



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE
VISUAL ARTS
PROGRAM OF DISTINCTION

**MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSIONS ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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INTRODUCTION TO THE MIDDLE STATES PROGRAMS OF DISTINCTION

Middle States *Programs of Distinction* recognize outstanding individual programs within MSA accredited and candidate schools and school systems. MSA offers schools and school systems the opportunity to assess the following areas of their curricula for excellence against internationally recognized Standards and Indicators of Quality in each field.

21st Century Skills
Early Childhood Education
Global Literacies
Music
Service Learning
School Counseling
STEM
Visual Arts
World Languages

If a school/system's program demonstrates that it meets the expectations of the Standards and Indicators of Quality at a consistently high level and exhibits the characteristics essential to serving as a high quality exemplar program for other schools, the *Program of Distinction* will be awarded. The expectations for earning recognition as a MSA *Program of Distinction* are very high. As such, a small percentage of programs will be determined eligible to receive the **award**.

Alternatively, schools and school systems can use the MSA *Program of Distinction* process as a tool for **program evaluation** that will yield comprehensive feedback for growth and improvement of the chosen area.

For **award or program evaluation**, the school/system will complete a rigorous self-assessment that is presented in a self-study report of the school/system's program. The self-study report is sent to MSA for review and if all is determined to be in order, a specialist visitor or visitors will be assigned to visit the school to validate the program's self-assessment and offer feedback. For schools/systems applying for an **award**, the specialist visitor(s) will make a recommendation to award or defer recognition of the program as a MSA *Program of Distinction*. For schools/systems engaging in **program evaluation**, a detailed feedback report including recommendations and resources will be provided to the school/system.

The specialist visits can be scheduled either in conjunction with a Team Visit for accreditation or reaccreditation, or independently at any time during the accreditation period.

Schools and school systems that have engaged in the MSA *Program of Distinction* evaluation process either for the purpose of seeking an award or for conducting a program evaluation have benefitted greatly from the actual experience as well as the outcome of the process. We encourage you to consider either of these approaches for realizing recognition and growth and improvement of your school or school system.

After review of this document, if you are interested in receiving the application for this *Program of Distinction*, please contact Audra Chin at achin@msa-cess.org.

WHAT IS THE VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM OF DISTINCTION?

The Visual Arts Program of Distinction is one of a series of Programs of Distinction designed by the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CESS) to recognize exemplary programs in various content and specialty areas. Similar to other MSA-CESS Programs of Distinction, the Visual Arts Program of Distinction supports and promotes the development of knowledge, experience, and cultural understanding and awareness that go well beyond local or national boundaries. As the borders of countries become more blurred by the rapidly developing world economy and communication technologies, visual art remains as one of the international languages and a primary means of self and group expression. As a result, the Visual Arts Program of Distinction recognizes those schools/school systems where visual art is seen as an essential component in the social and cultural fiber of all societies now, in the past, and in the future.

The Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools are fully aware of the challenges that schools/systems face in offering a continuum of study in visual arts education and the mistaken view of some that the fine arts are a frill in education. The Commissions also recognize that support for fine arts instruction, specifically visual arts, in schools/systems and communities varies widely from school/system to school/system and area to area. Some schools/systems offer superb programs that attract a large percentage of the student population. In other schools/systems the programs are weak or they reach only a small number of students. Because it is obviously unreasonable to expect students to meet achievement standards in any discipline, including the visual arts, unless they are given sufficient opportunities to learn the skills and knowledge specified, the Commissions have developed the Visual Arts Program of Distinction to recognize and support those schools/systems that not only meet but go above and beyond average expectations. Therefore, the Visual Arts Program of Distinction recognizes those schools/systems in which students receive outstanding support and are provided with visual arts education that is of superior quality, clearly articulated and comprehensive, led by qualified and talented instructors using research-based instructional techniques and strategies, and allow all students to develop an appreciation for and an understanding of the visual arts as a valuable and expressive fine art form. For this purpose, the Visual Arts Program of Distinction recognizes programs and courses that provide instruction in two- and three-dimensional visual arts and the applied arts including, but not limited to, instruction in:

- Art Appreciation
- Art Theory
- Ceramics
- Commercial Art
- Comics
- Digital Art
- Drawing
- Fiber Art
- General Art
- Graphic Design
- Illustration
- Jewelry Making
- Painting
- Printmaking and Imaging
- Photography
- Sculpture
- Studio

The Program of Distinction has been reviewed and endorsed enthusiastically by a number of visual arts educators practicing at all levels in the field. Schools/systems earning the Program of Distinction will serve as exemplary

models for others to emulate as well as attain highly deserved recognition in the form of external validation. Accredited Middle States schools/systems with quality programs at the elementary, middle, and/or secondary levels are invited to apply for the Program of Distinction.

