

## Lisa Duggan's speech upon accepting her NYSATA Region 7 award for Teacher of the Year at the High School Level.

I would like to thank my colleagues and the NYSATA selection committee for thinking me worthy of this award..

Of course I thank my family....whom I have been notoriously known for sweeping into my vortex ... most of the time with fondness and affection.

I am hoping this award gives me more creditably in our school district to fight to save our arts programs. This year Mt. Vernon's budget was defeated twice with devastating cuts in our historically solid Art and Music programs. Unfortunately the loss of our athletics program was what received most of the attention. It is as though Creativity is at the bottom of the food chain instead of the top(in it's rightful place) of the pyramid of Bloom's Taxonomy which has been used across the state as the corner stone of evaluating reformation of our states educational standards.

Art for Arts sake is no longer a philosophy that we can rely on for communities to continue to support us. It is my belief that we must keep the arts integrated into district core curriculum in order for art programs across the state to be viewed as valuable and beneficial. As long as an art program exists outside the other subjects areas we will be deemed expendable. I know that this observation is grating to many of your ears but I believe this is the only way many of our Art programs will be preserved. Using NY state arts standard 1 as effectively as possible will provide much of the concrete evidence necessary for communities to understand the important role we play in education...namely it's cultural and significant applications. I have spent 25 as years as an art educator to find a balance which still can support for arts sake by using 3 criteria in developing an effective art unit;

I ask myself 3 questions;

*Is it culturally relevant?*

*Will they learn a new skill?*

*Will the lesson allow for self expression?*

I also strongly support and implement the adaptation of engineering technology and principles into elementary art programs. Elementary art classes have on average 2-3 "artists". The rest may be characterized as" art challenged". But also in front of us are the future lawyers, doctors, engineers scientists, architects, teachers and construction workers whom providing a meaningful technical as well as cultural experience is of utmost importance for our nation to continue to be the world leaders in innovation.

In this way I have not only made my peace but my program has gained much credibility within the Mt Vernon community.

This award will be used to assure Mt. Vernon residents that their tax dollars are being spent on worthy programs with dedicated teachers. Our District plans on using this recognition as a platform to hopefully restore art and music education in every elementary building.

And finally, I also allow my students to inspire me...so that my lesson choices have meaningful reference in their life and their future.

Again I thank you for this honor.

Lisa Duggan