



Virginia Board of Education
January 28, 2016

The Virginia Coalition for Fine Arts Education is requesting that the Virginia Department of Education amend the way visual art, music and physical education is funded. Although I am here to represent art and music, I encourage the board to include physical education in their discussions.

We are asking that the state provide full funding of licensed art and music teachers to provide up to 60 minutes each of art and music instruction per week for kindergarten through fifth grade. This recommendation would replace the current Standards of Quality: Code of Virginia § 22.1-253.13.2. Standard 2. Instructional, administrative, and support personnel, which states:

- I. Local school boards shall employ five full-time equivalent positions per 1,000 students in grades kindergarten through five to serve as elementary resource teachers in art, music, and physical education.

Rationale:

- School divisions will be provided the resources to fully implement a sequential visual art and music education program.
- Full implementation of the kindergarten through fifth grade Music and Visual Art Standards of Learning requires dedicated instructional time at each grade level.
- Currently, the amount of art and music instruction an elementary student receives is not consistent in our state system and varies from school district to school district. Moreover, in some cases, students at one school within a district may receive 40 minutes per week more than students attending a second school. Full funding would support equity of access to art and music instruction for all kindergarten through fifth grade students across the Commonwealth.
- Research strongly suggests that students who participate in quality fine arts programs are more engaged, attend school on a more regular basis, develop leadership capacity and, ultimately in high school, graduate at a higher rate.
- Richard W. Riley, Former US Secretary of Education said, "I believe arts education in music, theater, dance, and the visual arts is one of the most creative ways we have to find the gold that is buried just beneath the surface. They (children) have an enthusiasm for life a spark of creativity, and vivid imaginations that need training – training that prepares them to become confident young men and women." A sequential art and music program taught by highly qualified teachers supports this gold in education for our students.
- In addition to the inherent benefits of the skills, knowledge, and understandings gained through participation in art and music, students involved in the arts develop creative problem-solving skills, exercise perseverance and persistence, work collaboratively, and take responsibility for learning independently.

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

Statement supported by: Virginia Art Education Association
Virginia Music Education Association
Virginia Theatre Association