

(9/13/23 – District Administrator’s Corner Article)

As a district, River Valley recognizes that art education is an influential factor in the total education that develops citizens of a global society. Art education helps create thinkers. And, we all appreciate locally how art influences the economy, mental health and wellness, and community culture. The River Valley School District is very fortunate to have well-rounded courses and experiences for our students. These classes, and their instructors, help students love and connect to their deep interests in the arts.

This week we celebrate the arts. Passed by Congress in 2010, House Resolution 275 designated the week beginning with the second Sunday in September as “National Arts in Education Week.” During this week, the field of arts education joins together in communities across the country to tell the story of the impact of the transformative power of the arts in education. The National Art Education Association (NAEA) believes there is a symbiotic relationship between a supported high-quality visual arts education program and a positive school culture. The fundamental context for a school-based visual arts education program requires effective educators who are adept in art, but also adept in leadership, equity, budgeting, time management, instructional materials, cross-curricular connections and online resources. They become a master of all. But more specifically, the art educators play an important leadership role in building positive school culture and climate (arteducators.org).

If you walked into any of our facilities, you would see visual art displayed. The visual expression is very apparent in the schools and has a great impact on school culture. Art class creates “a supportive environment where students develop abilities to problem solve, take risks, develop a personal creative voice, collaborate, and reflect on building a sense of community within the school.” Megan Quigley, Monica Kmak, and Kasey Maxwell are tremendous educators that organize the energy of our students and understand how to channel and challenge. Kids ask to be in art. Students seek out these opportunities before and after school. Kids love to use their hands to create and express their creativity. We are beyond fortunate to have such talent in our students facilitated by these three incredible teachers.

The Wisconsin Arts Board—a state agency which recently celebrated 50 years of advocacy for the arts—also recognizes the influence of art education as it builds community and economic development. Locally, River Valley ARTS nourishes the creative spirit in our community with financial support for artists as well as arts and cultural organizations that ultimately affects our students and community. RV ARTS embraces the performing arts, literary arts, visual arts and crafts as well as local and regional history and culture. In addition, the Spring Green Arts and Crafts Fair continues their great tradition of celebrating the arts annually with exhibitors celebrating many forms of media. This coalition in our community takes the energy from thousands of visitors and graciously extends their support with scholarships for students from our district. They all advocate and organize for our families.

I recently saw a t-shirt that stated: The “*EARTH*” without “*ART*” is just “*EH*”. I believe we won’t have to worry about that...the River Valley School District staff and students and community will continue to celebrate and advocate the transformative power of the arts.

Sincerely,

Loren Glasbrenner, District Administrator
River Valley School District