



Guiding Principles for High School Visual Arts Programs

Given the emphasis on substantive learning, creative and critical thinking, collaboration, communication, innovation, and visual literacy skills espoused by many, and referred to in Profile of a Virginia Graduate, the need for substantive visual arts programs has become more critical. Following are guiding principles for implementing high school visual arts programs in which powerful student learning occurs and visual literacy is developed.

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.

Art instructional activities and learning challenges are designed to support student individual solutions, choices, meaning making, and the development of student confidence, visual literacy, and voice. As students progress through the curriculum, they are encouraged become increasingly independent in their artistic study, research, and creative choices.

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 that 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. Maximum teacher to student ratio should not exceed 1:150.

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 while meeting course prerequisites. Due consideration should be given to scheduling like media and student leveling to minimize teacher course preparations within a given course period.

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, including 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 20-390. [Accreditation.](#)

Board of Education. Commonwealth of Virginia. [Visual Arts Standards of Learning.](#) June 2020.

Code of Virginia §22.1-274.1 [Criteria to identify toxic art materials; labeling; use in certain grades prohibited.](#)

Code of Virginia §§22.1-253.13:1-22.1-253.13:10. [Standards of Quality \(SOQ\).](#) 2022.

Parks, Michael E., Ed. *Purposes, principles, and standards for school art programs.* 2014. NAEA: Reston.

Virginia Board of Education. [Profile of a Virginia Graduate.](#)

Public Law 100-695, 15 USC §1277 [Labeling of art materials.](#)

[Virginia Art Education Association](#)