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National Art Education Association

PPAA News

By Sarah Ackermann, PhD



This month, we feature the insights of two art education leaders from the state of Missouri. Hester Menier and Kim Powell are a powerhouse presidential team who are transforming art education professional development for their members. We are excited to feature their thoughts regarding public policy in the arts during the time of COVID-19.



Hester Menier, MAEA
President



Kim Powell, MAEA
President-Elect

It is the mission of the Missouri Art Education Association to locally, regionally, and nationally promote, preserve, and perpetuate visual art education.

To learn more about the Missouri Art Education, visit their website [HERE](#).



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My Interview with MAEA Leadership



As President and President-Elect of MAEA you have inspired so many art educators in the state of Missouri, and particularly during challenging times. Tell us, why were you called to serve your art education community in this way?

Hester: I have always known that quality professional development and the connections teachers make while collaborating during that PD is what makes each teacher better. The moments that I can connect to making me a better educator have links to participation in PD events mostly with MAEA. The ah-ha moments that have led to great lessons, are ones I have learned from others in the profession. I have wanted to be a part of that enduring tradition, bringing that same great learning and sharing to future generations of teachers, like others have done for me.

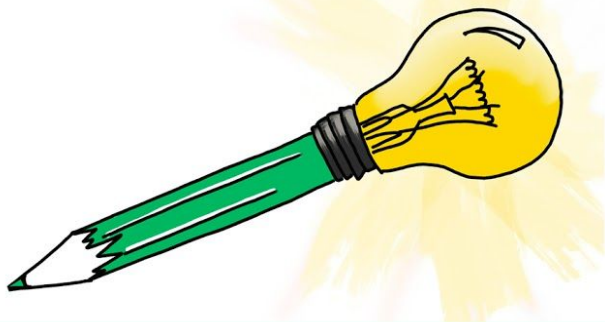
I started small as a district representative, working with teachers in my local area. I then moved to membership and registration chair, where I was able to connect with so many members. I then transitioned into the role of president-elect and now president

from having the opportunity to see the internal workings of the organization much more closely. Each step of the way I knew I was helping more and more teachers have the same connections and ah-ha moments I had; I was part now part of the tradition.

Kim: MAEA has been a support and networking system for me since I was a student teacher. It was very important for me to connect with other art teachers and share lessons, discuss issues in the classroom, and have a support system during my career.

I joined the MAEA Council in 2006 as a Fall Conference co-chair and served as the Artbytes moderator, our state online listserve forum. I was elected MAEA secondary Division rep for three terms before I was elected president-elect.

During these challenging times of virtual learning hybrid contact, and in-person restrictions, Art teachers need more support now than ever. It is our responsibility as state leaders to provide the resources needed for our visual art teachers across the state of Missouri. Just as there were state leaders there for me when I began my career teaching in multiple buildings, I believe it is our duty to continue to support all visual arts educators across the state. The importance of visual art has never been more evident in a students life.



What role does public policy play in your positions as state association leaders?

Hester: This has been the year where public policy has impacted us the most. With COVID emerging as a real unknown entity, we have had to do our research and look to the policies of many other organizations and groups to help provide guidelines to teachers across the state on how to work with students safely in a COVID environment. This also impacted us in making decisions about how our organization functioned to provide our usual events with art educators across the state.

We contacted companies to find out materials information, government officials to learn about local restrictions and regulations, and engaged with other educational associations in conversations about the pros and cons of different choices. Each contact provides us more pieces of the puzzle to help us make recommendations to officials at DESE and teachers about how to best stay safe while maintaining the integrity of our art programs.

Without all of the research and conversations, we wouldn't have been able to make the recommendations document that was ultimately used by the Missouri State Board of Education. A document that still lloyds strong today with only minor

edits, even as what we know about COVID changes.

Kim: This year the Missouri Art Education Association was asked to recommend visual art COVID safety guidelines for returning to the classroom in the fall of 2020 for DESE. A team of MAEA council members developed a document of recommendations for COVID-safety in the art room as it deals with sharing/distributing art supplies, art on a cart procedures, and scheduling art minutes for all students whether online or in-person.

[Link to Resource: MAEA's COVID-19 Return to School Recommendations](#)

We continue to advocate for the importance of the Visual Arts in Missouri when other schools across the nation are cutting programs during Covid. As state leaders, it is important for legislators and DESE to hear how the visual arts continue to be a need in education.

MAEA continues to sponsor Youth Art Month Exhibitions in the MO Congressional hallways, as well as a statewide exhibition in the MO Senate Hallways. It is important for policy makers to visually see student art work and the positive impact visual art has on students during (Covid) education. Missouri is fortunate to have an advocacy group called the MO Alliance for Education, which is a lobbyist group for all Arts



programs in MO. The MAEA President has a seat on this executive board and works with other Arts leadership in spreading the importance of the Arts across Missouri.

How can other state leaders reference and use public policy in the arts to substantiate their programming for art educators?

Hester: When public policy is connected to quality research and/or data, it makes it easier to get people/organizations to see our programming that is linked to those policies as high quality and effective. We make sure to connect our programs to researched policy or data to help improve our chances to get grants in order to provide PD, and to give teachers a better chance at getting their districts to allow them to attend PD, hopefully district-paid. Data-driven policies show that there is a direct impact of the arts education programming on students in a positive way.

Kim: As visual art state leaders your states policymakers should know who you are. It is important to not only keep student work in the eyes of your congressional district Reps and senators but also acknowledge the people who make the policies in favor of arts education.

Your policy makers should know you by name and recognize (MAEA) as the face of

Visual Art Education. Get your policy makers involved as judges, recognize their support for the Arts, and advocate the positive impacts Visual Art Education has in your community.

MAEA has an annual Otto Bean award for an elected official who continues to support Visual Arts. We invite the Governor to choose a piece of artwork at our annual YAM exhibition as well as asking the First Lady of Missouri to speak at our recognition program. Local art teachers invite their Superintendents as well as their Board of Education members to be involved in their district art exhibitions. One of the best art advocacy strategies is to involve our policy makers in acknowledging the success of our art students.

What does the future of the arts look like, in your opinion? How can we all work together to ensure that these goals are achieved?

Hester: I believe that art is going to start to be a more integrated part of the curriculum. If there is one positive that COVID has brought forth, it is that we as humans need art for our health and well being. Students need to be more hands-on, with less screen time, engaging with the world around them. Art will be there to calm, de-stress and focus students. It will help them to collaborate, share and express ideas better.



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And it will start to become integrated into the regular instruction of class mostly likely as media arts, like it has become so integral to the online world this generation has been raised in.

Is there anything else that you would like to share about your work in Missouri?

Hester: Each decision we have made in this crazy year had to be looked at from each perspective, since the impact of COVID was so different to each area. Decisions were not made lightly, since each community was experiencing everything so differently. But we did discover that we could find ways to connect everyone using online resources. As much as we all want to be hands-on, the internet has been our savior through it all, so we have worked on improving our online resources. We continue by improving our social media usage and by providing our first online conference.

Closure



Special thanks to Hester and Kim for allowing this deeper dive into their leadership strategies. We hope that their words of wisdom inspire you in creative, dynamic, and meaningful ways.

References

Missouri Art Education Association. (2020).
COVID-19 return to school
recommendations.
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ux_WuiWWjP_R0tNqX9mA0ITcmu1x4pf_lkEkgNdMvaM/edit

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