



SMARTS Educational Philosophy

“To be an artist is to truly see,” Marites Eldred, SMARTS Community Teaching Artist.

SMARTS believes every person is an artist, an individual who creates, innately possessing a creative mind and personal voice, a desire to express their perspective and experiences, a need to be inspired or have purpose, and a need to have enjoyment in life. Art is the work of an artist, and is any original work that conveys meaning or a message and provides a creative outlet for the artist.

SMARTS aims to develop student artists by teaching them to think, create, and view their world with the perspective of an artist. SMARTS allows students to develop as artists in the following ways: 1) cultivating personal identity as an artist; 2) developing technical skills in the arts; 3) building relationships with mentoring artists; 4) collaborating with peer artists from diverse backgrounds; 5) experimenting, exploring new arts mediums, and taking risks; 6) nurturing inspiration and curiosity; and 7) having fun in the arts.

SMARTS believes that teaching, itself, is an art form, and SMARTS supports teaching artists to be lifelong learners of pedagogy and their arts content by helping them develop as educators through instructional coaching, implementation of state standards, and professional development. SMARTS believes it is important for teaching artists to collaborate both as artists and educators in order to acquire new skills, inspiration, and to continue to find fulfillment in their art.

SMARTS believes effective teaching for the arts must: 1) be safe, accepting, and supportive in relationships and environment; 2) be taught by practicing artists who follow best practices for teaching and learning in their discipline; 3) build students’ technical, cognitive, and social-emotional skills; 4) teach students to study art, listen to other artists, respond to art, create art, and present their art; 5) emphasize the process, not the product; 6) emphasize growth, not expertise; and 7) encourage a sense of community and equality.

SMARTS believes the arts are necessary to ‘teach the whole child.’ In addition to providing early training in the arts, SMARTS is an advocate for and provider of arts integration, an approach to teaching in which a core subject and an arts discipline are paired throughout a lesson so that students meet learning objectives with both areas simultaneously. Research has shown that, because students learn through a creative process, arts integration benefits students by promoting long-term retention of content, increasing student motivation, preventing learning loss, and engaging diverse or underachieving learners. Arts integration benefits teachers by reducing time spent reteaching, providing opportunities for co-planning and team teaching, and reinvigorating their passion for teaching. SMARTS believes arts integration accommodates every learning style and reimagines how learning occurs in the classroom.