

CLASSROOM MUSIC • VISUAL ARTS

K–5 Music & Art

How every Syosset elementary student learns to make, think, and grow through the arts.

A sequential K–5 program in classroom music and visual arts, aligned to the New York State Learning Standards for the Arts — with a clear path into ensembles, middle school, and beyond.

🎵 **Classroom Music** — Dalcroze, Orff, literacy & movement
🎨 **Visual Arts** — Studio Thinking, TAB & media progression



Sequential & Aligned

Fostering creative expression, critical thinking, and artistic literacy across all elementary grade levels.

Today's conversation



Overview & Structure

A guided walkthrough of elementary arts education in Syosset Central School District.

01

Why the Arts in 2026

Development, hands-on making, and collaborative creativity

02

NYS Learning Standards for the Arts

Shared artistic processes and the eleven Anchor Standards

03

Classroom Music, K–5

Dalcroze, Orff, literacy, and the path into ensembles

04

Visual Arts, K–5

Elements and principles, Studio Thinking, eTAB, media progression

05

Instrumental and Choral Program

Band, orchestra, chorus — rehearsals, concerts, NYSSMA

The Case for High-Quality Arts Education

In a world of screens, automation, and rapid change, the arts remain one of the few places where children still do irreplaceable human work: they make something that did not exist before – with their bodies, their judgment, and one another.

psy

ch

olo

Brain

Arts study strengthens attention, memory, pattern recognition, and the networks that support language and spatial reasoning.

acc

ess

ibil

ity

Body

Movement, breath, fine-motor work, and instrument technique build coordination that transfers far beyond the studio.

fav

orit

Heart

Making art gives children language for feeling, a safe place to take risks, and a durable sense of belonging.

up

Together

Collaborative creativity — not just individual talent — is the skill the next decade will demand.

Making is the Point

pal
ett

Personal, hands-on work

A child who mixes a color, shapes clay, or finds a pitch with their own breath is doing work no worksheet can substitute.

01

Judgment under real materials — paint dries, clay cracks, a note is sharp.

02

Ownership: this piece is mine; I can change it.

03

Transfer: planning, revising, and finishing show up in every other subject.

up

Collaborative creativity

The work of 2026 and beyond is rarely solo. Ensembles, critique circles, and shared studio problems teach children to build something none of them could make alone.

Listening while playing. Adding to a classmate's idea without erasing it. Holding a common center so everyone can contribute.

This goes far beyond the music rehearsal or art studio. This is real-world preparation.

Joe Rohde · The Art of Imagining the Impossible

for



“Nobody has to imagine the impossible alone.”

A guiding principle for collective creativity and shared ownership in learning environments.



Creativity as a Group Endeavor

Rohde's argument in Floating Mountains is that creativity is a group endeavor. Individual talent matters less than a shared center — an idea no one person owns, so everyone can criticize it, improve it, and protect it.



The Daily Work in Music & Art

That is the daily work of an elementary music class and an art studio: children learning that the next good idea can come from anyone in the room.

One framework. Every arts discipline.

The 2017 New York State Learning Standards for the Arts share four artistic processes and eleven Anchor Standards across music, visual arts, dance, theater, and media arts.

Cr

Creating

Generate, organize, and refine artistic ideas and work.

Pr

Performing / Presenting

Select, refine, and convey meaning through artistic work.

Re

Responding

Perceive, interpret, and evaluate artistic work.

Cn

Connecting

Relate art to personal experience and to culture and history.

Under each process sit the Anchor Standards. Music and visual arts then add discipline-specific enduring understandings, essential questions, and grade-level performance indicators — the same spine from kindergarten through grade 12.

“That shared language is why a K–2 Orff lesson and a grade 5 critique can both be standards-aligned without looking anything alike.”

The Eleven Anchor Standards

Cr Creating

- 1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- 2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- 3 Refine and complete artistic ideas and work.

Re Responding

- 7 Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- 8 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- 9 Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Pr Performing / Presenting / Producing

- 4 Analyze, interpret, and select work for presentation.
- 5 Develop and refine techniques for presentation.
- 6 Convey meaning through the presentation of work.

Cn Connecting

- 10 Relate knowledge and personal experience to art.
- 11 Relate artistic ideas to culture, society, and history.

Classroom Music

Every student, every year, K through 5.

Our elementary music program is a place where **every child belongs**, **every voice matters**, and **every student has the opportunity to grow** as both a musician and a person.



A Safe & Creative Environment

We strive to create a classroom environment in which students feel safe to take creative risks, share their ideas, learn from one another, and experience success.

