



Drawing improves understanding and recall, and helps students become more attentive, observant, and active learners.¹

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Past, Meet Future!
- Take a Listen!
- Judge for Yourself
- Inspired and Inspiring
- Graduate News
- #ShoutoutsOSS

The Work of Art

Many of us attended a school where Art was considered extracurricular. For others, Art was a long-gone casualty of school budget pressures. At OSS, Art is an essential learning tool.

In an integrated curriculum like ours, learning is coordinated across subject areas in ways that are mutually reinforcing. By tapping into student creativity, Art plays a unique role in this synergy. In fact, studies show that students in schools with arts-integrated learning demonstrate greater motivation and engagement, and achieve better academic outcomes.

A 2012 report by the *National Endowment for the Arts* revealed that Arts involvement is especially beneficial for students from low-income environments. In addition to improved

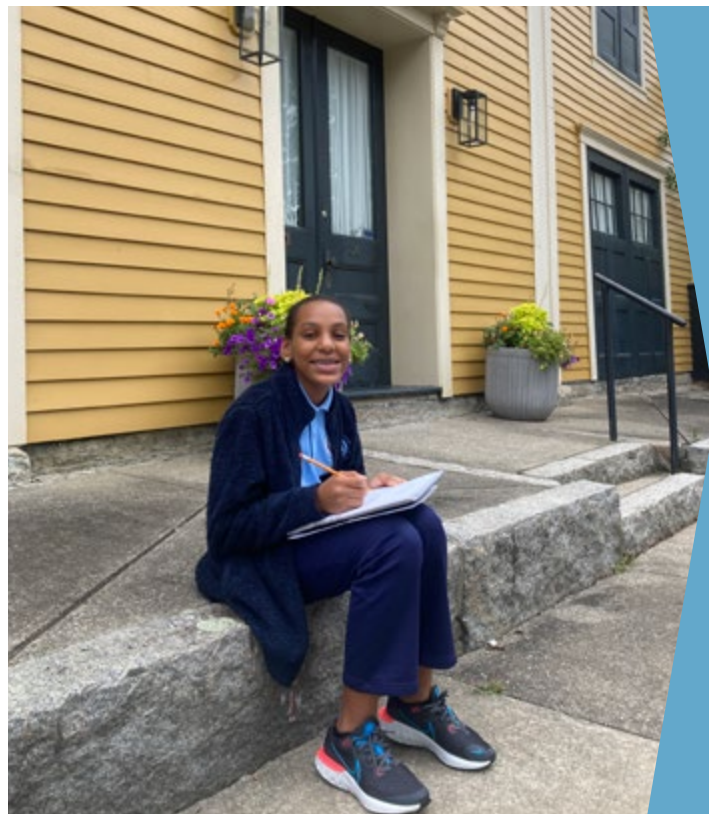
academic outcomes, the students were significantly more likely to graduate college, pursue higher career goals, and be civically engaged.

As our school's Creativity Director, Tobey Eugenio, explains, "Traditionally, Art was seen as something separate and elite. It's not. Art is universal and inclusive." Ms. Eugenio also points out that Art is not about teachers telling students what to do and how to do it. "It's about giving them the skills, tools, and space to convey their own message in their own voice as a way to make a difference."

In this issue, we highlight just a few examples of Art's integral role in our curriculum, and how it inspires and accelerates learning for our students.

When students play a musical instrument, they get a "cognitive workout" known to strengthen their brains' executive function and ability to process information.²

Above: Payton '23 displays her Creative Suite work



Past, Meet Future!

“Witnessing OSS students in these workshops has been inspiring. They are engaged and unafraid of creative risk.”

Mark Parsons, NBRR Founder and Executive Director

In collaboration with two local organizations, OSS seventh-grade students deepened their understanding of New Bedford’s abolitionist past, enhanced their drawing and visual representation skills, and partnered with an industrial robot named Splinter.