Schools/systems should not hesitate to apply even if they believe they are aware that their Visual Arts programs are in need of growth and improvement and do not meet the Program of Distinction's Criterion and Indicators at this time. They will find the Program of Distinction is an excellent self-assessment and program evaluation tool against which to measure their programs and a valuable tool and effective guide toward attaining the Program of Distinction in the future.

THE VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM OF DISTINCTION CRITERION

**The visual arts are aesthetic experiences
that satisfy our human need for personal expression
to life experiences through creating personal art and
appreciating the art of others.**

The Criterion: The school/system reflects a commitment to facilitating and developing in its students acquisition of a deep appreciation for and an understanding of the visual arts as an expressive and creative art form and as an essential component of the social and cultural fiber of our society. This commitment is demonstrated by the breadth and depth of the school/system's visual arts education offerings and the participation by a significant portion of its students. The school/ school system's visual arts program is accepted, understood, and supported by the governance, staff members, parents, students, and the school/system's community. Quality curricula and instructional programs are provided by qualified and artistically talented educators. Effective and varied curricular and co-curricular programs and activities provide students with numerous opportunities to develop and demonstrate their knowledge, skills and talent. The school/system's visual arts program is well defined, vertically articulated, age and grade level appropriate, and supports the development of response to the visual arts as a way to communicate meaning, ideas, and attitudes. The visual arts curriculum encompasses art history, theory, the art of various cultures, and the opportunity to create and critique personal art and appreciate the art of others.

THE INDICATORS OF QUALITY

Vision of the Visual Arts Program

- VA.1 The school/system and its visual arts program reflect a strong commitment to providing all students with access to a balanced, comprehensive, and sequential program of instruction in visual arts theory, appreciation, skill development, and production that will allow every student to realize her or his maximum visual arts potential.
- VA.2 The school/system and its visual arts program reflect a commitment to facilitating and developing in its students a deep appreciation for and an understanding of visual arts as a creative form of personal expression.
- VA.3 The school/system's governance, staff, parents, and broader educational community understand and accept the value and benefits of the study of the visual arts and support the school/system's visual arts program by providing it with appropriate resources (financial, human, physical, time, etc.).

- VA.4 The school/system and its visual arts instructors maintain a constant focus on the optimal development of the students' knowledge, skills, and talents along with the frequency and breadth of creative opportunities.
- VA.5 Evaluations of the visual arts program are based on the development of the individual student's knowledge, skills, and talents as well as the quality of the products of the students' work.
- VA.6 At the successful completion of each visual arts experience, the school/system strives to have students demonstrate that they have developed, or are developing, sufficient independent knowledge, skills and confidence in using a variety of medium to initiate and solve challenging visual arts problems.

School/System Climate and Organization

- VA.7 The climate and culture of the school/system and the visual arts offerings demonstrate respect for the cultural and religious differences, backgrounds, and influences of other individuals.
- VA.8 The school/system recognizes the cultural and religious diversity of its student population when scheduling visual arts exhibits and activities.
- VA.9 The school/system recruits and hires qualified teachers of the visual arts who are appropriately trained artists.
- VA.10 The teachers of visual arts are of the necessary number and have the qualifications to achieve the expectations and goals established by the school/system's community.
- VA.11 The school/system's professional development program for visual arts educators provides training in the effective use of research-based instructional and assessment practices.
- VA.12 Best practices in visual arts education guide the selection of teaching strategies, learning activities and materials, resources, and assessment.

Curricula for Visual Arts Courses and Programs

- VA.13 The curricula for the school/system's visual arts program are clearly defined, approved by the governing body, and consistent with the school/system's philosophy/mission.
- VA.15 The visual arts curricula reflect the alignment of teaching strategies, learning activities, instructional support, instructional resources, and the assessment of learning.
- VA.16 The curricula are designed to develop the students' skills in analysis, evaluation, and synthesis that enable them to create multiple solutions to specific visual arts problems.
- VA.17 Evaluation of student production and technical competence is based on areas of focus as established by external standards of excellence recognized by the profession.
- VA.18 External standards of excellence as recognized by the profession provide the basis for determining attainable targets and the basic concepts, skills, and knowledge required for successful completion of each visual arts course at the appropriate grade level(s).
- VA.19 The content and delivery of the courses and programs are designed to enable students to use visual structures and functions of the visual arts to communicate ideas and to respond to visual arts as a way to communicate meaning, ideas, attitudes, and intention.
- VA.20 The curricula include instruction in the use of current and traditional technologies in creating visual arts.

