

## NAEA Delegates' Assembly Report, 2015

I was fortunate enough to attend NAEA's national convention in New Orleans in March as the Montana Delegate for 2015. It was an honor to represent art teachers in Montana and to speak for our state's unique needs. The Delegates' Assembly takes place two days prior to the convention. Having never attended the Delegate's Assembly I found myself interested and engaged in the democratic practice of adopting position statements that shape our national organization. I got goose bumps as some of the position statements were adopted, specifically the position NAEA now takes on social justice art education! I sat next to the Idaho Delegate and we hugged as this statement passed unanimously. The process also reinforced the importance of familiarizing oneself with the position statements to ensure quality arts education and to facilitate advocacy for our programs in pre K-12, higher education, and museum education.

Most states send their president to the Delegates' Assembly. Sally was unable to attend this year, so I took her place. MAEA generously supported me with a \$200.00 stipend. Many states foot the entire bill or offer \$1000. I hope that MAEA will be able to increase the support on an annual basis to guarantee that Montana is part of the national dialogue and community. Next year, Amy York from Florence Public Schools will be President. I hope that MAEA will be able to make her attendance at NAEA in Chicago possible.

Additionally, connecting with other art educators from all aspects of art education was totally satisfying. Many of you, like me, are the sole art educator in your buildings. It can feel incredibly isolating. Attending various sessions unveiled new ways of approaching curriculum design and new artmaking techniques. I must say, though, that Teresa Heil and Justine Jam's presentation on Indian Education for All was the most exciting session I attended. At this session they shared the culturally sensitive and standards based lesson, *Crossing Boundaries Through Art: Tribal Seals of Montana Indian Nations*. Having the opportunity to share it on a national level sparked interest in other states which will enable them to also move toward valuing Indian Education for All. Hopefully they will again present at this year's MEA-MFT conference in Billings. Regardless, the lesson will be available in OPI's IEA website soon.

The NAEA reviews new position statements every year under the categories of Art Educators, Relationships, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. The ideas from position statements come from the constituency – people like you and the other members of our organization! This means that if an issue in art education is important to you, you can contact NAEA to begin the process of gathering a team to begin researching and writing on your topic. This year five position statements were proposed and adopted, all of which I voted on with your interests and needs in mind.

The first, under the category “Art Educators”, calls for “The Importance of Qualified Visual Arts Supervisors in preK-12 Art Education.” I hope the adoption of this position statement urges our Office of Public Instruction to hire a full time arts coordinator for our state.

The second position statement under the category of “Relationships” supports the “Value of Collaborative Research.” This platform statement creates necessary bridges between teachers, higher education faculty, artists, students, administrators, community members, policy members, and partner organizations. We are grateful for Emily Kohring from the Montana Arts Council who exemplifies this bridge already in place as a leader in art education in our state.

Under the third category of “Curriculum” two platform statements were adopted. “Art Education and Social Justice” and “Media Arts.” In social justice, we recognize the importance of art education to raise critical consciousness, foster empathy and respect for others, build community, and motivate people to promote positive social change. What a long way we’ve come since Discipline-Based Arts Education! The good news for media arts is that we support the implementation of visual arts education that encompasses traditional media arts including film, graphic communications, and animation as well as new media forms of expression. This is consistent with the new Core Arts Standards that have been adopted by NAEA. Montana is slated to review our current arts standards and the new Core Arts Standards beginning this summer.

Finally, under “Instruction,” we voted in support of “Instruction, Assessment, and Student Learning in the Visual Arts.” This position statement states that teaching art is a multi-faceted, complex endeavor that acknowledges the integral relationship between instruction, learning, and assessment. The most exciting part of this statement is the value that NAEA places on essential understandings and inquiry questions that are not only relevant to learners but can demonstrate how the visual arts impact society. As you know, art can shape and change perception, with meaning-making at the core.

If you would like to view the new position statements and the previously adopted position statements visit the NAEA website at <http://www.arteducators.org/about-us/naea-platform-and-position-statements>. Interesting information from coloring books to race-based school mascots can be found which you might find useful in your curriculum and schools.

I am excited to see NAEA grow. Next year the convention will be in Chicago. If you are interested in applying to present exciting lessons that have worked in your classroom note that the deadline coming up in May 15. Conference information can be found at <http://www.arteducators.org/news/national-convention/national->

[convention](#). It's wonderful that a multitude of sessions are led by innovative teachers in the trenches of the classrooms. Nationally, NAEA's assets are at an all time high. This, thankfully, translates to more support for classroom teachers and a lower conference fee.

Some of the professional development opportunities coming up this year include a Partnership with CA State University System Chico to bring university credit to the NAEA convention, and a summer studio project on design thinking in Washington DC called Summer Vision (<http://www.arteducators.org/learning/summervision>), as well as webinars.

Nationally we have some good news in art education. Chicago Public Schools just added 83 art positions! In Washington DC Chancellor Henderson, recognizing the need for teachers to be connected to the national community, paid all 176 art teachers' memberships to NAEA! And in California, a massive recruiting process is underway to fill previously unfilled visual art positions. Additionally, NAEA's website will undergo a new design.

While we struggle with cuts to our programs and general lack of support for visual art, it's helpful to learn what is happening at the national level. We can grow art education in Montana. You do it every day in your classrooms. I want to thank you for the opportunity to represent the wonderful state of Montana and urge you to join NAEA if you haven't already. I'll see you all in Billings this autumn!

Warmly,

Jennifer Combe  
The University of Montana