

STRENGTHENING ARTS EDUCATION IN THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

HELPING CHILDREN ACHIEVE IN SCHOOL, WORK, AND LIFE

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress, in the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* to:

- **Retain the arts in the definition of core academic subjects and strengthen equitable access to arts learning through the following actions:**
 - Require states to report annually on student access to, and participation in, all core academic subjects.
 - Improve success in school, work, and life for all students, including those with disabilities, by strengthening arts education in provisions relating to afterschool/extended learning, teaching effectiveness, school turnaround, charter schools, and student assessment.
 - Improve the U.S. Department of Education's national data collection regarding what students know and are able to do in the arts and the conditions for teaching and learning in arts education.
- **Reauthorize the Arts in Education Programs of the U.S. Department of Education:**
 - Retain a direct, national funding program that ensures dedicated resources to support large-scale model arts education projects that improve teaching in the arts, are inclusive, and leverage the power of the arts to support comprehensive school reform.
- **Conduct dedicated hearings on how arts education develops skills in creativity and innovation.**

TALKING POINTS

- **The arts are designated as a “core academic subject” in federal law.** In this respect, the arts have equal billing with reading, math, science, and six other disciplines. This designation is an acknowledgement of the relevance of the arts in a complete education and means that for federal education programs (such as Title I, teacher training, school reform, and technology programs) targeted to core academic subjects, the arts may be an eligible expenditure of funds.
- **Collecting and publicly reporting the status and condition of arts education and other core academic subjects on an annual basis at the state level is critical to ensuring equitable access to a comprehensive education for all students.** States including Arizona, California, Wyoming, New Jersey, Ohio, Washington, and others have produced significant reports on the status and condition of arts education. Sample data points should include the number and range of course offerings, student enrollment in each of the core subjects, pupil/teacher ratios, amount of instructional time, budget allocation, subject teacher certification, full-time equivalent teacher employment, amount of professional development in each of the core subjects, and other measures chosen by the state and significant in the subject area.
- **Implementation of the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* has led to the erosion of arts education in the schools.** In 2011, Common Core and the Farkas Duffett Research Group conducted a national survey of 1,001 3rd to 12th grade public school teachers and found that according to most teachers, schools are narrowing curriculum, shifting instructional time and resources away from subjects such as visual art, music, foreign language, and social studies toward math and language arts. Two-thirds (66 percent) say that other subjects “get crowded out by extra attention being paid to math or language arts.” The 2009–2010 U.S. Department of Education's Fast Response Statistical Survey found that schools with a higher concentration of students in poverty were less likely to offer arts education. In the 2010 National Art Education Foundation-funded study, *NCLB: A Study of Its Impact on Art Education Programs*, 67 percent of the arts educators surveyed reported that art schedules had been impacted by NCLB. The Secretary of Education has repeatedly identified the narrowing of the curriculum as the top concern expressed to him by parents nationwide.

TALKING POINTS (CONTINUED)

- **Learning in the arts should be among the “multiple measures” of student progress.** Comprehensive national standards for what children should know and be able to do in the arts were created for dance, music, theater, and the visual arts in 1994. These standards provided the basis for the National Arts Education Assessment Framework, which was adopted by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Assessment Governing Board and demonstrates that schools can and should measure student progress in creating, performing, and responding to works of art. The standards and assessment framework are currently undergoing revision to support the 21st-century needs of students and teachers, help ensure that all students are college and career ready, and affirm the place of arts education in a balanced core curriculum. The arts are a model of the performance and portfolio-based measurements envied by other core academic subjects.
- **Arts educators should be evaluated upon how well their students learn and perform in their respective subject areas.** New evaluation systems are being used to evaluate arts teachers based on standardized test scores in reading and math. The U.S. Department of Education should support a system in which individual arts teachers are evaluated and accountable based on their performance in their own subject areas using a range of criteria, including observations, peer reviews, parental or student input, and analysis of agreed-on student learning evidence. New evaluation systems employing valid and reliable measures should be developed and applied in the context of the number of students taught and the instructional time available, and all observation-based teacher evaluations should be conducted by individuals with adequate training and expertise in the arts.
- **Efforts to improve afterschool learning opportunities should not displace teaching of the arts from the core school day or an extended day setting.** As a core academic subject of learning, the arts have a rightful place in the main instructional day. While a complete education in the arts can be supplemented with afterschool offerings, those programs should not replace a complete arts education.
- **Flexibility should not absolve charter schools from presenting a full, balanced education for every child.** According to the National Center for Education Statistics, “From 1999–2000 to 2009–2010, the number of students enrolled in public charter schools more than quadrupled from 0.3 million to 1.6 million students.” With the prevalence of charter schools increasing, federal leadership is needed to ensure that all students attending charter schools be provided with a full and balanced education in all core academic subjects.
- **The Department of Education’s data collection efforts must be strengthened by systemically including the arts in studies conducted on the condition of education, practices that improve academic achievement, and the effectiveness of federal and other programs.**

