

The Road to DARTS: Recognizing the Improbable and Steering Around the “No’s”

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Abstract. *Arts/special education professionals new to our field now have choices of organizations with supportive colleagues. For example, they can become members of the Council for Exceptional Children’s Division of Visual and Performing Arts Education (DARTS) and/or the National Art Education’s Association’s Special Needs Interest Group (SNAE). These national organizations have annual convention arts/special education presentations and meetings around the country. They provide opportunities to meet colleagues with similar interests and goals. It can get lonely when others see only STEM, not STEAM. In contrast, it is exciting to be surrounded by professionals who teach, research, and advocate for the arts. We have come a long way!*

This article describes the distance that we, in the arts and special education, have come, as well as some bumps along our professional journey. It shares information about both DARTS’ and SNAE’s evolution, and the groundbreaking VSA/Intersections event that brought together visual and performing arts educators with government representatives, parents and students who loved the arts. It also challenges the simple, and too frequent, answer of “NO” while working around that obstacle. After all, we are creative people.