



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

March 17, 2017

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Month of March – Celebration of the Fine Arts

The fine arts are an important part of a well-rounded education for all students. All of the fine arts: dance arts, music, theatre arts, and the visual arts are essential to preparing the Commonwealth's K-12 students for the twenty-first century through innovation and creativity and for a social discourse that demands communication in images and sound as well as in text.

The importance of fine arts education is celebrated each year during March through [Dance in the Schools Month](#), [Music in Our Schools Month](#), [Theatre in Our Schools Month](#), and [Youth Art Month](#).

Throughout the state, student presentations in local communities will showcase how the fine arts infuse creativity and innovation into learning. The month also presents an opportunity to acknowledge the fine arts educators who assist students to reach high standards in the fine arts, while also serving their school communities as "fine arts educational leaders" who collaborate with classroom teachers to integrate the fine arts with other core academic disciplines.

Research shows that when instruction provides opportunities for students to experience the fine arts in deep and meaningful ways and to make curricular connections with English, mathematics, science, and history and social science, students are more engaged in the learning process. As we strive to increase high school graduation rates and ensure that all students are college and career ready, we know that students who participate in the fine arts are more likely to stay in school and to graduate from college.

For additional information, please contact Cheryle C. Gardner, Principal Specialist of Fine Arts, Office of Humanities and Early Childhood, by email at Cheryle.Gardner@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-2881.

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