

# Youth De'VIA Competition:

2025-2026 Rules and Guidelines



Sponsored by:



Art, No. 2 by Chuck Baird, 1993  
Acrylic on Canvas (24" by 30")

# HISTORY

With the backing of De'VIA Artists, the Youth De'VIA Competition is a joint project hosted by the Kansas School for the Deaf (KSD) and Museum of Deaf History, Arts, and Culture, Inc. (MDHAC) in loving memory of Chuck Baird, known as the “*Father of De'VIA*” and alumni of KSD, class of 1965.

Summer 2013: The first De'VIA Artist Retreat was held at KSD where Sandra Kelly, former MDHAC Executive Director (formerly the Deaf Cultural Center Foundation), and Jeanne Ewald, former MDHAC Board Member, coordinated logistics and other activities on behalf of Deaf Artists. The retreat focused on discussions about developing a De'VIA curriculum and hosting a Youth De'VIA Competition, because they wanted to honor Chuck Baird's dream to keep De'VIA alive for generations.

Summer 2014: A group of Deaf artists hosted their first working group seminar to initiate the development of the De'VIA Curriculum at the Rochester School for the Deaf. It has since been held annually at different schools for the Deaf for art teachers and other artists. This curriculum was intended to be free and available for Deaf schools or any programs with Deaf children. Find more information here: [DeVIA Curriculum](#)

Fall 2014: Sherry Gabel, a former KSD ASL teacher, and Takako Kerns, a KSD art teacher, developed ideas and guidelines for the Youth De'VIA competition. They asked MDHAC to be a sponsor, using funds from Chuck Baird's Foundation that was passed on to MDHAC by Chuck Baird in 2010.

January 2015: The first Youth De'VIA competition began across the United States with 6 schools participating and 142 pieces of artwork submitted. By 2024, the number of participants and submissions grew to a record 17 schools and 984 submissions!

Spring 2017: KSD and MDHAC agreed on a more formal partnership, where each has their own set of responsibilities such as KSD dedicating staff time to coordinate all school-related logistics for the national competition, and MDHAC showcasing annual winners in their Chuck Baird Art Gallery and dedicating a specific line item in MDHAC's annual budget for Youth De'VIA Competition expenses (honorarium fees for judges, costs of shipping artwork, and awards for winners).

January 2024: We added 1) competition fees to enhance award amounts given to winners and 2) two new groups, in Divisions, specific to Deaf Plus (as recommended by participants who attended the De'VIA Curriculum Seminar at the Wisconsin School for the Deaf in 2023).

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# 1. Introduction

This Rules & Guidelines booklet is written to govern the Youth De'VIA Competition for Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing youths.

The purpose of this project is to promote the creative abilities of Deaf children/youth from schools all over the United States in producing De'VIA artwork describing Deaf experiences in a way that helps them learn more about themselves and their community and heritage. Best works of art, following accepted mediums as established by the committee, are chosen per age group, and the results are shared with the public to highlight and raise awareness about Deaf people's experiences.

The submissions for the Youth DeVIA Competition will be done entirely through Google Drive links for photographs of artwork. All entries will be reviewed by a panel of judges consisting of Deaf Artists.

First-place winners' artwork will be displayed at the Chuck Baird Art Gallery in MDHAC. All winners will receive prizes.

## 2. Objectives

Students will create art that expresses their experiences and feelings as a Deaf/Hard of Hearing person.

Create art that includes one or more De'VIA elements:

- Deaf/DeafBlind expression of affirmation, resistance, and liberation,
- View of how they experience the world,
- Images/Motifs/Symbols of the experience, and
- Art, Activism, Aesthetics, and Authentic expressions.

## 3. ELIGIBILITY

This competition is for all Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing school-aged children and youth. Young artists must incorporate one or more aspects of the Deaf experience, language, culture, or history in their submissions.

## 4. DIVISIONS & CATEGORIES

### 4a. Divisions

All categories of the competition are broken down into seven groups.

1. Kindergarten & 1st grade
2. 2nd grade & 3rd grade
3. 4th grade & 5th grade
4. Middle school (6th grade to 8th grade)
5. High school (9th grade to 12th grade)
6. Deaf Plus\* (Kindergarten to 5th grade)
7. Deaf Plus\* (6th grade to 12th grade)

\*The term “Deaf Plus” is used here as a general grouping for students with additional learning disabilities and/or who are on an alternative educational track in school.

### 4b. Categories

Artwork is submitted within these four categories:

**2D 2-dimensional:** Painting, drawing, printmaking, mixed media, and collage.

**3D 3-dimensional:** Sculpture, ceramics, jewelry making, wood making.

**PH Photography:** Black/white, color, and/or digital photography.

The photography must be original and cannot be altered by adding, reversing, removing people or objects, or adding unique effect enhancements. There are acceptable exceptions: color enhancement includes increased contrast, lightening, darkening, and image cropping. Photo collage and triptych photography are also permitted.

**DIP Digital Illustration/Painting:** Student must create the artwork on their own using or enhancing with digital technology. No auto-generated or AI-generated works are accepted. Any computer program used (e.g., Photoshop, Procreate, Adobe, Photo Booth) also falls under this category.

*Suppose students use a computer camera to create their artwork (such as photographs taken directly through the computer or tablet). In that case, the work must be entered under Digital Illustration/Painting (DIP), not Photography (PH).*

## 5. TIMELINE

Submission Period: March 30th, 8:00 A.M. to April 3rd, 3:00 P.M., 2026 (CST)

Award Ceremony: May 5th, 2026 (email PDF to art teachers)

MDHAC Media Consent and Release Form: due by May 22nd, 3:00 pm CST

Chuck Baird Art Gallery: July 1st, 2026

## 6. RULES AND GUIDELINES

### 6a. Rules

- Artists must submit images of their artwork in JPEG format.
- Digital files cannot be longer than 2MB, or they will not be accepted.
- Selections will be made from digital designs. Artists should provide accurate representation of work to be considered (please only one per piece).
- Students are limited to 3 entries in total.
- Students may enter more than one category. It does not matter which category is entered. Only 3 entries per student are allowed.
- Students are not allowed to copy other artwork.
- Students must participate independently without any assistance or performance from their teachers
- Submit only one image per artwork category.
- You may combine two images into one to show different angles of your 3D piece.
- Do not submit multiple separate images; all views should appear in a single image file.

Artists must submit images of their artwork in **JPEG format**.

Digital files cannot be larger than 2MB, or they will not be accepted.

Selections will be made from digital designs. Artists should provide accurate representation of work to be considered (please only one per piece). Students are limited to 3 entries in total.

Students may enter more than one category. It does not matter which category is entered. Only 3 entries per student are allowed.

This is very important! The image file name must be labeled as follows:

Category code (2D, 3D, PH, CG); title of work; student's first initial of the first name and last name; grade; school's initials

A 2-dimensional work titled "Tiger" by Chuck Baird, 12th grade for Kansas School for the Deaf should be named: **2DTigerCBaird12KSD**

**2DTigerCBaird12KSD.jpeg**

Code category Title Student's First Initial Last Name Grade School's initials

## 6b. Guidelines

### EXCEL SPREADSHEET:

Submit an Excel spreadsheet.

### Instructions (step by step):

1. Make a copy of the official Excel spreadsheet provided. Do **not** create your own version.
2. Do **not** merge any cells.
3. Fill out the spreadsheet completely.
4. Paste the Google Drive image link for each artwork into the spreadsheet (insert as a clickable link — tab or chip style is preferred).
5. Submit the completed spreadsheet along with artwork images.

### Friendly Reminder:

- Encourage students/teachers to create their spreadsheet as soon as possible; edits or additions can always be made later.
- The Google folder should be shared with Marie Qualls, the Youth De'VIA Coordinator, to ensure she has access to all image links. [mariequalls@kansasdeaf.gov](mailto:mariequalls@kansasdeaf.gov)

The spreadsheet and guidelines can be downloaded from [www.kansasdeaf.gov](http://www.kansasdeaf.gov) OR <https://www.museumofdeaf.org/youthdevia>.

## 7. SUBMITTED ENTRIES:

The entry fee is \$100 per school with 5 or more student submissions. The entry fee is \$50 per school with 4 or fewer student submissions.

You must pay the fee before 3 pm on April 3rd. The fee payment link will be closed after 3 pm on April 3rd. Please make the payment before submitting.

### Youth De'VIA Competition Fee

Images and Excel spreadsheets must be submitted to [mqualls@kansasdeaf.gov](mailto:mqualls@kansasdeaf.gov) from March 30th, 8 a.m. to April 3rd, 3 p.m. Incomplete entries will not be accepted.

Homeschooled students should contact their local Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH) school or Deaf School art teacher to include the student in the competition fees. Alternatively, students may submit their entries independently.

## 8. JUDGING CRITERIA:

The artwork will be judged using the following criteria: originality, creativity, uniqueness, and professional quality.

Judges will look for originality, creative use of language, and use of the theme in an inventive and meaningful way.

## 9. PRIZES & AWARDS:

All teachers will be notified via email of the winners on May 5, 2026.

Awards and prizes will be mailed to schools in early May.

Prizes:

Elementary group - Art Kits

Middle/High school groups - Amazon gift cards



Awards:

Elementary Groups 2D - 1st, 2nd, 3rd and honorable mentions  
 Elementary Groups 3D - 1st, 2nd, 3rd and honorable mentions  
 Elementary Groups PH - 1st place and honorable mentions  
 Elementary Groups CG - 1st, 2nd, 3rd and honorable mentions

Middle School Group 2D - 1st, 2nd, 3rd and honorable mentions  
 Middle School Group 3D - 1st, 2nd, 3rd and honorable mentions  
 Middle School Group PH - 1st place and honorable mentions  
 Middle School Group CG - 1st, 2nd, 3rd and honorable mentions

High School Group 2D - 1st, 2nd, 3rd and honorable mentions  
 High School Group 3D - 1st, 2nd, 3rd and honorable mentions  
 High School Group PH - 1st place and honorable mentions  
 High School Group CG - 1st, 2nd, 3rd and honorable mentions

Deaf Plus Elementary Group - 1st place and honorable mentions  
 Deaf Plus Secondary Group 3D - 1st place and honorable mentions

First-place winners' artwork will be displayed at the Museum of Deaf History, Arts, & Culture on July 1st, 2026. First-place winners are required to have their parent/legal guardian sign a Media Content & Release form for MDHAC; if MDHAC doesn't have a form signed, then the artwork will be shared without a name. First-place winners will be asked to create a description of the artwork to add to the museum. The De'VIA coordinator will contact the first-place winners' art teachers with the form. The art teacher will be responsible for collecting the signed form of Media Content & Release.