Utilize COVID-19 resources provided by professional affiliates, such as [Massachusetts Art Education Association \(MAEA\)](#) and [National Art Education Association \(NAEA\)](#).
- Seek professional development to include a focus on:
 - Relevant apps, tools, and platforms.
 - Training on accessibility, student data privacy, digital etiquette, source appropriation, and plagiarism.
 - Managing expectations and communication in a completely online or blended learning environment.
 - Creating authentic arts integration that supports learning in multiple disciplines during a time-limited school year.
- Designate time for collaboration with other art educators, both locally and globally.
- Allot time for exploration of virtual collections in museums, galleries, and arts organizations for inclusion in curriculum.

Disclaimer and Citations

This guide does not purport to replace or contradict the guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, school districts and independent schools, or local public health departments regarding the timing or protocols for how schools should operate as we return to classes this fall. Please refer to those documents for specific information on safe use of materials and school spaces.

The following documents and guidance were instrumental in informing our work:

Massachusetts Arts Coalition: [MA Arts Guidelines](#)

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [Guidelines for the Arts and Physical Education](#)

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [Fall Reopening Facilities and Operations Guidance](#)

[2019 Massachusetts Visual Arts Frameworks](#)

[NAEA Guidelines](#)

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Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the many organizations whose work provided resources for us, especially the NAEA Eastern Region art education associations. Below is a list of many of the documents that helped to shape these guidelines:

[Arts Education in the Time of a Pandemic: VTATA](#)

[Arts Education: Return to School: NHAEA](#)

[Arts Together: MD Fine Arts Supervisors](#)

[COVID-19 and Arts Education: PA Arts Organizations](#)

[COVID-19 and Arts Education: RIAEA & RI Arts and Arts Learning Network](#)

[Creativity Is Not Cancelled: VAEA COVID-19 Response](#)

[Reopening Guidelines for the Arts: CAAA](#)

[September Ready: Fall 2020 Guidance for Arts Education: NJ Taskforce for Arts Education](#)

The following groups and resources have been influential in forming the ideologies and philosophies embedded within these guidelines:

[Anti-Racist Art Teachers](#)

[Arts Education is Essential: Unified Statement](#)

[Black Lives Matter](#)

[Imagining September: Principles and Design Elements for Ambitious Schools During COVID-19](#)

[MTA/AFT/BTU Public School Reopening Proposals to DESE](#)

[NAEA's National Task Force on Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion](#)