



Maine Art  
Education  
Association

**Cory Bucknam**

**President**

—  
[aeforme.org](http://aeforme.org)

[president.mainearted@gmail.com](mailto:president.mainearted@gmail.com)

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To Whom It May Concern,

As President of the Maine Art Education Association (MAEA), I am writing to emphasize the crucial role that visual art education plays in the development of our students, and the importance of supporting art educators in their professional capacities. The National Art Education Association (NAEA) firmly advocates for the inclusion of a rigorous, comprehensive, culturally responsive, and authentic visual arts program in every school for every child. This vision aligns seamlessly with the MAEA's mission to support art educators in the pursuit and delivery of such programming.

Visual arts education is not just a peripheral aspect of public education; it is essential for fostering critical skills needed in today's world. Every student deserves the opportunity to develop competencies in communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving—skills that are increasingly valued in higher education and the workforce. Engaging in the visual arts empowers students to express their ideas, work collaboratively, and think outside the box, preparing them for diverse challenges they will encounter throughout their lives.

Moreover, students who participate in visual arts programs often demonstrate improved academic performance across disciplines, increased self-esteem, and a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity.

To fully realize these benefits, it is vital that school districts recognize the importance of professional development and support for art educators. One significant step in this direction is for districts to budget and pay for art teachers' professional memberships in the Maine Art Education Association and the National Art Education Association. Membership not only provides invaluable resources, networking, leadership opportunities, and professional learning but also ensures that educators remain at the forefront of best practices in visual arts education. By investing in art educators' professional development, districts subsequently invest in the quality of the education their students receive.

The Maine Art Education Association urges you to prioritize visual arts education and support the art teachers in your district by covering their professional membership fees. Doing so fosters an equitable and enriching educational experience for every student, as well as professional growth and leadership opportunities for every teacher. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

*Cory Bucknam*

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