

**From:** [Linda Nelson-Bova](#)  
**To:** [University Governance](#)  
**Cc:** [Kowalchuk, Liz](#)  
**Subject:** ATTN: Kathy Reed. VAE Program  
**Date:** Monday, September 27, 2021 10:49:26 AM

---

September 27, 2021

Dear Ms. Reed

My name is Linda Nelson-Bova. I am a proud graduate of the Visual Arts Education programs at KU, receiving my Bachelor degree in 1981 and my Master's degree in 1989. I taught in the public school system for 34 years and have been very active in both the Kansas and National Art Education Associations.

I am writing this letter in support of KEEPING the Visual Arts Education program.

I am confident that you will receive letters of support that stress the importance of arts education in the schools. There is no doubt that art classes and teachers make a huge difference in the lives of many students. I will not dwell on this subject, but list just a few ways that art education contributes to the development of well-rounded students.

Through art classes, students acquire the following traits and skills:

- the ability to use higher order thinking skills, such as analyzing, evaluating and creating.
- the skills of problem solving and decision making.
- the capacity to persevere and collaborate.
- an appreciation of different cultures and a respect for diversity.
- increased confidence and self-esteem earned through improved craftsmanship
- the ability to express creativity and imagination
- the habit of focusing on a task and becoming self-directed learners
- improved visual, spatial and motor skills, especially in the early education years

My main focus in this letter is to express to you how essential the KU program is to the vitality of Art Education in Kansas. The University of Kansas has had the largest Visual Arts Education program in Kansas. Over the years, KU has been instrumental in supplying schools with student teachers who take their first step on the path to becoming professionals. Ultimately, KU has established a strong legacy based on a reputation for placing quality art teachers into schools across the state.

As the long-time Membership Director for the Kansas Art Education Association, I keep track of all of the art positions at every school across the state.

Herein lies the big problem we face in Kansas and surrounding states:

- We have an **aging population of teachers** across the state—in all disciplines.
- We have begun to see that **we do not have enough new teachers to take the place of those teachers retiring or leaving their position** for any number of reasons.
- There are still many positions open across the state—at the end of September! Some districts are leaving the positions open and advertised. Many have decided to just not offer art for this school year. Some have hired non-certified individuals to come in for the year as long-term substitutes. Others have individuals without art education degrees fill in with openings in their schedules such as Librarians and Foreign Language teachers.
- **There is a NEED for quality, certified, trained Art Educators across this state.**

The Visual Arts Education Program may appear small and insignificant by University “standards”—but it is NOT. The program serves a very important purpose—it educates and trains (and has for many, many years) some of the best art teachers in our state. Art Education is important—many times it is the reason a student comes to school and stays in school. We NEED quality art educators and KU provides that. **Without the program at KU—we will continue to see shortages of teachers and continue to see schools forced to eliminate the arts in their schools.**

I urge you to look at the Big Picture and recommend that the Visual Arts Education program be retained.

*Sincerely,*

**Linda Nelson-Bova**  
Retired Art Educator

**Kansas Art Education Association**  
**Past President**  
**Membership Director**  
**Communications Coordinator**  
**Youth Art Month Co-Chair**  
**Fall Conference Registration**