

NEW YORK STATE  
The n y s a t a NEWS  
ART TEACHERS ASSOCIATION





# Advocacy – A Big Idea for Now!

## *A Message from the NYSATA President*

Cindy Henry

### Times are tough.

Over the past few weeks I have spent some time pondering what kind of statement I can make on behalf of art education at the next Board of Education budget workshop in my district. I already know that the budget prognosis for next year will be grim. The administration and board of education have kept the list of potential cuts pretty quiet pending the “big reveal” at the final budget workshop, but it is easy to guess the big ticket items that might be on the chopping block.

My district will have a number of retirees this June—among them a remarkable educator in the high school art department. Anyone who is paying attention realizes that it will be a tough budget year, and personnel cost is one of the greatest expenses that can be controlled in a district’s budget. I am saddened that my colleague who will retire in June—a woman who has given so much of herself to building a program of dynamic, rich, and meaningful learning experiences for our students—must face the realization that what she worked so hard to help establish will be diminished when she leaves us, because her position will likely be eliminated.

During my time in graduate school at Kent State I had a professor who described his vision of the true professional as one who not only practices a profession, but who strives to actually contribute back to the field itself. His words have stuck with me through the years, keeping me conscious throughout my career of how I might contribute. How can I add to the body of knowledge, generate broader understanding and respect, move the field of art education forward—even when times are tough?

One way to begin is to get acquainted with the arts requirements outlined in the NYS Part 100 regulations. You can find the Summary of the Arts Provisions in the Part 100 Regulations on the NYSED website at

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/arts/>. Reading this document is easier than sifting through the entire part 100 regulations looking for references to the arts. You will note that Art is defined as a required subject at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. Additionally, high schools must provide students with the opportunity to earn a sequence in art. Pay attention to your district’s policies and practices. Leslie Yolen, the Visual Arts Associate in the State Education Department, can help with answers to questions about arts requirements. If you need clarification or recommendations on how to proceed, Leslie can be reached through the NYSED website or at [LYOLEN@MAIL.NYSED.GOV](mailto:LYOLEN@MAIL.NYSED.GOV).

We can all make advocacy a part of an ongoing daily conversation with parents, business leaders, colleagues, and school leadership personnel. Tell everyone you meet about the power of what is happening in your art classroom. Hang exhibits that include statements about what the students learned and how it connects with other areas of the school curriculum and life. Introduce art show receptions with a short explanation of the really important things students learn from engaging with art in their school day.

It is important to speak the language of your audience. Want to make them understand how creativity and

***“Parents, did you know that when your child is engaged in the art classroom, he or she is learning much more than how to draw or paint or make a clay vessel? Through engagement with art, our children are learning to envision, express, engage and persist... “***

innovation will be the keys to success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Try reading Daniel Pink’s *A Whole New Mind*. Pink’s ideas about the importance of inventive thinking to our nations’ future economic success have taken business and education communities by storm. He speaks the language of businessmen, but his message is perception, invention, and creativity. If you search his name on YouTube you will come up with a number of lecture segments that introduce you to Daniel Pink’s ideas.

Those of you who attended the 2009 conference and heard Dr Kimberly Sheridan’s lecture were introduced to ideas from the book *Studio Thinking: The Real Benefits of Visual Arts Education*. Kim Sheridan and her co-authors used their research to identify eight “habits of mind” that are developed through comprehensive instruction in art. Most of these habits provide benefits that extend beyond the art classroom. This book has

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given me language to describe much of what I have always intuitively believed about the benefits of art education. I make reference to the ideas it contains at nearly every event hosted by the art department in my district. Last year, I introduced our elementary art show reception with “Parents, did you know that when your child is engaged in the art classroom, he or she is learning much more than how to draw or paint or make a clay vessel? Through engagement with art, our children are learning to envision, express, engage and persist...”