- VA.21 Multiple entry points in the visual arts program are available for students who wish to enter or change the focus of their visual arts studies and/or skills development.
- VA.22 The curricula are designed to promote active involvement of students in both the learning and assessment processes, thus allowing them to take responsibility for their own artistic development.
- VA.23 The written curricula for all courses within the program have established priorities, objectives, and goals that are based on clearly defined expectations for all students.
- VA.24 The curricula include learning and production experiences that promote critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
- VA.25 The learning expectations of the curricula address the diverse needs of the students without compromising the common concepts and essential knowledge and skills students are expected to learn in the visual arts. The curriculum within the program(s) offerings addresses a range of student abilities and interests including career-based options.
- VA.26 The curricula are well-articulated and coordinated between all teachers at each grade/course level and by teachers across grade/course levels and support the integration of the study of the visual arts with other fine art forms, the humanities and the sciences.
- VA.27 The school/system has established and implements a process for the regular and systematic review, revision, and development of the visual arts curricula that includes opportunities for appropriate input by members of the staff, parents, community, and students and ensures that classroom activities are appropriate in terms of the age and skill level of students.
- VA.28 Decisions made in the review, revision, and development of the curricula are based on data about student performance, knowledge of child development, and research about best practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- VA.29 The written curricula are delivered as approved and written.

Instruction

- VA.30 Instruction in visual arts courses and programs is based on and is designed to achieve recognized external standards of excellence recognized by the profession.
- VA.31 Instructional strategies, techniques, and materials are appropriate for the age and knowledge/skill level of the students.
- VA.32 Instruction emphasizes the development of the understanding of techniques and processes in the visual arts in relation to history and culture, and the connections between the visual arts and other disciplines so that students are able to learn independently throughout their lives.
- VA.33 Individual and group instruction in the classroom recognizes the individual and varied developmental levels and artistic abilities of each student.
- VA.34 Rote learning/instruction is used only to supplement the development of the students' skills in the visual arts and to enhance the effectiveness of other appropriate instructional strategies.
- VA.35 Correction is achieved indirectly through modeling as well as by direct means.
- VA.36 The scope and pacing of instruction, lessons, and production engage the students' interest and provide learning opportunities that challenge, but do not overreach students' abilities.
- VA.37 Class sizes in the visual arts promote and allow for the development of student proficiency and high quality products.

- VA.38 Technology is used as appropriate and available to enhance teaching and learning.
- VA.39 Individual needs are addressed through differentiation, flexible grouping, and additional assistance when needed.
- VA.40 Students and teachers demonstrate an understanding of individual and cultural differences by maintaining respect for each other in class.
- VA.41 Teachers maintain safe, positive and supportive classroom environments and teach students to use materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner.
- VA.42 The school/system takes advantage of local cultural resources to educate its students and provide exhibition opportunities for student work.
- VA.43 Opportunities for travel and experiences outside the local communities allow for students to experience the visual arts of other cultures firsthand.

Assessment of Student Learning

- VA.44 The school/system conducts frequent systematic evaluations of the effectiveness of each program and course in the visual arts through an analysis of factual data developed from the evaluation of the knowledge, skills, and production of the students and on external standards of excellence and rating systems recognized by the profession for students at the appropriate grade level(s).
- VA.45 Multiple measures are used to assess student knowledge, skills, and production based on external standards of excellence and ratings systems recognized by the profession for students at the appropriate grade level(s).
- VA.46 Regular, frequent, informal, and formal assessments of student knowledge, skills, and production mirror instructional tasks as well as evaluate student's ability to defend the validity of content sources for personal work and the work of others.
- VA.47 Teachers review collaboratively and discuss evidence of student learning and production to develop a clearer understanding of the quality and rating of student work. This information is used to improve teaching and learning.
- VA.48 Students are provided the results of assessments of learning and production regularly and frequently throughout the school year in a form that assists them in improving future learning and career preparation.
- VA.49 Students are able to identify, explain, and analyze common themes, forms, and techniques used in the visual arts such as artistic composition and production across historical timelines.
- VA.50 Students are able to analyze, evaluate, and interpret a variety of visual works of art demonstrating an understanding of the work of artists, critics, and historians.
- VA.51 Students are familiar with and are able to analyze and evaluate the use of current and traditional technologies in producing visual arts.
- VA.52 Students are able to organize, evaluate, and analyze the effects and value of individual and/or group exhibitions of the visual arts.

