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Working Together to Fight Inequality

Dr. James F. Lane, Virginia’s Superintendent of Public Instruction, is committed to fighting inequality in Virginia’s Public School System. On June 2, 2020, he sent a message to Virginia’s stakeholders describing the commitment of the Virginia Department of Education to eradicating racism:

As the state agency in charge of our public schools in Virginia, we have determined that it is our responsibility to maximize the potential of every student in Virginia. But for far too long, students in our communities of color and especially African-American students have faced systemic racism in our public schools and in our broader community. It is our moral duty to be an organization that fights for every child in our schools, but especially for the students where our system has failed. The death of George Floyd and the protests of this past weekend have left me reflecting on how we, as an organization, can re-double, redefine, and strengthen our efforts to eradicate racism from our public schools and to make an impact on the broader community. School is the place, if nowhere else, that we can raise a generation of students committed to each other to ensure equality and equity for every member of our society.

Read the full message here.

The Seven Last Words of the Unarmed

The Seven Last Words of the Unarmed, composed by Joel Thompson, is an artistic response to the pain and anger being expressed by communities across the nation. The work is written in seven movements, each representing the life of a black man killed by police: Kenneth Chamberlain, Trayvon Martin, Amadou Diallo, Michael Brown, Oscar Grant, John Crawford, and Eric Garner. The piece uses the text structure of Joseph Haydn’s Seven Last Words of Christ, where each victim’s words are set in a different musical style. A recent blog post on ChoralNet.org provides links to some of the public performances of this piece.


The portal is designed to help individuals, families, and communities talk about racism, racial identity and the way these forces shape every aspect of society, from the economy and politics to the broader American culture. The online portal provides digital tools, online exercises, video instructions, scholarly articles and more than 100 multi-media resources tailored for educators, parents and caregivers—and individuals committed to racial equality.
Upcoming Webinars

The Virginia Department of Education is offering three webinar opportunities for the month of June. Stay tuned for July opportunities for divisions focused on understanding and implementing the 2020 Fine Arts Standards of Learning.

Fine Arts Division Leaders Meeting

On **June 10, 2020 at 2 p.m.**, the Virginia Department of Education will hold a Zoom meeting of division fine arts leaders to provide updates on the 2020 Fine Arts Standards of Learning and Virginia’s plans for the 2020-2021 school year. Participants should be a supervisor of fine arts programs in their school division, or a teacher representative for the division that is appointed by a division leader. To participate, [register using this link](#).

Webinar: Remote Learning Strategies for Fine Arts Educators

On **June 18, 2020 at 2 p.m.**, VDOE will be presenting a webinar to support fine arts educators who may be incorporating virtual and remote learning methods in instruction for the 2020-2021 school year. The webinar will cover practical strategies and specific considerations for fine arts programs, and is open to all Virginia fine arts educators, including dance arts, music, theatre arts, and visual arts. [Registration is required](#), and space is limited to the first 500 participants.

Webinar: COVID-19 Consideration for Virginia Music Educators

On **June 23, 2020 at 2 p.m.**, VDOE will present research, strategies, and resources to support music educators who may be facing changed learning environments in the 2020-2021 school year. The session will present key highlights from current research on COVID-19 as it relates to choral and instrumental music, key strategies for shifting curriculum to meet health and safety requirements, and highlight current resources. [Registration is required](#), and space is limited to the first 500 participants.
Information about the Fall 2020 School Year for Fine Arts Leaders and Educators

VDOE works closely with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and other state and federal authorities to provide the latest information and guidance on COVID-19 to the commonwealth’s public schools. In addition, you can always reach out to kelly.bisogno@doe.virginia.gov with questions regarding COVID-19 and fine arts education in Virginia.

The Department’s FAQ page is regularly updated with current information and guidance. Fine arts leaders and educators may be especially interested in item #77 (item number may change when new FAQs are added), which gives information for divisions regarding elective and resource offerings for the 2020-2021 school year. The text of the FAQ is copied here:

*Will new health and safety requirements related to COVID-19 impact electives and specials/resource course offerings for the 2020-2021 school year?*

Decisions about elective course offerings are determined at the local division level and must adhere to requirements in the Standards of Accreditation (SOA) and Standards of Quality for Virginia Public Schools. There are no plans to waive requirements for any instructional program, including electives, specials and resource classes, required in the SOA. The Governor, in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) will issue health and safety requirements and guidance for Virginia public schools for the 2020-2021 school year. Once the Governor’s guidelines and requirements are released, both core and elective courses may need to evaluate and adjust curriculum in order to meet the guidelines.

