

# The Visual ARTS:

So much **MORE** than what **you see**...

➤ **Learning to draw and think creatively helps prepare students for the future!**

➤ **The truth is** that learning to paint, create a website, or design an energy-efficient home requires mastering skills which are often invisible to the naked eye, but are developed through a strong visual arts education.

“ While students in art classes learn techniques specific to art, such as how to draw, how to mix paint, or how to center a pot, they’re also taught a remarkable array of mental habits not emphasized elsewhere in schools. ”

—Lois Hetland and Ellen Winner (Educational researchers at Harvard’s Project Zero)

➤ Our nation’s economic and social landscapes are changing before our eyes. **Now, more than ever, our kids need the lessons the visual arts teach.**

## Did you know that . . .

- **We live in a visual age.** Most children and youth spend 10 hours per day in front of screens composed of pictures and words, often two types of screens at once.
- **The arts provide jobs.** 1.25 million Americans currently work in the visual arts. Jobs for artists and designers are predicted to increase by 43% by 2016.
- **Art education equips students** to form mental images, which can be used to solve problems—an ability that chemists, engineers, and architects use to create models and that inventors use to think up new ideas.
- **Art education requires students** to use their eyes and hands to give form to ideas generated in the brain—a discipline that Nobel Prize winner Eric Kandel proved boosts brain power.
- Research also indicates that high school art programs engage students and keep in school those at-risk of dropping out.

➤ **A “little” visual arts education is simply not adequate** and would be considered unacceptable in any other core academic area. Teaching students to be creative is a deliberate process, much like teaching literacy or mathematics, and is certainly just as important. The skills learned through participation in the visual arts help to equip our nation’s youth for the challenges they will face in shaping the future. **The visual arts are essential to a high-quality and balanced education.**



**Find out what YOU can do. Turn the page! >>**

## 10 LESSONS the ARTS TEACH

by Elliot Eisner, Art Education Researcher and Scholar

- 1 The arts teach children to make good judgments about qualitative relationships. Unlike much of the curriculum in which correct answers and rules prevail, in the arts, it is judgment rather than rules that prevail.
- 2 The arts teach children that problems can have more than one solution and that questions can have more than one answer.
- 3 The arts celebrate multiple perspectives. One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to see and interpret the world.
- 4 The arts teach children that in complex forms of problem solving purposes are seldom fixed, but change with circumstance and opportunity. Learning in the arts requires the ability and a willingness to surrender to the unanticipated possibilities of the work as it unfolds.
- 5 The arts make vivid the fact that neither words in their literal form nor numbers exhaust what we can know. The limits of our language do not define the limits of our cognition.
- 6 The arts teach students that small differences can have large effects. The arts traffic in subtleties.
- 7 The arts teach students to think through and within a material. All art forms employ some means through which images become real.
- 8 The arts help children learn to say what cannot be said. When children are invited to disclose what a work of art helps them feel, they must reach into their poetic capacities to find the words that will do the job.
- 9 The arts enable us to have experience we can have from no other source and through such experience to discover the range and variety of what we are capable of feeling.
- 10 The arts' position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults believe is important.

**Teachers, administrators, community leaders, and parents** must **WORK TOGETHER** to give **all students** equal access to visual arts education.

## What YOU can do:

### Spread the word!

Make sure your family, friends, and community are aware of the value of visual arts education for all students.

**Connect** with your child's art teacher and principal to learn about the visual arts education program your child receives. Let them know that you feel that a strong visual arts education is a requirement, not an option.

**Involve** parent support groups in championing the visual arts! Form an art education network of caring, concerned community members.

**Contact** local media outlets with stories about how the arts impact learning. Keep them updated on what is happening (or not happening) in the visual arts in your community.

### Support visual arts everywhere!

You have the power to advocate visual arts education from your living room to across the nation!

**Include** the visual arts in your home and family life. Cultivate your child's exploration of creative thinking through the visual arts.

**Offer** to volunteer for the visual arts education program activities at your child's school, and community art programs through fundraising, advocacy, or other efforts.

**Attend** school and community arts shows and fundraisers. Invite everyone you know (and even people you don't). Use flyers, e-mail, and social media such as Facebook to get the word out.

**Pass this flyer on!** Give a copy of the document you are reading now to everyone. Make printed copies or send it electronically.

### Get political!

Shape the future by reaching out to the elected officials and community leaders who make the BIG decisions.

**Make sure** your local, state, and federal elected officials know how important the visual arts are to our children and ask them to ensure that all students receive a strong visual arts education. Encourage others to do the same.

**Research** the views and voting history of candidates regarding the arts and education before you vote.



## Helpful Resources

**Art educators** in your community are a great resource. Find an active network of people like you who know that visual arts education is necessary. Get involved!

**The National Art Education Association** website ([www.arteducators.org](http://www.arteducators.org)) offers tools for advocating visual arts education on the local and national levels.

**Artsonia.com** is the world's largest gallery of student artwork and a great way to involve your community in celebrating school art programs while raising funds.

naea

*Advancing Art Education*

National Art Education Association

The National Art Education Association is the world's largest professional visual arts education association and a leader in educational research, policy, and practice for art education. NAEA's mission is to advance art education through professional development, service, advancement of knowledge, and leadership.



## Voices for Visual Art!

**Don't just take our word for it. Hear firsthand how art impacts lives...**

"Although I may not become a professional artist, I have no doubt that I will continue to use what I learned in the art room for the rest of my life."

—Leslie Moore,  
Maryland High School  
Honor Student

"We live in an age when the most valuable asset any economy can have is the ability to be creative—to spark and imagine new ideas, be they Broadway tunes, great books, iPads or new cancer drugs."

—Thomas Friedman, *New York Times*, August 4, 2010

"The arts are not time off from academics but accelerators to learning."

—Dr. Richard Siegesmund

➔ **Find out more!** The NAEA website is a great resource for visual arts education advocacy resources. [www.arteducators.org](http://www.arteducators.org)