The Department of Education should include all core academic subjects, including the arts, as defined under ESEA Title IX, when collecting and reporting data on academic areas at the school, local education agency and state level, such as the annual schools and staffing survey. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education should continue to administer the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), known as “the nation’s report card,” in the arts, including comprehensive measurements in dance, music, theater, and visual arts across the entire public education system. The Department should also be encouraged to provide more timely updates on access to arts education using such tools as the Fast Response Statistical Survey (FRSS). The latest FRSS in the arts was released in 2012—the first time in a decade since such data was collected.

BACKGROUND

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, the update of the 1965 *Elementary & Secondary Education Act*, expired in September 2007. An automatic one-year extension occurs annually, as the Senate and House committees author reauthorization proposals. In the meantime, 34 states and the District of Columbia are operating under waivers issued by the U.S. Department of Education, allowing heightened flexibility in administering education policy.

Attached to this issue brief is a paper titled *Arts Education: Creating Student Success in School, Work, and Life*, which is a statement supported by national arts education and education organizations. This unified statement and the specific legislative recommendation one-pager that follows serve as a tool for communicating the benefits of arts education to policymakers at all levels as federal lawmakers begin the process of reauthorizing the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*.

Strengthen Arts Education in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Legislative Recommendations

Retain the Arts in the Definition of Core Academic Subjects of Learning

The federal government requires that a complete education for every child include rigorous instruction in all “core academic subjects”— a designation given to the arts in the No Child Left Behind Act.

Retain the arts in the definition of core academic subjects.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, Title IX General Provisions, Part A Definitions, Sec. 9101 Definitions (11)
CORE ACADEMIC SUBJECTS – The term ‘core academic subjects’ means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civic and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.

Require Annual State Reports on Student Access to Core Academic Subjects

Collecting and reporting the status and condition of arts education and other core academic subjects at the state level is critical to ensuring equitable access to a comprehensive education for all students.

Amend Title I., Part A , Subpart 1 Basic Program Requirements, Sec. 1111(h) State Plans to require states to collect and report annually comprehensive information about the status and condition of all core academic subjects for which challenging academic standards apply. Such information should include number and range of course offerings, student enrollment in each of the core subjects, pupil/teacher ratios, amount of instructional time, budget allocation, subject teacher certification, full time equivalent teacher employment, amount of professional development in each of the core subjects, and other such measures chosen by the state to be significant in the subject area.

Improve National Data Collection and Research in Arts Education

The U.S. Department of Education’s research efforts must be strengthened by systematically including the arts in studies conducted on the condition of education, practices that improve academic achievement, and the effectiveness of Federal and other education programs.

Amend the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Public Law 107-279, Title III, Section 303 to require a National Assessment of Educational Progress in the Arts once every five years, in grades 4, 8, and 12.

Amend the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, to require the National Center for Education Statistics to collect and disseminate full and complete statistics on the condition and progress of education at the preschool, elementary, secondary, postsecondary, and adult levels in the United States in all core academic subject areas.

Reauthorize the Arts in Education Programs of the U.S. Department of Education

The Arts in Education programs of the U.S. Department of Education identify and support successful models of arts instruction, integration, and professional development, and support the leadership initiatives of VSAarts and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Reauthorize Title V, Part D, Subpart 15 Arts in Education, Sec. 551 Assistance for Arts Education, including findings recognizing the benefits of arts education and improving the dissemination of timely information about the impact and best practices resulting from projects funded through the Arts in Education programs.

