



## Position Statement on House Bill 167

January 2018

While the Virginia Coalition for Fine Arts Education agrees that students should have special recognition for significant achievements such those cited in House Bill 167 and supports the expansion of the current diploma seal to include science and engineering. However, the use of the acronym STEAM in this configuration is confusing and the VCFAE opposes its use. In common educational parlance across the United States and in an increasing number of programs across Virginia, STEAM refers to science, technology, engineering, **ARTS**, and mathematics. The VCFAE asks that the expansion of the definition of the diploma seal be approved without the use of the STEAM acronym.

### Rationale:

- An increasing number of Virginia school districts have already incorporated a STEAM - science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics - focus in programs or schools, among them, Fairfax County, Loudoun, Alexandria, Chesterfield, Winchester, Charlottesville, Chesapeake, and Henrico. Virginia appears to be the only state to include advanced mathematics in the acronym rather than arts and design. Further, adding the term “advanced” only to mathematics could imply that science, technology, and engineering art not advanced.
- In the most recent federal education legislation of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, specific funds are provided for integrating the arts into STEM learning programs. Further, a bipartisan bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives which recognizes the inclusion of art and design.
- STEAM - Science, Technology, Engineering, **ARTS**, and Math – with intention, integrates 21st century skills, concepts, and practices directly into curriculum, instruction, assessment, and enrichment, while purposefully integrating the ARTS (English, history and social science, fine and performing arts), into science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics. STEAM education offers contextual learning using a framework designed with overlapping subjects.
- Art and design education teaches flexible thinking, risk-taking, and creative problem-solving with the overarching goal to foster innovation that comes by combining the mind of a scientist or technologist with that of an artist or designer. At the Institute for Creativity, Arts, And Technology (ICAT) at Virginia Tech, Director R. Benjamin Knapp says, “Creativity is essential in everything we do. Cultivating creativity, on all kinds of levels, flexes our thinking, opens us up to growth, and motivates us.”
- R. Benjamin Knapp Director of the Institute for Creativity, Arts, And Technology (ICAT) at Virginia Tech, maintains that, “Creativity is essential in everything we do. Cultivating creativity, on all kinds of levels, flexes our thinking, opens us up to growth, and motivates us.”

Contact: Virginia Coalition for Fine Arts Education  
John H. Brewington, Chairperson  
Jbrewington4@gmail.com

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