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Cathy DePentu: Career-long Learning

[Cathy DePentu](#) [arts education](#), [Cathy DePentu](#), [dance](#), [MAEIA](#), [MAEIA Leadership Fellows](#), [music](#), [professional learning](#), [Professional Learning Community](#), [school year](#), [theatre](#), [visual arts](#)

I have been in school for 58 of my 63 years. Granted, I've switched roles a few times and moved back and forth from the front of the room to behind a desk (or music stand), but still, the end of August is a turning point of each year. Even after all these years, I still toss and turn the night before school starts wondering what the year will bring. Much of my excitement is the same as when I was in elementary school: Who will I see the first day? What adventures we will share about summer? Will the people I work with be kind? Will they like me?

Every year, I am privileged to share my passion for music and music-making with a new group of students. We work together and learn from each other. Even though only a few of these students will choose the Arts as a career, I know that the thought processes and learning strategies involved in the performing arts classroom will benefit them all throughout their life.

We learn patience, collaboration, cooperation and persistence. When we fail, we try again. We value each others contributions and celebrate our differences. We are accepting and welcoming; our classrooms are safe spaces. Of course we will encounter obstacles to success—perhaps budget, administrative or legislative. While we may not be able to control the situation, we CAN control of how we choose to respond to it.

I say “we learn” because after all of these years, I truly feel once the unique process of teaching and learning through the Arts is shared, we are all both students and teachers. Being willing to adapt and continue to learn while I teach keeps me from teaching the same year, over and over again...and so every year can be exciting and fresh.

Have a great year everyone, and remember that MAEIA is just a click away!

From MAEIA:

On that note, we'd like to invite MAEIA-informed community members to join the Facebook closed group: MAEIA PLC. Look for us under “groups”. Request to join and share in professional dialogue with like-minds about MAEIA and arts education.

Cathy DePentu is a [MAEIA Leadership Fellow](#) and serves as Director of Orchestras for Plymouth-Canton Community Schools.