



NYSATA VISION Endorsement Communities and Schools of Excellence

New York State Art Teachers Association (NYSATA) is pleased to present the VISION Award.

V—Visual Arts

I—Instruction by certified art educators

S—Sequential, standards-based curriculum

I—Inclusivity, equity & accessibility

O—Opportunity

N—Next-generation artists

Community of Excellence in Visual Arts (CEVA) Endorsement for districts

School of Excellence in Visual Arts (SEVA) Endorsement for schools

INTRODUCTION

The NYSATA VISION Endorsement honors schools and districts that embrace and support **visual arts instruction using a sequential, standards-based curriculum while increasing inclusivity, equity, and accessibility** in arts education. This recognition celebrates programs that are shaping the future of creative learning—inspiring innovation, preparing students for a rapidly changing world, and ensuring that every learner has access to high-quality visual arts experiences that spark curiosity, creativity, and lifelong engagement. This endorsement recognizes and celebrates New York State K-12 public and private schools and districts that demonstrate a commitment to robust, engaging Visual Arts programs. The VISION Award endorsement, recognized by the New York State Art Teachers Association (NYSATA), encourages the development and maintenance of comprehensive, high-quality Visual Arts instruction and programming that prioritizes inclusivity, robust opportunity, and high visibility within school communities.

MISSION AND PURPOSE

The mission of the NYSATA is to promote excellence in art education across the state. Art education is a vital component of a well-rounded curriculum, fostering creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence.

The arts are fundamental to our humanity. They enable and inspire us—fostering creativity, empathy, and beauty. The arts also strengthen our communities socially, educationally, and economically, and improve health and well-being. (Americans for the Arts, 2025. *10 Reasons to Support the Arts*.

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/research/10-reasons-to-support-the-arts>)

Through the VISION Award, NYSATA encourages the growth and sustainability of exemplary Visual Arts Programs by recognizing schools and districts that dedicate resources to foster and support high-quality Visual Arts programs that maximize learning and expand opportunities for students. This initiative underscores the critical role of Visual Arts in student development and academic success, while promoting best practice and ongoing advocacy for the value of comprehensive, high-quality arts

programs. By acknowledging the significant impact of Visual Arts education on overall student success and well-being, educators and policymakers can advocate for its continued presence and growth within schools and districts.

PROCESS AND EVALUATION

The VISION endorsement is determined using a self-assessment nomination form and a scoring tool) to enable the NYSATA VISIONS Award Review Committee to assess program implementation. All responses to the application are confidential.

These tools help schools and districts to

- Identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth
- Guide program improvements and establish best practices
- Support sustained implementation of strong Visual Arts programming
- Receive recognition for their commitment to a robust and accessible Visual Arts curriculum
- Identify exemplary schools and districts as models for Visual Arts education in New York State

The NYSATA Visions Award Review Committee evaluates nominations based on a rubric, which includes three core areas:

- Comprehensive, sequential, and rigorous standards-based curriculum
- Inclusivity, equity, and accessibility
- Visibility and advocacy

INTENDED PARTICIPANTS

The NYSATA VISION nomination process requires collaboration between a certified Visual Arts educator(s) and the building or district leadership team, ensuring an impartial self-assessment of the arts program from multiple vantage points. At least two team members must complete the assessment, and at least one member of the nominating school or district must hold an active NYSATA membership during the year of submission.

TIMELINE

Nominations are collected from September through December each year. The NYSATA VISION Award Review Committee reviews submissions in time to decide of awards and release scores by March 1. Endorsements are announced in March in recognition of National Youth Art Month.

The evaluation considers the school's Visual Arts programming from within one year of the submission date.

Time Commitment for Completion

The time required to complete the VISION nomination form depends on the school's familiarity with the process:

- New applicants should expect to allow 45-60 minutes to complete the nomination, allowing more time as needed for team discussion.
- Returning applicants will need at least 30 minutes. The nomination process goes faster if team members have prepared relevant data ahead of time and have previous experience with the VISION nomination process.

