



Guiding Principles for Elementary 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 and sequenced visual arts programs for all elementary students in kindergarten through fifth grade 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 elementary 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 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.

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 and include equal time for planning, preparation, and evaluation. The recommended load for art teachers is five classes of 50 minutes five days per week. 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*.

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.

At a basic level, art classes are scheduled to meet 50 minutes of uninterrupted instructional time weekly; 100 minutes at a superior level.

A minimum of five minutes should be scheduled between classes to allow for clean-up and preparation for succeeding classes.

Enrollment

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

Art instruction honors diversity and meets the needs of all students including English language learners, special education students and gifted and talented students as a result of balanced enrollment across class sections.

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.

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 efficient, lighting, location, acoustical and maintenance needs.

Materials and equipment purchased for the art program should be sufficient to achieve the *Virginia Visual Arts Standards of Learning* and local curriculum goals and to meet all required safety regulations, including the exclusive use of non-toxic art materials.

The budget is sufficient for the art program established in the curriculum plan, includes consumable materials, instructional (resource) materials, new or replacement equipment and repair and maintenance of equipment and is equitable across the school district.

Resources

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.

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Public Law 100-695, 15 USC §1277 Labeling of Hazardous Materials Act.