This STEAM project began with the class delving into the history of our community’s Seventh Street neighborhood – now designated Abolition Row. With the help of Lee Blake, from the New Bedford Historical Society (NBHS), they researched the roles that the homes and their inhabitants played in the abolition movement. *“These houses were a part of the Underground Railroad,”* Giselle ’24 explained. *“Important people lived in these homes and made a difference in the lives of others.”*

The students each “adopted” a home, which they sketched and photographed while learning about architectural concepts and elements. They then used Tinkercad, computer-aided design software, to create a 3-D digital design of each adopted house’s façade. For many, this was the most challenging, yet rewarding, part of the project. As Nay’Lani ’24 put it, *“It’s software for college students and we’re only in middle school.”*

The other community partner involved in this project was New Bedford Research & Robotics (NBRR). NBRR’s industrial robot arm, Splinter, used the students’ Tinkercad designs to create 3-D replicas of the houses. *“Splinter can draw, paint, 3-D print, and even sign autographs,”* Lily ’24 explained, *“when it’s programmed by a human, of course.”*

For the project’s final phase, the students co-designed a public exhibition of their 3-D houses at the Star Store, part of the UMass Dartmouth campus. They were thrilled to welcome more than 100 visitors to their opening reception where they thanked NBRR and NBHS, the volunteers and families who provided transportation, the homeowners, and, of course, the teachers.

In written reflections about the project, Janellie ’24 expressed a sentiment to Ms. Eugenio that our teachers and staff hear quite often, yet never tire of, *“Thank you for helping us and pushing us past our limits.”*

“It felt really good representing our class and our school, and showing people we can do anything.”

Ayla ’24

Take a Listen!



OSS girls completed their first podcast! It’s an honest and powerful discussion about what it’s like to live in New Bedford and attend OSS. The six students, from grades 6-8, recorded and edited their own materials, and submitted the five-minute piece to NPR’s student podcast challenge!

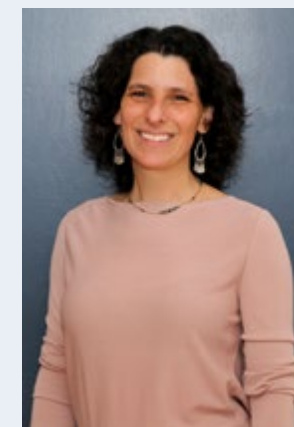
Podcast team coaches Terry Schaefer Severance and Lisa Schmid Alvord describe the process as a joy and a privilege. Terry explains, *“The girls have so much to say, and they love being heard. They’re honest and real, funny and spirited, and endlessly*

supportive of each other.” To Lisa, *“It’s such a great way to get to know the students, their challenges, and their triumphs.”*

You can hear for yourself! Just position your smart-phone camera over the QR code, click the link that appears, and enter the hearts and minds of students who will rock your world! It’s five minutes that we’re certain you’ll enjoy!



Education’s Secret Sauce



As anyone who’s ever sung their ABCs might theorize, art helps us learn. This theory is backed by science.

Studies show that students who participate in art classes tend to have **higher academic performance** than those who don’t. Perhaps surprisingly, their increased proficiency

extends to math and science as well as reading and writing. Researchers believe this happens because the arts help shape our neural circuitry, boosting functions like focus, memory, and self-control.

The arts also engage students emotionally. Tapping into passion and creativity makes learning more meaningful, memorable, and enjoyable. That builds confidence and curiosity. Research shows that making art also reduces stress and improves mood. It may be why students with access to art education are **five times less likely to drop out** of school. And it’s another reason why OSS so intentionally weaves art and creativity into our curriculum.

This isn’t the only “secret sauce” that leads our students to complete high school and so often pursue higher education and challenging careers. It’s not the *only* reason why our graduates often attribute their success and satisfaction to the education they received here. But it’s a big one.

That, of course, fills my heart with joy. Yet if you asked what amazes me *most* about our students, what makes me exceptionally proud and inspired, I’d tell you that it’s their openness, resourcefulness, resolve, and resilience. And though I can’t say for sure that the way OSS encourages creativity and self-expression helps students develop these qualities, I certainly do believe it!

Sarah Herman, Head of School



Judge For Yourself (In Art Court!)

Pick a profession, any profession! One that you practice, perhaps, or just wish you did! Now consider: for that profession, how important is creativity? Envisioning? Observing? Reflecting?

This year, OSS sixth and seventh graders chose and researched professions like astronaut, midwife, surgeon and more to learn if they involved activities, mind-sets, and metacognitive skills most often associated with artists. Students then presented their findings in "Art Court" to a jury of their peers.

Using Harvard University's "Eight Studio Habits of Mind" as the basis for their analyses, students crafted logical, clear, and convincing arguments with supporting claims and evidence to back their positions. They used OSS Core Value tools like: *Think Flexibly*, *Seek the Whole Truth*, and *Communicate Clearly*.

Then, role-playing as the clock ticked off up to three minutes of allotted time, each student had a shot at engaging and persuading judge, jury, and court attendees with a compelling case, in a voice that would ring "loud and proud" throughout OSS Superior Art Court.

