

## Middle Level Art Educator of the Year

### **Rachel Jensen**

A2 STEAM@Northside, Ann Arbor, MI



Rachel has taught Art and Design to 4<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> graders at A2 STEAM @ Northside for Ann Arbor Public Schools for the last 8 years. She serves as Lead Teacher, as well as Middle School Art Teacher Leader for the district and she loves sharing her skills and passion for art in this vibrant and creative community. Rachel aims to facilitate an authentic student-centered art studio, where young artists can explore, wonder, take risks, and create. Her own creative work involves clay, watercolor, or graphic design, though she enjoys working with just about any material she can get her hands on.

Rachel began her art journey with inspiring art teachers such as Mr. Benjamin (William Grace Elementary) and Mr. Harmon (Harrison High School) in Farmington Public Schools. She earned a BFA with concentrations in Clay and Graphic Design at University of Michigan. After 2 years working as a designer, and teaching children's clay classes on the weekends, she felt called to enroll in Eastern Michigan University where she earned a Post-Bac Teacher Certification in Visual Art Education, and eventually a MA VAE, as well. Prior to working for Ann Arbor, she taught for 9 years in various placements within Romulus Community Schools. Outside of K-12, she taught Art Ed classes at EMU, and Digital Design in Washtenaw Community College Lifelong learning program.

In the MAEA, Rachel has served as the Middle Level Division Chair for the past 3 years, as well as Co-chair for the 2023 Fall Conference in Ann Arbor. She has been a member of the organization since she began teaching, attending numerous conferences on the state and national levels. Additionally, she has presented at the state conferences and is thrilled to be able to share her experiences with others again in Ann Arbor.

*"It is hard to articulate how strongly I feel in support of Rachel Jensen as an art educator, consummate professional, and overall incredible human being...I have never worked with such an incredible art teacher and partner. Rachel is a triple threat in the world of education - she's an incredibly skillful teacher, she's a supportive colleague, and she's a leader outside of the building." - Meg Fenech*