Holistic Student Growth

Music provides a unique opportunity for students to develop not only musical skills, but also lifelong personal attributes:

- **Collaboration & Communication**
- **Perseverance & Self-Expression**
- **Empathy & Respect for Others**

What every K–5 student receives

K–5

EVERY YEAR

Music is a part of the elementary experience for every child.

cal
en
dar
_to
day

55 min

PER 6-DAY CYCLE

Sustained instructional time — long enough for movement, ensemble, and reflection.

sch
ed
ule



Music For All

LEARNING STYLES

Movement, speech, instruments, notation, and listening so every learner has an entry point.

mu
sic
_n
ote

Experience and Exposure

CULTURE AND RESPONSE

Repertoire and artists chosen so students see themselves — and encounter lives beyond their own.

pu
bli
c

The Early Years: Body, Sound, Symbols

PURPOSEFUL MOVEMENT

Dalcroze

Musical understanding begins in the body. Children walk, skip, freeze, and shape phrase with their whole selves before they ever name a note.

direct
ions
walk

ACTIVE PLAY & ENSEMBLE

Orff

Combining music, movement, drama, and speech into lessons that are similar to a child's world of play.

theater
comedy

SONG & NOTATION

Kodály - Literacy Through Songs

Counting, the musical alphabet, and note duration appear when the ear and body are already sure of the sound.

music
note

REPERTOIRE & RESPONSE

Culture & Inclusion

Songs, games, and listening examples are chosen for musical quality and for honest representation — children hear many ways of being musical.

public

Dalcroze: Understanding Through Movement

Émile Jaques-Dalcroze taught that rhythm lives in the body first. In Syosset K-2 rooms, children are on their feet — not as a break from learning, but **as** the learning.



01 • PHYSICAL ENGAGEMENT

On Their Feet

Locomotor and non-locomotor movement make beat, phrase, and form visible. The room is a score the class writes with their bodies.

03 • PITCH & SPATIAL MAPPING

High / Low

Pitch space is mapped in height and gesture. Melody becomes something you can show, not only hear.

02 • TEMPO & DYNAMICS

Slow / Fast

Tempo is felt before it is named. Children match, contrast, and change speed on a cue — the seed of ensemble listening.

04 • INTERACTION & IMPROVISATION

Call / Response

A musical idea is offered; the group answers. That exchange is literacy, community, and improvisation at once.

Orff: Instruments, Speech, Ensemble and Play



BARRED & PERCUSSION

Xylophones, metallophones, glockenspiels, and world drums give young hands direct access to harmony and rhythm.

THE APPROACH

The Instrumentarium

Our elementary music classes incorporate the Orff approach, an active, hands-on way of learning music through singing, movement, speech, instruments, and creative play.

Through call-and-response, rhythmic patterns, improvisation, and group playing, students learn to listen, cooperate, and contribute to a shared musical experience.

Includes xylophones, metallophones, and glockenspiels built for young hands to play real harmony, plus drums like shakers and African drums.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Beginnings of Ensemble

Listen across the room

Your part only works if you hear the others.

Enter and rest

Silence is a musical decision, not an absence.

Share the melody

Leadership rotates. No one owns the only interesting line.

From play to form

Games and speech pieces grow into ABA, rondo, and simple scores.



Music Literacy

Our structure unpacks musical elements sequentially, gradually building from a child's natural instincts toward advanced musical literacy

01 • RHYTHMIC FOUNDATION

Counting

Steady beat, then subdivision. Speaking rhythm with words and syllables so the body and the voice agree.

02 • PITCH & CYCLES

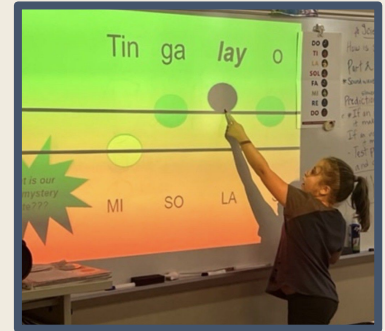
Musical Alphabet

A through G as a cycle, not a list. Same letters as language class — different job.

03 • SYMBOLS & TIME

Note Duration

Whole, half, quarter, eighth. Long and short become symbols that can be read, written, and performed.



04 • DECODING & CREATION

Basic Rhythm

Patterns combine. Students decode a line, clap it, play it, and invent a new one that still makes musical sense.

SPIRAL CURRICULUM

Building Depth Over Time

Instead of teaching a concept once and moving on, a spiral curriculum introduces basic foundational ideas early and repeatedly returns to them. Each time a concept is revisited, it is explored with greater depth, complexity, and abstraction.



