Margaretta (Gretta) Olton

Design & Visual Communications (CTE) Director | Visual Arts Educator
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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Experienced Design & Visual Communications CTE Director, educator, curriculum designer, and fine artist (painting and ceramics) with over nine years of leadership in Boston Public Schools. Proven success designing and sustaining a Massachusetts Chapter 74–aligned Design & Visual Communications pathway grounded in equity, industry credentialing, MTSS/UDL frameworks, and postsecondary readiness. Recognized for curriculum transformation, Perkins grant management, industry partnership development, inclusive instructional design, and producing award-winning student outcomes while fostering rigorous, studio-based learning environments.

LICENSURE & CERTIFICATIONS

- Vocational Technical Teacher License — Design & Visual Communications, MA
- Professional Teacher License — Visual Art (5–12), MA
- Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Endorsement
- Adobe Certified Professional — Graphic Design & Illustration (Illustrator)
- Adobe Certified Professional — Photoshop
- OSHA Safety Certification

EDUCATION

Massachusetts College of Art & Design — Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), Boston, MA
Parsons School of Design — Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), New York City, NY
Wesleyan University — Bachelor of Arts (BA), Middletown, CT

Additional Professional Study
School of the Museum of Fine Arts — Boston, MA
Office for the Arts at Harvard University — Cambridge, MA
Passalacqua School of Drawing & Illustration — New York, NY and Orlando, FL

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Boston Arts Academy (Boston Public Schools) — Boston, MA

Design & Visual Communications CTE Director / Visual Arts Faculty

2017–Present

Instructional Leadership & Teaching Practice

- Design and deliver project-based, industry-aligned instruction in typography, layout, branding systems, digital illustration, motion graphics, and professional workflows aligned to MA Chapter 74 Vocational Technical Frameworks.
- Teach industry-standard tools including Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign, and animation platforms, emphasizing vector/raster literacy, file architecture, naming conventions, and production-ready deliverables.
- Implement MTSS-, UDL-, and SDI-aligned instruction providing multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression.
- Guide students through the full professional design process: research, ideation, prototyping, critique, revision, production, and presentation.
- Facilitate structured critique protocols using professional design vocabulary and peer feedback frameworks (Glow/Grow).
- Differentiate for multilingual learners, students with IEPs/504 plans, and advanced students through tiered pathways and flexible pacing without lowering rigor.
- Embed career readiness competencies including collaboration, project management, professional communication, and portfolio development.
- Align instruction to Adobe certification standards and OSHA safety expectations.

Student Outcomes & Postsecondary Success

- Students consistently earn Gold and Silver Keys in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and win districtwide design competitions (including official BPS logo adoption).
- Graduates accepted to top-tier art schools, liberal arts colleges, and design programs; many receive full-tuition or substantial merit scholarships.
- Students complete public-facing client projects including large-scale architectural facades, signage, branding systems, digital media, and exhibition installations.

- Alumni pursue careers in graphic design, UX/UI, illustration, animation, and freelance practice; several secure paid commissions before high school graduation.
- Graduates maintain ongoing mentorship relationships for portfolio and career guidance.

Program Design & Expansion (Chapter 74 Leadership)

- Lead design and continuous improvement of a Chapter 74–approved DVC pathway (Grades 9–12).
- Developed vertically aligned four-year curriculum (DVC 1–4) with clear skill progression and portfolio benchmarks.
- Standardized professional workflows across courses (file systems, critique models, production standards).
- Integrated culturally responsive pedagogy, MTSS, UDL, SEI, and inclusive practices across curriculum and assessments.
- Created and oversaw **Studio M7**, a student-led graphic design studio providing professional-level and paid project experiences.
- Expanded public exhibitions and portfolio showcases to increase visibility and industry engagement.
- Built and sustained partnerships with professional designers, American Institute for Graphic Arts (AIGA)– a national organization, postsecondary institutions, and community organizations.

Program Operations & Compliance

- Oversee daily operations of Chapter 74 CTE program ensuring DESE and BPS compliance.
- Manage OSHA and Adobe credential tracking, student rosters, safety documentation, and reporting systems.
- Secure and manage Perkins-funded resources including hardware, software, and lab upgrades.
- Lead equipment planning, procurement, and lab maintenance.
- Coordinate field trips, exhibitions, visiting professionals, and public events.
- Monitor budgets, inventory, and responsible stewardship of public funds.

Supervising Practitioner — Massachusetts College of Art & Design (MAT Program)

2020–2022

Mentored graduate teaching candidates in studio pedagogy, lesson design, and culturally responsive instructional practice.

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Consultant — City Arts & Sciences Academy (Lynn, MA)
Designed and implemented DVC program model aligned to Chapter 74 standards.

Guest Lecturer — American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA), Boston
Presented on best practices in teaching typography and graphic design.

Web Designer & Strategic Consultant — Smithsonian Institution, Center for Astrophysics
Designed website and logo; consulted on UX architecture and implementation.

Founder / Creative Director — Studio 180 LLC
Led branding systems, website design and development, CMS platforms, and marketing strategy. Managed teams, budgets, and client deliverables.

Graphic Designer / Special Project Manager — Houghton Mifflin Company
Managed print and digital projects; contributed to corporate identity redesign and four-color Oxford English Dictionary production.

Publicity Coordinator & Photographer — Office for the Arts at Harvard University (Ceramics Program)
Managed marketing materials and event documentation.

New Art Center — Newton, MA
Marketing, website design, event photography, and communications.

SELECT AWARDS & EXHIBITIONS

- MITX Awards — Winner (City of Somerville Website & CMS)
- MIMC Awards — Finalist (City of Cambridge Website & CMS)
- eHealthcare Leadership Awards (website Design & Development)
- Massachusetts College of Art & Design Book Award (Exceptional Graduate Studies Work)
- Community Spirit Award Pro Bono Design & Website Development) — New Art Center
- James K. Bronner Exhibition (Painting) — Morse Institute
- The Rhythm of Color (Painting) — Allen Center
- Arnheim Gallery Group Exhibition (Ceramics)

SELECT CLIENT LIST

Smithsonian Institution • Museum of Fine Arts Boston •
Harvard University • MIT •
City of Cambridge • City of Somerville •
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center • Brigham and Women's Hospital •
Massachusetts General Hospital • Society for Black Academic Surgeons •
League of American Orchestras

CORE AREAS OF EXPERTISE

CTE Program Leadership • Chapter 74 Compliance •
Curriculum Design & Vertical Alignment •
MTSS • UDL • SDI • Inclusive Pedagogy •
Graphic Design & Visual Communication •
Typography • Branding Systems • Motion Graphics •
Adobe Creative Cloud •
Perkins Grant Management •
Portfolio Development & Industry Credentialing •
Exhibition Design • Industry Partnerships •
Fine Arts: Painting (Oil, Acrylic, Watercolor) • Drawing • Ceramics