ARTS EDUCATION

Creating Student Success In School, Work, and Life

National Signatories

American Alliance for Theatre and Education	League of American Orchestras
American Alliance of Museums	Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education
American Architectural Foundation	Literary Network
American Choral Directors Association	Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education
American Dance Therapy Association	Music Teachers National Association
American Educational Research Association	NAMM International Music Products Association
American Federation of Musicians	National Art Education Association
American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works	National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
American Music Therapy Association	National Association for Music Education
American String Teachers Association	The National Association of Counties Arts and Culture Commission
Americans for the Arts	National Association of State Boards of Education
The ASCAP Foundation	National Dance Education Organization
Association of Art Museum Directors	National Guild for Community Arts Education
Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design	National Music Council of the United States
Association of Performing Arts Presenters	National Young Audiences Arts for Learning Network
Chamber Music America	OPERA America
Chorus America	Performing Arts Alliance
The College Board	Quadrant Arts Education Research
Dance/USA	School Social Work Association of America
Educational Theatre Association	State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education
The GRAMMY Foundation	Theatre Communications Group
International Council of Fine Arts Deans	VH1 Save The Music Foundation
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts	Young Audiences, Inc.

ARTS EDUCATION

Creating Student Success In School, Work, and Life

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A child's education is not complete unless it includes the arts. In fact, the current iteration of the federal *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) (also known as the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*) lists the arts among the core academic subjects, requiring schools to enable all students to achieve in the arts and to reap the full benefits of a comprehensive arts education.

In spite of this federal direction, equitable access to arts education in our schools is eroding. A 2011 national survey by Common Core and the Farkas Duffett Research Group of 1,001 3rd to 12th grade public school teachers found that, according to most teachers, schools are narrowing the curriculum, shifting instructional time and resources toward math and language arts and away from subjects such as visual art, music, foreign language, and social studies. Two-thirds (66 percent) say that other subjects "get crowded out by extra attention being paid to math or language arts."

This is happening at a time when parents, employers, and civic leaders are demanding improvements to learning environments to make our schools places where all students will have access to a complete education that will prepare them to be college and career-ready. Our nation needs schools to prepare students to meet the demands of the 21st Century both for the students' sake and for the sake of our economy and our society. These demands cannot be met without comprehensive arts education in our nation's schools.

✧ **The Arts Prepare Students for School, Work, and Life**

As this country works to strengthen our foothold in the 21st Century global economy, the arts equip students with a creative, competitive edge. The arts provide the skills and knowledge students need to develop the creativity and determination necessary for success. Indeed, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills argues that "the arts are among society's most compelling and effective paths for developing 21st Century Skills in our students."¹ A comprehensive arts education – fully implemented as a core subject of learning – fosters the creativity and innovation needed for a more competitive workforce. Secretary of Education Duncan has said, "To succeed today and in the future, America's children will need to be inventive, resourceful, and imaginative. The best way to foster that creativity is through arts education."²

✧ **The Arts Strengthen the Learning Environment**

Where schools and communities are delivering high-quality learning opportunities in, through, and about the arts for children, extraordinary results occur. A study by the Arts Education Partnership, *Third Space: When Learning Matters*, finds that schools with large populations of students in economic poverty – too often places of frustration and failure for both students and teachers – can be transformed into vibrant hubs of learning when the arts are infused into their culture and curriculum.³ Additionally, studies have found that 8th graders from under-resourced environments who are highly involved in the arts have better grades, are less likely to drop out by grade 10, have more positive attitudes about school, and are more likely to go on to college.⁴

✧ **The Arts Can Attract and Retain Teachers Who Love to Teach**

Attracting and retaining our best teachers is a daunting challenge. It can be met, however, by ensuring schools embrace the arts. Having the arts in schools has been found to improve teacher morale, satisfaction, and attendance by fostering havens for creativity and innovation; places where students want to learn and teachers want to teach.⁵ As we aim to improve the teaching environment, the arts can help us retain outstanding future and current educators in our nation's schools.

¹ Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2010). *The 21st Century Skills Map in the Arts*. (p. 2)

² Duncan, A. (2011). Foreword in PCAH *Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America's Future Through Creative Schools*. (p. 1).

³ Stevenson, L. M. & Deasy, R. J. (2005). *Third Space: When Learning Matters*. Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership. (pp. 10-11).

⁴ Catterall, J. (2009). *Doing Well and Doing Good by Doing Art*. I-Group Books.

⁵ Barry, N.H. (2010). *Oklahoma A+ Schools: What the research tells us 2002-2007*. Volume 3, quantitative measures.