Third Grade: The Bridge Year

Grade 3 is where classroom musicianship becomes preparation for band, orchestra, and chorus — without leaving anyone behind who will stay in general music.

01 • ENSEMBLE PREP

Preparing for Ensembles

Independence of part, watching a leader, starting together, recovering from mistakes.

These habits transfer into larger ensembles as they choose to continue with chorus, orchestra and band.

02 • FIRST WIND INSTRUMENT

Recorder

A real wind instrument in every child's hands.

Fine-motor sequencing, breath control, articulation, and the first experience of a keyed pitch system.

03 • MUSICIANSHIP

Advanced Literacy

Using their knowledge of note-reading with ownership, for personal gain and ensemble performances.



Upper Elementary: Fluency and Citizenship

01 • METERS

Meters

Students move beyond 4/4. Compound and irregular meters become something they can feel, count, and perform — not a surprise on a page.

02 • LITERACY

Literacy

Reading and writing get more ambitious: longer phrases, more independent parts, the beginnings of harmony they can see as well as hear.

03 • CITIZENSHIP

Culture & Citizenship

A major strand of grades 4–5 is cultural awareness and global citizenship. Music is a way to study how people live, celebrate, resist, and remember.

04 • ALIGNMENT

The Handoff

Classroom skills are deliberately aligned to what middle school ensembles and electives will ask on day one.



CORE OBJECTIVE

By the end of Grade 5, students should view themselves not simply as students who have learned *about* music, but as **musicians who can actively participate in, create, understand, appreciate, and share music with others.**

PART TWO

K–5 Visual Arts

Studio habits, a shared language, and a growing toolkit.

Studio Habits

Shared Language

Growing Toolkit



The Elements of Art

The building blocks. Every work of art uses at least one; most works combine several.

Line

A path made by a moving point — thick, thin, broken, implied.

Shape

A flat, enclosed area: geometric or organic, positive or negative.

Form

Shape with depth. The difference between a circle and a sphere.

Color

Hue, value, and intensity — and the relationships among them.

Value

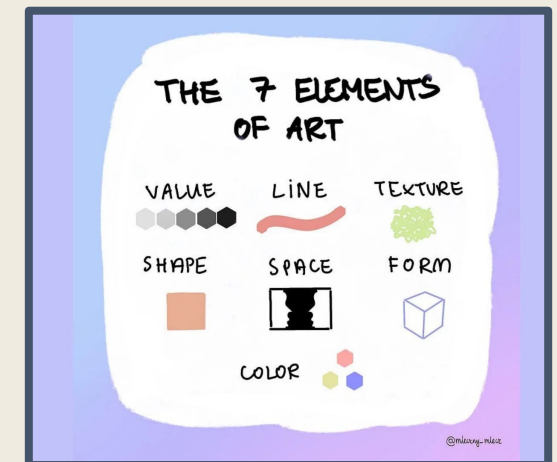
Lightness and darkness. How form is modeled and mood is set.

Texture

Actual or implied surface. What the eye (or hand) believes it would feel.

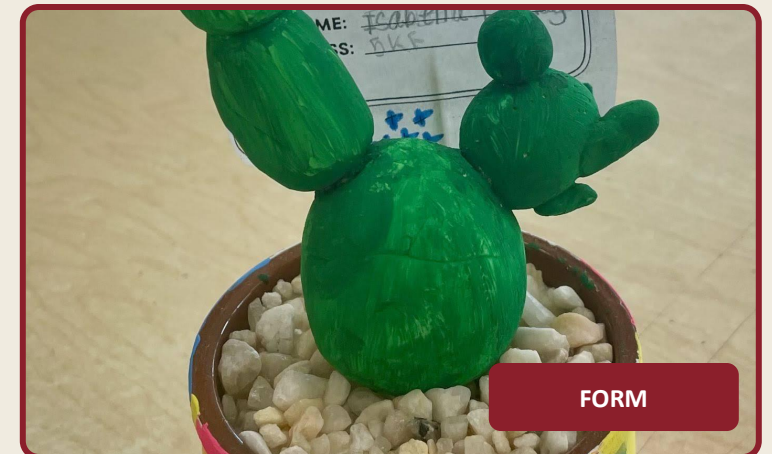
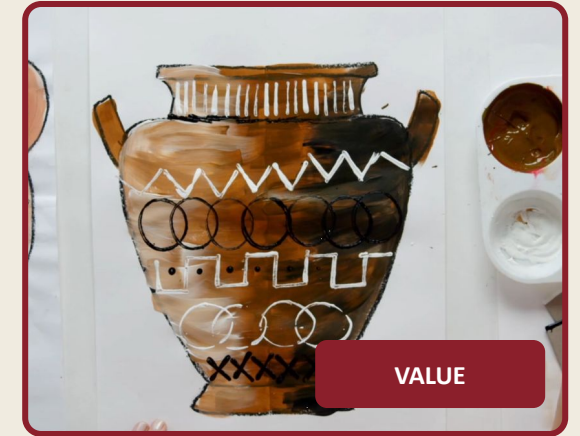
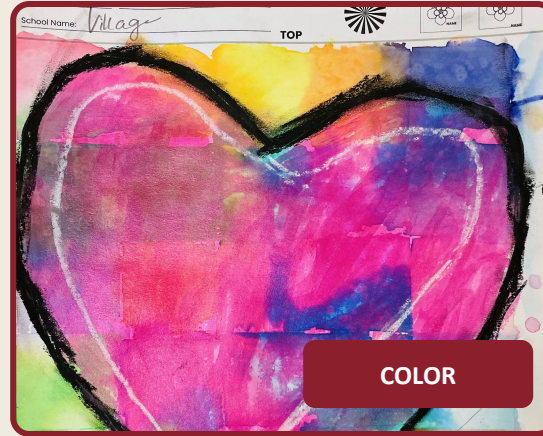
Space

