



## PREPARING FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

# TIPS FOR RETURNING TO THE VISUAL ARTS AND DESIGN CLASSROOM

### OVERVIEW:

Preparing to return to the arts classroom may seem daunting, but it can be successfully tackled by systematically addressing each component of your instructional plan. Think through scheduling, managing materials and supplies, and designing lessons. Volunteer to get involved with school planning efforts—including scheduling, supply ordering and distribution, and room setup/organization.

As an arts educator who likely knows a significant portion of the student body, you can provide valuable insight as well as creative problem-solving across grade levels, subjects, and classrooms. As for materials and supplies, individual student kits may best serve students, and organizing them can require coalescing school-wide resources—especially if supply orders for the next school year have already been placed. See the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines for current guidance on safe handling and disinfection of materials and objects. (Links are below.)

Be prepared and flexible as many material-rich lessons may need to be modified. When looking at lesson plans and curriculum, include **socioemotional learning standards (SEL)** alongside art and academic standards to ensure a 360-degree approach to each student.

The following lists, created by practitioners in the field, suggest approaches for successfully navigating the return to the classroom.

## PREPARATION, PLANNING, AND SCHEDULING

### TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 | Make multiple plans and embrace a flexible mindset.** Re-entry to the classroom may take different forms and it is important to have multiple plans and a flexible mindset. Be proactive by working with colleagues to imagine a variety of scenarios and think through different pathways to reopening.
- 2 | Plan for a phased reopening.** Establish options for a phased reopening—such as beginning with reduced hours or certain classes/grades—that will allow for monitoring the impact before a full reopening. Consider spacing/social distancing, staggered scheduling, transportation/busing, eating areas, and waiting areas (e.g., pickup).
- 3 | Increase transition time.** When possible, provide longer transitions for cleaning the art room and tools between classes. Work with colleagues and administration to plan for flexibility within the overall schedule.
- 4 | Consider mobile teaching options.** Although “art on a cart” is not everyone’s favorite approach, it may be safer to have the art teacher move from room to room. Classroom teachers and other subject area teachers may travel and rotate as well. This can minimize the number of tools and spaces that need to be cleaned/sterilized regularly.
- 5 | Aim for reduced class sizes.** While smaller class sizes can allow for greater social distancing, it takes whole-school planning to consider all classrooms and courses of study. Staggered scheduling can support these efforts.
- 6 | Be a resource to others.** As an art educator, you are uniquely positioned to support whole-school thinking and planning. Volunteer to be a part of re-entry teams and add your voice as a creative problem-solver. Art teachers often work across the entire school and have a bird’s-eye view of school systems and structures that can benefit students and position the arts as critical.

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## SUPPLIES, MATERIALS, AND ORGANIZATION

### TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 | Create individual student kits.** If possible, provide each student a kit of “high-touch” supplies—such as pencils, erasers, drawing materials, and brushes—that can be carried with them. Develop a “minimum, better, best” list of art supplies that can be used for each project.
- 2 | Work as one unified school community.** Coalesce whole-school supplies to create individual student kits and only order to fill existing gaps. Work with the administration to align resources throughout the school so that students receive one “education kit” that will encompass all courses. When possible, engage parents, partners, and local businesses in addressing supply gaps to ensure equity and access for all students.
- 3 | Follow CDC and WHO guidance on cleaning and sanitizing tools, materials, furniture, and spaces.** Wash/sanitize all shared tools for students after each use. Create designated areas in the classroom that are for specific purposes in order to separate sanitized tools and resources, etc. Tables and stools should be wiped down several times per day. See: [Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Schools and Workplaces](#).
- 4 | Be nimble with the curriculum.** Favorite lessons and units may need to be modified or postponed based on concerns related to collaboration, shared-supplies, and high-touch materials. Be prepared to think through new ways to explore your curriculum.

## COMMUNICATING AND ADVOCATING TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 | **Connect the arts to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).** NAEA already offers resources and support for considering the arts as part of a well-rounded education plan. See more [here](#).
- 2 | **Use NAEA advocacy resources.** The NAEA Advocacy Toolkit, “Visual Arts Matter” publication, white papers, and position statements are available to support you in making the case for visual art/design educators and programs.
- 3 | **Take part in planning efforts.** Offer to support school leadership in planning and establishing schedules and routines for the coming school year. In many cases, especially preK–8, art educators know the majority of the student body and can be very helpful in considering creative scheduling solutions, inclusive of the arts.
- 4 | **Follow up-to-date health and safety guidance.**
  - Centers for Disease Control: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov): specifically for schools: [Childcare, Schools, and Youth Programs](#).
  - World Health Organization, specifically for schools: [Key Messages and Actions for Covid19 Prevention and Control in Schools](#).
  - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

**Note:** This resource used in tandem with the “Preparing for School Year 2020–21: Tips for Returning to the Classroom” will aid in planning for a blended learning/hybrid back-to-school model.

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Founded in 1947, the National Art Education Association (NAEA) is the leading professional membership organization exclusively for visual arts/design educators, advancing visual arts education to fulfill human potential and promote global understanding. Find out more at [www.arteducators.org](http://www.arteducators.org).



### SUPPORTING YOU IN FACILITATING DISTANCE LEARNING.

The *Remote Learning Toolkit* is a repository of remote learning resources gathered in one place.



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