Arts
Education
Advocacy
Handbook
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Overview

This section provides articles and fact sheets that demonstrate the need for high quality arts education in schools. This includes dance, music, theatre and visual arts instruction by arts specialist teachers. It also includes instruction by multiple subjects teachers and teachers in other content areas who integrate the arts. It can also include after school programs either as stand alone arts classes or as arts integrated classes.

Key ingredients for all arts instruction

• Standards-based--aligned with the California Visual and Performing Arts Framework and Content Standards

• Comprehensive--all four arts disciplines are taught at the school

• Sequential--skills are scaffolded throughout the year and from grade to grade
What Is Arts Education and Why Is It Important?

The Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) in California Schools Are …

**Defined** as Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts

**Mandated** by the State Education Code for grades 1-12 (Sections 51210 and 5121)
Source: California Department of Education, Website: [http://www.cde.ca.gov/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/)

**Aligned** to the California K-12 VAPA Framework and Content Standards
Source: California Department of Education Website: [www.cde.ca.gov/ci/vp/cf/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/vp/cf/)

**Instructed by** highly qualified teachers (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) in a comprehensive and sequential manner during the regular school day

**Supported** by VAPA textbooks and materials adopted by the State Board of Education
Source: California State Board of Education, Website: [www.cde.ca.gov/BE/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/BE/)

**Assisted** by historic state funding of the Arts and Music block grants (over $100 million yearly, 2006-09) to be spent for the following
- professional development of teachers and administrators
- books, equipment, materials and supplies
- hiring of credentialed dance, music, theatre and visual arts teachers
Source: California Department of Education, Website: [www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/vp/vapa07faqs.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/vp/vapa07faqs.asp)

And That's Important Because…

**Arts education benefits both teachers and students**
In schools with strong arts climates, teachers and students both benefit. Teachers found students who had received high levels of arts training to be more cooperative and more willing to share what they had learned than students with low levels of arts training. "High-arts" students were better able to express their ideas, use their imaginations and take risks in learning, as reported by teachers. High-arts students had better rapport with teachers and teachers in arts-rich schools demonstrated more interest in their work and were more likely to become involved in professional development experiences. They were also more likely to be innovative in their teaching.

**The benefits of arts education don’t stop at the classroom door.**
The qualitative and quantitative findings of an education reform program that places a high value on the arts found that "the arts do contribute to the general school curriculum, to learning for all students, to school and professional culture, to educational and instructional practices, and to the schools’ neighborhoods and communities."
Source: *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, Richard J. Deasy, 2002, Arts Education Partnership
Arts education benefits the brain and transfers to other learning.  
Three-Year Study At Seven Major Universities Finds Strong Links  
Between Arts Education And Cognitive Development

Washington, DC, March 4, 2008 — Learning, Arts, and the Brain, a study three years in the  
making, is the result of research by cognitive neuroscientists from seven leading universities  
across the United States. In the Dana Consortium study, released today at a news conference at  
the Dana Foundation’s Washington, DC headquarters, researchers grappled with a fundamental  
question: Are smart people drawn to the arts or does arts training make people smarter?

For the first time, coordinated, multi-university scientific research brings us closer to answering that  
question. Learning, Arts, and the Brain advances our understanding of the effects of music, dance,  
and drama education on other types of learning. Children motivated in the arts develop attention  
skills and strategies for memory retrieval that also apply to other subject areas.  
Source: Dana Foundation website, www.dana.org

Arts education builds skills for the 21st century workforce

The arts are one tool used by states to enhance workforce readiness for students in both the  
general and at-risk populations. Programs incorporating the arts have proven to be educational,  
developmentally rich, and cost-effective ways to provide students the skills they need to be  
productive participants in today’s economy. Arts programs combine academic and workforce  
development skills in a manner attractive to participants of all age groups and economic  
backgrounds.  

Arts education is highly valued by most Americans

New Harris Poll Reveals that 93 Percent of Americans Believe that the Arts are Vital to Providing a  
Well-Rounded Education

Austin, TX—June 13, 2005. A new Harris Poll released today on the attitudes of Americans toward  
arts education revealed that 93 percent of Americans agree that the arts are vital to providing a  
well-rounded education for children. Additionally, 54 percent rated the importance of arts education  
a “ten” on a scale of one to ten.

The survey reveals additional strong support among Americans for arts education:
* 86 percent of Americans agree that an arts education encourages and assists in the  
improvement of a child’s attitudes toward school.
* 83 percent of Americans believe that arts education helps teach children to communicate  
effectively with adults and peers.
* 79 percent of Americans agree that incorporating arts into education is the first step in adding  
back what’s missing in public education today.
* 79 percent of Americans believe that it’s important enough for them to get personally involved  
in increasing the amount and quality of arts education.

Source: Americans for the Arts website, www.artsusa.org

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Introduction

Every young person in America deserves a complete and competitive education that includes the arts. America’s global stature, culture of innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit depend on the strength of a world-class education system. Perhaps now more than ever—as the country becomes increasingly diverse, the world more interconnected, and the workplace more oriented around technology and creativity—arts education is key to such a system and to ensuring students’ success in school, work, and life.

For this reason, the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) created ArtsEdSearch.org—the nation’s first clearinghouse of research examining the mounting body of evidence on the benefits of an arts education. Drawing on the research in ArtsEdSearch, this bulletin offers a snapshot of how the arts support achievement in school, bolster skills demanded of a 21st century workforce, and enrich the lives of young people and communities.
The arts prepare students for success in school.

Arts instruction and arts integrated instruction—lessons teaching skills and content of an art and non-art subject in tandem—engage students and increase learning and achievement. Arts education:

1. **Boosts literacy and English Language Arts (ELA) skills.** Arts education helps students become better readers and writers. Drama instruction, for example, increases reading readiness and word fluency in early grades and continues to improve reading comprehension and writing skills throughout middle and high school.1, 2 When the arts are integrated with literacy instruction, all students benefit, especially English Language Learners and students from low-income backgrounds.3

2. **Advances math achievement.** Students who study the arts, especially music, outperform their non-arts peers on mathematics assessments.4, 5 Arts integrated math instruction also facilitates mastery of computation and estimation skills, and challenging concepts like fractions.6, 7

3. **Engages students in school and motivates them to learn.** Arts education helps make learning matter to students by giving them a medium to connect new knowledge to personal experiences and express what they have learned to others. Students who are typically disengaged in school are more likely to participate in arts and arts integrated classes than in classes where the arts are absent, and students who receive arts integrated instruction have higher attendance than those who do not.8, 9, 10

4. **Develops critical thinking.** In a world where students must frequently wade through a sea of information to determine which facts are trustworthy and relevant to a particular topic, critical thinking skills are key to college readiness and lifelong learning. Arts education develops students’ critical thinking skills—including skills for comparing, hypothesizing, critiquing, and exploring multiple and alternative viewpoints.11, 12

5. **Improves school culture.** Arts education helps foster a positive culture and climate in schools.13 When schools integrate the arts across the curriculum, disciplinary referrals decrease while effectiveness of instruction and teachers’ ability to meet the needs of all students increase.14, 15 Arts integration also contributes to increasing teacher satisfaction and lowering teacher turnover rates, often challenges for low performing schools.16
The arts prepare students for success in work.

Arts education develops thinking skills and capacities key to success in the 21st Century workforce. **Arts education:**

1. **Equips students to be creative.** Arts education develops creativity, one of the top five skills employers prize for the 21st Century. Students receiving an arts-rich education perform better on assessments of creativity than do students receiving little or no arts education. Performing arts students, for example, show greater flexibility and adaptability in thinking than their peers.

2. **Strengthens problem solving ability.** The arts develop reasoning skills that prepare students to solve problems. Students who study the arts, for example, score higher than their peers on tests measuring the ability to analyze information and solve complex problems, and are more likely to approach problems with patience and persistence.

3. **Builds collaboration and communication skills.** In the arts, students learn to articulate their intentions, receive and offer constructive criticism, and listen actively to others’ ideas. Art making allows students to experience what it feels like to be active members of a community and to work as a team to determine and achieve common goals.

4. **Increases capacity for leadership.** Students who participate in the arts develop leadership skills, including decision-making, strategy building, planning, and reflection. They also prepare to use these skills effectively by developing a strong sense of identity and confidence in their ability to affect the world around them in meaningful ways.
The arts prepare students for success in life.

Arts education prepares students to engage meaningfully in their communities. **Arts education:**

1. **Strengthens perseverance.** Arts education develops students’ capacity to persist in the face of a challenge. Through arts study, students improve in their ability to turn barriers into opportunities, overcome difficulty in completing complex tasks, and sustain attention. In a longitudinal study of 25,000 secondary school students, those with higher involvement in the arts scored better on measures of persistence than their peers with lower arts involvement.

2. **Facilitates cross-cultural understanding.** Arts experiences foster pro-social behaviors and social tolerance that help prepare students for life in an increasingly global and culturally diverse world. Ensemble performance, community mural painting, and other group arts experiences in which participants are from diverse backgrounds demonstrate particular value for developing cross-cultural understanding.

3. **Builds community and supports civic engagement.** Arts programs foster a sense of community among participants that supports their personal, artistic, civic, and social development. They also offer a vehicle for effecting change in the surrounding community. Students who have had an arts-rich education volunteer more often and exhibit greater civic engagement than other students.

4. **Fosters a creative community.** Students who study the arts in their school years are more likely to engage with the arts in later life as consumers, performers, or creators than their peers who receive no arts education. Additionally, researchers find that the more art forms students study, the greater their arts participation in adulthood.
• Stay informed—Follow education efforts in your local media, learn about local arts education offerings and the position of arts education in school and municipal budgets, and continue to explore the research in ArtsEdSearch.org.

• Connect with others—Attend school board meetings and community forums, set up meetings with state, school, and city leaders, find out what is important to local stakeholders, and identify groups with like-minded goals.

• Get involved—Share this bulletin with state, school, and community leaders, join parent and other community groups, lead public discussions, make presentations at school board or city council meetings, and, in general, build a dialogue on the significance of the arts to a complete and competitive education.

• Tie it all together—Identify public policy goals that are supported by research and work with state and community leaders to ensure that they are enacted.

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Citations


Re-Investing in Arts Education: Winning America’s Future Through Creative Schools

Summary and Recommendations

REPORT BACKGROUND

In his 2008 Arts Policy Campaign platform, President Barack Obama argued for reinvesting in American arts education and reinvigorating the American hallmarks of creativity and innovation.

It has been more than a decade since any federal entity comprehensively examined arts education data in the United States. During this time, there have been important developments in arts education research, as well as major shifts in the landscape of American education—including the impact of No Child Left Behind and increasing economic pressure.

Taking on this challenge, the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities (PCAH) spent the last 18 months conducting an in-depth review of the current challenges and opportunities facing arts education. It sought out educational leaders around the country, visited schools, surveyed recent research, and talked to stakeholders all over the country working in this area.

The President’s Committee emerged from the process inspired both by robust data that clearly shows the effect of arts education on student academic achievement and creativity, and by firsthand observations in neighborhood schools across the country. These schools are improving test scores and fostering their students’ competitiveness in the workforce by investing in arts education strategies, even in the toughest neighborhoods.

The results also reaffirmed PCAH’s conviction that an arts education provides a critical benefit to the private sector. In order to effectively compete in the global economy, business leaders are increasingly looking for employees who are creative, collaborative and innovative thinkers. A greater investment in the arts is an effective way to equip today’s students with the skills they will need to succeed in the jobs of tomorrow.

The value of arts education is often phrased in enrichment terms—helping kids find their voice, rounding out their education and tapping into their undiscovered talents. This is true, but as President’s Committee saw in schools all over the country, it is also an effective tool in school-wide reform and fixing some of our biggest educational challenges. It is not a flower, but a wrench.
EDUCATIONAL BACKDROP
At this moment in our nation’s history, America’s schools are facing huge challenges, including:

- A dropout rate that approaches 50% in some demographics.
- A narrowed curriculum and strict focus on standardized testing that teaches students to fill in multiple choice bubbles instead of how to think creatively and problem solve, skills that are essential for helping them to compete in today’s economy.
- An achievement gap between our highest and lowest performing students that is ever-widening.
- Teachers who want to reach out and engage their students, but lack the tools with which to do so.

RECENT RESEARCH
Research over the past decade reveals that these are the areas where effective arts education strategies, especially arts integration techniques, have yielded practical and impressive results. While many may be familiar with these studies, a brief recap as it folds into the Report’s updated findings:

LONGITUDINAL STUDIES
- Two seminal studies with large sample sizes from the late 1990s showed that low income kids who participated in arts education were 4 more times likely to have high academic achievement and 3 times more likely to have high attendance than those who didn’t, and that these students were more likely to be elected to class office and participate in a math or science fair.
- Updates to these studies in the past few years, tracking the same kids well into their mid-twenties, showed that these advantages only increased over time, and that arts-engaged low-income students are more likely than their non-arts-engaged peers to have attended and done well in college, build careers, volunteered in their communities and participated in the political process by voting. The conclusion of these recent studies is that on average, arts-engaged low-income students tend to perform more like higher-income students in the many types of comparisons that the studies tracks.

BRAIN RESEARCH
In the last five years researchers also have begun to explore the benefits of an arts education on a child’s mind. In particular, the field of neuroscience is beginning to unravel the many ways that the arts can influence cognitive development. Their findings include:

- Music training is closely correlated with the development of phonological awareness—one of the most important predictors of early reading skills.
- Children who practiced a specific art form developed improved attention skills and improved general intelligence. Training their attention and focus also leads to improvement in other cognitive domains.
- Arts Integration techniques, which use multiple senses to repeat information, cause more information to be stored in long-term—as opposed to short-term—memory, and may actually change the structure of the neurons.
ARTS INTEGRATION STUDIES

Arts integration is a field particularly promising area for further development. Recent research has shown impressive results in reaching the lowest performing learners, and raising test scores without narrowing the curriculum.

- **CAPE (Chicago Arts Partnership in Education)** was a school-wide model for arts integration. The 19 Chicago elementary schools operating the CAPE model showed consistently higher average scores on the district’s reading and mathematics assessments over a six year period when compared to all district elementary schools.

- Last year, Montgomery County, Maryland compared three arts integration-focused schools (AIMS) to three control schools over a three-year period.
  - They found that AIMS schools with the highest percentage of minority and low-income students **reduced the reading gap by 14 percentage points and the math gap by 26 percentage points over a three-year period.** In the control schools, the number of proficient students actually **went down** 4.5%.
  - The Montgomery County evaluation also closely tracked the experiences of classroom teachers as they learned how to integrate the arts. Almost all teachers (79%) agreed that they had “totally changed their teaching” and (94%) that they had gained “additional ways of teaching critical thinking skills.”

- North Carolina’s and Oklahoma’s network of **A+ Schools** is a whole-school reform model. Everybody participates in professional development in arts integration, from the principal to the cafeteria lady. It incorporates Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences, recent brain research findings, and dance, drama, music, visual art, and creative writing. **These school tracked consistent gains in student achievement as compared to state and district averages.**
  - Importantly, years of research in both NC and OK **A+ Schools** show that A+ students consistently score as well or higher on statewide reading and mathematics assessments as students from more advantaged schools.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The United States has a long proud history of innovation and creativity. This is one of our greatest assets and what will give our workforce an edge in an increasingly competitive global economy. But to do this, we need to prepare the next generation of inventors, designers and creators. Business leaders are already asking for this. They recognize that this is essential for our schools to be teaching children how to think outside the box and to address challenges with creative solutions. And policy makers and parents are concerned because they see how the current education system is failing to give our children the tools they need reach their full potential.

Arts education is a solution to many of these problems that has been hiding in plain sight. This is largely because it remains siloed, from the macro to the micro level. At the policy level, arts education advocacy is
seen as something different and separate from the larger conversation of educational reform. And in schools, arts specialists classes are too often marginalized as something that gives the classroom teachers a planning period, while teaching artists are asked to parachute in and out in two or three week residencies, without ever being able to build relationships and integrate into the school community. But in fact, the potential of arts education lies in exactly the opposite—a seamless marriage of arts education strategies with overall educational goals, a vibrant collaboration between arts specialists, classroom teachers and teaching artists to create collaborative, creative environments that allow each child to reach his or her potential, using all the tools at our disposal to reach and engage them in learning.

The report makes the following recommendations to facilitate that vision:

**Recommendation 1: Build robust collaborations among different approaches to arts education**

- Almost every community—indeed, almost every school—that tries to address the difficult challenge of how to get more arts into schools does so differently. This results in a complex patchwork of arts education services across the country, representing a mix of delivery models that includes standards-based sequential arts curricula; formal and informal arts integration strategies; and short and long term teaching artists residencies.

- It also involves a wide array of organizations, school and state officials whose roles and initiative vary from place to place. There is no one model that works best for every community, and no single solution for the host of economic, pedagogic and logistical challenges faced by arts education advocates.

- However, too often an undue focus by advocates on the method of delivery of arts instruction, rather than the quality of that instruction and the flexibility to adapt to the needs of the community has hindered effectiveness of those advocates, and the overarching cause of getting more arts into schools. Small successes—such as a visiting artist leading a two-week dance workshop—can often be the gateway to more arts, and more learning, and more engagement.

**CASE STUDY:**

*Benton Heights Elementary School for the Arts is located in Monroe, North Carolina. It’s a Title 1 neighborhood K-5th grade school with around 700 students. 90% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunches, with a high population of ESL students.*

*The school was struggling with student achievement, but when their P.E. teacher, Michael Harvey, became their new principal, he was determined to find new ways to raise student test scores. In 2004, Benton Heights became a partner school with the local Blumenthal Performing Arts Center in Charlotte, North Carolina. Seeing promising results from that partnership, in 2007 Benton Heights Elementary became an A+ School: a North Carolina statewide reform model in which the whole school embraces the arts as*
fundamental to how teachers teach and students learn in all subjects.

Pretty immediately, measurements showed significant improvement in the students’ test scores. Over three years (2007-2009), the test scores of the 2nd grade class went from 45% to 71% in Reading, and from 68% to 84% in Math. Also, the school’s 4th grade class’ scores leapt from 25% in Science in 2008 to 62% in Science in 2009.

Over this time, the school hired more arts specialists, valued them more highly, deepened their relationships with some key teaching artists, and invested in their identity as an arts-rich school, even though their student population is one of the most transient, at-risk demographics.

If you walk into the school today, there is music and art everywhere, but also teachers who are inspired and excited about lesson planning every year with both arts specialists and teaching artists. The students are incredibly energized, and motivated—and their test scores show it.

Recommendation 2: Develop the field of arts integration.

- Arts integration relies on classroom teachers, usually working in concert with teaching artists and/or arts specialists, who incorporate arts into the teaching of other subjects, such as math, science and reading and vice versa.

- The statistics on its efficacy in raising test scores, the morale of students and teachers, and the increases in attendance, are persuasive. Observing arts integration in action is even more compelling. There’s a pride and a collegiality in an arts integrated school. Learning seems more fun; students and teachers are more engaged, and the whole school seems like a more creative place.

EXAMPLES:

- A 3rd grade math class in Baltimore building Calder mobiles out of coat hangers and buttons to understand the concept of linear equations, in which one set of buttons were balanced by a different but equal number on the other side.

- A 5th grade dance class of ESL students in Chicago, largely Polish and Russian, learning a rigorous dance number using physics vocabulary. ("Use your momentum to get you into the turn." "What slows our arms down here?" "Inertia!" "Now focus on lowering your center of gravity.") The dance lesson was immediately followed by a science class where they would be using those terms in a lab experiment.

- A 4th grade social studies class in Kennsington studying The Great Migration
of African Americans at the turn of the century, using a theater “tableau” method and the paintings of Jacob Lawrence. The students were each assigned a painting, grouped into threes and given five minutes to come up with a title, a character and to arrange themselves into a frozen tableau representing the meaning of the painting. They worked independently in their groups with no further instruction or intervention by the teacher and formed their tableaus representing African Americans at different stages on the road from bondage to freedom. In turn, each student described their title, character and “inner thoughts” with a strong grasp of history and nuance. When we asked the classroom teacher how she would have taught this curriculum segment without arts integration training, she said she probably would have assigned a reading and then tried to get the students to discuss it, which would engaged a relatively small percentage of the class who liked to speak up.

- Currently, models for training teachers, arts specialists and teaching artists in this approach are spread all over the country. There is promise in creating communities of practice among model arts integration programs to identify best practices in arts integration, organize curriculum units, bring together training approaches, and create a common frame for collecting evaluation results.

**Recommendation 3: Expand in-school opportunities for teaching artists.**

- Teaching artists are an untapped and important resource for enriching our schools with the arts. This is particularly true when they are given the resources and the time to build real collaborations with schools, classroom teachers and their students. As important is rigorous training in curricula and pedagogy.

**CASE STUDY:**

Horace Greeley, a Title I school in Chicago with over 90% free and reduced lunch kids, was struggling with test scores in 2004. Hoping to engage all of its students, especially the large body of ELL students, Horace Greeley’s principal turned to the arts. He started a partnership with the Urban Gateways Center for Arts Education, which helped coordinate and train teaching artists in different disciplines to work comprehensively within the school. We observed a classroom in which visual teaching artist Miss Sonia has been working with the same 4th and 5th grade classroom teacher for 4 years. They meet at the beginning of the school year to co-design visual arts projects that support key curricular objectives for the year. When we visited, she was teaching a lesson on Native American culture through a multi-week project where each student designed a Kachina doll with two animals that represented their inner and outer
selves. They were fully engaged in learning history and culture, developing fine motor skills and connecting the academic unit to their own personal stories.

