

Western Region

Columnists: Kimberly Cairy and Theresa McGee

Conference season is upon us—a time to learn, support, be creative, and evolve as art educators. Knowing that, we celebrate and applaud our Western Region states who are providing an innovative take on professional learning in this new environment.

Whether face-to-face or virtual, we are still growing as art educators! We also look ahead and forward to the 2021 NAEA National Convention, scheduled for Chicago, March 4–6. Art educators of Illinois rock! Go WEST!

ARKANSAS

Arkansas has been moving and shaking. AAE recently rebranded and presented a new logo to our membership. AAE developed a G Suite to help our organization manage documents and streamline

the process for future board and council members. Due to COVID-19, our 2020 fall onsite conference was canceled. Wisconsin offered a wonderful opportunity for collaboration. Arkansas, along with many other states, are attending the virtual 2020 Vision Fall Conference. Go WEST!

ILLINOIS

The Illinois Art Education Association continues to grow its robust series of virtual webinars and events to meet the needs of our community year-round. We have implemented programming in support of our Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion initiative, including a collaborative teaching resource of 500+ BIPOC artists. In 2020, Illinois became the first state to include the arts as a distinct, weighted indicator of K-12 performance in its school accountability system, representing a major advance in increased arts access for all students.

INDIANA

AEAI was fortunate to celebrate Youth Art Month in February before schools went online. Six hundred parents and families attended the exhibit and celebration at the Indianapolis Statehouse to honor young artists from around the state. Due to the shutdown, the exhibit was displayed longer than usual; however, artwork was returned to the artists. We also used time at home to reorganize our fall convention and will now partner with several states to hold a virtual conference in October 2020.

MINNESOTA

AEM has been busy preparing for our virtual fall conference on October 24, hosted by the Wisconsin Art Education Association and joined by many other states. This collaborative effort by multiple states will create an online learning environment for teachers from across the region. AEM is also presenting Art in the Parks. We are encouraging members to get out safely and socially distance by creating artworks in local city, regional, state, and national parks. Submit works by October 1, 2020,

to be in our virtual show during the fall conference.

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma has new standards for art education. OAEA members were on the writing committee for these standards, and we are just thrilled because this is good news for art educators. These new standards were approved by the state legislature last March and published on the state department website. OAEA has cancelled an in-person conference for 2020, so we are all looking forward to exploring new ways to reach our members virtually. Last year we had a significant rise in membership, and we intend to keep that increase going forward.

SOUTH DAKOTA

In South Dakota, we are encouraging our members to attend a digital version of the Arts Education Institute put on by Northern State University in Aberdeen. This is an annual event of artists, teachers, and university students. It is a time for collaboration and creation. Due to COVID-19 and the uncertainty of this fall, the South Dakota Art Education Association is joining the Wisconsin Art Education Association's virtual art education conference and are promoting this conference to all our members.

TEXAS

Texas is shaking things up! With COVID-19, we had to regroup with a lot of our programs. We conducted three board meetings via Zoom. While we had to cancel Junior VASE (Visual Arts Scholastic Event) and TEAM events, we held a successful virtual State VASE. Check out our Gold Seal winners (www.taea.org/VASE/Search-2020-Results.cfm?Gold_Seal=Y). Ever optimistic, planning is underway for our fall 2020 conference in Allen, Texas, but with social distancing in place. In addition, we plan to introduce our first-ever virtual conference to roll out after our regular conference. ■



Left: AAE's new logo. Below: Western Region NAEA virtual National Leadership Conference participants.



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