

Dear Families,

I'd like to take the opportunity to talk about a typical term in the Regis High School Fine Arts program, and what you and your students can expect. For me, art really is life. I have found that art is able to tie every subject in the educational experience together, and I hope that I can encourage students to explore these threads more deeply through their time in the studio. My classroom management style is very democratic in nature where every voice is heard and matters equally. I encourage my students to talk to me about their struggles so that we can collaborate to solve any problems they may be facing in the studio.

I also encourage my students to embrace failure as a means of learning through experimentation. In the art studio, happy accidents are to be celebrated with the hope of repeating them in future experiences. The direction of the studio/lab-based curriculum in the Fine Arts program seeks to address themes of identity development through which students will use the Elements of Art and Principles of Design. Students will be assessed using the 8 Studio Habits of Mind for artists, which you will find on my website and attached to this letter. These habits are the basis for how students will reflect on their own practices, failures, and successes. In addition to assessments based on the studio habits of mind, projects are graded using the 5 Cs:

- **Craftsmanship-** Is the project clean where it needs to be? Projects should be free of unintentional damage (creases, tears, water damage, wrinkles, etc.) and the artist must show a level of pride in creating.
- **Composition-** How does the viewer's eye move throughout a work? Artists should always think about where elements are placed in their work so as to create visual interest.
- **Conventions-** These are the foundational tools of the artist, the elements of art and principles of design, the materials used and techniques involved. Does the artist create work with intent in utilizing these building blocks?
- **Conduct-** Work ethic, studio practices, respect for others and one's self. There is no greater transformative force in the studio than the drive and work ethic to experiment, grow, and achieve.
- **Critique-** Does the artist provide meaningful, constructive feedback to their peers when appropriate to do so, and does the artist take the time to analyze and reflect on their own practices, successes, and failures?

Grading categories can be broken down by the following on a standard A-F scale:

- Projects: 40%
- Websites/Online Portfolios and Homework: 15%
- Classwork/workshops: 15%
- Yearbook (for Digital Media)/Final Project/Final Exam: 30%

Through art we learn who we are and how to use our voice. We learn to observe the world around us and how we fit into it. Through art we learn to think, to respectfully accept criticism, and to embrace mistakes. I believe that developing a strong work ethic and a robust vocabulary coupled with the capacity for critical thinking are the foundation of becoming a successful, well-rounded human being.

Fostering a culture of critique and discovery through which creativity and individualism can be nurtured using the studio habits of mind will allow our students to succeed in a world starved for forward thinking creatives. The role of the artist has never been as diverse and important as it is in today's world.