The school began to show significant improvement in its test scores shortly after the arts partnership began, and in 2007, Horace Greeley was declared a No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School.

Recommendation 4: Utilize federal and state policies to reinforce the place of arts in K-12 education.

- District superintendents and principals who determine school priorities need to hear simple, focused statements from leaders in federal and state education agencies about how the arts fit into their current priorities. They ask for policy guidelines and explicit examples of the efficacy of the arts in initiatives that increase the rigor of the curriculum, strengthen teacher effectiveness, and improve low-performing schools.

- To do this, achievements and outcomes of arts-rich schools should be highlighted in the larger dialogue on successful school-reform strategies, as with Blue Ribbon Schools, and arts education organizations need to be asking what goal posts are important for their state decision makers, and then devoting resources to helping address those.

- It is also important for teachers to get information about how to address the new Common Core Standards through the arts, just as the Partnership for 21st Century Skills Arts Map illustrates how to use the arts to develop critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity and innovation. With this report, and the compelling foreword by Secretary Duncan, PCAH has begun to make such a statement at the federal level and should do so much more.

Recommendation 5: Widen the focus of evidence gathering about arts education.

- Over the last decade there has been increasing emphasis and rigor in establishing linkages between arts education and student test scores—especially in math and reading. This is understandable, especially given the considerable impact of No Child Left Behind over the last 10 years. However PCAH found much less sustained research on the connections between arts education and 21st century skills such as creativity and innovative thinking, as well as the effect of arts education on engagement, attendance, behavioral problems and other factors that are early indicators of a student’s likelihood of dropping out.

- PCAH recommends support for research on arts education and its effect on innovative thinking and creativity, and on engagement, motivation, focus, and persistence. While it is hard to find the resources for these evaluations, they are vital to demonstrating the ability of the arts to solve a number of problems at once.
CASE STUDY:
MS 233 in the South Bronx, located in the poorest Congressional district in the country, used to be the most violent middle school in the city. Taken over by Principal Ramon Gonzalez in 2003, the school is now a safe, productive, creative space for his students. Among his numerous reforms, he has committed himself to making sure his students receive rigorous arts instruction at every grade level. MS 233 students now learn music and math together in an integrated curriculum, take visual arts classes several times a week, and have a band that won the Northeast Championship last year. He told us he deliberately schedules all the art and music classes for Mondays and Fridays, so that all the kids come to school on those days. Traditionally the days of the week with the highest truancy rate, he now has consistent high attendance rates for both.

The full report is available here: www.pcah.gov.
Eloquent Evidence: Arts at the Core of Learning
There is a growing consensus among policy makers and parents that the arts should be an integral part of education.

The National Conference of State Legislatures emphasized the importance of the arts in all aspects of education in its 1992 comprehensive study, *Reinventing the Wheel: A Design for Student Achievement in the 21st Century*.

In *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, the arts are recognized as part of the core curriculum, alongside other challenging subject matter like English, mathematics, science, foreign languages and history.

The Improving America’s School Act, approved by Congress in 1994, reinforced the importance of the arts in relation to other subjects and as vital subjects in themselves.

Twenty-eight states now require some study of the arts for high school graduation, a dramatic increase since 1980 when only two states included the arts. In some states, study in the arts is a requirement for college entrance and graduation requirements.  

*National Conference of State Legislatures, 1992*

Surveys show that a majority of parents think that the arts are as important as reading, writing, math, science, history or geography. More than half said they favored cuts in administration or sports in order to pay for arts classes. The vast majority of parents want their children to have more experience with the arts than they had when they were young.

*Americans and the Arts VI, by Louis Harris, 1992*

ELOQUENT EVIDENCE  
Arts at the Core of Learning

A dramatic revolution in cognitive understanding began in the 1970’s. Research now substantiates what some teachers and parents already knew intuitively — that the arts are critical to education and learning.

Most of the studies cited here are summarized in the recently completed *Schools, Communities and the Arts: A Research Compendium*, developed by the National Endowment for the Arts in cooperation with the Morrison Institute for Public Policy. Using set selection criteria, this compendium focuses on studies published since 1985 which employed sound methodologies.

“During the past quarter century, literally thousands of school-based programs have demonstrated beyond question that the arts can not only bring coherence to our fragmented academic world, but through the arts, students’ performance in other academic disciplines can be enhanced as well.”  
Ernest L. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

More than a quarter million Americans serve on nearly 14,500 independent school boards and approximately 40,000 town, city and county councils across the country. The evidence presented here is addressed to this key audience. It is also addressed to anyone concerned about how children learn.

Although the arts remain undervalued in many school districts, this is changing as the connection between the arts and learning becomes clear and evident. Well-known and respected leaders now advocate the view put forth in 1984 by John I. Goodlad in *A Place Called School*, when he concluded that, “The arts are not an educational option; they are basic.”

The value of arts education is now firmly grounded in theory and research. Although the hard-nosed, scientific language used in studies is often lacking in literary eloquence, the evidence accumulated is eloquent testimony to the remarkable relationship between learning, knowing, and the arts.
The arts are serious and rigorous academic subjects. They are an essential aspect of human knowing.

“Science will...produce the data..., but never the full meaning. For perceiving real significance, we shall need...most of all the brains of poets, [and] also those of artists, musicians, philosophers, historians, writers in general.” Lewis Thomas, Scientist

The arts convey knowledge and meaning not learned through the study of other subjects. They represent a form of thinking and a way of knowing that is based in human imagination and judgment.

The arts delight students, but they are also intellectual disciplines of substance. Like language or mathematics, the arts involve the use of complex symbols to communicate. To attain competence in the arts, it is necessary to gain literacy with these symbol systems. Some, like music and painting, use non-verbal symbols; others, like poetry and song, use language in particular ways.

Arts teachers daily ask their students to engage in learning activities which require use of higher-order thinking skills like analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Arts education, then, is first of all an activity of the mind.

Creative activity is also a source of joy and wonder, while it bids its students to touch and taste and hear and see the world. Children are powerfully affected by storytelling, music, dance, and the visual arts. They often construct their understanding of the world around musical games, imaginative dramas and drawing.

This view of the arts as important ways of knowing and constructing knowledge finds its roots most notably in the philosophical work of Ernst Cassirer, Susanne Langer and Nelson Goodman and in the theories of many cognitive scientists.

The arts have far-reaching potential to help students achieve education goals.

The groundbreaking theory of multiple intelligences, developed by Howard Gardner of Harvard University, broadens our view of how humans learn and realize their potentials. It shows that the arts can play a crucial role in improving students’ ability to learn because they draw on a range of intelligences and learning styles, not just the linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences upon which most schools are based.

Schools that incorporate music, art, drama, dance, and creative writing into the basic curriculum have found that teaching the arts has a significant effect on overall success in school. Because the arts are closely associated with important ideas and events in history, students who have a good background in the arts are likely to have a richer source of information and insight to draw upon, compared to those who do not study the arts.

For example, students of the arts continue to outperform their non-arts peers on the Scholastic Assessment Test, according to The College Entrance Examination Board. In 1995, SAT scores for students who studied the arts more than four years were 59 points higher on the verbal and 44 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework or experience in the arts.

The College Board, Profile of SAT and Achievement Test Takers, 1995

It has also been documented that the arts have the potential to aid learning in specific areas, such as reading, writing, math and creativity. Each study has its own context and complexities that cannot be presented in this brief format. Readers are encouraged to seek more information.

Theories and Research That Support Art Instruction for Instrumental Outcomes, by Karen A. Hamblen, 1993
Reading, Writing and Math Skills Can Be Enhanced Through the Arts

Many studies document the role of the arts in improving basic skills, the 3’Rs. Because of the mounting evidence linking the arts to basic learning, some researchers refer to the arts as “The Fourth R.”

Students improved an average of one to two months in reading for each month they participated in the “Learning to Read Through the Arts” program in New York City. Students’ writing also improved, the study revealed. “Learning to Read Through the Arts,” an intensive, integrated arts curriculum, has been designated a model program by the National Diffusion Network and has been adopted by numerous schools and districts across the country.


“Humanitas Program” students in Los Angeles high schools wrote higher quality essays, showed more conceptual understanding of history and made more interdisciplinary references than non-Humanitas students. Low-achieving students made gains equivalent to those made by high-achieving students. The Humanitas program incorporates the arts into a broad humanities curriculum, drawing upon the relationship between literature, social studies and the arts. The program has reached 3,500 students in twenty high schools.

The Humanitas Program Evaluation 1990-91, by Pamela Aschbacher and Joan Herman, 1991

The most gains in total reading, reading vocabulary and reading comprehension were made by elementary students in the “Spectra+” arts program in Ohio, compared to the control group. The students also scored better in math comprehension.


Vocabulary and reading comprehension were significantly improved for elementary students in the “Arts Alternatives” program in New Jersey. A strong connection between drama skills and literacy was found in this program, which involved role-playing, improvisational techniques and story writing activities.

The Impact of an Improvisational Dramatics Program on Student Attitudes and Achievement, by Annette F. Gourgey, Jason Bosseau, and Judith Delgado, 1985

The writing quality of elementary students was consistently and significantly improved by using drawing and drama techniques, compared to the control group, which used only the discussion approach. Drama and drawing techniques allowed the student writer to test-out, evaluate, revise and integrate ideas before writing begins, thus significantly improving the results.

Drama and Drawing for Narrative Writing in Primary Grades, by Blaine H. Moore and Helen Caldwell, 1993

Students made significant gains over the control group in language mechanics, total language and writing on the California Achievement Tests after participating in a special music and poetry program.

The Cognitive and Behavioral Consequences of Using Music and Poetry in a Fourth Grade Language Arts Classroom, by Carolyn Carter Hudspeth, 1986
Creativity Is Naturally Developed Through the Arts

Every child has the innate urge and capacity to be artistically expressive. Arts education requires students to draw upon their creative abilities and to deepen them, as well. The benefit is that creative thinking, once learned early, lasts for a lifetime and can be applied in other endeavors.

- Total creativity measures were four times higher for elementary students in an arts curriculum than for the control groups in two Ohio school districts. Gains were maintained and continued to improve in a second year evaluation.


- Originality and imagination scores were significantly higher for preschool children with disabilities after participation in a dance program than for those participating in the adapted physical education program.

Effect of a Dance Program on the Creativity of Preschool Handicapped Children, by Danielle Jay, 1991

“Pyramids, cathedrals and rockets exist not because of geometry, theories of structures or thermodynamics, but because they were first a picture — literally a vision — in the minds of those who built them.” Historian Eugene Ferguson

Student Engagement and Persistence Improve with an Arts-Based Curriculum

The arts can transform the classroom environment, making learning a lively, invigorating experience. With their emphasis on creative discovery and their ability to stimulate a variety of learning styles, the arts engender enthusiasm and motivation for learning. The arts also teach discipline, the value of sustained effort to achieve excellence, and the concrete rewards of hard work. All these factors can encourage higher attendance and decrease drop-out rates.

“The process of studying and creating art in all of its distinct forms defines those qualities that are at the heart of education reform in the 1990’s — creativity, perseverance, a sense of standards, and above all, a striving for excellence.”

U.S. Secretary of Education, Richard W. Riley

- Classes were more interactive, there were more student-initiated topics and discussions, more time was devoted to literacy activities and problem-solving activities in schools using the arts-based “Different Ways of Knowing” program. The program also produced significant positive effects on student achievement, motivation and engagement in learning.


- Students see relationships, question and analyze material, and clearly articulate thoughts through the “Humanitas Program.” These students also had significantly higher class attendance and were significantly less likely to drop out of school. They reported more positive perceptions about their academic abilities than did a comparison group. Teachers reported an overall new enthusiasm for teaching.

The Humanitas Program Evaluation 1990-91, by Pamela Aschbacher and Joan Herman, 1991

- The open and exploratory nature of the arts lessons in New York City’s “Arts Partners” program allowed students to explore their “regular” subject areas more actively. The students drew upon their learning from the “core” disciplines for much of the content for their art works, thus reinforcing academic achievement.

Arts and Cognition: A Study of the Relationship Between Arts Partners Programs and the Development of Higher Level Thinking Processes in Elementary and Junior High School Students, by Carol Fineberg, 1991
High-Risk Students Helped Through the Arts

“When I examine myself and my method of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than my talent for absorbing knowledge.”  - Albert Einstein

Many students find that the arts help them master academic skills. Drawing helps writing. Song and poetry make facts memorable. Drama makes history more vivid and real. Creative movement makes processes understandable. This is doubly true for the high-risk student, who often excels for the first time in an arts program.

Sometimes, the student who is not doing well in traditional academics might have an artistic talent that has not yet flowered. As the writers of The Fourth R point out: “Imagine what might happen to Leonardo da Vinci today if he were placed in the average American public school. This illegitimate son of a poor woman, a left-handed writer who loved to draw and challenge conventional thought, would be labeled an at-risk special education candidate...” Schools with an integrated arts curriculum might be better able to address the needs of students like da Vinci.

High-risk elementary students with one year in the “Different Ways of Knowing” program gained 8 percentile points on standardized language arts tests; students with two years in the program gained 16 percentile points. Non-program students showed no percentile gain in language arts. Students with three years in the program outscored non-program students with significantly higher report card grades in the core subject areas of language arts, math, reading and social studies. Participants showed significantly higher levels of engagement and increased beliefs that there is value in personal effort for achievement. In total, 920 elementary students in 52 classrooms were studied in this national longitudinal study in Los Angeles, south Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts.


Seventy-five percent of Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild students go on to college. An after-school program for at-risk high school students at a community arts center in Pittsburgh, the Guild’s extraordinary success shows how valuable community arts groups can be to school districts. Safe Havens, Portraits of Educational Effectiveness in Community Art Centers that Focus on Education in Economically Disadvantaged Communities, by Jessica Davis, 1993

Fifth grade remedial readers using creative drama as a learning strategy scored consistently higher on the Metropolitan Reading Comprehension Test. The drama readers’ scores also showed a steady increase over the six-week period. The comparative group engaged in the same reading activities, followed by vocabulary lessons and discussion of the story.

The Effectiveness of Creative Drama as an Instructional Strategy to Enhance the Reading Comprehension Skills of Fifth-Grade Remedial Readers, by Sherry Dupont, 1992

Drama techniques were an effective method for promoting facility in English as a second language among young children. The “drama group” exhibited significantly greater improvement than the control group in total verbal output.

Enhancing the Practice of Drama in Education Through Research, by Lawrence O’Farrell, 1993

Understanding of One’s Self and Others Expands with Arts Education

Based on what we know, what do students need in order to do well in school? Belief that success in school is possible is one of the most important factors for students. Positive self-perceptions have been shown repeatedly to aid the development of skills and learning.

Related to self-concept is an understanding of others. Cultural studies challenge students to respond to the world, to look beyond themselves and to see the connectedness of human society. The arts foster understanding of other cultures, their histories, symbols, myths, values and beliefs.
Projections about the demographic composition of the United States in the next 40 years show that the “minority” population will soon be the majority population. These projections have profound implications for educators, as they prepare our children for tomorrow’s world.

- **Students reported significantly improved attitudes relating to self-expression, trust, self-acceptance and acceptance of others in the “Arts Alternatives” program in New Jersey.**

  *The Impact of an Improvisational Dramatics Program on Student Attitudes and Achievement, by Annette F. Gourgey, Jason Bosseau and Judith Delgado, 1985*

- **Attitudes and perceptions toward Native Americans were changed through arts instruction.** In Arizona, music and cultural experiences were effective in diminishing fourth grade students’ stereotypical views toward minority cultures.

  *North American Indian Music Instruction: Influences upon Attitudes, Cultural Perceptions, and Achievement, by Kay Louise Edwards, 1994*

- **Self-concept is positively enhanced through the arts, according to a review of 57 studies, as are language acquisition, cognitive development, critical-thinking ability and social skills.** The authors examined studies of measurable results in the emotional and social development of children. The relationship between music participation and self-concept was strongly in evidence.

  *The Effects of Arts and Music Education on Students’ Self-Concept, by Jerry Trusty and Giacomo M. Oliva, 1994*

- **Fifth grade students derived satisfaction from their band experience regardless of their perception of their talents.** In a study of six elementary schools in a large suburban school district, students viewed their role as band members as part of their identity and benefited from both peer and adult recognition.

  *The Elementary Band Experience as Viewed by Students, Parents, Teachers and Administrators, by Cynthia Anne Leblanc, 1990*

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### The Arts Prepare Students for Jobs

Skill requirements for all workers are going up, including those in production and support jobs. In the modern business environment, the ability to communicate, adapt, diagnose problems and find creative solutions is more important than ever before. These attributes can be nurtured and honed through studying the arts.

Arts education also plays a role in improving and maintaining a community’s business climate. In a study of 142 businesses, most agreed that cultural amenities, including *arts education*, were important “quality of life” factors in their location decisions. Businesses say that schools are the most important vehicle for enhancing awareness of and interest in the arts.

*A Study of the Perceptions of Business and Community Leaders Regarding the Economic Importance of the Arts and Arts Education in Mississippi, by Jorja Pound Turnipseed, Giacomo M. Oliva, Charles A. Campbell and Steven C. Hardin, 1991*

- **Communications skills were ranked as the second most important factor in hiring, a national employer study reveals.** Employers look at educational levels and certificates, but what is more important to employers is how the applicant presents himself or herself, in terms of attitude and communication skills.

  *Educational Quality of the Workforce National Employer Survey: First Findings, by Lisa Lynch and Robert Zemsky, 1995*

- **Arts education aids achievement of “core competencies” needed for employment, according to a U.S. Labor Department’s report (Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, SCANS).** The arts are cited as important for certain “foundation” skills which include thinking creatively, problem solving, exercising individual responsibility, sociability and self-esteem.

  *The Elementary Band Experience as Viewed by Students, Parents, Teachers and Administrators, by Cynthia Anne Leblanc, 1990*
The $36 Billion Nonprofit Arts Industry Is A Source of Future Employment for Students

There are jobs in the arts! It is an industry that provides substantial employment opportunities, about 1.3 million jobs per year, a fact sometimes overlooked by educators. The economic dimensions of the nonprofit arts sector are extensive at $36 billion. It jumps to $314 billion when the commercial arts sector is added.

*Arts in the Local Economy, National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, 1994 1992 State of the Arts Report, National Endowment for the Arts*

“Out of a classroom of 30 children, maybe 10 will be employed in an arts-related occupation someday,” says Rexford Brown of the Education Commission of the States. This factor alone shows the necessity of arts education in each and every one of our nation’s schools.

**Arts Education Partnership**

The Arts Education Partnership is a private, nonprofit coalition of education, arts, business, philanthropic and government organizations that demonstrates and promotes the essential role of arts education in enabling all students to succeed in school, life and work.

The Partnership is administered by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. It is supported by a cooperative agreement with the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Education, and by the contributions of its participating organizations.

For more information, contact the Arts Education Partnership, One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001, 202-326-8693, or see its Web site at http://aep-arts.org.

**RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS AND PARENTS**

*Eloquent Evidence, Arts at the Core of Learning,* by Elizabeth Murfee. We encourage broad distribution of this guide. Feel free to reproduce it and make it available to anyone who would benefit from it. Each study has its own context and complexities that cannot be presented in this brief format. Readers are encouraged to seek more information. Additional copies can be obtained from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 1029 Vermont Avenue NW, Second Floor, Washington, DC 20005. Tel: 202-347-6352; fax: 202-737-0526. Email: nasaa@nasaa-arts.org. Web: http://www.nasaa-arts.org.

*Schools, Communities, and the Arts: A Research Compendium,* developed by the National Endowment for the Arts in cooperation with the Morrison Institute for Public Policy, can be purchased in print and diskette versions by contacting the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network, Education Department, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC 20566-0001, 202-416-8845.

*Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools,* the most current survey of the conditions of arts education, can be obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, Rm. 418, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20208; or contact Judi Carpenter 202-219-1333.

*The Basic School, A Community for Learning,* by Ernest Boyer, in which the arts are considered an essential understanding for all elementary school students, can be purchased from California Princeton Fulfillment Services, 1445 Lower Ferry Road, Ewing, NJ 08618, 800-777-4726.

*Be Smart, Include Art: A Planning Kit for PTAs,* can be obtained from The National PTA, 330 North Wabash Avenue, Suite 2100, Chicago, IL 60611.

State and local arts agencies and state alliances for arts education are important, useful resources. They often have abundant materials, resources, and expertise in arts education.
This publication is a project of the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, the Arts Education Partnership and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, using material published by the National Endowment for the Arts. It is made possible through the generosity of the General Electric Fund.

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The arts boost learning and achievement for students.

- The collection of research described in *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development* (2002) finds that learning in the arts may be uniquely able to boost learning and achievement for young children, students from economically disadvantaged circumstances, and students needing remedial instruction.

- According to the Arts Education Partnership publication *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* (1999), a compilation of studies on the impact of arts on learning, students who participate in the arts outperform their peers on virtually every measure. Researchers found that "sustained learning" in music and theater correlates to greater success in math and reading, and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds see the greatest benefits. In fact, "learning in and through the arts can help 'level the playing field' for youngsters from disadvantaged circumstances," the researchers contended.

- A book by the Arts Education Partnership, *Third Space: When Learning Matters* (2005), finds that schools with large populations of students in economic poverty—often places of frustration and failure for students and teachers alike—can be transformed into vibrant and successful centers of learning and community life when the arts are infused into their culture and curriculum.