It is the VDOE’s position that divisions should ensure continuity of learning in core and elective classes whether students are instructed remotely, face-to-face, or with a hybrid approach. Elective courses in Virginia are important to the overall goals and mission for public education in Virginia and for the realization of the Profile of a Virginia Graduate. Elective courses can have an important role in promoting and maintaining student mental and physical wellness, as well as allowing students to continue preparing for workplace, college, and career goals. The VDOE staff can assist local divisions in developing solutions for challenges associated with Virginia’s plan for reopening schools.

Arts for Learning Announces “Take 10!” Live and Recorded Performance and Workshops

With school no longer in session, Arts For Learning strongly believes that the arts can provide a much-needed calm focus and creative outlet for students. Every Tuesday and Thursday, they will Live Stream 10-minutes of #ArtsforLearning content in an effort they are calling #Take10. Please join in at 2p.m. EST for a variety of music, dance, and storytelling. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, they will be shared on-demand. Tune in at facebook.com/arts4learningVA!
The 2020 Fine Arts Standards of Learning

On May 8, 2020, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. James F. Lane announced that the revised Fine Arts Standards of Learning (SOLs) have been adopted by the Virginia Board of Education. Supts Memo 118-20 provides information for divisions, including a timeline for implementation. Divisions may begin aligning curriculum and resources to the 2020 Fine Arts Standards of Learning to support moving toward full implementation of the standards in the 2021-2022 school year. The revised Fine Arts SOLs are available on the Department of Education website, and at the following individual links: Dance Arts, Music, Theatre Arts, Visual Arts.

The 2020 Standards have new and revised strands in all fine arts disciplines. In addition, standards have been added for Elementary Theatre Arts, Elementary Dance Arts, and two additional levels of Middle School Dance Arts.

The following resources have been developed to support divisions and educators:

- A crosswalk between the 2013 and 2020 Fine Arts Standards of Learning is available on the Fine Arts SOL page of the Virginia Department of Education website.

- Progression Charts have been developed to demonstrate the alignment and sequence of the standards. These charts are available on the Fine Arts Instruction page of the VDOE website.

Additional resources are in varying stages of development and the website will be updated periodically with new resources to support fine arts instruction. The website is currently undergoing transitions to the new content and resources. If you have questions, please contact Kelly A. Bisogno, Fine Arts Coordinator at kelly.bisogno@doe.virginia.gov.

An Artful Thanks Contest

Virginia students in kindergarten through fifth grades are invited to say “thank you” using the art form of their choice: visual arts, literature, dance, music, or video. Entries are due June 30, 2020. Find out more on the Arts for Learning Virginia website.

Performing Arts Organizations Commission COVID-19 Study

A number of performing arts organizations have commissioned research on the effects of COVID-19 on returning to rehearsal for performing arts groups. The study seeks to determine the effects of aerosol dispersion produced by vocalists, instrumentalists, and actors. The initial findings on aerosol rates in confined spaces are expected to be available in early July. Further research will focus on methods to reduce the spread in rehearsal and performance settings. The outcomes will provide a better understanding of the issues and serve to inform policy and practices for a safe return to performing arts education. Follow this link for more information.
Helpful Links

**Americans for the Arts:** Resources, data, and materials for arts advocacy.

**Code of Virginia: Standards of Accreditation:** Regulations establishing accreditation for public schools in Virginia.

**Code of Virginia: Standards of Quality:** Laws governing education in Virginia.

**Fine Arts Instruction page on the VDOE Website:** Contains current SOLs and instruction resources.

**Superintendent’s Memorandums** are posted every Friday to the Virginia Department of Education website. The memos are the official communication method of the VDOE, and contain important information.

**Teacher Direct:** Sign up for weekly teacher updates from VDOE.

**Virginia Art Education Association:** Professional organization for visual arts educators and leaders.

**Virginia Coalition for Fine Arts Education:** The mission of the VCFAE is to bring together arts education stakeholders to promote and advocate for sequential, high quality arts programs for all children in the Commonwealth taught by highly qualified arts educators.

**Virginia Commission for the Arts:** The state agency that supports the arts through funding from the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts.

**Virginia is for Learners:** The Virginia Department of Education, local school divisions and key partner organizations are working together on big changes that will connect the future of learning in the Commonwealth with the future of work in a global economy.

**Virginia Museum of Fine Arts:** Education resources from VMFA.

**Virginia Music Educators Association:** Professional organization for music educators and leaders.

**Virginia Thespians:** Professional organization for theatre educators and leaders.

**Virginia Theatre Association:** Professional organization for theatre.