Expert testimony confirmed the value of Art Court. Sophia '25 enjoyed how it "combines research, presenting, and imagining." Maia '25 attested that "Acting like you're in a courthouse was fun." Addie '25 corroborated, "Art Court was really fun and gave me the opportunity to realize that art is a big part of a lot of jobs."

The verdict? Students proved beyond a reasonable doubt that most - if not all - professions engage in the creative process. The artists' metacognitive skills and practices are transferable and useful in many different contexts.



Inspired and *Inspiring*

"Women can do more than you think." This was one OSS sixth grader's takeaway after viewing the New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center's "Women's Work" photography exhibit that was displayed at the School last fall. The evocative images portrayed the often-untold story of women from fishing communities in Massachusetts, Maine, and Rhode Island, at sea and on shore.



After viewing the photographs, OSS girls embraced an assignment to create a self-portrait that each felt would authentically represent and celebrate who she is. Students planned, staged, and captured their images in their Creative Suite classes, and wrote accompanying artist statements in humanities class. "Students could share their identities in multiple formats - visually as well as through the written word," explains humanities instructor Sabina Kozak. The results were extraordinary!

"Blindfolded" Hannah '23

"When I dance I feel like I'm wearing a blindfold. Suddenly, once the music starts, I no longer feel like hundreds of people are watching me. The months of work are worth it for the 2-3 minutes on stage. Dancing clears my mind and brings me to an element of full simplicity. When I dance, I feel free, and alone with my thoughts."

"The Book Reader" Addison '25

"My portrait represents my love for reading and my culture. I chose this portrait because I love to read. I am wearing a bonnet because in my culture we wear bonnets when we go to sleep. I also read before I go to sleep. When I read, it makes me feel like I am flying; it relaxes me. I used to dislike reading but my time at OSS has made me see that reading is enjoyable."



Left: (left to right:) Cynthia Cummings, Mary Hunsche, Giovanna '23, Bernadette Souza, Allison '23, and Helena Moronta at the opening reception for the "Women's Work" and OSS Self-Portrait exhibits.

Right: Students find inspiration from the "Women's Work" exhibits.

Graduate News

Amelia Albanese '18 worked on Round the Bend Farm's new "Manifest Love" food truck. She started her art and garden career at OSS and helped to design and raise money for the original Outdoor Classroom build. Amelia is studying at Bennington College, and is working at OSS this summer.

Jael Costa '14 is a registered nurse working in maternal health as a labor and delivery nurse for a Boston-affiliated hospital. She also works at a group home for adolescents and is learning Portuguese and Haitian Creole.

Ava Faria '16 was selected as the Stephen B. Kay Family Endowed Scholar at Brandeis University. She will be studying in Morocco and the Netherlands this fall, and will be completing her bachelor's degree and beginning an accelerated Master of Science degree in Global Health Policy and Management at the Heller School. She is working at OSS again this summer!

Isabelle Fonseca '17 is a second-year student at Boston University. She recently declared a second major in African American & Black Diaspora Studies and is studying in Geneva this summer focusing on human development, economics, and global rights. Isabelle interned with "Act on Mass" whose mis-

sion is to fight for more transparency and accountability in the Massachusetts State House.

Nishaye '22 and Priseis Gray '22 are attending Tabor Academy and are participating in a two-week pre-college class at Brown University this summer. They have the opportunity to live on campus and choose a class from the "STEM for Rising 9th & 10th Graders" curriculum.

Sariah Hyacinth '16, a third-year student at Spelman College, was selected to participate in a summer research opportunity at the University of Colorado. As part of the Graduate Experiences for Multicultural Students (GEMS) Program, she will conduct cardiovascular research in Dr. Kika Sucharov's Pediatric Cardiovascular Research Lab.

Khyleigh Lobo '12 is working on a Master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Bay Path University. She works for New Bedford Public Schools as a full-time substitute teacher.

Carissa Mak '11 started a position as a Water Infrastructure Engineer at Woodard & Curran.

Trinity Monteiro '13 was promoted to Manager of Operations for the Sports & Entertainment Equity Network (SEEN). She has a new side gig as a travel advisor.

Katie Rivera '13 is working as a third-grade teacher at Carlos Pacheco Elementary School in New Bedford.

Nia Rodrigues '20 and Ava Silva '20 will be attending the 2023 SkillsUSA National Leadership Conference as national voting delegates. They attend New Bedford Voc-Tech High School where they are on the Dean's list and are Student Council members. Nia is also an instructor apprentice at Community Boating Center where she works with six- to eight-year-olds.