- Cognitive neuroscientists at seven major universities have found strong links between arts education and cognitive development (e.g. thinking, problem solving, concept understanding, information processing and overall intelligence.) According to the Dana Consortium study, *Learning, Arts, and the Brain* (2008) children motivated in the arts develop attention skills and memory retrieval that also apply to other subject areas.
Instruction time for the arts is decreasing across the nation since implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

- A 2007 study from the Center on Education Policy concludes that, since the enactment of NCLB, thirty percent of districts with at least one identified school—those with the students most responsive to the benefits of the arts—have decreased instruction time for art and music.

- In 2008, a follow-up study from the Center on Education Policy found that these cuts in instructional time were deeper than first considered.
  - Among the school districts that reported both increasing time for English language arts or math and reducing time in other subjects, 72% indicated that they reduced time by a total of at least 75 minutes per week for one or more of these other subjects.
  - Among districts that reported a decrease in instructional time since 2001-02, 23% reported decreasing total instructional time for arts and music by 50% or more below pre-NCLB levels - greater than social studies, science and physical education.

Arts education helps prepare a creative workforce.

- A recent national poll of 1,000 likely voters conducted by Lake Research Partners (2007) has identified a new and growing constituency of voters in America who advocate building capacities of the imagination in public education.
  - Voters believe that, in order to meet the demand for innovation in the marketplace, we must teach skills of the imagination in the classroom. They are concerned that America, a historic leader in innovation, is falling behind other nations as it devotes less attention to developing what they perceive to be essential skills of the imagination and innovation.
  - 91% of voters indicate that arts are essential to building capacities of the imagination.
  - 73% of voters believe that building capacities of the imagination is just as important as the “so called” basics for all students in public schools. 82% of voters want to build imagination and creative skills in schools.

- The New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, a bi-partisan commission, comprised of former Cabinet secretaries, governors, college presidents and business, civic and labor leaders, in the report Tough Choices or Tough Times (2006) called for “a total shakeup in how America educates its people with an innovative system that boosts students to unprecedented levels of learning throughout their lives while creating a structure that gives them the best teachers and schools the country can offer."
  - The executive summary of the Commission’s report states, “This is a world in which a very high level of preparation in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, science, literature, history and the arts will be an indispensable foundation for everything that comes after for most members of the workforce. It is a world in which comfort with ideas and abstractions is the passport to a good job, in which creativity and innovation are the key to the good life…”
Closing the Achievement Gap

Arts education is particularly effective for at-risk students and schools. Instruction in the arts levels the playing field for students who are often denied those opportunities. The pride and self-worth that flow from competence in the arts builds confidence in all areas of academic achievement.

In addition, instruction in the arts has been shown to improve attendance and behavior, lower the dropout rate and raise test scores. Arts education is engaging and student-centered, providing a means of expression for students whose voices are seldom heard. The arts build a sense of community for the entire school.

This section provides documents and research as well as success stories demonstrating that the arts one of our best intervention programs.
A POLICY PATHWAY:
Embracing Arts Education to Achieve Title I Goals
ACHIEVING TITLE I GOALS: THE ROLE OF ARTS EDUCATION

How can we improve educational outcomes for low-income students who are often underserved in public schools? This is the challenge to which Title I—a federal funding stream targeting assistance to students from low socioeconomic backgrounds—addresses itself. Schools and districts receiving Title I funds are charged with using these additional resources to supplement their regular education programs, in particular, to support qualifying students’ achievement in English Language Arts and mathematics and parent involvement with schools.

A substantial body of research demonstrates that certain forms of arts education can be an asset to schools and districts in achieving these goals.1 Studies find that integrating the arts with instruction in other academic subjects—for example, teaching skills and content of drama and English Language Arts in tandem—increases student learning and achievement and helps teachers more effectively meet the needs of all students.2, 3 Studies also find that both integrated and non-integrated forms of arts education help to transform the learning environment in schools by fostering student engagement, attendance, and motivation to learn, and improving school culture and climate.4, 5 These outcomes are leading indicators of student achievement. They are also key ingredients for turning around low-performing schools.

In today’s policy climate, educational strategies that include the arts may be particularly valuable to advancing the goals of Title I. A majority of states have now signed onto Common Core State Standards that establish a goal for student achievement that not only includes basic skills in literacy and mathematics, but also the development of higher-order thinking skills such as creative and critical thinking and problem solving. Arts integrated English Language Arts and mathematics instruction helps students develop these higher-order skills at the same time as it helps them master basic skills and content knowledge in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. Many Title I students who are below basic proficiency in ELA or mathematics are frequently pulled out of electives—including the arts—where they might otherwise have opportunities to develop higher-order thinking skills. When schools integrate the arts into Title I intervention programs, they can help address this equity gap. As Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, states, “The arts can help students become tenacious, team-oriented problem solvers who are confident and able to think creatively.”6 As a result, “Arts education remains critical to leveling the playing field of opportunity,” Duncan says.7

THE DEPARTURE POINT: EVIDENCE OF INEQUITY

Despite the evidence demonstrating the ability of arts education to help advance the goals of Title I, a 2011 survey conducted by Arts for All,8 found that students attending Title I schools in Los Angeles had

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1 ArtsEdSearch (www.artsedsearch.org), a research and policy clearing house from the national Arts Education Partnership.
6 Duncan, A. Letter to School and Education Community Leaders, August, 2009.
7 Duncan, A. (2012). Address to the national Arts Education Partnership forum, Washington, DC.
disproportionately low access to arts education compared to more economically advantaged peers. This finding echoed results of a national survey on arts education conducted by the U.S. Department of Education.9

Prompted by this survey and an invitation from Arts for LA, Los Angeles County's leading arts advocacy organization, the California Alliance for Arts Education, a statewide advocacy organization, set out to explore the role that arts education could play in Title I. Our intention was to support schools and districts in embracing the arts among their strategies for achieving Title I goals and realizing the benefits of arts education for students evidenced in arts education research.

THE LAY OF THE LAND: FEDERAL POLICY AND SCHOOL AND DISTRICT REALITY

Federal Title I policy allows schools and districts to include arts education in their strategies to achieve Title I goals. In fact, both current Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, and former Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, are on record stating that Title I can be used to fund arts education to support the achievement of low-income students.10

Downstream of the federal level, however, the Alliance found that there was a lack of clarity about whether and how the arts could play a role in Title I. Coupled with the culture of “fear of reprisal” that seemed to permeate the Title I world—where funding could be retracted if a program didn’t meet state or federal expectations—this lack of clarity was preventing schools and districts from including arts education in their Title I strategies, or at least deterring them from doing so publicly. District and school decision makers were wary of making choices that might lead funds to be revoked by state officials for improper use. Similarly, state officials expressed concern that, despite the Secretary of Education’s guidance, federal administrators might regard programs including arts education as outside Title I guidelines and revoke state funding. As a result, when we looked for schools and districts in California exemplifying this practice, we found few that would go on record as having funded arts education strategies through Title I. Schools and districts, it seemed, were either electing to ignore the opportunity to include arts education in their strategies for achieving Title I goals, or were moving forward in a way that would draw no attention to those practices.

CHARTING A PATHWAY: FACILITATING CHANGE

It was not clear, when it came to arts education and Title I, to what extent school and district fear of reprisal was based in fact or mythology. Regardless, however, it seemed to be having a real effect constraining the actions of schools and districts. To alleviate this fear,
the Alliance has been working to clarify what we have come to call a policy pathway—a shared understanding aligned across school, district, state, and federal levels of leadership regarding what is allowable when it comes to expending Title I funds on arts education. It is our hope that this pathway will enable any school or district that wishes, to successfully and publicly develop, implement, and evaluate educational strategies that include the arts to achieve Title I goals. The remainder of this paper tells the story of how the Alliance and its partners are using advocacy, research, and partnership to chart this pathway.

CONNECTING THE DOTS: CLARIFYING STATE POLICY IN RELATIONSHIP TO FEDERAL POLICY

Having confirmed that federal Title I policy supported using Title I funds for, “arts education to improve the achievement of disadvantaged students,” our next step was to seek a clear understanding of the position of the California Department of Education regarding if and how arts education programming could play a role in achieving the goals of Title I. Toward this end, in July 2011, Arts for LA and the Alliance co-authored a letter to California’s newly elected Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson, requesting guidance on this matter. Four additional partners—the California State PTA, the California Arts Council, the Los Angeles Music Center, and Arts for All—signed the letter.

Simultaneously, in order to help draw the California Department of Education’s attention to this issue, the Alliance and Arts for LA co-authored an op-ed in the Silicon Valley Foundation’s online education newsletter [see page 10]. We also sent out an action alert to our constituents, resulting in over 400 letters to the Superintendent’s office from around the state requesting clarification on the role arts education could play in Title I.

In June 2012, the Department of Education responded with a letter to districts from Deputy Superintendent Deb Sigman, outlining the parameters for using Title I funds to support arts programming that achieves Title I goals [see page 11 for the complete letter]. Sigman wrote:

Under the federal ESEA [Elementary and Secondary Education Act], local education agencies have the flexibility within certain programs to use federal funds to support the arts. However, funds may not be used to fund programs whose primary objective is arts education. These funds may be used only in limited circumstances to fund aspects of arts education if the strategies have been demonstrated to improve student academic achievement in English language arts and/or mathematics. In order to use Title I, Part A funds, a Title I school’s School Site Council (SSC) must develop, review,
update, and approve the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), which then must be approved by the local governing board. Any LEA [Local Education Agency] seeking to use funds for this purpose must comply with the requirements governing the development and approval of the SPSA.

Title I funding might be appropriately used to support arts education as a strategy to improve student achievement in ELA [English Language Arts] and mathematics at a Title I school if, after conducting a comprehensive needs assessment, the school has identified research-based strategies or programs incorporating arts instruction to improve the academic achievement in ELA and mathematics for participating students...

Superintendent Torlakson believes strongly that children should receive a holistic education that includes activities that reinforce academics, develop skills, capture student interest, and support student engagement. Arts education can play an important role in this regard.

Sigman’s letter clarified that indeed, in California, schools and districts can use Title I funds to support educational strategies that include the arts, if these strategies improve student achievement in English Language Arts and/or mathematics. The goal of Title I is student achievement in these subjects, and programs must be principally about achieving this goal in order to qualify for Title I funding. This does not detract from the importance of arts education programs whose primary goal is to teach students the arts; it just means that those programs are not a fit for Title I funding and so must be funded through other means. Sigman’s letter also stated the procedures schools and districts would need to follow in planning, implementing, and evaluating Title I programs that include the arts.

In order to confirm that the guidance from the California Department of Education aligned with federal guidance, the Alliance’s Executive Director, Joe Landon, took Deb Sigman’s letter to Washington, D.C., where he met with Paul S. (Sandy) Brown, Acting Director, Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs, at the U.S. Department of Education. Brown reviewed the guidance language provided by the California Department of Education, and gave assurance that its interpretation of Title I requirements is consistent with that of the U.S. Department of Education.
THE LAST LEG: ALIGNING SCHOOL AND DISTRICT PRACTICE WITH STATE AND FEDERAL GUIDANCE

The challenge then remained to determine how schools and districts wishing to embrace the arts to achieve Title I goals could ensure that their practice aligned with state and federal guidance. In September 2012, the Alliance met with Christine Swenson, Director of Improvement & Accountability, and staff at the California Department of Education to clarify what schools and districts would need to know and do in this regard.

First, she reiterated, in order to be allowable, any educational strategies involving the arts—like all strategies funded through Title I—would need to target student achievement in English Language Arts and/or mathematics. Further, schools and districts would need to develop, implement, and evaluate such strategies within a required planning and evaluation process designed to ensure that Title I programs respond meaningfully and effectively to student needs. This process is outlined in the U.S. Department of Education’s non-regulatory guidance for Designing Schoolwide Programs. Swenson shared with us a graphic distilling the key steps of the process, developed to provide technical assistance and support to California schools and districts [see page six].

The process begins with an evaluation of student achievement data and a needs assessment to determine the causes of student underachievement. From here, schools and districts must select a set of research-based programs to address the identified causes of underachievement, develop a plan for implementing the programs, and secure approval from the appropriate school and district governing bodies. In the case of schoolwide Title I programs, the school site council would need to support and approve the proposed programs and related expenditures. Finally, after securing approval for the program, a school or district would need to implement the program, evaluate its impact on student achievement at the close of the school year, and make any needed adjustments to the program for the subsequent year.

The Annual School Plan Planning Cycle

1. Identify a limited number of achievement goals and research-based improvement strategies that, based on the needs assessment, will provide opportunities for all children to meet the State’s challenging academic standards.

2. Conduct a needs assessment of the effectiveness of instructional programs to determine the causes of student underachievement.

3. Analyze verifiable state and local student achievement data.

4. For each goal, specify timelines, personnel responsible, proposed expenditures, and funding sources to implement the school plan.

5. Recommend the school plan to the local governing board.

6. Receive local governing board approval and implement the school plan.

7. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the planned activities and modify those that prove ineffective.
USING A COMPASS: THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

A lynchpin in the process of planning a schoolwide program is that the educational strategies that schools and districts select must be research-based. When we met with Christine Swenson and staff at the California Department of Education, we shared with them a clearinghouse of arts education research, ArtsEdSearch (www.artsedsearch.org), created by the national Arts Education Partnership. The clearinghouse includes close to 200 studies that examine the impact of certain forms of arts programming on student achievement in English Language Arts and mathematics, as well as their impact on leading indicators of student success, including student engagement and attendance, teacher efficacy, and school climate and culture. The studies included in ArtsEdSearch have been vetted against a set of criteria for research excellence developed in collaboration with the American Educational Research Association. Swenson concurred that the sound use of this resource could help schools and districts identify research-based programs in which the arts contribute to advancing student achievement and to addressing specific causes of student underachievement identified in their needs assessments.

COMMUNICATION: BUILDING AWARENESS AT THE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEVEL

The Alliance then turned its attention to the question of how best to communicate this information with schools and districts throughout the vast state. In conversation with the California Department of Education, we learned that their role as administrator of Title I funds prevents them from promoting any particular learning strategy. They do not wish to risk recommendations being construed as mandates and potentially interfering with the decision making of communities and local education leaders. Instead, the California Department of Education invited the Alliance to moderate a panel at the 2012 California Title I conference. The purpose of the panel would be to inform school and district representatives of the opportunity to use Title I funds to implement research-based arts education programs that achieve Title I goals.

The panel was designed to convey the department’s guidelines for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of such programs, as well as the perspectives of another state (Arizona) where arts education strategies had been successfully implemented within Title I funding, an assistant superintendent of a school district with a large population of Title I schools and a strong commitment to arts education, a principal of a Title I school where the arts contributed to parent engagement, and a researcher prepared to share the research base connecting arts education with Title I goals.
GETTING RUBBER ON THE ROAD: SCHOOL AND DISTRICT EXEMPLARS

We have now begun working with a cohort of schools and districts across the state that wish to embrace appropriate forms of arts programming among their strategies for achieving Title I goals. It is our intention to support these schools and districts as they align their practice with state and federal policy requirements and to assist them in getting any additional clarity they might need about these requirements. It is our hope that these schools and districts will serve as exemplars of how arts education can contribute to achieving the goals of Title I.

As we work with the cohort of exemplar schools and districts, we will also be assessing the information and resources that they need as they develop, implement, and evaluate arts education strategies to achieve Title I goals. Based on this information, we plan to build an online system of resources where the cohort and other schools and districts will be able to find needed guidance and support. This system may include, for example, resources to help schools align research-based arts education strategies with specific school site goals and identify means of evaluating the impact of those strategies when they are implemented. We intend to design the system with sufficient flexibility that it may also be useful to other states.

LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

As we have pursued this “policy pathway,” our efforts have relied upon the resources of advocacy, research, and policy guidance to broaden understanding and build consensus around why this issue matters and how we can bring about change. Advocacy without clear policy goals or the “ask,” can be a squandered opportunity. Recommendations for policy change are more easily ignored by decision makers without the active engagement of public voices advocating for change. And research, without the application of advocacy and public policy, too often finds itself removed from the system it seeks to remedy.

Partnership has also been a critical factor in charting this pathway. At various points on this journey, different organizations have stepped forward, providing expertise and leadership relevant to where the conversation needs to go next. As we move forward, we anticipate that others will join in this effort, bringing their voices to the conversation at the local, state, and federal levels. In particular, we expect that parents—who play a critical role at the school site level, where site plans are approved—will be key partners in shaping the role of arts education in Title I programs. As we gain clarity about the appropriate role of arts education in Title I, we envision parents stepping forward to advocate for the role the arts can play in supporting student achievement and engagement. We will be developing resources to support parents in these efforts.

To date, we are working with schools in Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, and San Diego counties. We will issue a follow-up report to this document in the next 18 months, highlighting their paths and other developments at local, state, and federal levels. As more schools embrace the appropriate use of arts education strategies to achieve Title I goals, and as we develop the means to provide schools and districts with the guidance necessary to develop those strategies, our hope is that this policy pathway will evolve into the natural landscape of Title I programs and strategies, supporting all students in achieving success.
STATE LEADERS SHOULD EMBRACE WHAT TITLE I PERMITS: ARTS FUNDING

Posted on 3/27/12 Silicon Valley Education Foundation

By Joe Landon and Danielle Brazell

The status quo is “stalemate.” The intention of the federal Title I program is to improve the academic achievement of children in schools with the highest percentages of children from low-income families. That improvement is measured by improvement in English language arts (ELA) and math.

According to the guidance provided by the California Department of Education, a school may elect to use arts education strategies to improve student achievement “if, after conducting a comprehensive needs assessment, the school has identified research-based strategies or programs incorporating arts instruction to improve the achievement for students in ELA or math for participating students.”

But that’s not what happens …

For the most part, school districts elect either to ignore the opportunities that arts education provide to reach students in transformative ways, or they provide those services “under the radar,” allowing students to benefit from those strategies, but choosing not to draw attention to those services.

Arts education fosters creativity, innovation, critical thinking, and teamwork – skills students will need to participate in a 21st century workforce. Employed effectively, arts education advances language acquisition and strengthens language arts and math comprehension.

In 2009, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan wrote, “Title I, Part A of ESEA funds arts education to improve the achievement of disadvantaged students.”

Unfortunately, in California and in all but a handful of states, that message is not getting through. States are reluctant to incur the wrath of federal oversight that could jeopardize funding, concerned that even though the Secretary may support this practice, those overseeing the federal program don’t share his interpretation of the law.

And in California, school districts are reluctant to implement arts strategies for Title I that may run afoul of state interpretation. As a result, the very children who might most benefit from arts education as a resource to improve their academic achievement never get close to those resources.

The best way to replace the existing climate of “fear of reprisal” is with strong, decisive leadership. That’s what happened in Arizona, where Superintendent Tom Horne directed $4 million of Title I funding to support arts education at 43 schools throughout the state. In 2004-05, the first year of Title I-F funded arts integration programs across the state, the Arizona Department of Education found statistically significant gains in reading for students participating in arts integration programs funded across the state versus students not participating.

Last year the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities released a report, “Reinvesting in Arts Education – Winning America’s Future Through Creative Schools.” It said, “PCAH believes that local decision makers need to hear clear, direct, and focused statements from the leaders of federal and state education agencies about how the arts fit within current education priorities.”

The time has come to move beyond the “status quo.” We call on Superintendent Tom Torlakson to work in partnership with a diverse mix of school districts to demonstrate how Title I can be utilized to support student achievement through the arts.

California’s children deserve to know what’s right about arts education.

Joe Landon is the Executive Director of the California Alliance for Arts Education, a nonprofit organization that advances visual and performing arts education in K-12 public schools. Prior to joining the Alliance staff, Landon worked in the Capitol as a senior consultant for Speaker Robert Hertzberg and Assemblywoman Wilma Chan. Previously he worked as a screenwriter in Los Angeles, and as a music and theater teacher.

Danielle Brazell transitioned Arts for LA from an ad hoc steering committee comprised of local executive arts leadership to a highly visible arts advocacy organization. She is the former Director of Special Projects for the Screen Actors Guild Foundation and Artistic Director of Highways Performance Space.
The Arts Education Effect

Why Schools With Arts Programs Do Better At Narrowing Achievement Gaps

By Sandra S. Ruppert

*This article was originally published as an online commentary in Education Week Vol. 29, Issue 05, on September 23, 2009.*

Most Americans agree with President Barack Obama’s assessment that a “complete and competitive education for the 21st century” means all students will need some form of education or training beyond high school. That’s why college and career readiness for all by 2020 is his administration’s top education goal.

Yet while we recognize that higher levels of educational attainment will open doors to a better life for students, we haven’t been able to keep an estimated 7,000 of them each day from heading quietly for the exits before they’ve had even a chance to earn a high school diploma.

Fewer than seven in 10 students in this country graduate from high school on time, according to the latest data available from the U.S. Department of Education. For students of color and those living in poverty or residing in large urban areas, the odds of on-time graduation are even slimmer. Barely half (51 percent) of African-American students successfully complete high school, while only 55 percent of Hispanics do.

For many of the 1.3 million young people who leave high school each year without a diploma, the path that eventually leads to this educational dead end begins in middle school. The National Assessment of Educational Progress—often referred to as “the nation’s report card”—provides a snapshot of student achievement in various subject areas at crucial transition points, including 8th grade. In June 2009, the results of the 2008 NAEP arts assessment in music and visual arts were released; it was the first NAEP arts assessment conducted since 1997.

