



Greetings! As the President-Elect of the National Art Education Association and on behalf of the NAEA Board of Directors, I want to invite you to make your presence felt as a co-laborer in the vital work of the new NAEA Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (ED&I) Commission.

From January 2018 through March 2019, a specially appointed ED&I Task Force undertook the *urgent* charge to thoroughly examine the demographics and histories of NAEA, as well as similar initiatives by other organizations, so as to assemble a research-based report of practical recommendations to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the NAEA community.

The first of those 16 recommendations was to “create a standing Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Commission similar to the NAEA Research Commission to ensure the sustainability” of our collective ED&I work.

Here we stand! I am honored to serve as the inaugural chair of the Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Commission. **As I envision it, our two top priorities are to:**

- 1) carry forward each of the final recommendations of the NAEA ED&I Task Force toward decisive actions aimed at dismantling structural and institutional inequities within our national association and beginning a long overdue cultural shift that centers upon greater equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility;
- 2) serve as a catalyst for the work of our affiliated state organizations, arts education partners, and individual members in similarly prioritizing, brainstorming, and enacting sustainable structures and systems for infusing greater equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility into their local workplaces, arts institutions, and communities of creative practice.

Believe it or not, the commitment to do this work comes simply—you learned everything you needed to know about diversity, equity, and inclusion when you were in elementary school. Do you remember the first time you invited a kid who didn’t look like you or dress like you to come eat at your cafeteria table because you were upset that they were being bullied? Do you remember the first time you included another child you didn’t really know in a game on the playground because you didn’t want them to feel left out? Yes, each time you opened up your eyes to someone who was being left out... and opened up your heart to include them in your little crowd... you became a leader in the important work of making your world a little more diverse, a little more equitable, and a little more inclusive. So ask yourselves the following questions:

- What are the needs in your school, organization, institution, or state association in order to bring about greater equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility?
- What is most needed at present in order to shape and advance a viable ED&I initiative within your organization and local region that will grow the strength of your professional community?
- What are one to three ED&I ideas that you can present to your state leaders and colleagues for discussion, development, and commitment over the next year?
- What will it take in terms of actions and next steps in order to execute your ED&I idea(s)?

Diversity matters. It expands our social networks and resources. It’s the perfect growth strategy—aim to diversify and welcome in life experiences unlike your own, and *you’ll* be the one who is enriched. Expand the stories your organization or institution can authentically tell, and NAEA will be strengthened as a whole. I invite you to keep doing the right

thing there in your corner of the nation. Open your eyes for those around you who are being excluded. Open your heart to invite them into your conversation, your circle of friends, and the center of your best intentions.

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If you would like to identify yourself as an ED&I field worker for advancing the arts or art + design education in your locality, or if you seek resources to do this vital work more effectively, the new email address ED&I@arteducators.org has been set up and is now active. Emails sent to this address will be directed to NAEA Chief Learning Officer Dennis Inhulsen, who will forward correspondence to appropriate sources or individuals. We look forward to hearing from you! ■



Left to right: NAEA Chief Learning Officer Dennis Inhulsen, ED&I Commissioners Anna Pilhoefer, Krissy Ponden, Bella Merriam-Gourley, Tiffany Lin, Pam Lawton, NAEA President-Elect James Haywood Rolling, Jr., Browning Neddeau, Wanda B. Knight, Elizabeth Barker, NAEA President Thom Knab, David Herman, and Vanessa Smart.



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