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SUBCOMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PUBLIC WITNESS HEARING
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CHAIR, ARTS EDUCATION COUNCIL OF AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS,
WASHINGTON, DC**

Summary: Catherine Richmond-Cullen will present testimony concerning the need for increased funding in the FY06 Arts in Education program at the U.S. Department of Education.

My name is Catherine Richmond-Cullen and I am here to testify in support of arts education funding on behalf of Americans for the Arts. As chair of its Arts Education Council which is a network of arts educators and curriculum specialists in communities and states across the country, I would like to thank you Mr. Chairman for granting us the opportunity to testify before your subcommittee today.

I am here to ask the Subcommittee to appropriate \$53 million for the Arts in Education program for FY 2006.

To begin, I am pleased to say that last month, the House of Representatives approved a resolution that recognized the benefits and importance of school-based music education, and I thank Representatives Cunningham and Hoyer for being co-sponsors of that resolution. I hope that what I share with you today will also demonstrate how arts education is valuable and also worthy of your support.

With a 45 year record of conducting arts industry research and promoting access to the arts and arts education for every adult and child in America, Americans for the Arts applauds the Congress for recognizing arts education as a core academic subject and today we hope you will specifically increase funding to the art education Model Development and Professional Development programs.

The Department of Education Arts in Education program, has generated impressive evidence on the best ways to improve overall academic achievement by integrating the arts into the school curriculum. The evidence of improved academic achievement is itself impressive. For example:

- The Art Smart Project in Warren County, Pennsylvania has shown that in rural school districts arts education can be developed through strong partnerships, such as the one with the Arts Council of Erie. Survey research results, through interviews with parents, students and educators, indicated overwhelming support of how arts education transformed the culture of learning in Warren County. Art Smart received a \$1 million Model Development and Dissemination grant in 2001 and an \$800,000 grant again in 2003. Art Smart was profiled in the Department's "Education Innovator" publication in October 2003.
- The SUAVE program in Escondido, California reported significant gains in English comprehension among K through 5 multilingual students, who received the arts-integrated instruction through this program. The SUAVE program is currently receiving a \$350,000 Model Development and Dissemination grant, awarded in 2003.
- Mississippi's Whole Schools Initiative, which integrates the arts into all the subjects, found that participating schools with a high degree of implementation far surpassed other schools in their ability to meet No Child Left Behind (NCLB) reading targets. The Whole Schools Initiative program received a \$1 million Model Development and Dissemination grant in 2002. This program was spotlighted last month on the Department of Education's nationally broadcast monthly television series "Education News Parents Can Use". The March 2005 broadcast was titled, "Arts Education:

Improving Students' Academic Performance.” and featured an interview with an arts administrators from the Mississippi Whole School Initiative.

These three programs are examples of the thousands of incredible arts education programs that are transforming student lives across the country. These three examples illuminate the four overarching reasons why we need to increase funding for arts education in America.

FOUR REASONS TO INCREASE ARTS EDUCATION FUNDING

The most important reason to support arts education is simply stated: arts education works for children. Research increasingly confirms its beneficial effects in several areas, including but not limited to academic achievement. The Arts Education Partnership's report, *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, includes 62 separate studies pointing to “critical links” between arts education and reading, writing, mathematics, cognitive skills, motivation, social behavior, and the school environment. The studies suggest that arts education may be especially useful for students who are economically disadvantaged and/or in need of remedial instruction.ⁱ

The second reason to increase funding is that schools desperately need it. Even now, when the accountability and testing regimens of NCLB have focused schools' attention on what some call “the basics,” many schools understand that the arts are a core academic subject, as NCLB indeed stipulates, that they are essential, and that they work. The Department of Education's first model grant competition generated a flood of applications despite the tiny number of awards. In the years since, the number of applications has remained consistently high, in fact, the Department has only been able to grant awards to between 2% - 15% of those who apply. Increased funding will at least begin to address the demand.

The third reason is with more than 578,000 arts-centric businesses employing nearly three million people, arts education becomes a critical tool in fueling the creative industries of the future with arts-trained workers. We know from published research studies on the benefits of arts education that early learning in the arts nurtures the types of skills and brain development that are important for individuals working in the 21st century economy.

As Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee and former U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige recently wrote in a joint op-ed column: “To put it simply, we need to keep the arts in education because they instill in students the habits of mind that last a lifetime: critical analysis skills, the ability to deal with ambiguity and to solve problems, perseverance and a drive for excellence. Moreover, the creative skills children develop through the arts carry them toward new ideas, new experiences, and new challenges, not to mention personal satisfaction. This is the intrinsic value of the arts, and it cannot be overestimated.”ⁱⁱ

Finally, despite increases in overall federal spending for K-12 education, and despite the substantial flexibility given to states, evidence is beginning to accumulate that schools are neglecting those areas of the curriculum that are not subject to the mandatory testing requirements of NCLB. Daily headlines from Alaska to Florida continue to report major cuts to arts education programs in public school across the country. The National Association of State

Boards of Education (NASBE) identified the threat in its 2003 report *The Lost Curriculum*.ⁱⁱⁱ In 2004, the Council for Basic Education released a survey of school principals in four states: fully one quarter of them report that they have decreased instructional time in the arts.^{iv} This finding was confirmed last month in the Center for Education Policy's report, *From the Capital to the Classroom: Year 3 of the No Child Left Behind Act* when it found that almost a fourth of school districts surveyed reported that time in science, art and music had been reduced.^v

Unfortunately, the shift away from the arts appears most concentrated in elementary schools and schools with large minority populations. We have supported NCLB, especially its inclusion of the arts as a core academic subject, and we believe that the problems facing arts education are a consequence that is very much unintended. Nevertheless, the problems are real and must be addressed. USDE's model development program – with sufficient funding for national dissemination – provides educators with desperately needed information on how to integrate the arts into the curriculum in a way that improves academic achievement.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to appear today and for considering an increase to the Arts in Education program.

Biographical Statement

Catherine Richmond-Cullen, Ed.D.

Catherine Richmond-Cullen is the curriculum specialist and arts administrator for the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit, a subsidiary of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and is the Regional Director for the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts' Arts in Education Partnership Program. Her work has resulted in innovative arts programming and curriculum through school and community partnerships. She is a national award-winning teacher, has worked as an elementary educator for 15 years, and has held numerous board-level positions at the national, state, and local levels. Her efforts in the field of arts education have received recognition from the Pennsylvania Art Education Association (Pennsylvania Arts Administrator of the Year) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Best Practices in the Arts). Catherine is Chair of the Arts Education Council at Americans for the Arts.

Federal Funding Disclosure

Americans for the Arts received \$120,000 through three federal grants from the National Endowment for the Arts over the last two years.

The witness, Catherine Richmond-Cullen, does not directly administer any federal grants, however, her employer, the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit, being a school district, does administer federal education funds.

ⁱ <http://www.aep-arts.org/CLTemphome.html>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2005/01/26/20paige.h24.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.nasbe.org/Research_Projects/Lost_Curriculum.html

^{iv} <http://www.ecs.org/html/Document.asp?chouseid=5058>

^v <http://www.ctredpol.org/pubs/nclby3/>