A comprehensive strategy for a complete education includes rigorous, sequential arts instruction in the classroom, as well as participation and learning in available community-based arts programs. Public schools have the responsibility for providing a complete education for all children, meeting the commitment put forth in federal law. The federal commitment to arts education must be strengthened so that the arts are implemented as a part of the core curriculum of our nation's schools and are an integral part of every child's development.

ACHIEVEMENT IN AND THROUGH THE ARTS

Position: The Arts Help Close the Achievement Gap.

Argument: The arts make a tremendous impact on the developmental growth of every child, leveling the “learning field” across socio-economic boundaries. The arts reach students not otherwise engaged, bridging the broad spectrum of learning styles. Low achieving students often become high achievers in arts learning settings. Their success in the arts classroom often transfers to achievement in other subject areas. Students who participate in the arts outperform those who do not on virtually every measure. Researchers have found that sustained learning in music and theatre correlate to greater success in math and reading, with students from lower socio-economic backgrounds reaping the greatest benefits.⁶ It is now accepted that the arts play a unique role in boosting learning and achievement for young children, students with disabilities, students from under-resourced environments, and students needing remedial instruction.⁷

Students in high-poverty schools benefit dramatically from arts education. The arts teach children the skills necessary to succeed in life, including learning to solve problems and make decisions; learning to think creatively; building self-esteem and self-discipline; articulating a vision; developing the ability to imagine what might be; and accepting responsibility to complete tasks from start to finish. The College Board's National Task Force on the Arts in Education recommends that, “greater access to arts education can serve as an effective tool in closing the achievement gap, increasing the number of underserved students that achieve at the highest level in education.”⁸

Ask: Academic achievement for students from under-resourced environments should be strengthened by implementing successful arts education models in the schools. Urge high-poverty schools to use federal funds to ensure that a comprehensive arts education is available for all students and to implement the arts in schools to improve student achievement. Provide support for local, state, and national partnerships that promote standards and strategies in support of arts education.

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY IN AND THROUGH THE ARTS

Position: The Arts Are a Core Academic Subject and Must Reach All Children.

Argument: The federal government requires that a complete education for every child must include rigorous instruction in all core subjects – and the arts are named as a “core academic subject” in the No Child Left Behind Act. However, the 2009-10 U.S. Department of Education's Fast Response Statistical Survey found that schools with a higher concentration of students in poverty were less likely to offer arts education.⁹ The results of the study were alarming enough to prompt U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to declare the status of arts education “an equity issue and a civil rights issue,” and to conclude that “A well-rounded education is simply too vital to our students' success to let the teaching of the arts and humanities erode.”

⁶ Center on Education Policy. (2006). From the Capitol to the Classroom: Year 4 of the No Child Left Behind Act, March 2006. (p. xi).

⁷ Horowitz, R. & Webb-Dempsey, J. (2003). Promising signs of positive effects: Lessons from the multi-arts studies. In R. J. Deasy (Ed). *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*. Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership. (p. 98-100). Mason, C.Y., Thormann, M.S., & Steedley, K. M. (2004). *How Students with Disabilities Learn in and through the Arts*. Washington, DC: VSAarts. (p. 19-25).

⁸ The College Board. (2009). *Arts at the Core: Recommendations for Advancing the State of Arts Education in the 21st Century*. (p.11).

⁹ Parsad, Basmat & Spiegelman, Maura. (2012). *Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools: 1999-2000 and 2009-10*. (p.14 & 28)

U.S. Department of Education Arts in Education (AIE) programs identify and disseminate successful models of arts instruction, integration, and professional development, and have supported the leadership initiatives of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and its affiliates the National Symphony Orchestra, VSA, and the Washington National Opera. In addition, in-school and after-school learning partnerships with arts organizations, when teamed with rigorous instruction in the arts during the school day, provide students with opportunities to achieve artistic literacy. The U.S. Department of Education's ten-year review of Arts in Education funded programs finds that, "students in arts programming had better attendance, fewer disciplinary issues and improved on-task behavior relative to comparison students."¹⁰

Ask: Congress must address the unintended consequences of NCLB, as the equitable presence of arts education has diminished in many states, whether or not they have elected to undertake the waiver process. Preserve and strengthen the arts as a federally-designated core academic subject and improve the implementation of arts education at the state and local levels, particularly reinforcing arts education as an eligible use of Title I funds. Congress should also continue to strengthen support for programs and partnerships that maximize the capacity of the arts to reach all students, including the Department's AIE program, the primary federal initiative for developing national models in arts education and professional development.

