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Superintendent Vitti leaves legacy of restored arts education

The Cathedral Arts Project wishes Superintendent Dr. Nikolai Vitti heartfelt congratulations on his newly appointed position as Superintendent of Detroit Public Schools and sincerely thanks him for the work he has done for Duval County Public Schools during his tenure in Jacksonville.

Dr. Vitti has been a champion for arts education in Duval County since he arrived in 2012, and the district has made great strides in investing in and strengthening arts learning in our public schools. The list is impressive, but some of the highlights include raising the percentage of students enrolled in arts courses to the highest among Florida's seven largest districts, increasing weekly instructional time in the arts, designating Ft. Caroline Middle School as an arts magnet and increasing funding for professional development for arts educators.

In a press release from DCPS earlier this year, Dr. Vitti said, "Expanding music and arts programming is certainly one of my proudest accomplishments as superintendent and something I promised the community after listening to their demand to restore the whole child emphasis in the education experience."

His efforts have not gone unnoticed. In 2014, he was named Superintendent of the Year by the Florida Art Education Association, and earlier this year was awarded the same recognition by the Florida Music Education Association. We can now boast that every elementary school in our district has at least one full-time music teacher, and every middle and high school offers courses in music, visual arts, dance and/or theatre.

Rev. Kimberly Hyatt, CAP president & CEO, still remembers one of her first conversations with Dr. Vitti shortly after he arrived in Jacksonville. "I'll always remember standing with him and several CAP board members outside of a school when he said, 'I want my legacy to be that I restored the arts to Duval County Public Schools,'" said Hyatt. "He prioritized learning more about CAP's work and our community's shared vision for every child to have access to an arts-rich education. But most importantly, he embraced that vision and acted to pursue it."

We are deeply grateful for Dr. Vitti's leadership and look forward to continuing to work with the school board to build upon the progress we've made toward providing quality arts learning for all DCPS students.

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*Now in its third decade of service, the mission of the **Cathedral Arts Project** is to enrich the quality of life in Northeast Florida through unleashing the creative spirit of young people. Our vision is for every child to benefit from a well-rounded education that includes dance, media arts, music, theatre and the visual arts. By providing direct instruction to students and teachers, facilitating partnerships and advocating for expanded access to arts education, the Cathedral Arts Project empowers children and youth to succeed in all areas of their lives. Learn more at capkids.org.*



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