

THE CRITICAL LINK

AEP is a national coalition of arts, education, business, philanthropic and government organizations that demonstrates and promotes the essential role of the arts in the learning and development of every child and in the improvement of America's schools.

The Partnership was formed in 1995 through a cooperative agreement among the **National Endowment for the Arts**, the **U.S. Department of Education**, the **National Assembly of State Arts Agencies**, and the **Council of Chief State School Officers**.

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

One of the major purposes of AEP is to provide our national and state partners with information and research important to their efforts and those of their constituents "to demonstrate and promote" the essential role of arts education to students and schools. Crucial to those efforts is an understanding both of federal laws and programs, but, just as important, if not more so, are the policies in each of the states. It has been crucial to the work and success of AEP to have as partners the state departments of education and their national association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the state arts agencies and their association, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. With their

assistance, AEP annually collects and shares through our website state policies as a way of monitoring progress and to help states better understand how they compare with one another. Now arts education advocates have the added benefit of the work of another of our partners, the Education Commission of the States, which is collecting the actual documents articulating those policies. Coupled with the AEP database, this new resource gives advocates and program managers even richer access to the best information available on state support for arts education. We urge you to learn more about the policies and programs in your own state and to benchmark them to those in other jurisdictions.

In This Issue...

Message from the Director

Washington Watch

Spotlight on Research

News from the Field

Suggested Resources on...

Targets of Opportunity:

- National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Annual Meeting, September 8-11, 2005 in Boise, Idaho.
- AEP National Forum and 10th Anniversary celebration, October 1-2, 2005 in Charleston, SC, Theme: The Arts and the Creative Economy.

Visit us on the web! <http://www.aep-arts.org>
(Past newsletters are stored in the archive)

Washington Watch: Federal Arts and Education Update

This year the National Endowment for the Arts embarked on a variety of arts education initiatives that boost the quality and quantity of arts learning opportunities for youth. One of these programs was designed to encourage model summer school programs in the arts. In May, 25 grants were awarded to organizations across the country ranging from Sitka, Alaska to Philadelphia, PA. Each site will conduct assessments in arts learning for the participating students ranging in ages from elementary to high school and in all art forms. An evaluation firm, WestEd, a non-profit research, development, and service agency that works with schools, families, and communities across the country, was awarded a contract to assist the sites in developing and conducting their assessments of student learning. Programs are intended to meet a variety of educational needs that serve the local community. For example, the sum-

mer school initiative in Tacoma, WA, will serve elementary students with lower academic achievement scores to participate in the visual and performing arts instruction that integrates the arts with math and reading. Approximately 120 students in grades two through four will benefit from the project.

These Summer School programs are an enormous aid to communities during tough financial times when students might not have access to arts experiences as part of their regular curriculum. As this program began in the Spring of 2004 with 10 grants, it has emerged as a successful effort that will lead to the Endowment's sharing details of the learning outcomes from the 25 awardees. This information will be shared with public policy makers and leaders in the arts, and will also be posted on the Endowment web site at <http://www.arts.gov>.

Spotlight on Research

For the past several years, the Arts Education Partnership has been collecting information from each state department of education on their state's arts education policies. AEP has been tracking such issues as standards, assessments, professional development policies, requirements for high school graduation and college admission, and other related areas. This year, the Education Commission of the States (ECS) will join AEP in offering state by state arts education policy information as part of the Chairman's Initiative led by Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee. Governor Huckabee has chosen to make arts education the focus of his tenure as chairman of ECS. Called "ArtScan," this information will help identify policy options that other states may want to adopt or incorporate into their existing initiatives. ECS also plans to

track arts education policy changes over time and eventually to analyze the effectiveness and implementation of these policies. For the purposes of ArtScan, "policy" is defined only as state statute, a law enacted and established by the legislature, or administrative code, rules and regulations necessary to carry out legislative policy and that have the force and effect of law.

This searchable database will be made available in August 2005 along with a brief summary of findings. AEP will broadcast information about ArtScan and its findings via the "ArtsEd" listserv. Look for details and further information on the web site of the Education Commission of the States at <http://www.ecs.org>

News from the Field

Collaborative efforts between arts organizations and institutions of higher education dedicated to strengthening pre-service teacher education and improving communications and leadership skills of school and university faculty are emerging across the country. The Arts Education Partnership has been identifying and convening these types of partnerships over the past decade, and produced the report, *Teaching Partnerships: Report of a National Forum on Partnerships Improving Teaching on the Arts* which is the result of a national gathering of 13 higher education/ arts collaborations. One promising effort that brings together an array of higher education partners in a statewide endeavor has emerged in Maryland under the leadership of AEMS or Arts Education in Maryland Schools.

AEMS' Higher Education Task Force is working to ensure that courses are training teachers in the latest information available on arts education reform and arts integration techniques. AEMS' Higher Education Task Force is working on such innovative strategies as the implementation of a certification program in arts integration instruction techniques. The Task Force has also been instrumental in supporting the annual Arts Integration Institute, available at Towson University, serving communities across the state by helping to achieve the goals of training teachers, both pre-service and in-service. The institute's courses include *Enhancing Reading Through the Arts*, and *Arts Across the Curriculum*. For more information about AEMS visit <http://www.aems-edu.org>

Suggested Resources on...State Arts Education Policy

NASAA's Arts Education Resources for State Leaders
http://www.nasaa-arts.org/nasaanews/index_anl.htm

State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education
<http://www.seadae.org/>

Council of Chief State School Officers
<http://www.ccsso.org>

Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Arts Standards
<http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/ArtsStandards.pdf>

Featured AEP Publication

Name: Strengthening State-Level Arts Education Partnerships

Year: 2000

Cost: \$1.00 plus shipping

Description:
AEP, in cooperation with four of its national partners, convened arts education consultants from state departments of education across the country in April, 2000 in Washington, DC. This report is available in PDF format on the AEP web site, and in hard copy.

How to obtain a copy:
Visit <http://www.aep-arts.org> and click on "Publications"

Arts Education Partnership

One Massachusetts Ave. NW
Suite 700

Washington, D.C. 20001-1431

(202) 326-8693,

(202) 408-8081 (fax)

<http://www.aep-arts.org>

How to Subscribe to *The Critical Link*: send an email to aep@ccsso.org and in the message, type "subscribe Critical Link **your name**."

How to Unsubscribe from *The Critical Link*: send an email to aep@ccsso.org and in the message, type "unsubscribe Critical Link **your name**."

Editor: Sara Goldhawk,
Senior Associate for
Partnership Development

© Arts Education Partnership