**Need help? You are not alone. You belong to a dynamic community of art educators: you have access to resources and people who are willing to help.**

NYSATA is committed to keeping you informed of political developments that affect art education in New York State and across our nation. Log into our website, [www.nysata.org](http://www.nysata.org), and check your profile to make sure your contact information is current so that you will not miss e-news alerts on important issues that may affect you. Become familiar with the RESOURCES tab on the main tool bar of the website, and find a little time to search through some of the links on the ADVOCACY page. If you know of a valuable web resource that is not listed there, please contact our web administrators to suggest it be shared with the NYSATA community.

With the tools I have at hand I will be able to speak up about the cuts in my district. In fairness to my district leaders, I acknowledge that they have made efforts not to make cuts that disproportionately affect the arts. I

## NYS Arts Education Survey 2009!

The New York State Alliance for Arts Education in collaboration with the [New York State Education Department](#) is pleased to announce an exciting new state-wide census of Arts Education programming, opportunities, and resources of every public school in the State. The NYS Arts Education Survey was distributed as part of the annual [Basic Educational Data System](#) (BEDS) survey to every school in New York State during October. This is the first time Arts Education has been examined this closely in New York State via the BEDS program.

The NYS Arts Education Survey will consist of a total of ten questions collecting data in the areas of: - Arts Instruction (Visual Arts, Music, Theatre and Dance) - Resources (Supplies, Materials and Equipment) - Facilities (Classroom Space) - Support (Funding / Professional Development / Technology) To view the actual survey, click [here](#). (PDF) See pages 12 & 13.

Get Involved! More information available! Go to NYSAAE’s website: [http://www.nysaae.org/NYS\\_Arts\\_Education\\_Survey-2009.htm](http://www.nysaae.org/NYS_Arts_Education_Survey-2009.htm)

What's the  
**BIG**  
Idea?

**NYSATA 62nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**November 19-21**

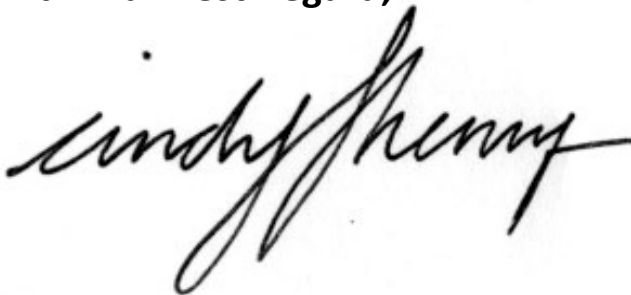
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know the economy will drive a lot of decisions in the coming years. I know that speaking up will probably not change the board decision this time. But if my school is forced to provide fewer opportunities in the arts next year, I want district leaders and the school community to understand just what it is that we have lost, and what the cost is to the children we serve.

This is not a new experience for many of you—times have been tough before. Tough times can be especially frustrating for those in the arts disciplines. It seems that we can never let our guard down or take for granted that our program is safe. The math teacher rarely needs to justify her existence. Meanwhile, just keeping art education from disappearing in the school curriculum can be a daunting task. But we art teachers have a unique opportunity to help others—children and adults—to see the world in a little different light, to realize things about art and life that they might not otherwise see. The struggle to advocate for our profession is an important one. Our advocacy is not just about protecting jobs. It is about providing opportunity. It is about creating the future in which our children will live and work.

**Times are tough, but the struggle is important and together we really do make a difference.**

With Warmest Regard,



## HOT LINKS

OVA is right around the corner – are your teams ready? The 2010 **Olympics of the Visual Arts** will be held at the Saratoga City Center on THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 2010. For more info – link to <http://www.nysata.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=87223>

**The NYSATA Portfolio Project!** Registrations are due soon for Regional Adjudications for the NYSATA Portfolio Project. Adjudication dates vary by Region, ranging from mid-April to mid-May. Fee is \$15 per student. For more info – link to: <http://www.nysata.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=86929>

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# NYSATA 2009 Conference Highlights

