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**Arts Education, Federal Support, School Subjects,
Teachers, and You**

AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS

PRECONFERENCE

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Earlier this year, Secretary Spellings was the guest on “Ask the White House,” a monthly online interactive forum through which anyone can ask our nation’s top leaders questions.

- Joel, a 10th grader at a 1,600 student high school in Superior, Wisconsin asked: *“Over the last couple of years, we have had many cutbacks in our fine arts departments. I was wondering what is being done to limit the amount of fine arts cutbacks.”*
- Secretary Spellings responded: *“NCLB is about getting results in reading and math not simply moving students through the system. Many educators across the country have shown that a focus in NCLB on reading and math is not mutually exclusive of the arts and music. In fact, we all know that a well-rounded curriculum that includes the arts and music contributes to higher academic achievement. We will continue to emphasize that point as we talk to educators across the country.”*
- Albert Einstein once said, *“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.”*
- The arts are essential to every child's education, which is why the arts are one of the core academic subjects in the No Child Left Behind Act, alongside reading, math, science and social studies.

While there is much discussion these days of how NCLB has affected arts education, many changes in the national education policy environment over the last decade have shaped and continue to shape today’s landscape for arts learning in the schools.

- In 1994, Congress enacted Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which identified the arts for the first time in federal policy as a part of the core curriculum.

- In 1995, the link between the arts and student achievement was cited in *Eloquent Evidence: Arts at the Core of Learning*, published by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, the Arts Education Partnership, the National Endowment for the Arts and the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.
- In 2002, 62 of the strongest studies to date on arts education can be an effective strategy to improve student achievement and school environments was published by the Arts Education Partnership, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education and the National Endowment of the Arts.
- Also in 2002, No Child Left Behind was signed into law and expanded the federal role in education in order “to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers,” or as President Bush likes to say, end “the soft bigotry of low expectations.” Under NCLB, arts share equal billing with reading, math, science and other disciplines as core academic subjects that can contribute to improved student learning outcomes.
- This year, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and the Arts Education Partnership commissioned “Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement in response to the needs of arts professionals and non professionals alike for accurate and concise information that reflects the current state of knowledge about arts learning and student achievement. AEP Director Richard J. Deasy said, upon the book’s release: *“Cutting school arts programs in an effort to boost student academic achievement is counterproductive. In fact, the research outlined in Critical Evidence suggests that eliminating the arts in schools denies students the opportunity to develop crucial cognitive skills and motivations they need to achieve at high levels.”*

The U.S. Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Arts have maintained a consistent connection with arts education in the public schools over the past decade.

- This has occurred in part through targeted funding for programs, often involving partnerships between schools and community organizations; professional development for teachers and teaching artists; and research and evaluation.
- The two agencies have cooperated, as well, in the data collection efforts of the National Center for Education Statistics, which provide important insights into the status and condition of arts education in this country.

Funds to the States under NCLB are flexible, including those under Title I that support disadvantaged students.

- Former Secretary Paige noted this in his July 2004 letter to local and State superintendents about the flexibility of Title I and other NCLB funds to support arts programs
- For example, Arizona has invested more than \$4M in Title I (Part F-Comprehensive School Reform) and Title V (Innovative Programs) funds to replicate the very successful *Opening Minds Through the Arts* (OMA) program in Tucson schools in more than 40 schools throughout the state. ED, through our Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination grants, invested support in the development, evaluation, and documentation of the OMA program.

It's up to states and local districts to set specific requirements for the arts. All but a few states require schools or districts to provide some arts education.

- 49 states have established content and/or performance standards that outline what students should know or be able to do in one or more art form.
- 43 states require schools or districts to provide arts instruction.
- More than 35 states now include the arts in their high-school graduation requirements, some more robustly than others, but a considerable increase in this state-level policy compared to a decade ago.
- A few states -- California, Florida, and Minnesota for example -- have enacted college-entrance requirements that include course work in the visual and performing arts. In MN, that requirement can be also be met through study of the media arts.

National arts education resources:

Education Commission of the States

- Under the leadership the past two years of Governor Mike Huckabee of Arkansas, ECS offers a national database, *Artscan*, which contains information on state arts education policies in 4 areas: Access and Participation; Standards, Assessment and Curriculum; Teaching Quality; and State-Level Initiatives. It's easy to get to at www.ecs.org/Artscan.
- ECS's initiative, *The Arts: A Lifetime of Learning*, under the leadership of Governor Huckabee, has gathered and widely disseminated policy data and developments as well as information on effective programs and practices in the arts. Through its "Arts and Minds" series, ECS has provided the insights and advice of prominent national- and State-level leaders in the arts and education.