Foreground, middle, background. What is occupied and what is left open.



The Elements of Art

The building blocks. Every work of art uses at least one; most works combine several.



The Principles of Design

How the elements are arranged. This is composition — the decisions that make a work hold together or pull apart on purpose.

scale **Balance**

Visual weight:
symmetry, asymmetry,
or radial arrangement.

tonality **Contrast**

Difference that creates
interest — light/dark,
large/small,
rough/smooth.

center_focus_st rong **Emphasis**

The place the eye lands
first. A focal point made
on purpose.

east **Movement**

The path the eye travels
through the work.

grid_view **Pattern**

A motif repeated. Order
the viewer can count
on.

graphic_eq **Rhythm**

Repetition with
variation — visual beat.

hub **Unity**

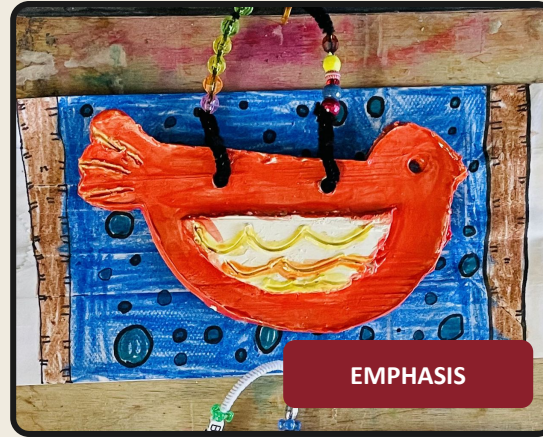
The sense that the parts
belong to one idea.

widgets **Variety**

Difference that keeps
unity from becoming
sameness.

The Principles of Design

How the elements are arranged. This is composition — the decisions that make a work hold together or pull apart on purpose.



Teaching for Artistic Behavior

TAB is a choice-based approach: the child is treated as an artist with original ideas worth pursuing, not only as a student completing a teacher-designed product.

brush Student as artist

Ideas originate with the child. The teacher structures time, materials, and critique so those ideas can become works of art.

space_dashboard Studio structure

Centers, materials that stay available, and routines that let a class of 25 work independently without chaos.

co_present Teacher as facilitator

Demonstrations, conferencing, and mid-process shares replace a single correct outcome.

block What it is not

It is not an unstructured free-for-all. Craft, criteria, and reflection remain explicit and rigorous.

How We Think in the Studio

Studio Thinking Framework

The research-backed set of habits artists actually use. We teach these habits on purpose — not only final products.

Elements & Principles: K–12 Language

How we talk about work from kindergarten through high school. A 1st grader naming “thick line” and a 5th grader naming “asymmetrical balance” use the same vocabulary at different depths.

brush **Develop Craft**

Learning to use tools, materials, artistic conventions, and studio practices.

bolt **Engage & Persist**

Embracing problems of personal importance and sticking with them.

auto_awesome **Envision**

Picturing mentally what cannot be directly observed and imagining next steps.

draw **Express**

Creating works that convey strong meaning, personal feeling, or purpose.

center_focus_strong **Observe**

Looking closely to perceive subtle visual details that might otherwise be missed.

psychology **Reflect**

Questioning, explaining, and evaluating personal work and creative process.

explore **Explore**

Reaching beyond current capacity, taking artistic risks, and learning from mistakes.

public **Art Worlds**

Connecting with art history, contemporary practices, and broader creative communities.