I would like to thank all of you for this incredible honor. I was overwhelmed when I received the news that I was to be this year's NYSATA Art Educator of the Year. It truly is wonderful to be standing here tonight. I must say that I am flattered and privileged to have so much support from my school district here at the awards banquet – I thank all of you for coming: Brian Heyward, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel; Marianne Litzman, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Phil Grusenmeyer, our Supervisor of Fine Arts; Susan Powell, the president of our Board of Education; all of my incredible colleagues from our art department; and of course Maureen Bright, our Superintendent of Schools. Maureen, thank you for kind words and for taking time out of your very busy schedule to speak here on my behalf. You have always been a great support for our Art Department at Hicksville, so I thank you for that as well. I would also like to thank Jessica Bayer and Jane Berzner for the nomination, and the Awards Committee for my selection. It is an honor to be selected by the people who I respect the most, my fellow art educators. What a wonderful conference! Thank you to the Conference Committee for putting this memorable event together.

My father, Fred Pilkington was the president of both LIATA Region 9 and NYSATA at different times when I was growing up. As a child I was surrounded by NYSATA activities as part of my everyday life. So when I became a teacher, I never thought twice



about becoming a member. I have been a member of NYSATA for the past 24 years and it has been one of the best choices I have ever made. I immediately took advantage of the opportunities that NYSATA offers its members and became involved with local and state exhibitions. I attended conferences, I got my students involved with OVA, and for the past 5 years I have been attending the NYSATA Summer Art Institute at Great Camp Sagamore. Because of this organization I am surrounded by people who are incredibly creative and talented, and who have inspired me to be a better teacher and a better artist. Who I am is very much because of all of you, so I would like to thank NYSATA and all of you for your inspiration.

I consider myself very lucky. I work in a district where the arts are considered an important part of a child's development. Our students not only create incredible works of art for themselves, but we encourage them to give back to their community and other communities by painting murals in hospitals and creating works of art for programs like "The Memory Project" and "Empty Bowls." Much of what we do in our Art department is about teaching our students not only to become better artists, but also how they can use the skills they learn in our classrooms to problem-solve in many other areas of their lives. Even in these times of economic crisis where budget cuts are affecting all of our schools,



## Beth Atkinson New York State Art Educator of the Year



Hicksville is doing all that it can to hold onto the art, music and theater programs that we currently have. Hicksville recognizes that our arts programs are just as important as math, science, English and social studies. Some of you may have read the book by Daniel Pink “A Whole New Mind.” In it he talks about how the future of our country lies in those who are considered “right brainers”; those who can see the big picture; people who can cross boundaries and are able to combine dissimilar parts in to a striking new whole. He writes about how even the Yale School of Medicine is having their medical students take classes at the Yale Center for British Art because they have found that students who study paintings excel in noticing subtle details in a patients’ condition. He writes about how the MFA is the new MBA and states facts that prove there are more Americans today working in the Arts than as lawyers, accountants and auditors. We are the future.

Our programs are important to the development of every child – even the ones who will not choose art as their direct path. What they learn in our classrooms will help them with everything that they do. It is important that everyone know this.

One of my students, Aatmaja Pandya, was recently selected as the Long Island Arts Alliance and Newsday Scholar Artist. She wrote in her application essay:

*“I am forever grateful that I live in a city that embraces and encourages creativity, and that I go to a school that overwhelmingly supports its fine arts department. Many of my peers who have taken art classes in my school have changed or improved because of them. In fact, I am one of those students. Bookish and shy, I kept quiet during the beginning of high school, making sure I never drew attention to myself. Once I discovered I had a talent for art, however, everything changed for me. I made new friends and became friendlier with others. I signed up for courses and projects that I never would have before. I joined clubs filled with people who shared my interests and my ideas. Together we did things that I never would have had the initiative to do on my own. Having a creative background gave me a new drive. It makes me want to share my thoughts and feelings with others – it makes me want to branch out... Being surrounded by creative people not only creates a welcoming environment, but it has forced me to try new things, to meet new people and to break out of my figurative shell... Art is a necessity. Creativity, in general, is a necessity. Without it, how else would we know of the diversity and individuality of the communities we live in?”*

I read Aatmaja’s essay and my faith in what I do everyday as an art educator was once again renewed.