Those 2008 results tell a disappointing, but incomplete, story of 8th grade student achievement in the arts. In music, for example, 8th graders had just a 50-50 chance on average of being able to identify the correct response on any of the multiple-choice questions. In visual arts, 8th graders on average were
able to identify the correct answer only 42 percent of the time. As troubling as the overall lackluster performance were the significant disparities in achievement based on socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, gender, and type and location of schools.

Does it really matter if the performance of 8th grade students on the NAEP arts assessments is mediocre at best, or that significant achievement gaps based on socioeconomics and other characteristics continue to persist? It matters only if we as a nation are truly serious about reaching the president’s goal of preparing all K-12 students by 2020 to succeed in school, work, and life.

Arts learning experiences play a vital role in developing students’ capacities for critical thinking, creativity, imagination, and innovation. These capacities are increasingly recognized as core skills and competencies all students need as part of a high-quality and complete 21st-century education. And, as a matter of social justice, we must be concerned when students are denied access to a high-quality education—one that includes learning in and through the arts—simply because of where they live or go to school.

Eighth grade is a crucial turning point for students as they prepare to make the transition from middle school to high school. By 9th grade, researchers can predict with a high degree of accuracy which students are most at risk of dropping out of school, based on three factors: absenteeism, behavioral problems, and course failure.

We know the arts can make a difference in the academic lives of 8th graders. A decade ago, the Arts Education Partnership published groundbreaking research that compared 8th graders who were highly involved in the arts with those who had little or no involvement, and found consistently better outcomes for the highly involved students: better grades, less likelihood of dropping out by grade 10, and more positive attitudes about school. The study also showed that the benefits of high levels of arts participation can make more of a difference for economically disadvantaged students.

Here are five strategies, drawn from the NAEP results, that can help arts education leaders, policymakers, and educators improve performance in the arts and narrow achievement gaps.

**Ensure equal access to arts education.** Not surprisingly, 8th graders who attend schools where visual arts instruction is offered at least once a week perform better than 8th graders who attend schools where the visual arts are not taught. The same is true for music education. Yet based on projections contained in the NAEP results, more than half a million 8th graders attend the 14 percent of schools where no visual arts classes are offered. More than 300,000 8th grade students attend the 8 percent of schools where no music classes are offered.
Raise levels of participation in arts coursetaking. Even in schools where the arts are offered, actual rates of student participation can be low. For example, one-third of schools estimate that no more than 20 percent of their students received any music instruction in 2008. Fewer than half of 8th graders reported taking a visual arts course in 2008.

Build interest in and demand for the arts in the early grades. Multiple factors can account for mediocre performance and low levels of participation in the arts, but one plausible explanation is that we are seeing the effects of the reduction or elimination of elementary school arts programs, which help build interest in and demand for arts courses in middle school. It may also be a contributing factor in 8th graders’ low self-assessments of their skills: Only 24 percent think they have a talent for visual arts, while just 36 percent think they do for music.

Focus on what works in improving student achievement in the arts. Based on the NAEP results, 8th graders perform at consistently higher levels when they attend schools where any of these conditions exist: (1) a state or district curriculum is in place; (2) classes are taught by a full-time or part-time arts specialist; and (3) classes are located in a designated and adequately equipped space.

Level the playing field to help close the arts education achievement gap. Minority students and those from low-income households have less access to instruction and are less likely to attend schools that have a state or district curriculum. They are less likely to receive instruction from a full-time or part-time arts specialist, or to take field trips or have visiting artists in their schools. Put simply, we provide students who are likely to benefit from arts instruction most with the least of everything.

NAEP’s next arts assessment is scheduled for 2016. The 8th graders who participate in it will be part of the high school graduating class of 2020—the first class in which we can measure whether we have met the ambitious goal of ensuring that all K-12 students are prepared to succeed in college and the workforce.

If we are to meet such a goal, we must take seriously our commitment to close achievement gaps and keep all students on the path to high school graduation and beyond. Arts learning opportunities—both as stand-alone classes and integrated with other subjects—must play an integral role in providing them with the complete education they need to succeed. Let’s hope we see the results of our efforts in 2016.

Sandra S. Ruppert is the director of the Arts Education Partnership, a national coalition of more than 100 arts, education, government, and philanthropic organizations advocating for an increased role for the arts in schools.
Arts Facts ... Improved Academic Performance
Students who participate in the arts, both in school and after school, demonstrate improved academic performance and lower dropout rates.

Students with High Levels of Arts Involvement: Less Likely To Drop Out of School by Grade 10

- Arts in the schools increase test scores and lower dropout rates. The Arts Education Partnership’s publication, Critical Links, contains 62 academic research studies that, taken together, demonstrate that arts education helps close the achievement gap, improves academic skills essential for reading and language development, and advances students’ motivation to learn.
  Source: Arts Education Partnership

- Longitudinal data of 25,000 students demonstrate that involvement in the arts is linked to higher academic performance, increased standardized test scores, more community service and lower dropout rates (see chart above). These cognitive and developmental benefits are reaped by students regardless of their socioeconomic status.
  Source: Dr. James S. Catterall, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, UCLA

- Research conducted between 1987 to 1998 on young people working in the arts for at least three hours on three days of each week throughout at least one full year, demonstrated the following:
  - 4 times more likely to have been recognized for academic achievement
  - Being elected to class office within their schools more than 3 times as often
  - 4 times more likely to participate in a math and science fair
  - 3 times more likely to win an award for school attendance
  - 4 times more likely to win an award for writing an essay or poem
  Source: Dr. Shirley Brice Heath, Stanford University, for Carnegie Foundation for The Advancement of Teaching

www.AmericansForTheArts.org
In New York City, the cultural capital of the world, public school students do not enjoy equal access to an arts education. In fact, in schools with the lowest graduation rates—where the arts could have the greatest impact—students have the least opportunity to participate in arts learning.

This report takes the first ever look at the relationship between school-based arts education and high school graduation rates in New York City public schools. The findings, based on data collected by the New York City Department of Education (DOE), strongly suggest that the arts play a key role in keeping students in high school and graduating on time.

In several national studies over the past decade, students at risk of dropping out cite participation in the arts as their reason for staying in school.

In several national studies over the past decade, students at risk of dropping out cite participation in the arts as their reason for staying in school.\(^1\) Research has also shown that arts education has had a measurable impact on at-risk youth in deterring delinquent behavior and truancy problems while also increasing overall academic performance.\(^2\) Despite these known benefits, as the findings of this report confirm, New York City public school students at schools with the lowest graduation rates have the least access to instruction in the arts.

Analyzing data from more than 200 New York City schools over a two-year period, this report shows that schools in the top third in graduation rates offered their students the most access to arts education and the most resources that support arts education.\(^3\) Schools in the bottom third in graduation rates consistently offer the least access and fewest resources. This pattern held true for nine key indicators that convey a school’s commitment to arts education. The findings are summarized below.

### Summary of Findings

**Certified Arts Teachers**
High schools in the top third of graduation rates had almost 40 percent more certified arts teachers per student than schools in the bottom third—or, on average, one additional arts teacher per school.

**Dedicated Arts Classrooms**
High schools in the top third of graduation rates had almost 40 percent more physical spaces dedicated to arts learning per student than schools in the bottom third.

** Appropriately Equipped Arts Classrooms**
High schools in the top third of graduation rates had almost 40 percent more classrooms appropriately equipped for the arts than schools in the bottom third.

**Arts and Cultural Partnerships**
High schools in the top third of graduation rates had fostered 25 percent more partnerships with arts and cultural organizations than schools in the bottom third.
External Funds to Support the Arts
High schools in the top third of graduation rates were 45 percent more likely to have raised funds from external sources to support the arts than schools in the bottom third.

Coursework in the Arts
High schools in the top third of graduation rates had 35 percent more graduates completing three or more arts courses than schools in the bottom third.

Access to Multiyear Arts Sequence
High schools in the top third of graduation rates were 10 percent more likely to offer students a multiyear sequence in the arts than schools in the bottom third.

School Sponsorship of Student Arts Participation
High schools in the top third of graduation rates were more likely to have offered students an opportunity to participate or perform in one or more arts activities than schools in the bottom third.

School Sponsorship of Arts Field Trips
High schools in the top third of graduation rates were more likely to have offered students an opportunity to attend an arts activity, such as a theater performance, dance recital, or museum exhibit, than schools in the bottom third.

These findings suggest that increasing students’ access to arts instruction in schools with low graduation rates can be a successful strategy for lifting graduation rates and turning around struggling schools, not just in New York City, but nationwide.

And while the central focus of the report is arts education at the high school level, the benefits that participating in arts learning imparts to students are just as pronounced in the lower grades. In fact, for students to benefit fully from high school arts instruction, it is critical that they acquire the increased level of knowledge and understanding that comes with coursework in earlier grades.

Thirteen years ago, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) established a set of rigorous learning standards and regulations that confirms the value of instruction in the arts—music, dance, theater, and visual art—for all students, K through 12.

According to data provided in the New York City Department of Education’s Annual Arts in Schools Reports, however, the great majority of schools in New York City are out of compliance with these state mandates—in fact, only 8 percent of elementary schools and less than half of middle schools make the grade.

This study also points to unequal access to arts education in city high schools based on socioeconomic background, race, or ethnicity. Schools with the lowest graduation rates had a higher percentage of poor, black, and Latino students than schools with the highest graduation rates. This secondary association could be an indication of an inequitable system that sustains educational and income disparities and is worthy of further study.

Our analysis, which associates arts education and graduation rates by school rather than by individuals, buttresses our ongoing argument that arts education is an essential component of K through 12 public school education. The recommendations in this report reflect our vision of quality arts education for all students and the glaring need to address the deficiencies and inequities that exist throughout the system.

In addition to calling on high school principals to expand course offerings in all four arts disciplines so that students can at least meet the minimum graduation requirements, the report urges the New York State Education Department to ensure compliance with the state standards and regulations currently in place.

The recommendations also call for the city to restore Project Arts, a policy initiative created in 1997 that guaranteed a minimum amount of funding for arts education in every school. Restoring this initiative could once again serve to catalyze the hiring of certified arts teachers at schools, the purchasing of instruments and supplies, and the fostering of arts education partnerships with the city’s rich array of arts and cultural organizations at all schools.

These and other key arts-friendly policies summarized on the following page and presented in detail in the Recommendations section can help ensure greater access to an arts education for New York City public school students and play a key role in addressing the city’s graduation crisis.
Summary of Recommendations

Expand Course Offerings in the Arts
- High school principals should expand course offerings in the four arts disciplines.
- The New York State Board of Regents and the State Education Department should review the graduation requirements and examine the benefits of increasing the minimum requirement to three arts courses.

Expand Student Access to the City’s Cultural Arts Sector
- The city should implement policies and dedicate resources to ensure that all students have access to the city’s cultural arts sector.

Ensure All Schools Have Certified Arts Teachers
- Every school should have at minimum one certified arts teacher on staff.
- The city should expand to arts teachers the existing financial incentives to attract and retain certified teachers in high-needs areas.
- The city should support and expand approaches for sharing arts teachers and teaching artists among small high schools.
- The New York State Education Department should create an expedited certification program for non-arts subject area teachers to attain certification in any the four recognized arts forms.

Require Adequate Classroom Space for Arts Instruction
- The city should require that all schools provide adequate space for arts instruction. The formula used for determining a school’s capacity should reflect this requirement.
- The city should conduct an inventory of classrooms utilized for arts instruction, including a survey of the number and former use of arts spaces that have been repurposed. These spaces should be reclaimed for arts instruction.
- Arts spaces should be incorporated into the design and construction of all future school facilities.

Dedicate Resources to Support Arts Instruction
- Principals should be held accountable for spending funds received through the Project Arts budget line exclusively on arts education.

Ensure School Compliance with Existing State Regulations for Arts Instruction
- The New York State Education Department should conduct a thorough and periodic audit of compliance with the New York State education regulations for the arts and develop a comprehensive intervention program for districts and schools out of compliance.
- The New York State Education Department, City Comptroller, or other government entity should conduct an investigation and issue a public report on New York City high school compliance with graduation requirements.
Data from The College Board shows that students who take four years of arts and music classes while in high school score 85 points better on their SATs than students who took only one-half year or less (scores of 1,063 vs. 978, respectively).

*Reflect the Critical Reading and Mathematics portions of the SAT only. The new Writing section of the test is excluded from this analysis for year-to-year comparison purposes. Students with four years of art and music classes averaged 523 on the Writing portion of the test—52 points higher than students with one-half year or less of arts/music classes (471).

Artist Habits of Mind

Develop Craft
Learning to use tools and materials. Learning the practices of an art form.

Engage & Persist
Learning to take up subjects of personal interest and importance within the art world. Learning to develop focus and other ways of thinking helpful to working and persevering at art tasks.

Envision
Learning to picture mentally what cannot be directly observed, heard or written and to imagine possible next steps in making a piece.

Express
Learning to create works that convey an idea, feeling or personal meaning.

Observe
Learning to attend to visual, audible and written contexts more closely than ordinary “looking” requires; learning to notice things that otherwise might not be noticed.

Reflect
Learning to think and talk with others about one’s work and the process of making it. Learning to judge one’s own and others’ work and processes in relation to the standards of the field.

Stretch & Explore
Learning to reach beyond one’s supposed limitations, to explore playfully without a preconceived plan and to embrace the opportunity to learn from mistakes and accidents.

Understand Art World
Learning about the history and practice of the art form. Interacting with other artists and the broader arts community.

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ARTS EDUCATION AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Neuroscientists from seven universities across the country used brain imaging studies and behavioral assessments to advance our understanding of the effects of music, dance, and drama education on other types of learning. The findings from their coordinated three-year study suggest that children motivated in the arts develop attention skills and strategies for memory retrieval that also apply to other academic subject areas.

- Training in music appears to improve skills in geometric representation, as well as the acquisition of reading skills and sequence learning.

- Training in acting classes appears to lead to improved memory, via learning and manipulating language skills.

- Learning to dance by effective observation relates closely to physical practice, and that training appears to improve other cognitive skills.

Scientist’s research findings include the following:

1. An interest in a performing art leads to a high state of motivation that produces the sustained attention necessary to improve performance and the training of attention that leads to improvement in other domains of cognition.

2. Specific links exist between high levels of music training and the ability to manipulate information in both working and long-term memory; these links extend beyond the domain of music training.

3. In children, there appear to be specific links between the practice of music and skills in geometrical representation, though not in other forms of numerical representation.

4. Correlations exist between music training and both reading acquisition and sequence learning. One of the central predictors of early literacy, phonological awareness, is correlated with both music training and the development of a specific brain pathway.

5. Training in acting appears to lead to memory improvement through the learning of general skills for manipulating semantic information.

6. Learning to dance by effective observation is closely related to learning by physical practice, both in the level of achievement and also the neural substrates that support the organization of complex actions. Effective observational learning may transfer to other cognitive skills.

The Arts Learning Anchor School Initiative

2006-Present

Spreading the VALUES Project to 38 K-12 schools in Oakland Berkeley and Emery School Districts

art education
Peralta School, Oakland Unified School District

Peralta is a Title 1 K-5 school serving a diverse community in Oakland; 13% of students are Asian, 37% Latino and 35% African American; 38% of Peralta students qualify for free/reduced lunch.

Peralta School has shown overall gains in student achievement, from 694 API in 2001 to 892 in 2009.

It is one of just 57 schools in the entire state – out of more than 9,000 total – where the average API score for African-Americans tops 800.

Peralta’s principal, Rosette Costello, credits the school’s dramatic improvement – from a school that “many families avoided to one of the most sought after schools in the city of Oakland” – to its arts-integrated curriculum. “The complexity of art-based learning and the opportunities it provides for students to observe, to think, and to wonder, prepare our students to develop creative and resilient approaches to problem solving in all aspects of their lives.”
Graduation Rates:

92% for ALAS, compared to 69% for general population.

In 2006, 94% of African American students in ALAS schools graduated, compared to 64% of their peers in non-ALAS schools.

CSU/UC eligible: 41% of ALAS students graduated with the CSU/UC eligibility, compared to 26% district-wide

39% of African American students in ALAS schools graduated with CSU/UC preparedness, compared to 17% their peers in these districts as a whole.

In 2009, overall API growth for ELL students was 668, compared to 598 for students in non-ALAS schools in the three districts.

On Language Arts tests, Latino students scored consistently and significantly higher than Latino students in the general population – 45% in 2006 compared to 22% and 40% compared to 31% in 2009.
The Diversity Project and the Arts and Humanities Academy (AHA!)

Berkeley High School’s Arts and Humanities Academy (AHA), is demonstrating how an intense arts learning and arts-integration model is working to close the achievement gap. Of AHA’s 58 senior students in 2009, 33 were African American, four were Latino. AHA graduated 99% of its seniors (compared to the Berkeley Unified rate in 2008 of 54%). 85% of AHA seniors graduated eligible for UC/CSU admission.
District Wide Initiative

The San Leandro School district’s goal is to address the racial predictability of the achievement gap. The goal is to shrink the “engagement gap” and support students who are achieving below and far below basic in language arts. Through TARI-SLI, we reach out in innovative ways to every child in our project classrooms implementing California State Standards based learning in the arts and connecting to standards-based learning in other content areas.
The 21st Century Workforce

A 2010 IBM study of 1500 CEO’s from 60 countries and 33 industries identified “creativity” as the most important trait for successfully navigating an increasingly complex world. While many subjects may teach creativity, a study by the American Association of School Administrators rated arts study as the highest indicator of creativity. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills has identified three other essential skills that the arts teach in addition to creativity: collaboration, communication and critical thinking. These 4 C’s are at the heart of high quality arts education.

The greatness of American has always been in its imagination, creativity and innovation. Nowhere is this more true than in California where arts and entertainment are a $70 billion a year industry. To lead the world in the new global economy, America must invest in a more creative education for the next generation.
Are educators and executives aligned on the creative readiness of the U.S. workforce?
Ready to Innovate
Are Educators and Executives Aligned on the Creative Readiness of the U.S. Workforce?

Innovation is crucial to competition, and creativity is integral to innovation. U.S. employers rate creativity/innovation among the top five skills that will increase in importance over the next five years,¹ and stimulating innovation/creativity and enabling entrepreneurship is among the top 10 challenges of U.S. CEOs.² But how to foster creativity in new entrants to the U.S. workforce?

In November 2007, The Conference Board and Americans for the Arts, in partnership with the American Association of School Administrators, surveyed public school superintendents and American business executives (employers) to identify and compare their views surrounding creativity.

Overwhelmingly, both the superintendents who educate future workers and the employers who hire them agree that creativity is increasingly important in U.S. workplaces (99 percent and 97 percent, respectively), and that arts-training—and, to a lesser degree, communications studies—are crucial to developing creativity. Yet, there is a gap between understanding this truth and putting it into meaningful practice. Our findings indicate that most high schools and employers provide such training and studies only on an elective or "as needed" basis.

Other results of this survey:

- Eighty-five percent of employers concerned with hiring creative people say they can’t find the applicants they seek.
- Employers concerned with hiring creative people rarely use profile tests to assess the creative skills of potential employees (less than 20 percent). Instead, they rely on face-to-face interviews. More than 1 in 4 say they assess creativity based on interviewees’ appearance.
- Superintendents and employers cite many of the same skills as indicators of creativity. Yet when asked to rate mastery of these skills, superintendents are more likely than employers to rate graduates/new entrants as meeting or exceeding expectations.
- While 97 percent of employers say creativity is of increasing importance, only 72 percent say that hiring creative people is a primary concern.

Defining Creativity

We gave 155 school superintendents and 89 employers a list of 11 “skills or observable behaviors” and asked them to rank which ones best demonstrate creativity. Both groups agree that ability to identify new patterns of behavior or new combination of actions and integration of knowledge across different disciplines are foremost in demonstrating creativity. Other responses reveal a decided lack of alignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which best demonstrates creativity?*</th>
<th>Business/Employers</th>
<th>School Superintendents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem-identification or articulation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to identify new patterns of behavior or new combination of actions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of knowledge across different disciplines</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to originate new ideas</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort with the notion of “no right answer”</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamental curiosity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Originality and inventiveness in work</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to take risks</td>
<td>9 (t)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance of ambiguity</td>
<td>9 (t)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to communicate new ideas to others</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Rank determined by percentage of respondents selecting skill. Respondents allowed to select only three skills.

Most employers report that new workforce entrants meet or exceed expectations on seven of 11 creativity-related skills or behaviors. Most school superintendents report that high-school graduates meet or exceed expectations on all 11.

It is not clear what accounts for these differences. Perhaps it’s the varied perspectives of the respondents rather than a disagreement on the importance of creativity. The results suggest there needs to be more discussion between the


two groups—educators and employers—to be sure they understand each other’s points of view.

Diverging Views

Seventy percent of school superintendents presume employers seek out “creative thinkers” over “technically skilled” individuals. Employers, as a group, are evenly split (49/51). When employers are separated into two groups—those who say creativity is a primary hiring criterion and those who say it is not—differences emerge:

- Of employers seeking creativity, 63 percent prefer the creative employee over the technically skilled one.
- Of employers who do not see creativity as primary, only 16 percent prefer creativity over technical skill.

Playing a Guessing Game

Employers who are concerned with hiring creative people use job interviews as their primary tool for assessing creativity. In those interviews, employers evaluate the following:

- Ability to look spontaneously beyond the specifics of a question (78 percent)
- Responses to hypothetical scenarios (70 percent)
- Elaboration on extracurricular activities or volunteer work (40 percent)
- Appearance (style of dress, accessory, hair, etc.) (27 percent)

Asked to name the educational backgrounds and experiences deemed indicators of creativity, school superintendents and employers rank arts study among the top two.

