



Guiding Principles for High School Visual Arts Programs

Given the emphasis on substantive learning, creativity, innovation and visual literacy skills espoused by many, including The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, the need for substantive visual arts programs has become more critical. The following are guiding principles for implementing visual arts programs in which powerful student learning occurs and visual literacy is fostered.

Instruction

The high school course of art instruction is based on locally developed curriculum requirements and is aligned with the *National Visual Arts Standards*, incorporates the *Virginia Visual Arts Standards of Learning* and meets the *Virginia Standards of Quality*.

Art instruction is sequential, makes authentic interdisciplinary connections and preserves the integrity of the content, skills and concepts of both visual arts goals and objectives and those of other subject areas.

Assessment is ongoing, formative, performance based and designed to assess students' critical thinking and artmaking skills, creativity and content knowledge.

Staffing

Only highly qualified candidates, as defined by the Virginia visual art licensure standards, are considered for art teaching positions. Art teacher selection and hiring are based on the candidate's demonstration of knowledge and skills as an art educator and artist through an interview process conducted by licensed art personnel and a portfolio review.

Art teacher assignments are equal to but do not exceed the maximum number of hours required of all instructional staff members. Planning and preparation time, duty, lunch and additional assignments are commensurate with other teaching professionals in the building.

Art teachers are given equitable opportunities and leave for professional and leadership development.

Scheduling

Art instructional time allocations allow for student success in meeting local standards and the *Virginia Visual Arts Standards of Learning*. Students take and pass prerequisite courses prior to moving on to the next level. Elective selections are available to students every year of their middle and high school experience so that a career pathway and course sequence may be followed so that it relates to each individual student's interest and expertise.

Regularly scheduled class periods for art support quality student learning by providing sufficient time for instruction, motivation, distribution of materials, student brainstorming, creative think time, production, assessment and clean-up.

Art classes are scheduled to meet as often, as long and as regularly per week throughout the semester or year as do other academic subjects. The Virginia standards for accreditation require 140 hours of instruction for one Carnegie unit of credit to be earned.

Enrollment

Art class enrollment sizes are equivalent to those in all disciplines allowing for a safe working environment for students and teacher.

Balanced enrollment supports art instruction that honors diversity and meets the needs of all students including English language learners, special education students and gifted and talented.

Art class enrollment takes into consideration student preference, interest and ability in art.

To support sequenced instruction, art class enrollment and attendance are consistently maintained. Students are not removed from art class for punishment or remediation in other subject areas.

Environment, Supplies and Equipment

Art facilities are provided on the basis of one dedicated art room per 500 students enrolled in the school and are equipped for specialized art media to include clay, paint, printmaking, sculpture, weaving and technology. An adequate design, based on 55 square feet of classroom space per student, should allow for ease of traffic flow and a safe working environment.

Art facilities provide adequate, safe and secure storage for equipment, supplies, instructional resources and student work.

The art room learning environment is designed to fulfill specialized safety, energy efficiency, lighting, location, acoustical and maintenance needs.

Materials and equipment purchased for the art program will be sufficient to achieve the Virginia *Visual Arts Standards of Learning* and local curriculum goals and to meet all required safety regulations.

The budget is sufficient for the art program established in the curriculum plan and includes consumable materials, instructional (resource) materials, new or replacement equipment and repair and maintenance of equipment. In areas such as computer graphics or digital photography, one computer station is available per student enrolled in the class.

References

- 8 VAC 20-131. Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia - 2006. Board of Education. Commonwealth of Virginia. *Visual Arts Standards of Learning*. April 2006.
- Code of Virginia §22.1-274.1 Regulations Governing Criteria to Identify Toxic Art Materials; Labeling; Use in Elementary Schools is Prohibited
Commonwealth of Virginia. *2007 Standards of Quality*.
- Rushlow, Bonnie B., Ed. *Purposes, principles, and standards for school art programs*. 1999. NAEA: Reston.
- Partnership for 21st Century Skills. 177 N. Church Avenue, Suite 305 Tucson, AZ 85701
www.21stcenturyskills.org
- Public Law 100-695, 15 USC §1277 Labeling of Hazardous Materials Act.
- Virginia Art Education Association - www.vaea.org