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Dear Vendors,

With 4025 members, the Texas Art Education Association is the largest state professional organization for art educators in the country. Each year TAEA presents a state conference that spotlights the latest innovations and trends in the field. The 2017 Galveston conference attendance was 1893.

Conference sessions include hands-on presentations, demonstrations, general session keynote speakers, tours, round table and panel discussions. Members from elementary, middle school, high school, college/university, museum, private and home school, community art education programs attend these sessions.

The centerpiece of the conference is the commercial exhibits. Here art educators can discover new materials, network with other art educators, explore possibilities for stretching budget dollars, and experience first-hand the products that will be utilized in the art classroom. This hands-on experience is just as valuable as the scheduled workshop offerings, and teachers spend a large percentage of their conference time in the exhibit hall. From a first timer: "The vendors took lots of time explaining products I wasn't familiar with and a kiln representative patiently explained all I needed to know about a kiln that was donated to our school."

TAEA keeps scheduling teacher workshops in the exhibit hall to meet the needs of the teachers and to further spotlight the outstanding products the vendors provide. A stroll through the Exhibit Hall is in itself an outstanding educational tool for the art educator. The partnership between TAEA and our vendors is a strong and vital one – and one the conference attendees count on. Each of our vendors graciously interacts and inspires art teachers, and the samples provided are taken back and shared with the students. The demos at the booths are always a hit, and many art educators feel they are just as powerful as a regular workshop session or a walkup workshop.

Planning for the 2018 TAEA conference in McAllen is well underway, and the excitement is building. TAEA recognizes an integral part of a quality conference experience is centered on the Commercial Exhibits. We appreciate the long-standing relationship that has been nurtured with the outstanding companies who serve the art community, and look forward to promoting the bridge between the teacher/consumer and the fine companies that exhibit at our TAEA conference.

Thank You,

*Ricia Kerber*