- School superintendents rank arts study as the highest indicator of creativity, followed by experience in performing arts/entertainment.

Employers rank arts study second, topped only by self-employed work, as an indicator of creativity.

Walking the Walk

Educators and employers both feel they have a responsibility for instilling creativity in the U.S. workforce (83 and 61 percent, respectively). However, their current creativity-building offerings don’t match this desire.

When superintendents were presented with a list of 12 creativity-promoting educational activities/experiences, more than three-quarters reported that each one (excluding study-abroad programs) is supported within their high schools. However, in more than half of these schools, only three of these activities/experiences are part of the required curriculum.

When employers were presented with a comparable list of eight employee activities/training options, at least half the employers identified seven of the eight as creativity-developing endeavors. Of this group, however, fewer than one in 10 say they provide those seven to all their employees. And only four of the eight options are offered even on an “as needed” basis by more than half the employers.

The picture isn’t much better among those employers who cite creativity as a primary hiring criterion. In this group, 80 percent provide the three activities/training options that they say best develop creativity—working in departments other than their own, managerial coaching, and mentoring—only on an “as needed” basis.

Given these findings, it is time for employers to evaluate how well their corporate support of education and their own employee training programs stack up against the strategic value they themselves place on innovation and its creative underpinning. It is also time for greater dialogue within and across all sectors to better understand and align efforts to foster creativity in current and future U.S. employees.

“We need people who think with the creative side of their brains—people who have played in a band, who have painted, been involved in the community as volunteers. It enhances symbiotic thinking capabilities, not always thinking in the same paradigm, learning how to kick-start a new idea, or how to get a job done better, less expensively.”

Annette Byrd, Manager, Healthy Work Environment, GlaxoSmithKline, Are They Really Ready To Work, 2006
About This Report

This Key Findings report is based on the upcoming Ready to Innovate: Are Educators and Executives Aligned on the Creative Readiness of the U.S. Workforce?, which has been developed as part of The Conference Board Workforce Readiness Initiative. Focusing on the skills and knowledge of current, new, and future employees, The Conference Board Workforce Readiness Initiative is committed to helping ensure that employers have the workforces they need to compete in the global marketplace. Our evolving work is validated by frequent interaction with our 2,000 member companies as we respond to their emerging business issues.

Business and School Leaders See the Arts as Key to Preparing Students to Be Creative Workers for the Global Marketplace

85 percent of surveyed business executives indicated that they are currently having difficulty recruiting individuals who possess creative ability. The demand for creative people will increase as U.S. firms pursue innovation.

- U.S. employers rate creativity/innovation among the top five skills that will increase in importance over the next five years, and rank it among the top challenges facing CEOs.

- Employers (56 percent) and superintendents (79 percent) agree that a college degree in the arts is the most significant indicator of creativity in a prospective job candidate.

- Among eleven subjects offered in high school, superintendents rank arts activities in the top four that are most likely to develop creativity. Yet, three out of four top rated arts subjects are offered as an only as elective by a majority of respondents. Creative writing is the sole required course in more than half the districts. Less than 1 in 5 require a music class.

Improving access to arts education for all students and strengthening the arts in NCLB is critical to building tomorrow’s creative workforce.

The source for this information comes from Ready to Innovate, a new study conducted by The Conference Board, Americans for the Arts, and the American Association of School Administrators.

The Conference Board is a global, independent association of business executives dedicated to creating and disseminating knowledge about management and the marketplace.

www.AmericansForTheArts.org
Arts Facts . . . Creative Industries
An analysis of Dun & Bradstreet data reveals that the creative industries comprise 4.05 percent of all U.S. businesses and 2.18 percent of all U.S. jobs.

Creative Industries: Business & Employment in the Arts

Nationally, 668,267 Arts Businesses in the U.S.
Employ 2.9 Million Workers

The top ten states with the greatest number of arts businesses are: CA, NY, TX, FL, IL, PA, MI, GA, NJ, and WA.

- The Creative Industries study provides a research-based approach to understanding the scope and importance of the arts to the nation’s economy. This study is a unique representation of both the nonprofit and for-profit businesses involved in the creation or distribution of the arts.

- The creative industries are composed of arts-centric businesses that range from non-profit museums, symphonies, and theaters to for-profit film, architecture, and advertising companies.

- Nationally, there are 668,267 businesses in the U.S. involved in the creation or distribution of the arts. They employ 2.9 million people, representing 4.05 percent of all businesses and 2.18 percent of all employees, respectively. These data are current as of January 2010.

- The source for these data is Dun & Bradstreet, widely acknowledged as the most comprehensive and trusted source for business information in the United States. Analysis is by Americans for the Arts.

- Using “geo-economic analysis,” Americans for the Arts can detail and map the creative industries by any political or geographic area (e.g., city, county, state, or Congressional District). See the next page for an example of a Creative Industries report for a specific Congressional district. Creative Industries reports for EVERY Congressional District and state in the country can be downloaded at www.AmericansForTheArts.org/CreativeIndustries.

The Skills Connection Between the Arts and 21st-Century Learning

Arts Education and 21st-Century Skills

By Bruce D. Taylor

Few of us could disagree that today’s students must be taught the necessary skills to function in an increasingly complex, conceptual, and globalized 21st-century society and economy. Students have to acquire so-called “habits of mind” that will enable them to develop the skills of creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. In addition, they must be able to communicate effectively, collaborate with people different from themselves, exercise initiative, and be self-directed.

That is a pretty tall order.

The primary purpose of education is to enable students to make a living as adults; without this capability, everything else falls away. Yet we still teach within a basic framework established in the 19th century. In today’s education environment, we seem to be slipping back from the future into the 19th century’s contextual emphasis on reading, writing, and math. The consequences could be dire, even propelling us back to a two-tiered education system: just reading, writing, and math for the disadvantaged in underresourced schools, alongside a richer 21st-century curriculum for the country’s productive employees and future decisionmakers.

What can we do?

Consider the list of skills cited in the first paragraph. Aren’t these 21st-century skills, in reality, arts skills? Now, stay with me here: First, we need to recognize that the very same valuable skills routinely employed by artists and arts educators can be integrated curriculum-wide in ways that are not arts-dependent. If this seems a revolutionary notion, it is because for more than 30 years, the well-meaning mandarins of arts education have promoted practitioner development above all else.
We must ask ourselves, are we preparing students to function as human beings, or just as flesh-and-blood versions of a hard drive?

What happened over that same span of time? Not only were the arts severely diminished in public education, but the young people we supposedly reached 10, 15, even 20 years ago became parents of kids in schools where the arts were cut. Bear in mind that these cuts were not the work of educators, but of school boards ostensibly representing the parental community. The irony is rich, since the very skills their children will need to be capable adults can result from arts practice.

At this point, I believe that the prevailing public perception is that arts education is only for young people who want to be artists—“Glee” wannabes. If we applied this mindset to science, we would teach science only to students who aspired to be chemists, biologists, or astronomers.

But the basis of this public perception is legitimate, rooted in the reality of arts education today. The fact is, we too often teach students to perform without their actually learning anything. Most of the time, students are simply remembering lines, notes, steps, terminology, and so on. To be fair, the cumulative amount of instructional time an elementary music teacher has in the school year is approximately 32 hours. This is less than the equivalent of a standard workweek to produce two concerts with 200 or more kids. Given this time constraint, perhaps all that can be accomplished is replication—not learning, much less understanding.

I believe that we can repair the damage done, and change public perception, by rethinking and reshaping our approach to arts education. I propose that the critical skills of creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving can be developed by design—not acquired by accident or as a byproduct—using the arts as tools. For example, teaching artists, along with arts specialists in schools, can be rich resources for the integration of 21st-century teaching and learning into the 19th-century paradigm to which we seem to be wedded. After all, to be “creative” is to be, by definition, artistic.

Why am I convinced that this would work? Because the arts relate to the unique ways in which human beings think.
Marc Hauser at Harvard University postulates that there are four “key characteristics of the human mind” that are contained in the 1 percent of our DNA that distinguishes us from our nearest primate relative, the chimp.

- **Generative Computation** The ability to create a limitless variety of “expressions” from a generative catalyst of modest content. Think Beethoven’s four-note theme, which he spun into the Fifth Symphony.

- **Promiscuous Combination of Ideas** Mingling of different domains of knowledge, thereby creating new products, relationships, techniques, and technologies. Think of a recipe that combines the chemistry of ingredients with knowledge of temperature and time, along with taste, feel, and smell.

- **Mental Symbols** Encoding sensory experiences, both real and imagined, into complex systems of communication. Think metaphor or analogy.

- **Abstract Thought** The ability to imagine what isn’t yet.

To focus on these is to enhance the very qualities that make us … us. In other words, to be artistic is to be human.

The arts are woven throughout the fabric of our lives and the tapestry of our society. We engage with the arts every day, all day. Artistic products envelop our daily lives, particularly those of children. They are what we listen to, watch and read, wear, put up on our walls—they are everywhere. Artists have employed for millennia the inherently human abilities that Hauser describes, transcending cultural and historical boundaries; now, these qualities have become crucial capabilities for success in the 21st century. So we must ask ourselves, are we preparing students to function as human beings, or just as flesh-and-blood versions of a hard drive?

The key connector of all these artistic artifacts in our lives is emotion—these things matter to us. They touch us, resonate with us. Now, what is the one adjective all dropouts use to describe school? Boring! To be bored is to be emotionally disengaged. Do our children go to school only to prep for tests that are limited in scope and focus to the three R’s of retention, recall, and replication? Is there a difference between “to know” and “to think?”
Of course there is a difference, and surely the mission of education is to have students think as much as it is for them to “know.” But how do you “test” thinking? And shouldn’t teachers be asked, “What do you think?” The key disconnect with so-called teacher reform is that teachers are not urged—not permitted—to think. The demand is that teachers limit themselves to following prescriptions generated by people far removed from the classroom and the school, sometimes hundreds of miles away, both literally and figuratively.

We must allow and encourage teachers to be creative (i.e., artistic) in devising ways to reach children in a variety of circumstances, cultural frameworks, and emotional conditions, to have the flexibility to shift gears, to create (there’s that word again) alternative methods, and to inspire in their students an emotional commitment to attaining mastery.

All of these are hallmarks of the artistic process, and they can—and should—be employed in nonartistic contexts as well.

Bruce D. Taylor is the director of education for the Washington National Opera, in Washington, D.C.
Issue Brief
Economic & Technology Policy Studies
Contact: Phil Psilos (202) 624-5330
May 1, 2002

The Impact of Arts Education on Workforce Preparation

Summary
The arts provide one alternative for states looking to build the workforce of tomorrow—a choice growing in popularity and esteem. The arts can provide effective learning opportunities to the general student population, yielding increased academic performance, reduced absenteeism, and better skill-building. An even more compelling advantage is the striking success of arts-based educational programs among disadvantaged populations, especially at-risk and incarcerated youth. For at-risk youth, that segment of society most likely to suffer from limited lifetime productivity, the arts contribute to lower recidivism rates; increased self-esteem; the acquisition of job skills; and the development of much needed creative thinking, problem solving and communications skills. Involvement in the arts is one avenue by which at-risk youth can acquire the various competencies necessary to become economically self-sufficient over the long term, rather than becoming a financial strain on their states and communities.

Programs incorporating the arts have proven to be educational, developmentally rich, and cost-effective ways to provide students with the skills they need to be productive participants in today’s economy.

This Issue Brief provides examples of arts-based education as a money- and time-saving option for states looking to build skills, increase academic success, heighten standardized test scores, and lower the incidence of crime among general and at-risk populations. It offers examples drawn from states that are utilizing the arts in education and after-school programs, and it provides policy recommendations for states looking to initiate or strengthen arts education programs that improve productivity and foster workforce development.

Human Capital’s Role in the New Economy
The New Economy has reshaped previously held beliefs regarding productivity. Knowledge has supplanted labor-intensive careers as the preferred path to economic growth and stability. Human capital has become the primary determinant of a region’s economic vitality. Today’s challenging workplace demands academic skills (i.e., a college degree) as well as “intangible” assets such as flexibility, problem-solving abilities, and interpersonal skills. Old hierarchical, boundary-laden, and static organizational structures are giving way to new kinds of “learning organizations” with flattened hierarchies. More decision-making and problem solving authority rests in the hands of front-line employees, and
self-managed, cross-functional teams are replacing bureaucratic assembly lines. Furthermore, extensive cross training, teamwork, and flexible work assignments are taking the place of elaborate work rules.²

**The Workforce Skills of Today and Tomorrow**

Today’s knowledge-based economy relies on a combination of academic prowess and fluency with foundation skills relating to communication, personal and interpersonal relationships, problem solving, and management of organizational processes. The skills necessary to acquire and retain a job in today’s workforce include:³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Skills</th>
<th>Higher-Order Thinking Skills</th>
<th>Affective Skills and Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Oral communications</td>
<td>• Problem solving</td>
<td>• Dependability and responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reading, especially understanding</td>
<td>• Learning skills, strategies</td>
<td>• Positive attitude towards work, following instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Basic arithmetic</td>
<td>• Creative, innovative thinking</td>
<td>• Conscientiousness, punctuality</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Writing</td>
<td>• Decision making</td>
<td>• Efficiency</td>
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</table>

**The Arts Help Build New Economy Workforce Skills**

The arts are one tool used by states to enhance workforce readiness for students in both the general and at-risk populations. Programs incorporating the arts have proven to be educational, developmentally rich, and cost-effective ways to provide students the skills they need to be productive participants in today’s economy. Arts programs combine academic and workforce development skills in a manner attractive to participants of all age groups and economic backgrounds. Children raised in higher socioeconomic brackets and exposed to the arts through other sources such as families and communities reap the benefits of these activities. In general, at-risk children lack the resources available to other children, are less likely to be introduced

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_Schooling in the arts has cognitive effects that help prepare students for the 21st-century workforce._
to the arts, and lose out on the important educational advantages that the arts can provide. Arts education can have a beneficial and enriching effect on all children, but in some cases, the effects on at-risk children are even more dramatic, especially among those from low-income situations.

Research reveals that when young people (both general and at-risk populations) study the arts they show heightened academic standing, a strong capacity for self-assessment, and a secure sense of their own ability to plan and work for a positive future. The report, *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* reviews research conducted by scholars from Columbia University’s Teachers College, Harvard University, Harvard’s Project Zero, Stanford University, the University of California at Los Angeles, and the University of Connecticut. The researchers found that arts education can enhance academic achievement, reach students on the margins of the educational system, create an effective learning environment, and connect learners’ experiences to the world outside of school. Multiple studies cite strong positive impacts across socioeconomic groups with respect to both academic and personal success.

Other studies of the effects of arts instruction on learning have found that children who study the arts are:

- four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement;
- elected to class office within their schools three times as often;
- four times more likely to participate in a math and science fair;
- three times more likely to win an award for school attendance; and
- four times more likely to win an award for writing an essay or poem.

In addition to academic success, students introduced to arts education have heightened soft skills. In a study of more than 2000 middle school students in four states, researchers at Columbia University found that children receiving at least three years of in-school arts instruction scored significantly higher on quantitative tests of creative thinking than their peers with less arts instruction. Students with more arts instruction had index scores averaging 20 points higher than their peers on measures of creative thinking, fluency, originality, elaboration and resistance to closure.

Some critics have argued that arts curricula may not produce increased standardized test results. An analysis of 188 previous studies describing correlations between the arts and performance on mathematics and verbal skills tests found a causal link between studying the arts and improved academic performance in only 3 of 10 areas studied. Researchers Ellen Winner and Lois Hetland, in Harvard’s Reviewing Education and the Arts project, urged caution with respect to justifying arts education programs on the sole basis of instrumental grounds such as test scores.
Nonetheless, arts education appears to develop cognitive skills and traits which may or may not be easily measured through standardized testing. According to Dr. Elliot W. Eisner of Stanford University, schooling in the arts has cognitive effects that help prepare students for the 21st-century workforce. Eisner identifies key competencies of cognitive growth that are developed through an education in the arts. These include:

- perception of relationships;
- skills in finding multiple solutions to problems;
- attention to nuance;
- adaptability;
- decision-making skills; and
- visualization of goals and outcomes.

School districts are finding that the arts develop many skills applicable to the “real world” environment. In a study of 91 school districts across the nation, evaluators found that the arts contribute significantly to the creation of the flexible and adaptable knowledge workers that businesses demand to compete in today’s economy.

In addition to supporting general workforce competencies, arts competencies in themselves can be marketable skills in today’s economy. For instance, today’s media workers are applying arts skills in careers such as television and film production, Web site design, and advertising. Design skills taught through the arts are both professional and technical and can lead students to careers in the architecture or fashion industries. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has counted more than 2 million full-time workers in artist occupations. In this way, workforce development programs that involve the arts may provide dual benefits, opening up careers in the creative industries for some students while enhancing the overall workforce preparedness of others.

**Arts Based Education for General, At-Risk, and Incarcerated Youth Populations**

As states continue to focus on the future development of their workforces, arts-based education proves to be a viable option for developing skills necessary for increased productivity and prosperity. The following programs highlight several states’ best practices in arts education for general, at-risk, and incarcerated youth.

**Incorporating the Arts as a Foundation for the General Population**

Schools throughout the country are implementing arts-focused curricula targeting the general population to create a more educated workforce with a set of well-rounded and applicable skills. Programs in California,
Connecticut, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, and South Carolina have shown positive outcomes such as higher test scores, increased academic achievement, lower absenteeism, and soft skills development beginning at an early age.

The Connecticut Commission on the Arts’ HOT (Higher Order Thinking) Schools Program is an educational process that creates child-centered schools through the arts. Initiated in 1994, the commission works with 24 HOT “laboratory” schools situated strategically in 22 districts across Connecticut. The program affects over 5,000 students and more than 500 educators from diverse rural, suburban and urban communities. In a HOT school, teaching for understanding assumes more importance than schedules, educators welcome parents into the school, and teachers adapt the curriculum to meet the learner’s needs. The HOT Schools Program arrives at child-centered education through a cluster of strategies that stimulate change in the school’s culture—its symbols, myths and educational expectations, both for students and teachers. The HOT Schools Program provides each school with resident artists (up to five per year), curriculum development grants, technical assistance, workshops, principals’ retreats, peer sessions, and an annual six-day summer institute. Schools commit themselves to creating school cultures in which learning in, about, and through the arts in a democratic setting enables each child’s voice to be heard and celebrated.

**Outcomes:** Through these arts-infused curricular innovations, HOT schools are promoting intellectual, psychosocial and academic growth. When the program began in 1994, six schools were selected through a competitive application process. Today the program has expanded to include 24 schools in Connecticut and has become a model adopted by schools in New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Delaware.¹¹

In Mississippi, the Whole Schools Project expands regular classroom instruction to include the arts and promotes collaborations between arts and classroom teachers to create arts-infused instruction. Currently, Mississippi has 20 schools (more than 15 percent of all school districts) participating in this model of school reform. All members of the school community play an important role in this initiative: superintendent, principal, arts and classroom teachers, students, parents, community organizations, and businesses. The Art Commission’s goals for this initiative are to foster sequential, comprehensive arts education programs that serve every student in a single school and offer the prospect of being replicated in other parts of Mississippi.

**Outcomes:** The measured results of Mississippi’s arts-infused instruction include enhanced curriculum assessment practices (as measured schoolwide); increased student engagement (as measured by lower absenteeism rates and fewer discipline problems); and increased student achievement (as measured by classroom grades and higher test scores).¹²
**New York’s** Empire State Partnership (ESP) is an interagency initiative that unites the New York Department of Education’s strategic plan for raising standards for all students with the New York State Council on the Arts’ (NYSCA) goal of integrating and reasserting the arts into all the classrooms in New York. Established in 1997, the ESP project is designed to enhance teaching and learning. Schools can make strategic use of the state’s vast cultural resources, including artists, museums, music companies, nature centers, community organizations, and writing and literacy programs. Partnerships between classrooms and cultural institutions are built around long-term school strategies to build both tangible and intangible skills. Teacher professional development, an important component of the program, helps build teachers’ capacity to use the arts as a classroom resource. The goal of the ESP project is to establish the arts as a discipline on par with other curricular disciplines and as a highly effective, widely tested means to teach skills and knowledge in other core curriculum subjects. To date, ESP has involved over 34,000 students and 1,400 teachers and principals.

**Outcomes:** In a preliminary evaluation, school principals cite anecdotal evidence that the ESP is providing students with more sustained learning experiences than traditional approaches to the curriculum can provide. Some individual school sites are also observing improved school attendance and gains in reading skills among some students. The next steps for the ESP initiative are to secure the empirical data needed to assess student academic performance across multiple school sites and to evaluate how the ESP practices affect teachers’ student assessment practices.

In **Ohio**, the cities of Hamilton and neighboring Fairfield resolved during 1990 to map out a cultural action plan for their schools, beginning at the elementary level. The program outlined in the plan called SPECTRA+ (Schools, Parents, Educators, Children, Teachers Rediscover the Arts) was implemented during the 1992 school year. SPECTRA+ is a methodology that places the arts in the daily curriculum as a basic subject. The program has five major components: arts instruction, arts integration, artists-in-residence, professional development for teachers, and evaluation and advocacy. These components combine into a curriculum that involves art, music, dance, drama, literature, and media arts. Each school must offer arts instruction in music, visual art, dance, and drama at least one hour per week, and classroom teachers are trained to deliver academic subjects through the arts by teaming and planning with art teachers and artists. As a result, students receive direct arts instruction as well as lessons that combine, for instance, math with music or science with drama.