APPLYING FOR THE PROGRAM OF DISTINCTION

QUALIFICATIONS

The following qualifications must be met in order for a School/System to apply for the Program of Distinction:

- The School/System must be accredited by MSA-CESS or be a candidate for accreditation by MSA-CESS.
- If applying for the Program of Distinction independent of a current self-study and accreditation/reaccreditation process, the School/System must:
 - Be an accredited member of MSA-CESS;
 - Demonstrate that it meets all of the appropriate Standards for Accreditation at the time of its last evaluation; and/or
 - Provide evidence that it has addressed successfully all areas of the Standards identified for improvement through Stipulation or Accreditation Maintenance Reports.
- If applying for the Program of Distinction as a part of a current self-study and accreditation process in preparation for a Team Visit, the School/System will integrate the Program of Distinction application as an additional component of the self-study and Team Visit.

GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are offered to Schools/Systems wishing to apply for the Program of Distinction:

Schools/systems:

- Must be a candidate or accredited member in good standing of MSA-CESS or an Alliance partner.
- Must be willing to accept an on-site Team Visit to validate the Program of Distinction application. If the School/System is seeking the Program of Distinction as a part of a Team Visit or Mid-Term Review, the School/System must be willing to accept at least one additional team member to focus on the Program of Distinction Application.
- Must give MSA-CESS notice of its intention to apply for the Program of Distinction at least six months prior to the date of the expected evaluation visit.
- Must meet all of the Standards for Accreditation in order to be awarded the Program of Distinction.
- May seek the Program of Distinction at any time.
- May seek the Program of Distinction as a program evaluation for an additional fee.

If a School/System is receiving a Program of Distinction Visitor as a part of a Team Visit, the Program of Distinction Visitor will integrate his/her activities into the three and one-half-day schedule of the Team Visit. If a School/System is receiving a Program of Distinction Visitor as a part of a Mid-Term Review or independent of any other accreditation activities, the Program of Distinction Visitor(s) will develop a separate schedule of meetings specifically targeted on validation of the findings in the School's/System's Application for the Program of Distinction. This may require an additional day extension to the typical one-day Mid-Term Review.

The decisions that the Visitor will recommend are either to award the Program of Distinction or to deny awarding the Program of Distinction. When the awarding of the Program of Distinction is denied, schools/systems may reapply at a later date by submitting a new Application for the Program of Distinction.

ACTIVITY	DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION
Submission of the Program of Distinction Commitment Form	At least six months prior to the intended date of visit
Submission of the completed Application for the Program of Distinction	At least two months prior to the date of the intended visit

*Schools/Systems may also complete the application for the purpose of a program evaluation and not for seeking the Program of Distinction. Full details will follow in a separate section.

STEPS TO EARNING AND MAINTAINING THE PROGRAM OF DISTINCTION

- 1) The School/System contacts Audra Chin at achin@msa-cess.org expressing interest in applying for the Program of Distinction.
- 2) The MSA Staff Coordinator for the Program of Distinction will be informed and contact the school/system to discuss readiness and availability. The School/System will then be sent the Commitment Form and Application.
- 3) The School/System submits the Program of Distinction Commitment Form.
- 4) The School/System submits the Application for the Program of Distinction to MSA-CESS along with payment.
- 5) The MSA Staff Coordinator for the Program of Distinction evaluates the Application to determine how well it meets the Criterion and Indicators of Quality and the school/system's readiness to host the Visitor. The staff coordinator will provide feedback to the school/system and a recommendation regarding whether or not a Visitor should be appointed at this time.
- 6) The Visitor(s) appointed by MSA to evaluate the School/System's application has substantial educational, and/or administrative experience. The number of visitors will vary depending upon the comprehensiveness of the School/System's initiatives in the Program of Distinction area, the size of School/System, etc.
- 7) Upon the completion of the visit, the Visitor submits the Report and a recommendation for award or denial of the Program of Distinction. Upon the receipt of the Visitor's report, the Staff Coordinator develops an analysis of the Visitor's report and makes a staff recommendation on the award of the Program of Distinction.
- 8) An MSA Accreditation Advisory Committee reviews the Visitor's report and the School/System's application and determines its recommendation on the award of the Program of Distinction. The Middle States Commissions' Membership and Accreditation Committees review the recommendations of staff and the accreditation advisory committee and make a recommendation to the full Commissions.
- 9) The Commissions make a final decision on the award of the Program of Distinction.
- 10) The school/system ensures that all future accreditation maintenance activities (e.g. Periodic Reviews, Mid-Term Reviews Visits, etc.) will examine progress on recommendations outlined in the school/system's Program of Distinction application and the Visitor's report.
- 11) The School/System may reapply for the Program of Distinction in any subsequent year.