Dalymar Ruiz '12 continues as a therapeutic case manager at the Justice Resource Institute (JRI). She also works with its Diversity and Advisory Group promoting diversity and inclusion. Dalymar recently completed an internship at the JRI Intensive Foster Care and Adoption program - her duties included writing assessments on children to help with adoption. In her not-so-spare time, she bartends at a brewery in Providence that showcases and promotes community groups such as LGBTIQ+ members and urban youth. Dalymar is one year away from completing her Master of Social Work at Bridgewater State University.

Solange Lima-Soares '17 graduated from the Commonwealth Honors Program at Bristol Community College in May. She works as a Behavioral Technician at Brightening Horizons Autism Treatment Center and is an intern at Better Community Living, both in New Bedford. This fall she will be attending Boston University, where she will continue her studies in the Department of Psychological and Brain Studies. We are so proud of Solange, and will miss her at OSS, where she has spent the past two years as a Teaching Fellow.

Tampson Tavares '12 earned a master's degree in accounting in 2021 and currently works at PKF JND, P.C. as an Advanced Staff Accountant. Her work in photography keeps her busy too!

Shaelynn Yopp '13 is putting her Bachelor of Science degree in Fashion Merchandising to use as Assistant Merchant for the T by Talbot brand. Shaelynn is also engaged to be married this fall!

Isis Ramos '19, Nariah DeBortoli '19 and Ayah DeBarros-Andrade '19 all graduated Dartmouth High School, and plan to be roommates at Bridgewater State University this fall.

#ShoutoutsOSS

This school year, two OSS teachers were honored for their remarkable work supporting our students on their journey to being extraordinary.

Science Department Chair **Jocelyn Chin** was named Mass Audubon's 2022 Conservation Teacher of the Year. Jocelyn was praised by Mass Audubon for her devotion to "civic engagement, community partnerships, and commitment to building conservation leaders." Creativity Director and Art/STEAM teacher **Tobey Eugenio** won the 2023 CARE Award for Curiosity. In response to the challenges that COVID-19 brought to educators in 2020, the CARE Awards were created to honor teachers who have demonstrated exceptional qualities during difficult times. An OSS parent who voted for Tobey commented: "Ms. Eugenio is a passionate, loving, selfless and devoted teacher who goes above and beyond for her students."



Two OSS students won the fifth annual New Bedford Public Library Youth Writing Contest. **Giselle '24** and **Daishaly '23** were each awarded in their grade-level's poetry category. Daishaly is also working as a media and journalism intern for Buy Black New Bedford and had

her first piece published in March! Check it out here:



Caira '25 won the New Bedford Public Library Black History Month Youth Art contest for her drawing depicting feminist political activist Angela Davis. To see more OSS student artwork, please visit artsonia.com and search for Our Sisters' School.

Last summer, OSS students and graduates participated as vendors in Buy Black New Bedford's first-ever Dream Makers Market. **Arieanah Lopes '21, Giselle '24, Mia '25, and Samara Kazan '22** sold their hand-crafted goods during the Kids Rule AHA! Night at the 54th Regiment Square in downtown New Bedford. Read about it in SouthCoast Today:



UMass Dartmouth's 10th annual STEM4Girls event was held last October. OSS eighth graders showed off their enthusiasm for STEAM

as presenters and workshop facilitators to over 80 girls in grades 3-8 across the SouthCoast. Shoutouts to **Aaliyah '23, Aden '23, Allison '23, Daishaly '23, Genesis '23, Hannah '23, Laura '23, and Na'Arah '23.**

Grades 5 and 6 Humanities teacher **Ms. Kozak** joined fifth grader **Arabella '26** in Boston in May for the 2023 Max Courage Awards luncheon. Arabella's personal essay has been published in *The Courage of Children: Boston and Beyond.*



The Zeiterion Theater in New Bedford invited four OSS students to read their "This I Believe" essays at The Moth's pre-show event in March. **Daishaly '23, Lily '24, Savannah L.-C. '24, and Savannah G. '23** enthralled the audience with their personal stories of inner growth and overcoming adversity.



In honor of International Women's Day, four OSS students read Amanda Gorman's "We Rise" to an audience at the First Unitarian Church in downtown New Bedford.

Thank you to **Abby '26, Gia '23, Miyuki '25 and Sydney '26!**

Seventh-grade students displayed their artwork honoring women artists at the fifth annual Ignite Youth Art Showcase in the New Bedford Whaling Museum's Harborview Gallery.