K–2: Studio Habits and First Tools

inventory_2 Organization

How to enter the room, find materials, work, clean, and leave work so the next class can begin.

brush Student as Artist

Choice within structure. Children learn that their decisions change the picture.

pan_tool Fine Motor Skills

Cutting, drawing, joining, and controlling a brush or stick of pastel — the physical basis of later craft.

palette Media They Meet

- Watercolor and tempera
- Pencil, colored pencil, oil pastel
- Mixed media and collage
- Air-dry clay and ceramic clay
- Drawing as thinking, not only product

public Artist Encounters

First encounters with named artists, time periods, and art from many cultures — so “artist” is never only one kind of person.

The Art of Observation

How to See

Observation is a practiced skill, not a gift. Students learn to look longer than is comfortable, to notice relationship instead of symbol (“an eye is an almond”), and to describe what is actually in front of them.

That habit serves science, reading, and social life as much as it serves drawing.

“Draw what you see, not what you know.”

Basic color theory

palette

Primary

Red, yellow, blue — the starting set.

auto_awesome_motion

Secondary

What happens when two primaries mix.

brightness_medium

Value

A color made lighter or darker on purpose.

thermostat

Temperature

Warm and cool as tools for space and mood.

style

Relationship

Colors change depending on what sits beside them.

Introduction to Artists and Styles of Art



Wassily Kandinsky
Abstract Art · Composition VIII



Vincent van Gogh
Post-Impressionism · The Starry Night



Henri Matisse
Fauvism · Goldfish



Pablo Picasso
Cubism · Portraiture



Romero Britto
Neo-Pop Art



Keith Haring
Pop Art & Contemporary

Upper Elementary: Craftsmanship and Individualism

Observation becomes language

Students can name what they intend — “I want contrast on the left edge” — before and after they make the mark. Critique is a conversation with criteria, not a popularity vote.

wh
at
sh
of

Kiln-fire clay

Heat, glaze, and permanence.

w
_i
h
_a
t

3D sculpture

Form in the round.
Balance that is physical, not only visual.

pa
let
te

Acrylic

Opaque color, layering, and a different kind of patience than watercolor.

dr
a
w

Digital / graphic

Basic digital art and graphic design — composition in a new tool, same principles.

p
u
bl
ic

Art in different cultural contexts remains a through-line: students study how materials, purpose, and audience change across time and place — and they make work that answers those examples rather than copying them.

PART THREE

Instrumental and Choral Program

Band, orchestra, and chorus — from elementary into middle and high school.



Band

Woodwind, brass, and percussion ensemble instruction fostering teamwork, rhythm, and instrumental mastery.

Orchestra

String instrument training across violin, viola, cello, and bass starting early in the elementary sequence.

Chorus

Vocal technique, ensemble singing, and multi-part harmony development through public performance.

CONTINUOUS MUSIC CURRICULUM

Sequential progression building skills from foundational elementary years into advanced secondary ensembles.

Elementary → Middle School → High School

Orchestra, Band, and Chorus

sc

he

du

When it begins

le

Instrumental and choral pathways open in grade 3 and 4 and continue, without a break in sequence, through middle and high school.

wb

_s

un

Morning rehearsals

ny

Ensembles meet before the academic day. That is a commitment from students, families, and teachers — and it is how large groups become musical.

ev

en

t_r

ep

Two concerts a year

ea

t

Public performance is part of the curriculum, not an extra. Students learn what it means to prepare work for an audience.

e

m

o_j

_e

ve

NYSSMA to All-County

nt

Solo and ensemble festivals give students an outside measure of growth and a path onto All-County stages.

Visual Arts - PTA Curriculum Enrichment - Tilles Center Partnership

Infusing meaningful arts experiences - Before school and throughout the day



CONTINUOUS ARTS CURRICULUM

Sequential progression building skills from foundational elementary years into advanced curriculum-aligned experiences

The Arts Are Not the Reward After the Real Work.

They are part of how Syosset children learn to pay attention, make something true, and do that work with other people.

01

Every K–5 student has classroom music and visual art, every year.

02

Instruction is sequential, standards-aligned, and built for development — brain, body, and feeling.

03

Ensembles begin in the elementary years and run through graduation.

Questions and conversation welcome.