TEACHERS AND THE ARTS

Position: The Retention of Arts Teachers Is Crucial to Creating Powerful Learning Communities and Maximizing Student Achievement.

Argument: One-third of new teachers leave the profession within three years; half within five years.¹¹ Most affected are urban, rural, and minority communities with large populations of students in economic poverty¹² and studies have found that the costs of teacher turnover can be significant both in terms of finances and student success.¹³ But schools have the ability to retain their best teachers by transforming schools – especially those drowning in frustration and failure for students and teachers alike – with the infusion of the arts into their curriculum. When schools embrace the arts, they can become vibrant and successful centers of learning and community life – places where students want to learn and teachers want to teach.¹⁴ For schools to develop this sense of community and collaboration through the arts, arts instruction for every child must be delivered by teachers with specific and expert arts and education knowledge.

Ask: To provide students with a complete education, the arts must be both comprehensively learned *and* rigorously taught as a core academic subject. In addition to providing students with essential skills to succeed in school, work, and life, a rigorous arts education offers a methodology for learning that generates creative teaching solutions from which all teachers can benefit. Student learning will benefit by ensuring arts education specialists are the providers of rigorous arts instruction, continuing support for professional development of new and experienced teachers, and increasing federal support for the transformation of struggling schools into successful learning communities through the arts.

IMPROVE NATIONAL MEASUREMENTS OF THE ARTS

Position: The U.S. Department of Education Must Include the Arts in All Research and Data Collection Regarding the "Core Academic Subjects."

Argument: Federal law and current U.S. Department of Education policy make it clear that decisions regarding education should be made on the basis of research. Furthermore, as this nation crafts major policies regarding the future of public education, it is imperative that sound research is available on the status of learning and

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Education. Progress and Promise: Ten Years of the Arts Education Model Development and Dissemination Program. (p. 13)

¹¹ Ingersoll, R. M. (2003). Is There Really a Teacher Shortage. (pp. 13 & 22).

¹² Ingersoll, R. M. (2002). Teacher shortage: A case of wrong diagnosis and wrong prescription. *NASSP Bulletin*. 86. (pp. 16-31).

¹³ Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., Wyckoff, J. (Forthcoming). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*.

¹⁴ Stevenson, L. M. & Deasy, R. J. (2005). *Third Space: When Learning Matters*. Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership. (pp. 10-11).

teaching in our schools. The U.S. Department of Education is the only entity in a position to collect essential national demographic information and to guide policy research of this kind.

Meaningful research is needed to determine the status of dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts education. Statewide longitudinal data collection efforts should include all core academic subjects, including the arts – as stated in a recommendation by the Council of Chief State School Officers.¹⁵ In the past, influential data-gathering has taken place in a manner that excludes the collection of information on the arts. For example, the Department's January 1999 study on "Teacher Quality" specifically excluded arts teachers from the study sample, and the Department's Schools and Staffing Survey lacks adequate coverage of the arts.

Another data collection initiative, the Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) report, *Arts in Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools*, is the only Department of Education-produced research report on the status of how arts education is delivered in America's public schools. Long overdue, the 2012 FRSS report arrived a full decade after the previous incarnation went into the field in 1999. This data collection should be repeated with greater regularity and should gather comprehensive data in dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts to provide a clearer picture of the status of arts education. The National Assessment of Educational Progress in the Arts (NAEP) – the national arts "report card" – provides critical information about the arts skills and knowledge of our nation's students. The 2008-2009 report included data on music and visual arts only and did not comprehensively cover dance and theatre. When last administered, the NAEP also did not include measures that assessed performance or learning creative processes. The FRSS and NAEP are essential to studying and improving access to the arts as a core academic subject.

Ask: The U.S. Department of Education's research efforts must be strengthened by systematically including the arts in studies conducted on the condition of education, practices that improve academic achievement, and the effectiveness of Federal and other education programs. To provide a complete picture of arts learning in the U.S., future National Assessments of Educational Progress in the Arts and Fast Response Survey System reports should be more comprehensive in scope and depth in all arts and be conducted more frequently. Longitudinal data collection systems should include the collection of data on student achievement in the arts as well as other core academic subjects. Finally, the arts should be fully covered in routine data collection instruments such as the Schools and Staffing Survey.

¹⁵ Council of Chief State School Officers/State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education, release, "Chiefs Embrace Call for Data Collection for All Courses," December 10, 2009.