**Outcomes:** SPECTRA+ schools showed significant gains in student creativity, teacher/student attitudes, academic and thinking skill improvement, attendance, discipline, school climate, student self-esteem, and parental self-esteem (children’s belief that parents are proud of them). These outcomes were documented through an independent evaluation that
These outcomes were documented through an independent evaluation that included pre- and post-program testing in four schools, as well as through comparisons between SPECTRA+ schools and other schools in the Hamilton-Fairfield area.\textsuperscript{14} These outcomes have heralded the expansion of SPECTRA+ in other school districts across Ohio, as well as in California and New York.

Initiated in South Carolina in 1987, the Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Project is a statewide initiative to ensure that every child through college has access to quality, comprehensive education in the arts, including dance, music, drama, visual arts, and creative writing. It is directed cooperatively by the South Carolina Arts Commission and the South Carolina Department of Education. ABC was founded on the premise that the arts are an indispensable part of a complete education because quality education in the arts significantly adds to the learning potential of students. Arts education complements learning in other disciplines and establishes a foundation for success in school and lifelong learning.

\textbf{Outcomes:} Educators report that the adoption of an arts-centered school curriculum has positively affected student and teacher attitudes, student behavior, parent participation, and other key variables that are linked to general student achievement.\textsuperscript{15}

Developed by the California Arts Council, the Arts Education Demonstration Project targets K–12 public schools to develop best practices in arts education. These models demonstrate how arts education in the classroom can increase art skills while encouraging attitudinal and behavioral changes, such as reduced truancy and reduced dropout rates. The program is a "working laboratory" designed to develop viable arts education models that document why and how they are successful, so that other schools and communities can emulate what is learned and adapt these practices to new sites and new student populations.

\textbf{Outcomes:} Currently, WestEd Laboratory is conducting a rigorous evaluation of the program. This assessment of 56 school sites will collect exact data on student attendance, behavior and self-concept and will also measure program outcomes on students’ basic skills and higher-order cognitive skills. This comprehensive evaluation will be available in the fall of 2002.
The Arts Build Skills for the At-Risk Population

Because of challenging neighborhood environments, lack of role models and challenged school systems, at-risk youth are most in need of educational programs and workforce development training; yet, they are the least likely to receive the necessary assistance. Not only are disadvantaged youth likely to earn less money and pay fewer taxes as a result, but significant funds are also spent combating or compensating for poor social and academic environments.¹⁶

By investing in arts-based prevention programs for youth, states are working to reduce later unemployment, corrections, and public assistance costs. In the words of Richard Romley, Maricopa County District Attorney in Arizona, “As a prosecutor, I know that crime prevention pays far greater dividends than prosecution. To this end, I make RICO funds available to after-school arts and social programs for at-risk children that stimulate imagination, develop skills and contribute to character development. Children whose hearts and minds are nourished and challenged in wholesome ways—such as by art, dance, theater, and sports—are much less likely to succumb to the lure of crime.”¹⁷

After-school programs have joined forces with the arts to bridge this gap and foster a developed workforce. The programs have been successful through a simple combination of the arts, academics, and social counseling, and the reinforcement of necessary soft skills. Not only have violence, drug abuse and alcohol abuse in communities decreased through arts-based prevention programs, but programs have documented increases in students’ likelihood to set further educational or career goals. Gains in self-esteem, discipline, problem-solving and decision-making—all skills necessary to actively participate in today’s workforce—have also been noted.

Programs in Florida, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas are among a growing number of states proving that the arts can cost-efficiently help create an otherwise untapped workforce resource.

Begun in Ft. Myers, Florida, in 1989, Success Through Academic and Recreational Support (STARS) is a multifaceted arts studies and crime prevention program for at-risk youth that offers a variety of classes, including modern dance, African Folk dance, poetry, creative writing and vocal arts, as well as tutorials in math, reading, and computers. The cost for each participant in Florida’s arts intervention program is only $850 per year—compared with as much as $28,000 per youth in the typical juvenile boot camp. Participation in STARS is a family affair: Both parents and children must agree to participate in the activities. Children are required to maintain good behavior and at least a C average in school.
Outcomes: At the start of the STARS Program, 75 percent of the children were making less than a C average; now 80 percent are making a C average or better. Since the program’s inception, juvenile crime has dropped 28 percent, and for youth ages 11 and 12, the rate of recidivism has dropped 64 percent.\textsuperscript{18}

The Massachusetts Cultural Council’s Youth Reach Initiative, founded in 1996, is a statewide program that enlists arts organizations and other community groups in addressing the needs of their young people. The program serves children with disabilities, school dropouts, homeless youth, young people facing neighborhood violence, court-involved youth, runaways, and pregnant or parenting teens. Currently, Youth Reach supports 38 partnerships across the state. One example of its work is Artists for Humanity’s City Teens Design Company. It is a comprehensive, year-round, after-school and summer program that gives inner-city Boston teens a place to get away from the streets and work closely with artists. Participants receive instruction in painting, sculpture, photography, ceramics, silk-screen, graphic design, entrepreneurship, and teamwork.

Outcomes: Before Youth Reach, students’ typical goals were to finish or leave school, work at a grocery store or hotel laundry or collect social security income. After their experience in Youth Reach, students have excelled in school and many have sought postsecondary education and careers in nursing, teaching, or technical theatre.\textsuperscript{19}

The Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild (MCG), was created in 1968 as an answer to a rapidly deteriorating Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, neighborhood—Manchester—home to many at-risk children with little prospect of graduating from high school, let alone attending college. MCG is an arts education organization that employs visual and performing arts to educate and inspire inner-city youth to become productive citizens. Its success lies in its ability to combine academic guidance, high school and college entry counseling, and development of self-esteem, decision-making, and team building skills—resources ordinarily not available to children in the Manchester neighborhood. The goal of the program is not to create artists, but to use the arts as a means through which students learn the skills necessary to perform as productive members of society.

Outcomes: With an 80-percent college attendance rate, this arts program has been so successful that it currently is being replicated in five cities nationwide (Baltimore, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, and St. Louis) and has attracted attention from technological powerhouses such as eBay, Hewlett Packard and Cisco Systems.\textsuperscript{20} Through successful outcomes, MCG has overcome the common misperception that using the arts to teach workforce skills only produces artists—not a skilled workforce.
Created in 1985 as an after-school program to provide an alternative to community despair and to standard education and social programs, The Boys Choir of Harlem in New York has grown into a nationally recognized school and after-school program. This program uses an integrated model of education, counseling and the performing arts to prepare inner-city youth to become disciplined, confident, motivated, and successful citizens. Five days a week from 8:30 in the morning until 6:30 in the evening, young boys and girls in grades 4–12 study academics and music at the Choir Academy, which operates in partnership with the local school district. After school, they rehearse for up to three hours and participate in counseling and tutoring sessions.

**Outcomes:** The program’s progress is measured by college-bound participants. To date, 98 percent of the participants have gone on to college.\(^\text{21}\)

Also in New York is El Puente Leadership Center, located in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn, in one of the poorest Latino communities in the state. El Puente is a community center that has an after-school and weekend program with rigorous participation requirements for its members. Members pursue a wide range of artistic interests such as dance, drama, music, videography, and visual arts under the guidance of accomplished artists. El Puente’s staff develops individualized plans with participants that focus not only on the arts, but also on educational, vocational, personal and social issues. El Puente houses resident performing companies made up of trained young artists from the program and provides a stage for visiting local, national, and international companies and artists.

**Outcomes:** El Puente’s model for youth and community development is being replicated through a growing national association that presently includes three New York centers, two centers in Massachusetts and a center in formation in San Diego, California.\(^\text{22}\)

Texas’ Juvenile Gang Prevention Program was initiated in 1991 by the Dallas Parks and Recreation Department in response to an influx of gang activities. The program offers free classes at four city recreation centers, where participants between the ages of 10 and 18 create plays and visual works of art based on personal experiences including gang violence and drug and alcohol abuse.

**Outcomes:** Now in its 10th year, the program has an 80-percent attendance rate and is noteworthy because rival gang members work together on projects and relate to one another while working collaboratively on projects to achieve a positive outcome.\(^\text{23}\)
The Arts Develop Skills in Incarcerated Youth

The arts are being used for skill development for a population that is most without resources, role models, or positive futures—incarcerated youth. Through the intervention of the arts, young people are taught job skills that will prepare them for a life outside of prison. These programs seek to develop skills that put young inmates on par with others in their age range. Using the arts to help incarcerated youth become productive members of society, with the skills and attributes necessary for personal financial prosperity, contributes to regional stability and vitality. Alabama, Mississippi, South Dakota, and Washington are among several states that have instituted such programs and have had success that shows in lower recidivism rates, fewer behavioral problems, and a marked increase in job skills for outgoing inmates.

Writing Our Stories, a partnership between the Alabama Arts Council, the Alabama Writers’ Forum and the Alabama Department of Youth Services, places writers-in-residence in youth detention facilities in three locations in Alabama. The program is designed to help 12-15 year old students develop nonviolent means of self expression and skills for coping with difficulties in their lives. Incarcerated youth participate for nine months in poetry and creative writing classes, which culminate in the publication of formal anthologies of student works. Most participants enter the program with reading skills five to six levels below the eighth-grade level. Writing Our Stories helps build reading and writing proficiency while providing a constructive, creative outlet for young offenders.

Outcomes: The program proved so successful at its original pilot site in 1999 that it has since been expanded to several other sites across the state and now reaches approximately 150 juvenile offenders. The initiative has been cited as a model program by the corrections community. Documenting the approach in Corrections Today journal, managing editor Susan Clayton writes, "The program has proved that a collaboration between a juvenile justice system and the arts community can change lives." 24

The goal of Washington’s Experimental Gallery is to teach responsible citizenship through the arts and the humanities. The Gallery developed the Arts Program for Incarcerated Youth in partnership with the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services and the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration. Youth in six juvenile detention facilities voluntarily take part in the 12- to 18-month program. In all the centers, workshops in creative writing, painting, drama, graphic design, sculpture, and videography are led by community artists and humanities scholars at the peak of their professions. These artists also provide mentoring and role modeling as they guide the students through projects that address real-life issues, such as drugs, violence, abuse, neglect, and disease. In these workshops students create products that can be shared with the community.
For example, participants created a film with KCTS-TV, a local PBS station, that aired nationally in 1999. The film focused on their fears of returning to the community and the community’s reciprocal fear of them. This kind of visibility brings the young participants a sense of achievement and educates the communities to which they return. In addition, the Experimental Gallery runs a small apprenticeship program that allows young offenders to continue to develop their potential when they return to their communities.

**Outcomes:** Because of the success of the Arts Program for Incarcerated Youth, the Washington State Historical Society’s Capital Museum will be developing a museum school in one of the maximum-security facilities over the coming year. Another sign of success is that students in the Experimental Gallery overcome their behavioral problems by 75 percent and are 50 percent less likely to commit another crime.²⁵

**Mississippi** also is using the arts to develop skills among juvenile offenders. Core Arts was initiated in 1998 after an arts program at a juvenile detention center in Columbus, Mississippi, produced impressive decreases in violence and improvements in behavior. The program, now operational in three counties, pairs professional artists and arts organizations with counselors, social workers, judges, housing authorities and other community resources to develop arts programs for various settings. First, the program strives to teach job-related skills, such as punctuality, discipline, focus and the creation of products. In stressing these skills, Core Arts trains young people to eventually to get and keep a job. The second focus of the program is working to achieve a vision—developing patience and problem-solving skills that apply not only to making art but also to other areas of life.²⁶

**Outcomes:** Although documentation of results for the Core Arts programs is still at an early stage, the program has shown a reduction in recidivism and improvements in overall behavior.

Initiated at the request of Governor William Janklow, the ArtsCorr program, involves a partnership among the **South Dakota** Department of Corrections, the South Dakota Arts Council and South Dakotans for the Arts. ArtsCorr places professional visual, theater and literary artists in long-term residencies in correctional facilities that house juveniles between the ages of 12 and 18. The artists, who receive special training in dealing with this population, work with the students on projects ranging from creative writing to full-scale musical productions. ArtsCorr also integrates the arts into chemical dependency programs, in-take assessments, and other education programs.²⁷

**Outcomes:** Although a formal evaluation of ArtsCorr’s impact has not yet been conducted, the department of corrections has been impressed enough with the results to date to assume full funding for the program.
State Strategies and Policy Options
There are a number of policy actions that governors can consider to take advantage of the arts as a workforce development strategy and to initiate the spread of successful programs.

- Include arts education as an element of comprehensive education reform legislation.
- Facilitate the interaction among governors’ education policy advisors, economic development leaders, and school leadership—especially in those areas with high numbers of at-risk youth. A state’s top arts and culture officers can act as resources in these interactions.
- Encourage artists to participate in community development programs including artist-in-residence programs, assistance to youth in primary and secondary schools, neighborhood centers and programs, and detention centers.
- Leverage the willingness of the private sector to contribute to the arts by providing seed funding and starter grants to innovative arts-based education programs.
- Insist that legislation promoting the arts in education be subject to ongoing outcome measurement, and consult with national organizations and centers of excellence to determine best practices in program evaluation.
- Facilitate collaboration between arts educators and juvenile detention centers to promote programs for detained youth.

At the national level, states can also participate in, and benefit from, the creation of a centralized, easily accessible database listing arts-based programs that includes replicable components, best practices information on a state-by-state basis, outcomes measurement, and relevant contact information.

Conclusion
In a human capital-based, knowledge economy, the loss of workforce productivity is tantamount to throwing money away. In this environment, states do not have the option of excluding at-risk or incarcerated youth populations from the workforce. In the face of such developments as a shrinking workforce, increased globalization, and an aging population, governors can continue to explore methods that guarantee higher levels of productivity and financial viability for their states. Diverse arts education programs—in and out of school curricula—have proven to be valuable options for states seeking to develop advanced workforce skills for general, at-risk, and incarcerated students. With the help of the arts, governors can ensure that skills are developed effectively, completely, and to the best advantage of the states and their constituencies.

Diverse arts education programs—both in and out of school curricula—have proven to be valuable options for states seeking to develop advanced workforce skills.
Endnotes

1 Thanks to a cooperative agreement between the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, and with significant research assistance from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, this is the second of three Issue Briefs in that explores effective practices that integrate economic development and the arts. See "Issue Brief: The Role of the Arts in Economic Development" (June 25, 2001).


6 "Learning in and Through the Arts: Curriculum Implications," Burton, Horowitz and Abeles in Champions of Change.


11 See www.ctarts.org/hot.


15 See www.winthrop.edu/abc/ABCmmission.htm.

16 The Value of Investing in Youth in the Washington Metropolitan Region. Brookings Institution, Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, January 2000.


18 Arts Programs for At-Risk Youth: How U.S. Communities are Using the Arts to Rescue Their Youth and Deter Crime, Americans for the Arts, 1998.


20 See www.manchesterguild.org.

21 See www.cominguptaller.org/profile/pr32music.htm.


26 See www.arts.state.ms.us/grants_abcd_corearts.html

27 See www.sdarts.org/arts_ed.php3?scrollTarg=149&s=X&c=x7x&noJS.
Americans for the Arts presents a series of essays commissioned for the 2007 National Arts Policy Roundtable

Thinking Creatively and Competing Globally: The Role of the Arts in Building the 21st Century American Workforce

Essays by Paul Houston, Ken Robinson, and Hamsa Thota

The Americans for the Arts 2007 National Arts Policy Roundtable has been supported in part by funding from Davis Publications, Inc. and The Ruth Lilly Fund of Americans for the Arts.
The premise of the Americans for the Arts National Arts Policy Roundtable is that the arts have a fundamental role in promoting the creativity and innovation on which the United States increasingly depends. The paradox is that at the very time when the arts should be ascendant in public policy and especially in education, they are actually in decline. This is a much bigger issue than it may seem, and it calls for some radical rethinking in the arts and in education.

Early in 2006, I spoke at the Ted conference in Monterey, CA. One of the other speakers was Al Gore. He gave his talk on the climate crisis that became the Oscar-winning documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*. I assume that most people with any sense now accept that there is a genuine crisis in the earth’s resources; that it is potentially catastrophic; and that the way that we’ve been behaving as a species for the past 300 years has probably got something to do with it. One climate crisis is probably enough for most people. But I believe that there is another climate crisis, of which most people are even less aware. It is exactly analogous to the climate crisis in the natural world, and its consequences are just as serious. This is a crisis of human resources.

We are all born with tremendous capacities, but our systems of education and work squander many of our best talents and those of our children. Fixing all of this isn’t just about improving the quality of the arts; but like the canary in the mineshaft, the health of the arts in schools is a good sign of the overall atmosphere in education that students are breathing every day. When the arts in schools are sick, there are serious long-term consequences for the quality of individual lives, for the health of communities, and for economic competitiveness and sustainability. Why is this—and what should be done?

A growing library of books and reports all confirm that the world is engulfed in an economic revolution and that the United States is as vulnerable to it as everyone else. This revolution is being driven by two main forces: technology and demography.

The first is technology. Information technologies in particular are transforming the economic and cultural landscape faster and more profoundly than many people seem to grasp. Digital culture has been described as the first genuine generation gap since rock and roll, and I think it is. Children and teenagers are living now in a different world from their parents. They network, communicate, and create online in ways that many adults don’t really understand and often fear. The next five, 10, 20 years will see even more profound changes that may divide our children technologically from their children.

We’re all impressed by the huge advances in computing power in the last 50 years and doubtless walk with an extra spring in our step if we’ve bought an iPhone. But the real revolution in information systems has yet to hit us. I’m told that the most powerful computer on earth currently has the processing power of the brain of a cricket. In the near future, the most powerful computers will have the processing power of a six-month-old human child. At that point, we will cross an historic threshold: computers will then be capable of learning.

I asked a prominent computer designer what that means. He said it means that they will be able to rewrite their own operating systems in the light of their ‘experiences.’ The next step could be a merging of information systems with human consciousness. How’s that going to feel? It may sound improbable, but 30 years ago the only person with anything approaching an iPhone was Captain Kirk.

The second main driver is demography. In the last 200 years, the population of the earth has risen from one billion to six billion. Half of that growth has been in the last 30 years. Most of it is not in the established industrialized economies but in Asia, the Middle East, and the so-called emergent economies. The birthrate within the traditional populations of Western Europe, the United States, and Japan is mostly declining. The growth in those populations is mainly through patterns of migration. The population of the United States just passed the 300 million mark, mainly as a result of migration from South America. The Asian and Hispanic economies in the United States are growing now at a faster rate than the U.S. economy as a whole.

In every way, technological innovations and demographic changes are interacting in ways that make the present tumultuous and the future unknowable. The economic challenge everywhere is to maintain competitiveness and prosperity in a world where the nature of work, the sources of wealth, and the supply of labor are being transformed week by week. The challenge to the United States is not just the availability of cheap manual labor in other parts of the world. The United States is competing with highly educated and skilled intellectual labor, which is also less expensive at the moment.
It would be wrong to think that these skills are only linear and routine and that other regions are creative deserts—they are not. There is huge creative talent in and moving toward China and India. There are major economic challenges emerging in Russia, the Middle East, and other parts of Southeast Asia and South America. There is no doubt that the United States and Western Europe have an enormous, historic advantage in creativity and innovation over many other parts of the world. But the gap is closing every day.

This global revolution is not only economic: it is also cultural. We are living in a world of explosive population growth, of unprecedented social mobility, and of instant access to information and ideas. All of this is raising profound questions of identity, values, and purposes. Globalization is usually thought of as a process of homogenization, and in many ways things are becoming more alike wherever you go: a Starbucks on every corner, the same hotel chains in every city give or take the room service menu, the same fast-food stores and iconic clotheslines. But all of this is a little deceptive.

There is also a powerful counter-trend toward localization—toward the reassertion of national, regional, and local identities. As globalization gathers speed, questions of cultural identity are resurgent everywhere. The French are in no rush to stop being French. For the first time in modern history, the United Kingdom is arranged in regional assemblies. And the Americans aren’t giving up on being American. Instead, we all exist, like Russian dolls, in increasingly complex cultural layers. These issues of identity are potentially corrosive, as we’re seeing continually in the Middle East and in other deep-seated regional conflicts and in Western responses to them.

One of the great ironies is that we are now more connect-ed technologically with other cultures than at any other time in human history, but there seems to be little gain in cultural tolerance and understanding. The issues are urgent. If we’re to have a chance of economic sustainability and cultural stability—as nations and as a species—we have to address how we use and care for the earth’s natural resources. We also have to think differently about ourselves and each other and make much better use of our human resources. In particular, we have to focus on developing the abilities we now need most of all: imagination, creativity, and innovation.

I think of creativity as the process of having original ideas that have value. There are many misconceptions about creativity. One is that only special people are creative. It isn’t true. We are all born with tremendous creative capacities. What is true is that relatively few people seem to discover and cultivate them fully. A second misconception is that creativity is about special things, like the arts. This isn’t true either. Creativity is possible in every area of human activity. Some of the most creative people I know are scientists and mathematicians. What is true is that the processes of creativity have common features in every field. Some of the most creative ideas come from dynamic interactions between different ways of thinking. There is a lot of art in science and lot of science in art. Creativity is about making connections. One of the most important connections we have to make is to see that economic and cultural growth and sustainability are intimately related.

