

Creativity is not cancelled

COVID-19 Response

The covid-19 pandemic continues to have a dramatic effect within school divisions across Virginia. Educational leaders are now faced with the task of re-imagining how learning will take place this fall and beyond. As those plans take shape, it is of vital importance to continue the arts as essential learning for all students, K-12, and ensure that all students have access to the subjects that are so very important to their lives. Since the school closures began, arts teachers have met this challenge with resounding success. Within an instant, they developed emergency distance learning plans and stayed engaged with their students in a variety of meaningful, creative ways. As we stay safe at home, the arts have been given new meaning, appreciation, and involvement within the homes of families across Virginia. While we still do not know what changes and challenges the next school year may present, we do know that the arts will continue to have a vast role in shaping a positive outlook of school, in contributing to each student's overall success, and in preparing them for a multitude of lifelong careers after graduation.

Why the Arts are Essential

Students involved in a thriving school K-12 arts program develop skills and competencies needed for many 21st century careers. Limiting arts instruction could have irreversible effects on future life opportunities. The Commonwealth of Virginia is home to **16,887** arts related businesses employing over **76,432** people, contributing to to 4% of the total business in the entire State. Much like Virginia, our Nation's economy is also driven by the arts with a total of **673,656** arts related businesses employing **3.48 million** people.*

The arts play an important role in childhood development. Through the arts, students develop communication skills, build self confidence, and innovative problem solving skills. A study from the National Endowment from the Arts also shows a direct correlation of participation in school arts programs benefiting social and emotional learning (SEL).

<https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/arts-in-early-childhood-dec2015-rev.pdf>

Virginia Fine Arts Education Requirements

The Code of Virginia (§ 22.1-253.13:1) specifies that local school boards must develop and implement a program of instruction aligned with the Standards of Learning which include the fine arts. These standards are naturally equipped to be delivered virtually through distance learning methods. Art educators throughout Virginia continue to develop content and engage with their students in creative, accessible, and equitable ways in meeting this requirement.

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter13.2/section22.1-253.13:1/>

The Us Department of Education

The US Department of Education approved Virginia's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in May of 2018 which demands that all students be provided a well-rounded education including the arts while providing equitable access to an enriched curriculum and educational experience for every student.

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/esea/virginia-essa-plan-amendment-3-redline.pdf



The Virginia Art Education Association

www.vaea.org

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