Art in Schools Funded for Second Year

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

For the second year in a row the Kodiak Island Borough School District has received funds specifically to help boost art activities throughout the district. The Art in Schools Grant totals $13,000 and will help bring artists into schools as part of the artist in residence program. Superintendent Stewart McDonald said it's an affordable way to encourage high quality visual arts education.

-- (Art in Schools 1 : 33 "There are several artists that will be identified for the school year, that each on of them have some sort of specialty. And because it's a part of our curriculum because it's a part of state standards and the visual arts are important to teach our children but our budget doesn't have the kind of funds to hire full time visual artists for our programs, this $13,000 will create stipends for these individual artists to come in and run projects in our schools throughout the year.")

McDonald said unlike the high school, art classes aren't readily offered to elementary students.

-- (Art in Schools 2 : 21 "And so for a very small dollar amount we're able to bring visual arts and a very high quality to all of our students. At the high school a student can actually take an art class, but at the elementary school they really don't get rich quality art instruction unless someone like this comes in and makes it a part of their year.")

The $13,000 will go toward paying artists that come teach, but McDonald said each school has funding worked into their budget that will pay for art supplies. He said the grant is unique in that it will be used for all schools in the district; where as in the past individual schools or classrooms have obtained grant money for artist in residence projects.

McDonald said the projects can involve artists from the local community, or bring in off island expertise.

-- (Art in Schools 3 : 24 "The idea is to have an accomplished artist that would come and do a residency in a school. So I think it's bringing people together that have strong talent and we have lots of people local that fit that description. But the idea is to bring in artists. I'd love to have our local folks, but when people come in from off island as well we're looking for what skills do they have and what are they going to teach.")

Last year the funding allowed various schools to collaborate on the marine debris octopus sculpture that can be found downtown. McDonald said he's unsure what projects will come out of this year's money, but hopes it will involve the whole district, including secondary schools and those in rural communities.

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