The third misconception is that you’re either creative or you’re not and there’s not much that can be done about it. The fact is that a huge amount can be done to cultivate creative abilities. It’s to do with providing the right conditions for growth. Providing these conditions is one of the main challenges for education and for arts policy. Our current systems of education do not provide these conditions and they were never intended to. They were designed in the 18th and 19th centuries primarily to meet the needs of the industrial revolution. In almost every way they are out of step with the technological and economic imperatives of the 21st century.

The real problem that confronts the arts in education lies in the dominant assumptions about the purposes and nature of education that are rooted in industrialism and in the intellectual traditions of the Enlightenment. One illustration is the hierarchy of subjects in schools, which is being reinforced by the current programs of reform. At the top are languages, math, and sciences; then come the humanities; and at the bottom, the arts.

There are two reasons for this hierarchy. The first is economic. There is an assumption that math, languages, and sciences are more important for national economic development than the arts. The second reason is cultural. There is an assumption that education is really about developing academic ability and that the arts are not really academic. For both reasons, the arts suffer when budgets tighten and when conversation turns into economic competitiveness.
The most significant national reform program in U.S. education is the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and its effects on the arts are a powerful example of the problem we face. NCLB was introduced to address issues of economic competition by raising standards in public education. The jury is still out on the benefits and achievements of NCLB. From the point of view of the arts in schools, the impact has often been negative.

One report claims that more than 70 percent of schools have cut back or eliminated arts programs entirely as the direct result of NCLB. I doubt that earnest politicians sat in smoke-filled rooms in Congress plotting the end of painting in schools. The collapse of the arts may not have been intended, but it was inevitable.

It happens because policymakers are focused on promoting standards in the subjects they think are more important, especially languages, math, and sciences. The arts aren’t victims of a deliberate assault, but of collateral damage. NCLB recognizes that math and literacy levels in the United States are too low. The assumed remedy is to focus almost exclusively on them and to push other disciplines to the margins, including the arts. This is an example of a mindset in public policy that is often self-defeating. I think of this as the septic focus. This is the tendency in medicine to look at a problem in isolation from the context that produces it: to treat symptoms and not causes. It isn’t working, and it isn’t a surprise to anyone who knows about learning.

I doubt that many young people leap out of bed in the morning wondering what they can do today to raise their state’s reading scores. Learning is a personal process: to succeed in any task, learners have to be motivated and engaged. Raising reading and math scores means exciting and motivating students to want to do better in these things, not just punishing them if they don’t. It means engaging their passions and imaginations, not numbing their minds. This calls for a rich curriculum, not a honed-down one.

Despite all the major reform programs of recent years, many of which have marginalized the arts, the needle of national educational achievement in the United States has hardly moved at all. The United States still faces high drop-out rates, low graduation rates, high teacher turnover, low professional morale, and low international standards of education. The truth is that the current system doesn’t need to be improved; it has to be transformed. No country can hope to prosper in the future simply by doing better what they did in the past. We need to think and act differently. The real value of the arts is not in making marginal improvements on the peripheries of the existing system of education, but in transforming the heart of it. To achieve this transformation, we have to do something more than argue the case for the arts against the sciences, or math, or literacy. We have to see the issues whole and make common cause with others who are trying to move in the same direction. We have to connect with overarching ideas and principles that unite those who see the need for educational transformation. Creativity is one of those ideas and so is culture.

The arts and arts education have fundamental roles to play in helping the United States to engage with the economic and cultural challenges it faces. The first is personal. Conventional education focuses on developing particular forms of academic ability. The arts illustrate the tremendous richness and diversity of human intelligence and that there is much more to the human ability than a narrow academic curriculum recognizes. A balanced education gives equal weight to the arts, the sciences, math, and the humanities, and recognizes the many ways in which they can feed into and enrich each other.

The second broad role is cultural. As the world becomes increasingly connected and interdependent, it is essential to nurture a deeper sense of cultural understanding and tolerance. The arts in all of their forms are at the very heart of the cultural identity of every human community. Learning about the arts is the surest way to understand our own and other people’s cultural values and sensibilities, and to understand the true nature of diversity.

It doesn’t do to assume that we all know what we mean by the arts, or that we mean the same thing. If asked what the arts are, people often recite a list of art forms: music, theater, visual arts, dance, and literature. Lists like this look innocent, but they can be dangerous. Some cultural groups don’t think of the arts in this way at all, and those that do usually have a hierarchy in mind: classical music before jazz, or jazz before blues; ballet before the tango, contemporary before salsa; painting before movies. The fact is that a definitive list of arts forms would exhaust the memory of Wikipedia and a full debate about their relative value would exhaust us all. The arts are fundamental forms of human expression and communication. The forms they take are as diverse as human imagination and they are dynamic. The popular arts of one generation may become the high arts of another.
The third role is economic. A vibrant, innovative economy certainly needs great scientists, technologists, and mathematicians and it needs a literate workforce. It needs a high proportion of all of these to be adaptable to change and innovative in creating new opportunities for employment and sustainable growth. But a strong economy needs much more: it needs writers and artists, performers and designers of every sort energizing the culture and breathing inspiration into daily life. In a strong creative culture all of these processes affect each other and raise the whole tide of aspiration and achievement.

Effecting this transformation in the arts and education means thinking and acting differently. First, it needs a theory of change. It’s sometimes assumed that the change for the arts in education has to come from the top in new sorts of public policy. That certainly helps, and continued advocacy is essential. In moving forward, I believe it is essential to broaden the debate and make common cause with others who are moving in similar directions and have common interests in change.

The arts are not alone in feeling marginalized. The major science and technology organizations in the United States are also deeply worried that their disciplines are in decline, and that they are not being taught in ways that facilitate passion and innovation. They are deeply anxious about levels of student enrolment in science programs in colleges and of federal funding and support. There is much to be gained from sharing insights and concerns with these and other professional groups and in pressing for common purposes rather than sectional interests.

It’s also essential to engage major businesses in the conversation. One of the current ironies is that the pressures in schools that are constraining creativity and a broad curriculum are being promoted in the alleged interests of improving economic competitiveness—that is, to help business prosper. In my experience, business leaders are deeply concerned that students coming through the system are in decline. It’s vital to tackle the issues of teacher education with strong arts skills coming through the system are in decline. It’s vital to tackle the issues of teacher education and professional development. It’s also essential to tap into the vast reservoir of creative expertise and passion in America’s huge community of professional artists of all sorts. A consortium of conservatoires and arts schools could help to shape a new profession of teaching artists. Working alongside teachers, they could help to transform the quality of arts education for future generations of students.

Educators of all sorts need to embrace our young people’s intuitive relationships with information technologies. Digital platforms provide enormous opportunities to support arts learning across the country. A national initiative to explore how best to do this would have immense benefits for teachers, artists, and students alike.

In the end, this is all about changing the climate in education and in the workplace to make better use of the human resources on which the economic and cultural development of the United States actually depends. This can
start now and small changes can make a big difference. In this respect, human resources are like natural resources. It's about providing the right conditions for growth. If we do, the growth will come. It always does.

Death Valley is one of the hottest and driest on earth. In the summer, temperatures can reach over 50 degrees centigrade, and in an average year there's less than two inches of rainfall. Not much seems to live in Death Valley, hence its name. But 2004 was not an average year. In the winter of 2004–2005, something remarkable happened. It rained—a lot. In three months, more than eight inches of rain fell on the valley. That's more than four times the average and the most rain to fall on Death Valley since records began more than 90 years ago. In some parts of the valley the rains caused floods, mayhem, and destruction. They washed out roads and bridges. But the rains brought more than destruction to Death Valley; they brought life too.

In the spring of 2004, the normally parched floor of Death Valley was covered by a lush carpet of vibrant wildflowers. All over the valley, a dazzling diversity of plants and flowers sprang from the sand, from the cracks in the rocks, and from the desolate interiors of old carcasses. The display was so startling that people traveled across America to see something they might never see again. Death Valley was alive. The blush of flowers showed that Death Valley wasn't dead after all. The potential for life was there all along. The seeds had been dormant in the arid ground for decades. All they needed were the right conditions to grow and flourish. For several weeks they did and then the sun reclaimed the valley and the vitality of the plants sank beneath the ground where they lay dormant until the next time.

There are immense creative resources lying dormant in our students and in our organizations: in schools, colleges, public institutions, and companies. The current climate of high-stakes assessment, narrow forms of accountability, and rigid conformity is suppressing the very qualities it is intended to promote. The two climate crises we face are intimately related. Dealing with them will need all our creative resources. Jonas Salk once said that if all the insects were to disappear from the Earth, within 50 years all forms of life would end. But if all human beings were to disappear, within 50 years all other forms of life would flourish. Human imagination and ingenuity has brought us all to a perilous place, because as a species we have not thought widely enough about the consequences of what we do. The only way forward is to harness our most distinctive capacities as human beings: imagination, empathy, and creativity. These are what the arts are about, and we risk more than we imagine when we cut them from our schools and our lives.

Sir Ken Robinson is an internationally recognized leader in the development of creativity, innovation, and human resources. Now based in Los Angeles, he has worked with national governments in Europe and Asia, with international agencies, Fortune 500 companies, and nonprofit corporations. Robinson has worked with some of the world's leading cultural organizations, including including the Royal Shakespeare Company, Sir Paul McCartney's Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, the Royal Ballet, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, the European Commission, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the J. Paul Getty Trust, and the Education Commission of the States. He was professor of education at the University of Warwick in England for 10 years and is now professor emeritus.

In 1998, Robinson led a national commission on creativity, education, and the economy for the U.K. government, bringing together leading business people, scientists, artists, and educators. His report, “All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education” was published to huge acclaim. The London Times said: “This report raises some of the most important issues facing business in the 21st century. It should have every CEO and human resources director thumping the table and demanding action.” He was the central figure in developing a strategy for creative and economic development as part of the peace process in Northern Ireland, working with the ministers for training, education enterprise, and culture. The resulting blueprint for change, Unlocking Creativity, was adopted by politicians of all parties and by business, education, and cultural leaders across the province.

He speaks to audiences throughout the world on the creative challenges facing business and education in the new global economies. His latest book, Out of Our Minds: Learning to Be Creative, is described by Director magazine as “a truly mind opening analysis of why we don’t get the best out of people at a time of punishing change.” John Cleese said, “Ken Robinson writes brilliantly about the different ways in which creativity is undervalued and ignored in Western culture and especially in our educational systems.” In 2005, he was named as one of Time/Fortune/CNN's Principal Voices. In 2003, he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for services to the arts.
The National Arts Policy Roundtable is co-convened annually by Americans for the Arts and the Sundance Preserve.

For more information on the National Arts Policy Roundtable, visit www.AmericansForTheArts.org/go/PolicyRoundtable.

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Planning for Success

The Fresno County Office of Education offers assistance in strategic planning for schools and districts who would like to assess and enhance their arts education programs. This training is based on the Institute for Cultural Affairs model adopted by the California Alliance for Arts Education. Following are important documents that can assist in the planning process.
I. ADVANCING ARTS EDUCATION FOR EVERY CHILD IN CALIFORNIA

Start where you are.
Just as children benefit from differentiated instruction, every school and every district has different needs, different resources, different challenges and different starting places. Perhaps 90 percent of your students speak a language other than English as their first language; perhaps your district is composed of small schools in isolated rural locations; perhaps you live in an area rich in artists and cultural resources; or perhaps the nearest bookstore is several hours away.

All of the districts and schools cited in this guide started somewhere and built upon what they had. Begin by taking a reality snapshot: What do you currently have in the way of existing programs, facilities, equipment, human resources and community resources?

Establish a clear vision.
Districts need to establish a vision for the role of arts education in supporting student learning and development that involves all stakeholders in order to ensure that all students have opportunities to experience quality learning in every school, every day. The vision will reinforce the values and priorities of the community and serve as a mechanism to build consensus, enthusiasm, and endorsement among stakeholders. Stakeholders include teachers (classroom and arts specialists), administrators (site-based and district level), superintendent/assistant superintendent(s), parents, students, community business leaders, artists and representatives of arts organizations, school board members and representatives from higher education.

The vision must:
- Reflect the values of educators, parents, students and the business community
- Enable the creation of a plan
- Inform policies and practices that support teaching and learning in the arts
- Include the skills, knowledge and dispositions that stakeholders agree every student needs in order to be successful in school today

A suggested process for creating a vision includes the following:
- Ask people what matters most to them in their school, district, county
- Collect their ideas in short phrases
- Group them by common ideas
- Determine what is each grouping is about
- Appoint a committee to craft the vision for group review based on the ideas expressed

Move from vision to policy-driven planning:
Your district’s vision reflects the values, assets, needs and capacity of your community. Policy preserves that vision, legitimates the values and priorities that inform it, and establishes a formal structure of accountability for its realization. Sound policy formalizes and institutionalizes the district-wide arts education vision as a commitment to moving beyond ideals to reality. For example, some district leaders
articulate a commitment to arts education, but not all districts have formally adopted the California Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards (VAPA content standards). A commitment to staff development that supports the innovation methods emerging from arts teaching and learning might be another significant policy element. The move from vision to policy is just one example of showing your district’s readiness to move from ideals to actions, and will increase the district’s credibility with community stakeholders and potential partners and funders.

Just as district visions vary according to local needs, resources and priorities, there is no single template for arts education policies. However, district leaders can be guided by existing policies in districts similar in size and scope to their own. For an overview of the range of possibilities and district ownership of policies, in the Appendix are two examples of board-adopted arts education policies; one is from a small rural elementary district, while the second sample is a large urban K-12 district.

“The arts constitute one of the important forms of representation through which humans share what they have thought, felt, or believed.”

– Elliot Eisner, Professor of Education and Art, Stanford University

References and Resources


II. LEADERSHIP ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES and RESOURCES

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

Just as district leaders calibrate vision and policy to local needs, resources and priorities, they also act as stewards of this vision throughout the planning and implementation process, ensuring continuity and equity among schools and preserving the vision of the district and community. The district’s educational leaders hold up the big picture for all to see and with the support of the school board provide continuity of vision and action. Upper level management must provide leadership and resources if the arts planning and programming is to be successfully implemented.

Innovative practices in our schools, districts and county offices of education require rethinking the kind of support educators will need in order to lead, learn, and teach in these new ways. The Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California Public Schools (VAPA framework) describes some of the important ways district leads can ensure a district-wide arts program:

District-level administrators and staff, from superintendents to visual and performing arts coordinators and lead teachers, are key participants in implementing district policies for arts education programs. The first steps to be taken are to complete a self-study of the current arts education programs; gain the endorsement of a long-range plan by district, school, and community stakeholders; and have the plan adopted by the school district governing board. The long-range plan should include the following elements:

- Allocating personnel and instructional resources, including appropriate materials, equipment, and facilities
- Ensuring that the district has a standards-based arts curriculum for Kindergarten through grade eight and high school
- Developing collaboration to support the program with school district, community, state, and national resources
- Securing funding and grants for the arts education program within and outside the district

When educators analyze standards-based instruction, many discover that their classroom instruction already follows a standards-based approach. Students are engaged in meaningful work and the creative process, know what is expected of them, can describe what they are doing and why, demonstrate habits of rehearsal and revision, can discuss work in progress in terms of quality, describe what assistance they need, and see their teachers as advocates and coaches.
Implementing comprehensive arts education programs involves different levels of administration: school district, school site, and classroom levels.

Other essential roles in assisting educators in revitalizing classroom practice in and through arts learning include mentoring and coaching, and providing ongoing, targeted staff development. Each district must have a multi-year plan in place that includes a professional development plan for implementing and expanding arts education and other measures of support.

Key administrative steps for planning and implementation are:
- Form district “Arts Teams” that include the board and superintendent
- Conduct arts needs assessments
- Determine data collection methodology
- Assess strengths and identify barriers
- Develop district-wide arts learning plan
- Create a vision rooted in your local reality
- Define essential question, understanding goal, guiding inquiry
- Determine assessments and evaluations on student learning outcomes
- Tie Arts Learning plan to district master plan
- Develop a policy/resolution for arts education
- Create district arts learning professional development plan for art teachers, classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, etc.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Accountability flows from clearly defined roles and responsibilities based on local management capacities.

Superintendents or assistant superintendents:
- Make ultimate decisions in regard to budget
- Act as a lead advocate and representative of the arts plan
- Inspire district-wide support
- Assign district arts education coordinator
- Request regular reports on implementation progress from Arts Teams
- Report to school board on a regular basis

Directors of curriculum and instruction:
- Communicate with art lead
- Provide oversight of all content areas including the arts
- Coordinate implementation of the arts plan with district fiscal, materials adoption and other appropriate administrators
- Determine communication with all principals regarding policies and practices in arts education and district-wide professional development offerings
- Maintain continuity among the arts disciplines and other subject areas
- Maintain connection between the arts and various district initiatives (reading programs, interventions, school improvement strategies)
- Provide insight and motivation for arts integration programming as well as arts instruction in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts
- Represent the perspective of the generalist and single subject content teachers
District visual and performing arts coordinator/managers:
- Provide oversight for district arts program, structure and process
- Manage budgets and contracts for arts learning personnel and partnerships
- Coordinate and communicates between district’s executive instructional leadership and district arts learning leadership
- Provide overall supervision and management of arts learning programming and personnel.
- Ensure infrastructure is in place to provide high quality arts instruction in the district
- Monitor and audits arts learning resources and partnerships for, and to, school sites
- Oversee district arts education master plan implementation

“The East Whittier City School District feels fortunate to have the resources of the Arts4All program to assist us and we develop ways to bring back the Arts to our school curriculum, even during these very difficult financial times. We believe that a good arts education program will greatly benefit all of our students and is one of our strategies to help improve student learning and get us out of our NCLB Program Improvement status.”

– Joe Gillentine, Superintendent
East Whittier City School District, Los Angeles County

“An appreciation of the arts, and their importance to students, schools, and communities, is absolutely essential in any discussion of educational leadership. The arts foster creative thinking, problem-solving, individual responsibility and self-esteem. Those are building blocks for successful lives, regardless of the eventual field of endeavor, and they are just the beginning of the long list of benefits the arts provide”

– Dr. Randolph Ward, Superintendent of Schools
San Diego County Office of Education

References and Resources


* See Appendices H. District Arts Education Plan Example, J. Stages of District Planning and I. District Arts Plan: Component, Content, Format
SCHOOL BOARD LEADERSHIP

As the governing bodies of local education agencies, school boards play an essential role in promoting arts learning in California’s public schools and communities. School boards have statutory responsibility to adopt local policies to carry out the state mandate to ensure that high-quality, equitable education is made available to every child in California. School board members serve as active participants in their communities as educators, administrators, business leaders, parents, and concerned citizens. County and district school board members are elected officials with direct contact to the public.

It is important for school leaders to establish a strong relationship with their boards. For example, the California Arts and Music Block Grant legislation requires that a plan for distribution of funds be presented to the school board. This is an important opportunity for districts to think about how they will support schools in developing skills, knowledge and ability in teaching the arts. This new funding provides an opportunity for districts leaders to work with school board members on for a shared vision of every child’s access to arts learning.

Here are some tips for fostering strong arts advocacy within school boards:

• Bring teachers, students and families to share how the arts are making a difference in student success
• Provide opportunities for school board members to learn how the arts impact school and community relationships
• Invite school board members to visit schools and observe learning in the arts firsthand
• Ask school boards to adopt resolutions and policies in support of arts education
• Make presentations regarding content of the arts, providing examples of how arts content is both discrete and integrated providing examples of student achievement
• Invite school board members to chair district arts teams or working committees
• Provide monthly updates to board members on key arts related issues/topics
• Provide opportunities for board members to connect with leaders in the greater arts and business community

The relationship between district and board leaders is one of interdependence. District leaders should communicate with their boards throughout the visioning process to build advocacy through the policy development and planning phases. District leaders should be clear on the board’s complementary and supportive role in establishing arts education plans.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School boards can support arts education in the following ways:

• Establish a district wide education policy that identifies and funds the arts as a key component in a complete education
• Allocate a percentage of the district’s general operating budget to arts education instruction, staff, and resources
• Foster partnerships with local and state arts agencies and cultural institutions in an effort to broaden support and resources
• Advocate for arts education within the community
• Adopt the VAPA content standards
• Facilitate a public review of the arts education plan

References and Resources


More information on developing arts education policies from the California School Boards Association may be found at: http://www.csba.org/Services/Services/GovernanceTechnology/GAMUTOline.aspx.

* See Appendix B. Sample Arts Education Policies
SCHOOL SITE LEADERSHIP

School site leaders play an instrumental role in setting the course for how arts learning objectives set out in vision and policy are actually achieved, one school at a time. School site leaders can be principals, assistant principals, curriculum instruction specialists, perhaps the arts lead teachers – again, this will be determined by the size and staffing structure of individual districts and schools. Site leaders take on the challenges of maintaining high-fidelity implementation of district-wide policies and monitoring quality control on a site-by-site basis, all the while accommodating the idiosyncrasies of the individual school, its resources, staff, location, and other variables.

Strong school site leadership should foster open and honest discussion about challenges as much as accomplishments. Creating a safe and open environment for frank discussion ensures a feedback loop that informs ongoing methodology and program improvements. The role site leaders play in documenting and sharing lessons learned is invaluable in helping check arts learning theories with arts learning practices, and is thus critical to our work in maintaining the highest quality of programming as districts and county offices of education bring their programs to scale.