The Middle States Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools meet twice a year (typically in April and October) to make accreditation decisions. It is at that time that decisions regarding the award of the Program of Distinction will be made although; the School/System will be informed of the recommendation of the Visitor prior to their departure.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Our school/system does not have regular exhibitions as part of its formal curriculum? Is this required?

Because the visual arts are an expressive fine art form, students must have the opportunity to not just learn about the visual arts, but they must also have the opportunity to express or demonstrate their creativity, knowledge, and skills as part of their education or as a culminating experience in the learning process. This is also essential for the establishment and application of accurate and multiple assessment strategies of student knowledge and growth. Therefore, the school/system should provide a balance in its visual arts education programs. These opportunities may also include organized after school activities.

Is it more difficult for an overseas school/system with a visual arts education program to qualify for this Program of Distinction? Do magnet fine arts schools automatically qualify for this Program of Distinction?

While a number of schools/systems may be able to qualify for the Program of Distinction, it is not automatically conferred to any schools/systems in the United States or abroad. The Commissions believe strongly that before any school/system is awarded the Program of Distinction, it should first conduct a self-assessment of the degree to which it meets the Program of Distinction's Criterion and Indicators of Quality. If the results of the self-assessment indicate that the school/system believes its visual arts programs meet the Program of Distinction's Criterion and Indicators of Quality, it should proceed to completing and submitting the Application for the Visual Arts Program of Distinction.

Our visual arts education program does not have a formal or standardized assessment program. How can we show trends in student performance?

Although it is of primary importance to have a picture of student performance against recognized visual arts education standards, the program may be able to document student results in other ways if state, national, and/or international standards and/or tests are not available. For example, exams that assess knowledge, theory, and appreciation at the appropriate grade and difficulty levels could be valid measures. However, the exams must be consistent and parallel acceptable standards and expectations. When conducting or developing any type of assessment that will measure student performance trends, it is important to know and establish the criteria that are used to determine whether students meet, exceed or do not meet expectations of the course, grade level or program and that these expectations are clearly identified and maintained throughout the evaluation process.

Do all curriculum guides in the program have to be up-to-date?

Ideally, curriculum guides should be the "guide" for current best practices in visual arts education and, therefore, should be revised or rewritten in a timely manner. However, the review cycles for the curriculum and performance materials do not always allow for every guide in a program to be perfectly updated. In this case, three factors will determine eligibility for the Visual Arts Program of Distinction:

1. There is ample evidence that the guides reflect the goals and purpose of the current program and support and reflect the school/system's mission and belief statements.
2. A plan for how the guides will be revised or rewritten and a scheduled review cycle are in place.
3. There is ample evidence that the instructional materials and the instructional strategies and techniques being employed reflect current external guides and standards that are recognized by the profession for students at the appropriate grade level(s).

Do all teachers in the program have to be certificated?

All teachers in the program should be certified in visual arts instruction at the appropriate grade level or should be working toward meeting the requirements to teach as required by the school, school system or civil authority of the jurisdiction(s) in which the school/system operates. It is also expected that the mentoring of new teachers and professional development for all teachers of the visual arts are systematic and consistent with program expectations and goals.

USING THE APPLICATION FOR A PROGRAM EVALUATION

The following guidelines are offered to schools wishing to use the Program of Distinction **ONLY** as a Program Evaluation tool:

- Schools/Systems may seek the Program of Distinction as a program evaluation tool at any time.