2009 Regional Art Educators of the Year: (front row, l-r) Terry Crowningshield (5); Lee Harned (10); Donnalyn Shuster (3); Julie Zeller (2); (back row, l-r) Keith Rosko (4); Ted Chereskin (9); Nate Morgan (7).

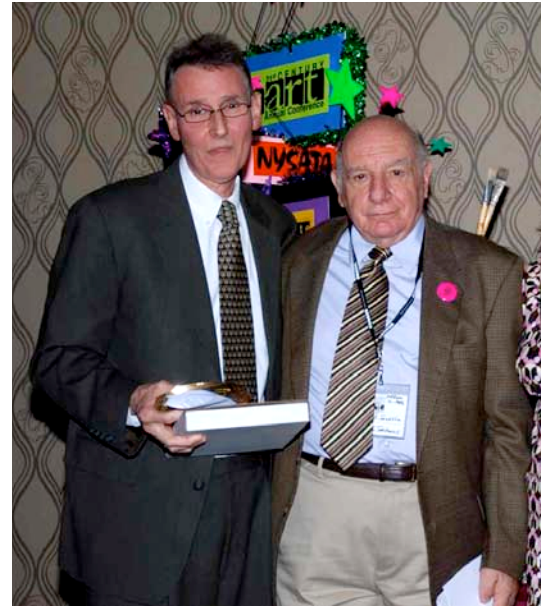




Sometimes we get so caught up in the complexities of our everyday lives that we do not take the time to reflect and realize the impact that we have as art educators on our students and who they will become. Aatmaja may or may not choose to pursue art as a career but it is evident that participating in the arts has shaped her future and changed her life.

We not only serve the students who become practicing artists but rather all students; and the arts help them to think creatively – to come up with alternative solutions to problems and see the world in a different light. We do not educate our students to fit into a mold but rather to break the mold and make their own mark. This is what we need to do to be successful in the future, so be proud of what you do every day in your classroom. We all are shaping the future of many lives.

In closing I would like to thank my family and especially my husband Brian who has great patience for all of the projects that seem to take over my basement, my living room, the garage; well, actually, pretty much sometimes all over the entire house. He holds down the fort when I come home from school late again and again from hanging an exhibit or another one of my special projects. And he never complains when I want to leave every summer for a week to go to the NYSATA Summer Institute at Great Camp Sagamore so that I may renew myself as an artist. I couldn't do it without you.



Peter Falotico, Special Citation Award for Member, with Ernie Savaglio

...be proud of what you do every day in your classroom. We all are shaping the future of many lives.



Above: Beth Atkinson with proud father, former NYSATA President, Fred Pilkington.

Below: Mimi (Mary) Broderson receives the Outstanding Service Award, presented by Michelle Schroeder, Region 1.







Mel  
Chin

LEADERSHIP

Mel Chin with NYSATA President Cindy Henry (left) and NYSATA Fundreds Chair Nate Morgan (left); and thousands of Fundred Dollar Bills delivered by NYSATA members.



Keynote







JOY

Left: NYSATA President Cindy Henry addresses the Awards Banquet crowd; Top Right: Past-President Pat Groves receives her Lifetime membership award from another Past-President Cindy Wells; Bottom Right: “Mr. Behind the Scenes” Rich Groves receives accolades for his years of contribution to NYSATA conferences.

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**Top and Right Center: Nate Morgan introduces Jessica Hamlin, Director of Education and Public Programs for Art:21.**

**Below, and Bottom Left: Dr. Kimberley Sheridan, co-author of "Studio Thinking: The Real Benefits of Studio Thinking."**



MORE  
KEYNOTES

PURPOSE