

The Critical Link is a quarterly newsletter featuring articles and resources on emerging issues related to arts education and promising practices from AEP's partnering organizations.

Message from the Director, Richard Deasy

There's good and encouraging national news for arts educators reflected in this issue of Critical Link.

Appropriators in both U.S. House of Representatives and Senate are proposing renewed funding for the Arts in Education model demonstration and the professional development grants at the U.S. Department of Education. The House would increase the current amount by \$3.5 million to \$38.8 million. It is also looking promising that funding will be made available to conduct the first national survey of the status and condition of arts education since 1999 – data badly needed by policy makers and advocates alike. The House has proposed \$2.2 million for the survey.

The NAEP arts assessment of eighth graders scheduled for 2008 is on track and states are being asked for their participation. AEP again this summer will conduct its own annual survey of state arts education policies and regulations and will attempt to probe into how well those policies are being implemented. (The results can be found in the State Policy Database on our website.)

And Americans for the Arts in its periodic study of the economic impact of the nonprofit arts sector shows that the arts and culture industries generate \$166.2 billion of activity each year, yielding \$26.9 billion in tax revenues to local, state, and federal governments. These data confirm the important role the arts play in the American economy and are a strong and compelling argument for why they should be taught in schools. Complementing that argument are the findings from AEP-published research that the cognitive, personal, and social skills demanded and fostered by learning in the arts are the very skills proposed as essential by recent reports for how America will stay competitive in a global economy.

Upcoming AEP Forum Announcement

The next meeting of the Arts Education Partnership will be held in Cleveland, OH on Thursday and Friday, September 27-28, 2007. We will meet on Thursday the 27th from 9:00am – 5:00pm, and on Friday the 28th from 8:30am – 1:00pm. All plenary sessions and breakout discussions will take place at the Idea Center at Playhouse Square, 1375 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115.

FORUM THEME: Arts Integration: Theory, Practice and Lessons Learned

The complete forum announcement with registration, hotel and transportation information will be available online August 6 at <http://www.aep-arts.org/forums/reports.htm>.

Partnership Updates

The statewide commitment to place creativity at the center of Oklahoma's economic, cultural, and education strategies was the subject of the Arts Education Partnership's latest forum, *Arts Education in 21st Century America*, at the Wanda L. Bass School of Music on the campus of Oklahoma City University Sunday and Monday, June 10-11, 2007.

The Honorable Sandy Garrett welcomed attendees by saying "The arts provide a dynamic that is not present in most academic subjects, and make learning a richer experience. The time is right for recognition of the arts as an essential ingredient of our education system. The business community is particularly aware of and concerned about the challenges that lie ahead for our nation, and very much support the emphasis on creativity and critical thinking."

V. Burns Hargis, Vice-Chairman of Bank of Oklahoma, and co-host of KFOR-TV's Sunday morning weekly show, "Flashpoint" and Sir Ken Robinson, internationally known expert on creativity and advisor to the Oklahoma Commission, gave the keynote address that explored the significant work being done in Oklahoma to advance arts education at the K-12 and Higher Education levels and suggested how Oklahoma's experience could offer lessons to other regions of the country.

Also featured during the day and a half were sessions on the Oklahoma A+ school improvement program, Oklahoma City University's collaboration with the Priddy Trust to integrate the arts into the undergraduate curriculum, as well as the University's innovative use of Apple Computer technology to advance K-20 arts education. Sir Ken Robinson facilitated a second plenary session discussing educational uses of technology and how new means for expression and creativity are shaping the field of arts education. Apple senior education development director, Morrie Reece and education territorial manager, Eric Dawson, as well as student tech representatives were on hand throughout the forum to offer their insight to attendees.

Other sessions put Oklahoma's efforts in the context of national studies, including the recent report: *Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*. Commission member Dr. Susan Sclafani, former Counselor to the U.S. Secretary of Education and Assistant Secretary for Adult and Vocational Education, presented the report's findings.

In addition to 130 attendees representing 22 states, State Department of Education Arts Consultants from California, Delaware, Florida, Maryland, New Jersey and Oklahoma were also in attendance.

More specific forum information can be found on the AEP website at <http://www.aep-arts.org/forums/index.htm>.