- Schools/Systems seeking to use the Program of Distinction as a formal program evaluation tool must be willing to accept an onsite visit to validate the findings of the self-study. If the school/system is seeking the program evaluation as a part of a team visit or Mid-Term review, the School/System must be willing to accept at least one additional team member to focus on the components of the program.
- If a school is receiving a Visitor as a part of a team visit, the Visitor shall integrate his/her activities into the 3 and ½ day schedule of the team. If a school is receiving a Visitor as a part of a Mid-Term Review or independent of any other accreditation activities, the Visitor shall develop a separate schedule of meetings specifically targeted on validation of the findings in the school’s self-study of the program. This may require an additional day extension to the typical one-day Mid-Term Review.
- Schools must give MSA-CESS notice of its intention to apply for the Program Evaluation at least six months prior to the date of the expected evaluation visit.
- Schools seeking a Program Evaluation independent of any other MSA-CESS accreditation activities shall adhere to the following timelines:

ACTIVITY	DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION
Submission of the Program of Distinction/Evaluation Commitment Form	At least six months prior to the intended date of visit
Submission of the completed Application for the Program of Distinction/Evaluation	At least two months prior to the date of the intended visit

PREPARING FOR AND HOSTING THE VISITOR(S)

When the application from the school/system has been received and reviewed by the Middle States staff, a visitor(s) will be assigned, and the length of the visit will be determined based upon the size and scope of the visual arts program and the type of visit. The visit may be arranged as a “stand alone” or in conjunction with a regularly scheduled accreditation visit. The visitor(s) will contact the school to arrange the details. The purpose of the visit will be to validate the application, ascertain the quality of the program Vis à Vis the Criterion and Indicators of Quality, and make a recommendation to award or deny the Visual Arts Program of Distinction. A schedule will be developed by the visitor(s) and the visual arts program liaison for the school/system that will include interviews, classroom observations, and review of materials and documents.

INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

The Visual Arts Program of Distinction Visitor(s) will probably request to meet with the following individuals and groups:

- Board Member(s)
- Superintendent of Schools
- Director of Curriculum
- The Head(s) of School
- The Head(s) of the Visual Arts Program
- Visual Arts Steering Committee
- Visual Arts Staff Members
- Guidance Counselors
- Technology Staff
- Students
- Parents

- Community members, representatives from partnerships, consultants and other stakeholders as appropriate

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Observations should be arranged so that the visitor(s) see as many of the program's classes as possible in the time allotted. If a school system is applying for more than one school, all schools being considered will be visited.

MATERIALS AND DOCUMENTS FOR REVIEW

It is recommended that the school/system has available a variety of evidence in support of its self-study and application for the Visual Arts Program of Distinction. Online documents and electronic versions including CDs and videos are welcome. The suggestions below offer a wide range of evidence that the school/system could provide for the visitor(s)' review during the visit:

- Visual Arts curriculum guides and/or course outlines
- Program of Study (course offerings and descriptions)
- Sample units and/or lesson plans if not included in curriculum guides
- Samples of instructional assessment materials and assessment tools and/or criteria/standards
- Copies of programs from exhibitions
- Student Portfolios
- Documentation of partnerships, e.g., university collaborations, "sister school" relationships, and community connections for exhibitions
- Documentation of field trips and extended travel opportunities the school offers to visual arts groups and individuals
- Documentation of co-curricular activities and events that celebrate and promote the school's visual arts program and students' work
- Documentation of the communication of the goals, value and benefits of the visual arts program within the school/system, to parents and to the community
- Budget demonstrating resource allocations to the visual arts program
- Goals of the program and any short and/or long range plans that have been developed or are currently being developed to attain them
- Documentation of recognition, grants and/or scholarships to the program, staff and/or students which have been awarded
- Documentation of adjudication results, e.g., exhibitions in local, regional, state, national and/or international contests and competitions

FEEDBACK FROM THE VISITORS

At the conclusion of the visit, the Visual Arts Program of Distinction Visitor(s) will meet with the Head of School and Head of the visual arts program or other key personnel as appropriate to offer feedback on the interviews, classroom observations, and review of materials and documents. A report of the visit that includes the Visitor(s)' recommendation to award or deny the Visual Arts Program of Distinction will be forwarded to the Head of School within two months. The Visual Arts Program of Distinction will be officially conferred after review of the report and approval of the recommendation by the Visual Arts Program of Distinction Review Committee and the MSA Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools.