



November 10, 2021

Durham Public Schools  
511 Cleveland Street  
Durham, NC 27702

To Whom It May Concern:

After returning to in-person instruction in May of 2021, I was tasked to create engaging summer learning opportunities for middle school students in English Language Arts classes. My partnership with the Durham Arts Council provided multiple options for student learning experiences. During this time, I had the pleasure of working with Ms. Maria Geary, who intertwined writing and art and made it come alive for students. Her two-day residency at four school sites introduced students to visual art through an exploration of textures and blends. Ms. Geary's work continued with students writing from a personal perspective on any topic. This was an opportunity for our students to release feelings, thoughts, ideas, and leave it on the paper. To produce a finish product, students experimented with paint to conceal their personal writing. Students were not asked to share their writing, but many shared their finished visual product.

Clearly, Ms. Geary excels at her gift of artistry, but her ability to engage middle school students was AMAZING. At all times, she facilitated a positive learning experience and provided the space for students to be expressive in conversation and in their work product. Ms. Geary respected our students, affirmed their skills, and encouraged them to experiment with the colors and textures. Interactions between Ms. Geary and students were easy-going and productive.

It was truly my pleasure to work with Ms. Geary on this project and I look forward to future collaborative efforts to integrate art into English Language Arts.

In Service to Students.

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