The school community, as well as district administration, should be involved in reflective and direct conversations about learning in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts as it relates to school wide goals. Clarifying and articulating what the school is trying to achieve for students overall will help direct arts learning at desired student outcomes.

School site leaders monitor the quality of teaching that is occurring in the arts, engages in classroom observation, and maintains clarity in regard to the roles, relationships, expectations and development of the program over time. An effective school site leader understands the flexibility required to be reflective in adapting the plan to accommodate needs and obstacles.

Site leaders with successful arts education programs collaborate to do the following:

• Create a school environment that fosters equity and honors diverse cultural arts backgrounds and experiences
• Create school-wide arts learning plan that aligns with overall school master plan
• Identify school arts lead teacher(s)
• Make a professional development plan that aligns with school and district goals
• Allocate ongoing professional development time
• Provide opportunities for teachers to make arts learning visible and share student achievements
• Establish partnerships with community arts organizations and arts practitioners
The following excerpt from the VAPA Framework characterizes some of the important ways a site leader can ensure a school-wide arts program:

Although site administrators are not required to be arts experts, they must be advocates for the arts. Accordingly, they must know the content standards and understand the connection between the visual and performing arts standards and the five strands that connect instruction and content (see Chapter 1). Site administrators must work with school staff members, parents, and the community to set a plan in motion that includes broad-based representation and participation and ensures that all students receive a standards-based curriculum in the visual and performing arts.

In addition to establishing a collaborative planning and implementation process, site administrators must ensure that the arts are included in the basic education of all students by:

- Allowing enough time to teach the arts to all students and preparation time for those teaching the arts
- Providing appropriate facilities, necessary equipment, equipment repair, and materials
- Ensuring that subject-centered instruction and arts instruction relating art to other subjects are occurring in elementary school classrooms and that student have access to the arts through appropriate scheduling of teachers and students in subject-centered classes at the middle school and high school levels
- Allowing opportunities for teachers to meet across grade levels and subject areas for planning
- Advocating the importance of the arts for all students to parents and members of the community
- Providing opportunities for exhibitions and performances of works in progress and final products in schools and in the community as curricular and co-curricular educational experiences
- Providing opportunities for community artists and performers to collaborate with teachers in delivering a standards-based visual and performing arts curriculum to students in classrooms and in community museums, galleries, and performance venues
- Providing time for periodic evaluation of the arts education program at the school level

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles of site administrators and school site councils are crucial to the planning and success of visual and performing arts programs at schools.

**School Administrators (principal, school director, instructional leader) provide leadership to:**

- Define a shared vision for arts education that aligns with the district vision
- Communicate the shared vision so that the whole school community understands how the arts will be part of the schools’ curriculum
- Plan and implement activities that support the vision
- Identify and address challenges that will prevent the implementation of the vision
- Allocate resources to support the vision by setting clear expectations and agreements regarding implementation of arts learning in the classroom and school
- Appoint and work with teacher leaders to create structures within the school that allow for the arts instruction, arts professional development and teacher/artist planning
- Take full advantage of district level arts leadership professional development such as visiting other schools
- Actively and clearly communicate the advantages of arts learning to parents, other administrators and teachers
- Work with staff to create opportunities for parents to have arts experiences with their children during school events
- Ensure opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development including time for planning and collaboration between teachers/arts specialists/teaching artists
Lead teachers for the arts and arts specialist teachers:
In addition to the school site administrator, other leaders play a significant role in implementing arts education programs. Lead teachers for the arts (who may not be arts teachers); arts specialist teachers; arts department chairs; and other designated curriculum leaders all help to implement arts learning in many important ways:

• Provide general coordination and support development of the arts learning programming
• Provide expertise in arts learning to the school community through professional development and classroom instruction in and through the arts
• Serve as school arts communication coordinator
• Order arts supplies and equipment
• Assists in identifying and coordinating teaching artists
• Provide program orientation about the arts plan for the year to members of the school staff
• Create opportunities for arts learning planning sessions and professional development

Arts Education Coaches:
An arts coach can be an artist, a retired arts specialist teacher, or an arts consultant from an arts organization or college/university. The role of the arts coach is to serve as an arts resource for the school which can include providing whole staff professional development and collaboration with staff on various projects as well as individualized attention for teachers as they develop their own skills in planning and implementing arts learning in the classroom. Typically, they work with school leadership to support instructional strategies, reflection, and investigation of resources for arts and arts integration programs and activities.

Arts Coaches:
• Facilitate staff collaborations across disciplines
• Meet regularly with school leadership to ensure arts education is aimed at the school’s overall goals
• Support teachers in learning how to teach the arts
• Introduce vocabulary and demonstrate how to use arts tools, materials and techniques
• Meet regularly with lead and classroom teachers to review instructional plan for the year and discuss discrete arts learning and curricular integration with the arts.
• Observe classroom teachers during arts instruction and provide feedback

References and Resources

Provides solid evidence that the arts are critical to school reform and that they give students a sense of worth based in accomplishment, and a sense of community based in shared striving.

Creative Collaborations: Teachers and Artists in the Classroom, Pre-K through Grade 12, California Alliance for Arts Education and San Bernardino City Unified School District. www.caae@artsed411.org.
This publication provides a framework for effective collaboration between artists and teachers, for the benefit of their students.

Introduces descriptions of practice (DOPs) developed to enhance the usefulness of research-based leadership standards, including the widely used California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSELS).
The teacher, having direct contact with his/her students, has the most important role in providing standards-based arts instruction. While arts instruction and delivery varies depending on the background and training of the teacher, he/she has the responsibility to meet the needs of all students through various delivery models. Dance, music, theatre, and visual arts can be taught during the school day using a variety of approaches. Some of these approaches include the following:

### Teaching the discrete arts discipline.
Students learn the methods and techniques of the arts disciplines through active practice, creation and expression. In quality standards-based arts classrooms students read, research, communicate, reflect and critique the artistic process. Students understand the historical contexts of art works and cultural contributions of individual artists.

### Integration with other core subjects.
In arts integrated instruction there is clarity about disciplinary learning goals in the arts and in other content areas. Instruction is designed to integrate standards-based learning in both the arts and non-arts content areas. Students are making and creating in and through the arts in disciplinary ways that develop, deepen and demonstrate their learning in other content areas.

### Differentiated instruction to access non-arts content.
Arts learning instructional strategies provide teachers with multiple ways to engage students across all content areas. In differentiated instruction, students have multiple options for taking in information and making sense of ideas. This delivery model requires flexibility on the part of the teacher to adjust the curriculum and presentation of information to learners. Differentiated instruction is intended to address individual and diverse learning styles. In order for students to explore and deepen their understanding in the arts and non-arts content, the teacher must be able to recognize misunderstandings and redirect, modify or repeat instruction so that every child can demonstrate progress towards specific learning goals.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
At the classroom level, there are responsibilities for the non-arts teacher, the credentialed arts specialist teacher, and teaching artists.

**Non-arts teachers will:**

- Use the VAPA content standards as the basis for planning instruction that is grade level appropriate
- Determine how the arts content standards connect, support, and reinforce content standards in other subject areas
- Determine resources needed in order to implement dance, music, theatre, and visual arts standards in the classroom
- Implement a sequential curriculum based on the VAPA content standards supported by research-based best practice
- Use formative and summative student assessment
- Work with the arts specialists and/or teaching artist to find effective ways to teach arts content
- Collaborate with other teachers to share approaches and innovative strategies for incorporating the arts into the classroom.
- Differentiate instruction by using the arts to support students’ learning styles.
- Use arts integration to enable deeper student thinking, creativity, and innovation.
Credentialed arts specialist teachers will:

- Implement a sequential curriculum based on the VAPA content standards supported by research-based best practice.
- Use formative and summative student assessment.
- Provide ongoing in-depth instruction and support to students in the arts discipline (dance, music, theatre, visual arts) based on the VAPA content standards
- Act as a resource to generalist teachers.
- Provide leadership to the school and district, such as serving on committees and participating in special projects.

In the VAPA Framework, the following section characterizes some of the important ways that teacher can implement a comprehensive, standards-based visual and performing arts curriculum, teacher:

- Design and conduct instructional activities aligned with the standards.
- Evaluate student work and make fair and credible judgments of quality.
- Manage data and plan instruction accordingly.
- Communicate specific expectations and provide explicit feedback to students.
- Use student feedback to improve arts instruction.
- Teach students to evaluate their own work.
- Be relentless in pursuit of improved performance.
- Understand the community's expectations for student performance.

TEACHING ARTISTS

Local, community based and/or regional artists can be a valuable asset to a school-wide arts education program. They can support teachers in many ways and provide unique arts experiences for teachers, students, parents, and community members.

In the VAPA Framework, the following section describes some how visiting artists contribute to the school's visual and performing arts program:

Guest artists and artists-in-residence can be an important part of a school's visual and performing arts program. In addition, community resource persons, administrators, parents, arts chairpersons, and arts teachers can ensure that the program is well defined and efficiently run. For example, transportation should be made available for students to visit arts venues, artists should be scheduled for classroom visits, materials should be well organized, and facilities should be up to date and safe.

Joint planning may include a provision for including guest artists and artists-in-residence with the school's generalist and specialist teachers in professional development programs. Programs of this kind are mutually beneficial. That is, the teachers learn about current developments in art forms, and the guest artists and artists-in-residence learn how to adapt their teaching so that the students will gain standards-based knowledge and skills. Whenever possible, such professional development programs might also include school board members, administrators, other faculty, and parents.

Integrating community artists into a comprehensive, standards-based arts program brings the experiences of practicing artists to the students, who learn that artists struggle continually to solve problems, improve their skills, focus on meaning, and communicate effectively in their art form. Thus, students begin to see themselves as members of a community of artists who inherit long-standing traditions across time and place.
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Teaching artists will:

• Provide the perspective of the working artist.
• Bring an external excitement to the mix.
• Model skills, knowledge and dispositions of the art discipline.
• Provide content expertise to both the arts specialist teacher and classroom teachers.
• Help provide teachers and students address and meet VAPA content standards.
• Serve as mentors to both students and teachers.
• Provide community opportunities for student and teacher engagement such as participating in community arts events and attending special performances and exhibits.

References and Resources

Blueprints for implementing the content standards adopted by the California State Board of Education developed by the Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission.

National Visual and Performing Arts Standards, ArtsEdge, Kennedy Center. http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards.cfm. The standards outline what every K-12 student should know and be able to do in the arts. These standards were developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations. For a comparison of entrance requirements of California State University and University of California: http://powaysd.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/news/college/UC_CSU_EntranceReqs.pdf

Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness for the Subject Matter Requirement for the Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/STDS-subject-matter.html. For requirements for obtaining a multiple subject teaching credential. To learn more about requirements specific to the arts download the following document www.cset.nesinc.com/PDFs/CS_multisubject_SMR.pdf and refer to pages 16 and 17.

Studio Thinking: The Real Benefits of Visual Arts Education, L. Hetland, E. Winner, S. Veenema, K. M. Sheridan, Harvard University, Teachers College Press, 2007. This book demonstrates why arts education is indispensable and offers art teachers a research-based language they can use to describe what they teach, and what is learned.

California College of the Arts Teaching Institute and ACOE's Arts Learning Specialist Certificate. http://www.cca.edu/academics/aie. The first of its kind in the United States, the Arts Learning Specialist Certificate provides a meaningful opportunity for pre-K through 12th grade educators and teaching artists to advance professionally, and to verify their knowledge about quality teaching in and through the arts.

The California Arts Project (TCAP), Visual & Performing Arts Content Standards. http://csmp.ucop.edu/tcap/. TCAP is the state’s subject matter project in Visual and Performing Arts. TCAP’s mission is to deepen teachers’ knowledge of the arts, to enhance student success and to develop instructional strategies to support the Visual & Performing Arts Content Standards.

Partnering Successfully with Schools Today: A Teaching Artist Institute Three-Day Curriculum. www.lulu.com. A resource for county or district offices planning to provide professional development for teaching artists working with public schools

Factor: The Community
In districts with strong arts education, the community – broadly defined as parents and families, artists, arts organizations, businesses, local civic and cultural leaders and institutions – is actively engaged in the arts politics and instructional programs of the district.

The community assists in the teaching and learning activities of the faculty and students, mobilizes and supports arts education through political activity, uses school facilities as community arts venues and provides venues for faculty and student works and performances.

Formal “partnerships” of school and community arts organizations providing arts education programs to students can be found in many of these districts, and the creation of those partnerships is a strategy a number of districts use. But the pattern of relationships in the strongest districts is more richly textured and involves a wide range of formal and informal interactions among school staff and the community. School administrators in these districts encourage or support an array of interactions described in the profiles, including:

- active parent and community involvement in school arts programs;
- interdisciplinary teams involving arts specialists in the development of curricula;
- arts faculty involvement in community arts events;
- artist residencies;
- student exhibitions and performances for community audiences.

Factor: The School Board
School districts with strong arts education programs generally have boards of education that provide a supportive policy framework and environment for the arts.

Typically, one or more influential members of the board have had personal experiences or education that developed their knowledge and valuing of the arts and use this background to:

- adopt written policies that value the arts as equal to other school subjects;
- support the development of plans to strengthen arts education, then apportion resources in accordance with the plan;
- treat arts education equally with other subject areas when budget cuts are required;
- consider the artistic qualities of buildings and the needs of arts education programs during facility renovation and development.

Factor: The Superintendent
Superintendents who regularly articulate a vision for arts education are critically important to its successful implementation and stability.

Superintendents interviewed for the study generally credit school staff, key board members, and/or influential community forces with assisting or convincing them to develop a vision for schooling that includes arts education. But the subsequent actions by the superintendent are vital to sustaining district-wide arts education.

Superintendents in these districts take such actions as:

- regularly articulating in writing, memos, and speeches the importance of the arts in achieving the goals of the school district;
- appointing highly effective district-wide arts coordinators;
- developing a shared understanding with their district arts coordinator(s) of the role of arts education and providing support for implementation;
- encouraging education staff to collaborate among disciplines to ensure district-wide initiatives apply to and include the arts;
- committing personal time to meeting with the arts education personnel of their district and to representatives from the arts and cultural organizations of the community.

Factor: Continuity
There is enough continuity in the school and community leadership to implement comprehensive arts education.

continued on next page
Many districts examined in this study have board members, superintendents, and/or district arts coordinators who have served in their districts for a decade or more. Similarly, many building-level leaders have worked in the district or the same school for even longer periods. Stability in these formal leadership positions is important in pursuing a set of educational goals, while strong community traditions that embrace the arts are important factors in shaping a consensus supporting arts education.

School leaders told the researchers that consensus was a key to continuity. Superintendents and principals who enjoyed healthy relationships with the board and influential segments of the community had the freedom and time to pursue their educational visions. Demographic, political, or value shifts in the community produce board and leadership turnover, a major problem in sustaining arts education.

**Factor: The District Arts Coordinator**

District arts coordinators facilitate program implementation throughout a school system and maintain an environment of support for arts education. School board members and superintendents repeatedly affirm the essential role of the district arts coordinator(s) in sustaining strong arts education programs and in keeping "the arts" part of a district’s definition of education. Their first piece of advice to their colleagues in other districts is to hire an effective coordinator. They emphasized the care with which they searched for "the right person" – some tapping a recognized leader among the ranks of the arts teachers, others wooing an outstanding arts educator from another school district.

Smaller districts often lack resources for a full-time coordinator but add the responsibility to the workload of a district curriculum specialist or an arts educator at a school. While the approach has problems – overwork and lack of clarity among them – it is essential in these districts as well.

Effective coordinators play a number of crucial roles and provide several vital services:

- They are often the staff member most actively engaged with influential segments of the community that value the arts and are instrumental in nurturing and mobilizing community support for arts education.
- Board members credit arts coordinators with keeping "the arts on the table" during budget sessions.
- They negotiate between board and central office policies and school-level decision making, an increasingly critical role as districts move towards site-based management.
- They often participate with school-level leadership in the screening and hiring of teachers.
- Teachers in turn cite the role of district coordinator in facilitating communication among individual schools and in fostering the climate of support for arts education in the community and district.

Many principals interviewed for the study spoke of early learning or involvement in the arts or of professional development opportunities that helped them to decide to support arts in their schools. Others were convinced by the effectiveness of arts education in addressing specific issues. For instance, principals looking to create a thematically focused or interdisciplinary approach in an elementary or middle school have found that art forms can play a central role because of their complex content and range of activities. Others have found that hard-to-reach students become actively engaged in the arts and, subsequently, in other aspects of the school.

Similarly, parent and family involvement in arts education enhances the overall environment for learning.

For a district as a whole to sustain the successful implementation of arts education for all of its students, a sufficient number of these building-level leaders must personally value the arts or be persuaded by other pragmatic considerations to make them an important aspect of the school. In view of the national trend to site-based management, this factor is critical.

Recognizing this, district-level leaders in several of the districts studied include arts education in the professional development activities of school principals.

**Factor: A Cadre of Principals**

School principals who collectively support the policy of arts education for all students often are instrumental in the policy’s successful district-wide implementation.

The study reaffirms research on the role of the principal as the primary instructional leader at the individual school level. Principals create the expectations and climate in the school building, and their support for arts education is essential.

**Factor: The Teacher as Artist**

Effective teachers of the arts are allowed to – indeed are encouraged to – continue to learn and grow in mastery of their art form as well as in their teaching competence.

The presence of arts specialists in a district’s schools proved time and again to make the difference between successful comprehensive, sequential arts education and those programs in development. What the study found
compelling is the vibrancy that teachers who practice their art bring to an already strong program.

Whatever their medium or métier, teachers who also pursue their artistic life repeatedly told researchers for this study that the value placed on the professional quality of their art by school administrators stimulates and refreshes their commitment both to their art and to teaching. Administrators, in turn, pointed out that the best teachers stay actively engaged in their art form through exhibitions and performances in district and community venues. In the strongest districts, this commitment to the teacher as artist is reflected in recruitment and hiring practices that include auditions and portfolio reviews to assess the applicant’s competence in the art form. Experienced arts teachers in the district participate in these reviews.

**Factor: Parent/Public Relations**

School leaders in districts with strong, system-wide arts education seize opportunities to make their programs known throughout the community in order to secure support and funding for them.

In the districts profiled here, school leaders employ a variety of techniques to engage the total school community in arts activities that create a climate of support for arts education. Exhibition spaces and performance venues in the schools are made available to students, faculty, and community artists. Free tickets are provided to students, staff, and faculty for attendance at community arts events. One district provided free piano lessons to all district staff. Others create weeklong festivals of the arts engaging the school and community organizations. These activities are conceived as part of a general strategy to strengthen school-community ties in support of the district’s general educational goals as well as the arts education budget and programs. Principals told researchers that parents who never come to school for parent-teacher conferences will come to see their child perform, creating opportunities for building relationships important to the school and district.

**Factor: An Elementary Foundation**

Strong arts programs in the elementary school years are the foundation for strong system-wide programs.

District leaders advise their colleagues to establish strong arts education in the elementary school years and to begin any rebuilding efforts at that level. They give several reasons for doing so. Elementary programs establish a foundation in the arts for all students, not just for those in specialized programs or those who choose an arts course of study in high school. Moreover, in some art forms such as instrumental music, a long period of time is needed for students to achieve even a basic level of proficiency. If such instruction is not begun in elementary grades, a district will not have quality programs at the secondary level.

The arts also have proved to be strong components in the adoption of an interdisciplinary curriculum by elementary schools. School leaders find, too, that beginning programs in the early years builds relationships with parents and community organizations important to sustaining their support for comprehensive arts education. These leaders advise their colleagues seeking to reestablish strong arts programs to begin with a major focus on the elementary years.

**Factor: National, State, and Other Outside Forces**

Many districts in this study employ state or national policies and programs to advance arts education.

Policies, mandates, and funding from the state or national levels will not of themselves forge the community/school consensus required for district-
have developed a number of strategies for allocating new resources, many of them based on stimulating a “bottom up” request for arts education funding from school sites.

**Factor: Continuous Improvement**

**School districts that succeed in advancing arts education promote reflective practices at all levels of the schools to improve quality.**

While researchers found few districts using student assessments in the arts as part of a formal accountability system, the strongest districts actively encourage the use of arts assessment techniques for improving student, teacher, and administrative performance. A few districts, for example, use portfolio review for evaluations of principals and teachers as well as students. Others encourage teachers to set themselves a challenge within their art form that will be addressed and assessed throughout the year – composing new music for a choral group, for instance. What researchers observed in these districts was the disposition to reflect on and improve practice that is central to improving artistic achievement.

**Conclusion**

Not every school district examined in this report exhibits these factors to the same degree. But the more intensively the factors occur, the stronger the presence of quality arts education in their schools. A level of agreement among formal and informal leadership in the community and school on the importance of arts education is essential. Implementing and sustaining that agreement requires a sufficient presence of the critical success factors to achieve a level of quality that keeps the consensus intact. The following profiles and case study reports show how this occurs in specific local contexts. The lessons of this report are best learned by analyzing these districts.
Websites for further research

Region 7 Arts and Education Website, www.teacharts.org
California County Superintendents Arts Initiative, www.ccsesaarts.org
California Alliance for Arts Education, www.artsed411.org
Americans for the Arts, www.artsusa.org
The Kennedy Center, www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org
Mission Statement

The Fresno Arts Network is a professional learning community of arts and education partners coordinated by the Fresno County Office of Education. The Fresno Arts Network will collaborate to create equity and access to a high quality arts education for every student, in every school, every day.

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