



Arizona Department of Education  
Office of Kathy Hoffman  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ADE Highlights Arts Education Excellence During Youth Arts Month**

(Phoenix, Ariz., March 29, 2019) – The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) will wrap up “Arizona Youth Arts Month” this weekend, bringing to a close a month of celebrating excellence in arts education inside and outside of schools throughout Arizona. March, which is also known as “Dance in Our Schools Month,” “Music in our Schools Month,” “Theatre in Our Schools Month” and “Youth Arts Month,” is when arts educators throughout the state are recognized for their outstanding contributions to their respective communities.

“Arts programs are an essential part of a well-rounded education system,” Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman said. “I want to thank all of the wonderful artists - both teachers and students - for enriching our state by sharing their talents.”

ADE extends a warm congratulations to this year’s Arts Teachers of the Year:

Arizona Art Education Association Teachers of the Year

**Cathy Saraniero**, Cocopah Middle School, Scottsdale Unified School District  
**Michelle Peacock**, Saguaro High School, Scottsdale Unified School District

Arizona Music Educators Association Teachers of The Year

**Eric Zimmerman**, Band, Orchestra & Guitar Teacher, Moon Valley High School  
**Jennifer Randle**, Orchestra Specialist, Mesa Public Schools  
**Anneka Kotterman**, Music Teacher, Whipple Ranch Elementary  
**John Snyder**, Secondary Choral Festival Coordinator, Mesa Public Schools

Arizona Dance Education Organization “Katherine Lindholm Lane Dance Educator of the Year”

**Tiffany White**, Mesquite High School, Gilbert Public Schools

Arizona Thespians Teachers of the Year

**Corey Quinn**, Central Region, Mountain Pointe High School  
**Laura Colletti**, North Region, Centennial High School  
**Jessica Armistead**, South Region, Cienega High School

Flagstaff Arts Council 2019 Viola Award Winner for Excellence in Arts Education

**Kathy Marron**, Thomas Elementary School, Flagstaff Unified School District

In addition, many schools and arts organizations around the state promoted high-quality arts programs and stories of excellence. JO Combs High School opened their new Performing Arts Center, Nogales Unified School District debuted murals in partnership with the Ben's Bells organization to encourage kindness and the UBU Project promoted peer-led substance abuse prevention through the arts at Cactus Shadows High School.

In addition, the Rising Youth Theatre has utilized theater to stimulate healthy emotional development at Create Academy, while representatives from ADE were invited to join parents and families at arts celebrations in the Agua Fria and Alhambra School Districts. The ADE Office of Arts Education is also thrilled to announce that the arts are the first *non-federally mandated discipline* to link arts education student enrollment and access data on the Arizona State School Report Cards for greater transparency and accountability.

March also marked the announcement of winners of the Southwest Airlines and the Phoenix Suns "Heart of Freedom Art and Essay Contest," Arizona Department of the Administration "Cybersecurity Calendar Contest" and ADE's 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Collaborative Visual Arts Competition "WeAreAz" statewide arts competitions.

If you'd like to know more information about the Office of Arts Education and our programs, please visit our website. <http://www.azed.gov/artseducation/> You can sign up for our blog and explore arts education resources.

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