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September 2026

Dear School Leader:

Every teacher in your school plays an essential role in serving the needs of all students. Art Educators are problem-solvers and creative thinkers who focus on artistic learning outcomes as well as social-emotional learning and broader achievement. The New York State Art Teachers Association (NYSATA) understands that educators need to continuously develop new instructional approaches to serve increasingly diverse populations of students from pre-K to university level. This is why we are pleased to announce the gathering of over 600 professionals within and around New York State for the 2026 NYSATA conference taking place in Albany, NY, November 20-22, 2026.

The annual NYSATA Conference is an opportunity for all educators engaged in the visual arts, design, and media arts to experience models of best practices and methodologies supported by research. A carefully curated array of learning opportunities is provided through over 100 interactive sessions in the largest and most diverse professional development opportunity available to New York State art educators. This year's theme, *Mind, Body, Spirit: Awakening Awareness Through Artistic Practice*, refers to the development of resilience through creativity, imagination, and emotional expression. Art Education engages human cognitive and emotional capacities, providing the opportunity for students to activate their voice and find a place in the world.

The content of the annual NYSATA conference is indispensable for anyone in visual arts, design, and media arts curriculum, instruction, assessment, and leadership. Participants will connect with a vibrant community of professionals representing art teachers, school administrators, university professors, pre-service educators, researchers, and museum educators—all with the common goal of supporting student learning through arts education.

The arts are vital in developing human potential in our students. I ask for your encouragement of your art educators in advancing their knowledge and professional skills by providing release time and support for conference registration, travel, and lodging. Thank you for any support you might provide. Details about the conference are available at www.nysata.org/2026-conference, and the Thursday preconference event at www.nysata.org/preconference. Please accept my gratitude for your leadership as we work together to ensure equity and access to a quality, well-rounded education for all students.

Sincerely,

Kelly Verdi,

NYSATA President 2025-27