With the support of **Dr. Lance Fiondella, UMass Dartmouth Associate Professor of Electrical & Computer Engineering/Cybersecurity Center Director and UMD students**, we have launched a new gaming club and are developing curricula around computer science and cyber security to be used at OSS and other schools. This spring we began incorporating Virtual and Augmented Reality into our curriculum and are looking forward to doing more great work from this valued partnership! **Melanie Luperon '13**, who currently works at Dell Technologies, has been helping OSS set up this new program!

OSS students have been involved in many exciting activities this year with New Bedford Research & Robotics. They had the chance to work with **NBRR's Artist in Residence, Lilach Porges**, an Israeli student at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. Lilach shared her innovative work using robotic arms to 3-D print fashion using sustainable materials. **Sophia '25** said of the experience: "I am glad that my school provides opportunities to collaborate with artists and designers. I believe that this work will inspire the minds of girls like me for the future."



The Class of 2019 will be attending:*
Bridgewater State University
Elmhurst College
Emerson College
Massasoit Community College
New England Institute of Technology
UMass Dartmouth
Wentworth Institute of Technology
Wheaton College

The Class of 2023 will be attending:*
Bristol County Agricultural High School
Dana Hall School
Dartmouth High School
Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School
Stoneleigh-Burnham School
Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical High School

*at press time



Our Sisters' School

145 Brownell Avenue, New Bedford, MA 02740
508.994.1255 / www.oursistersschool.org

Address Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
NEW BEDFORD, MA
PERMIT 500

2022-2023 Board of Trustees

Officers

Rayana Grace
Elizabeth Kellogg
Kerry Lynch
Joe McDonough
Martha Sullivan

Trustees

Pamela Beck
Mary Berg
Alison Coolidge Boreiko
Angie Fenton
Alice Flint
Kim Francis
Merita Hopkins
Tony Jaccaci
Per Lofberg
Serge Moniz
Faith Morningstar
Jane Reynolds
Christina Turner
Young Un
Marcy Wintrub

Founding Chair Emerita: Lisa Schmid Alvord

Honorary Trustees: Talbot Baker Jr., Helena DaSilva Hughes,
Elizabeth Huidekoper, William Prescott

Head of School: Sarah Herman

Photography: Kim Goddard, Terry Schaefer Severance and OSS Staff



As an independent, tuition-free, non-sectarian middle school, our mission is to educate and inspire economically disadvantaged girls from the New Bedford area. OSS empowers girls to step into the future with valuable life skills and a mindset of achievement and excellence by providing a safe, supportive, and academically challenging environment.

Our school's name honors the bravery of the women known as "sister sailors" who boldly headed out to sea from New Bedford's harbor during the city's whaling days. Like these women, OSS students courageously embark on a voyage in a challenging academic environment carefully crafted to support them as they discover and achieve their greatest potential, while finding true north on their moral compass.

Support The OSS Fund

Unlike charter schools, OSS is not eligible for state funding as a single-sex school and we rely solely on our friends and foundations. Your generosity makes it possible for OSS students to receive an extraordinary education and transformative opportunities. Make a gift today or contact Georgie Goulding, Director of Advancement, at 508.994.1255 or ggoulding@oursistersschool.org, to discuss the different ways you can help OSS.

Planning Ahead with True North

Make a gift that will help secure OSS's future and prepare our students to live lives of consequence. Join the *True North Legacy Society* by naming OSS as a beneficiary in your estate planning, while meeting your current financial and philanthropic goals with tax benefits. You will make a lasting contribution to educating students and nurturing human potential.

Anti-Racism Statement

At Our Sisters' School, we are committed to an inclusive and diverse community, dedicated to our core values of *Excellence, Community, Civic Engagement, and Leadership*. We condemn all forms of racism – individual, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic. We will be diligent

in identifying, discussing, and challenging issues of race and ethnicity to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of our work, including student, staff, volunteer, and trustee recruitment, anti-racist curriculum development, and community engagement. We pledge to address any inequities we discover, using just and fair practices to yield a better understanding of ourselves and our school.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Our Sisters' School, Inc. admits girls as students to the School regardless of their race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, creed, or sexual orientation. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, creed, or sexual orientation in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, athletic and other school administered programs.

Our Sisters' School, Inc. employs personnel of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, gender identity, religion, creed, and sexual orientation to all the rights, privileges and activities generally accorded or made available to personnel at the School.