Federal Arts and Education Updates

House Subcommittee Approves Increase for Arts Education

The House Labor-Health-Education Appropriations Subcommittee provided a funding level of \$38.8 million for the Arts in Education program at the U.S. Department of Education, providing a \$3.5 million increase in funding for the program. In the House funding bill, the FRSS-III survey will receive \$2.2 million under the Institute of Education Sciences funding. The Senate Labor-Health-Education Appropriations Subcommittee has allocated \$36.3 million for the Arts in Education programs.

Congressional Arts Caucus Sends Arts in Education Dear Colleague Letter:

The Congressional Arts Caucus, co-chaired by Reps. Louise Slaughter (D-NY) and Chris Shays (R-CT), has sent a Dear Colleague letter with the signatures of 74 additional members of Congress to House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman David Obey (D-WI) and Ranking Member James Walsh (R-NY) calling for the Arts in Education program at the U.S. Department of Education to be funded at \$53 million in the FY 2008 federal budget. The program is currently funded at \$35.3 million.

Spotlight on Research

Arts & Economic Prosperity III: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences

Americans for the Arts released the results of the most comprehensive economic impact study of the nonprofit arts and culture industry ever conducted in the United States. The Arts & Economic Prosperity III report reveals that the nonprofit arts industry generates \$166.2 billion in economic activity every year, resulting in \$29.6 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenues.

A Snapshot of State Policies for Arts Education

This [summary](#) is adapted from remarks prepared for the second meeting of the California Arts Education Strategic Task Force on April 9, 2007. It provides an overview of state policies for arts education in two areas: (1) the alignment of standards, curriculum and instruction and (2) teaching quality, assessment and accountability. In both areas of analysis, California examples are highlighted.

More than Measuring: Program Evaluation as an Opportunity to Build the Capacity of Communities

is the final publication of the longitudinal study that assessed the impact of Dallas [ArtsPartners](#). The evaluation conducted over five-years with Dallas ISD, the City of Dallas and over 50 cultural organizations, focuses on design principles used in conducting evaluations in ways that build the capacity of communities to design and improve programs for children and youth.

Cyrus Driver, Education, Sexuality, Religion Deputy Director at the Ford Foundation writes "*More than Measuring* vividly presents the role that evaluation can play in making the case for arts integration, and in building common ground among civic leaders, parents, scholars and others who have the capacity to return the arts to a central place in U.S. public education."

News from the Field

Arts Education Building Steam in L.A. Area Schools:

At a time when regular offerings of art, music, dance, and theater have generally declined around the country, one-third of the 80 districts in Los Angeles County have agreed to provide such programs, and many have hired arts administrators and educators to carry them out. Through [Arts for All](#), the county's blueprint for strengthening its arts programs in grades K-12, more schools are providing regular, separate arts lessons, hiring artists in residence, acquiring more instruments, hiring arts staff, and hosting community arts activities.

Schools and volunteers find a way to teach arts

Schools are increasingly relying on student and parent fundraising to fund art programs. A recent survey of 1,123 California schools found the majority of the schools rely on private funding to support arts education.

Teaching Practical, Essential Skills—Via the Arts

"Business leaders and analysts tell us that imagination, innovation and creativity are the primary skills that will keep America competitive in the global economy. Isn't it strange, then, that the school subjects that best teach these skills—the arts—are still considered the frills in the curriculum? The problem is a general misunderstanding of how the arts engage and nurture the mind." Dick Deasy, *The Washington Post*, June 27, 2007.

NCES Research Update

Researchers will be interested in a report prepared by the WestED research and evaluation company of data relevant to arts education available in databases at the National Center for Education Statistics. The data are from ongoing education surveys conducted by NCES that are rarely mined for arts education information. The WestED analysis and report were commissioned by arts education staff in the Office of Innovation and Improvement at the U. S. Department of Education. Please contact [Carol Sue Fromboluti](#) of the OII staff for guidance on accessing the report.

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Featured AEP Publication—*Young Children and the Arts: Making Creative Connections*

[Young Children and the Arts: Making Creative Connections \(1998\)](#)

Young Children and the Arts provides guiding principles and recommendations to organizations to support the development of arts-based early childhood programs and resources. Examples of arts-based early childhood resources, research, and programs are available in a companion database to this report. The database is available through the Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts Web site at <http://www.wolf-trap.org>.

To order copies of *Young Children and the Arts*, please visit www.aep-arts.org/publications/index.htm.

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