



THE GATEWAY CREATIVE ARTS CENTER

March 28, 2022

Dear Planning Committee,

I am a Wareham-based art educator, author, and cartoonist. I specialize in mindfulness drawing classes and am currently writing and illustrating a book about mental health topics for children. Previously, I taught art in Lexington High School in Lexington, MA for thirteen years before leaving to pursue writing full-time. Art education is still very important to me, and over the last five years, I've led workshops to children and adults in a dozen states.

The pandemic has taken a huge toll on our community, specifically our young people. Anxiety and depression are on the rise, with at least [one study](#) suggesting that these numbers have doubled compared to pre-pandemic levels. Mental health has always been a challenge for traditional classrooms to handle because of the emphasis on grades, but now figuring out how to move past some of these mental health hurdles seems like an unavoidable issue.

For some kids, art is a very real solution. Drawing has been shown to [lessen anxiety](#) and build resilience, even for new artists. A full-year art class used to be a staple offering at middle schools across Massachusetts when I was a child (and from which I greatly benefited), but this is no longer the case. Middle school students are lucky if they have access to an art room for half the year.

I propose turning a classroom from the former Decas Elementary School into the Gateway Creative Arts Center. I would rent this space to provide a community art classroom that features classes and studio hours for local residents. I envision after-school art programming for kids and teens, as well as guided studio hours for adults. Classes would focus on drawing, cartooning, watercolor painting, and creative writing.

Ideally, I'm looking for a classroom in close proximity to a restroom, as well as accessible to people of all abilities.

Thank you for considering my proposal.

Best wishes,

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