ADMINISTRATION AND SCORING

The VISION nomination form is a self-assessment tool completed by school teams leading the Visual Arts program implementation.

The art teacher(s) work collaboratively with an administrator of record to assess the school or district's Visual Arts programs across a range of indicators of excellence.

Once a nomination is submitted, the NYSATA VISIONS Award Review Committee reviews each submission with the assistance of a scoring instrument to ensure consistency in the endorsement process.

ACTION PLANNING

Schools and districts receiving the VISION endorsement may use the results of the scoring process to

- Refine and strengthen existing Visual Arts programming and consider expanding opportunities
- Implement best practices aligned with NYSED Learning Standards for the Arts and NYSATA, VISION Award standards
- Plan long-term program sustainability and support
- Increase advocacy and public relations in their school community
- Promote their commitment to and achievement of Visual Arts education excellence through an endorsement from NYSATA

Schools with lower scores may use subscale data to develop targeted action plans for improvement.

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

The VISION scoring instrument was developed in 2025 based on NYSATA's mission and goals for Visual Arts advocacy and policy, research of similar programs in surrounding states, a review of the New York State Learning Standards for the Arts (NYSED) and a review of the National Art Education Association (NAEA) Purposes, Principles and Standards for School Art Programs, with input and feedback from Visual Arts Educators and Administrators in a broad range of education situations. Data and feedback collected during the pilot year (2025-26) will inform changes to improve reliability; applicability to a range of economic and demographic situations; rigor and relevance of criteria; and clarity and user-friendliness of the introductory information, nomination form, and award process.

CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION

The NYSATA Vision award criteria examine three essential components of the Visual Art Program

1. Comprehensive, sequential, and rigorous standards-based curriculum

- Visual Arts programs are standards-based
- Visual Arts courses are taught at every level by certified Visual Arts educators
- Art program emphasizes both technical skills and creative/expressive investigation, ensuring students receive a comprehensive arts education
- Curriculum is relevant to students' lives through the inclusion of artists and work from a variety of time periods and cultures, including contemporary work by living artists
- Curriculum presents opportunities to engage with artists, works, and process in a variety of forms, including works of design and three-dimensional art forms. The school provides and/or enables access to high-quality professional growth opportunities for art educators, including content area learning

2. Inclusivity, equity, and accessibility

- All students, regardless of background or ability, have access to Visual Arts education at every grade level
- School leaders exhibit recognition of the importance of art education for all
- School leaders demonstrate a commitment to funding and sustaining their Visual Arts programs
- Curricula show evidence of representation of a broad spectrum of artists and work from a range of cultural backgrounds, cultivating diversity, empathy, and belonging
- Schools and districts work to eliminate discrimination; foster a culture of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging; ensure equal access, opportunity, and representation for individuals from all backgrounds and with varying needs

3. **Visibility and advocacy**

Schools and districts promote their Visual Arts programs by showcasing

- Curricula that are relevant and accessible to all grade levels and student populations
- Faculty credentials, achievements, and leadership
- Mission statements and educational goals that include student opportunity in and access to the arts
- Recognition of the achievements of students and art educators in New York State
- Student artwork and arts events are promoted through school websites, social media, and other communication means available within the community

CONCLUSION

The NYSATA VISION Award honors schools and districts that demonstrate commitment to Visual Arts education as a vital part of a comprehensive education. This recognition is granted to schools or districts that meet the established qualifications based on data reported for within one year preceding the submission date. Schools that meet these standards contribute to a strong and thriving Visual Arts community in New York State.

NYSATA is committed to maintaining the integrity of the VISION Award as a symbol of excellence. If a school or district's submitted information does not demonstrate eligibility for recognition, detailed feedback will be provided to support growth and strengthen future applications.

Through the structure of the nomination and review process, NYSATA provides schools and districts with guidance, a set of criteria, and a process of recognition that can be used to help build and promote a high-quality Visual Arts program. For more information and to submit a nomination, visit www.nysata.org/vision.

Questions? Please contact vision@nysata.org.