- Also watch the ECS Web site later this summer for the final report of Governor Huckabee's Commission on the Arts in Education, which will summarize the efforts and achievements of ECS's arts education initiative and ECS's plans for continuing to focus on the importance of the arts. The report should be available soon after the ECS annual forum in mid-July.

The Arts Education Partnership -- www.aep-arts.org

- The Department, with its federal partner the National Endowment for the Arts, created the Partnership more than 10 years ago, and continues to support its critically important work as a national coalition focused on demonstrating and promoting the essential role of arts education in the learning and development of every child and the improvement of America's schools.
- Also maintains a State policy database and updates it each year by contacting the state departments of education and their arts consultants or program managers.
- Also make good use of the many resources provided by the Arts Education Partnership, represented here at the preconference by its Senior Associate for Research, Rebecca Borden, who is presenting information about the Partnership's 2005 *Third Space* report. The Third Space report details the ways in which arts enhance student engagement and help to foster a culture of high expectations across the curriculum in high-poverty schools.
- Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination Grants: Known affectionately as the "Arts Models," these multi-year grants are helping local school districts and their arts and cultural organization partners develop, evaluate, and document both the means and the ends of making the arts core in grades K-8. To date, more than 60 Arts Models grants have been

supported. This summer, the Department's Office of Innovation and Improvement will announce a new round of approximately 30 Arts Models grants.

- Professional Development for Arts Educators Grants: This program supports innovative and increased efforts to ensure that teachers of the arts at all grade levels have opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills in the arts -- dance, music, theater, the media and visual arts, including folk arts educators. More than 20 grants were awarded this past year. And among the professional development grantees in recent years was the Milwaukee Public Schools, which combined the resources and expertise of its school system with an impressive group of local post-secondary and arts institutions to serve 50 Milwaukee schools.
- The Department's manager of the Professional Development for Arts Educators program, Carol Sue Fromboluti, is here at the conference. You may have met her yesterday along with representatives of two OII arts-in-education grants from MN and AZ in the "Fully Supported by the Community" session. In addition, Carol Sue is hosting a lunch discussion today; join her if you want to learn more about these OII arts-in-education programs.
- The Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative: The arts are a alive and well as part of the Department's T2T Initiative. Again this summer, sessions on arts instruction, arts integration with other core subjects such as reading and math, and arts assessment are part of the line-up at our Teacher Workshops. In addition, the arts are included in the recently established Teacher Training Corps. And as schools open this fall, we expect to honor arts teachers, as we've done the past two years, as "American Stars of Teaching."

Many teachers who are not art, music or drama teachers have found innovative ways to integrate the arts with reading, math, science and other core subjects.

- This very idea of arts integration is at the heart of Arts in Education Model Development grants that ED is supporting. Many of the more than 60 programs we have funded since 2002 are implementing and evaluating ways to successfully combine the arts with other academic subjects in elementary and middle school.

Integrated arts programs are working. I got to observe a very successful program this last September at the Newton D. Baker School of Arts in Cleveland. This school was also featured in the Third Space report I mentioned earlier.

- One of only 295 schools nationally to be recognized as a 2005 NCLB Blue Ribbon school. Students meeting or exceeding reading and math scores consistently beat district (Cleveland Municipal Schools) and state scores.
- The Baker School is a kindergarten through grade five arts magnet school with a lottery-based admission system on the west side of Cleveland, Ohio. The school serves 608 students. Seventy-three percent are Black, five percent are Hispanic and eighty-six percent of the students come from low income families.
- In 1993, a school principal in the Cleveland School District approached the newly appointed district superintendent and got permission to create an arts magnet school. The principal and a group of teachers had experience with Discipline Based Arts Education (DBAE), the art education model designed and promoted nationally by the Getty Education Institute for the Arts. The principal and teachers used the model to develop a plan to integrate, strengthen, and expand the arts into the curriculum and programs of the existing Newton D. Baker school.

- Arts integration is the heart of the curriculum at Newton D. Baker. Each year a theme is selected, focusing on an international region and its cultures, for example, Asia, Africa, Europe, or Latin America; or a region or culture within the United States, for example, Cleveland, Ohio, Native American culture and history, or African-American culture and history. Teachers work independently or in partnership with the school's arts specialists and teaching artists from community arts partners, such as the Cleveland Museum of Art or the Cleveland Opera. The units culminate in a major event or performance at the end of the year.

In a recent interview, Secretary Spellings said “Providing every child with a quality education is a tall order, so we should use all the tools and resources available to get the job done. In many instances, we’ve seen combining music, art, and dance with teaching subjects such as math, reading, and language can be highly effective. Since every child learns differently, it’s important that we continue to integrate these more creative learning methods because they obviously have a positive impact for many children.”