

**Ensuring a Place for the Arts in America's Schools –  
an Essential Goal and Constant Challenge**

by  
Doug Herbert  
Director of Arts Education  
National Endowment for the Arts

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## Ensuring a Place for the Arts in America's Schools – an Essential Goal and Constant Challenge

While I hesitate to begin a speech with the long-standing technique of a *Webster's* definition, I think it's actually worth reflecting on what the term *essential* means – both as an adjective, as in essential subject, and as a noun, as in the arts are essential.

According to the dictionary, the adjective means constituting or being part of the nature of something; or inherent. Basic or indispensable; necessary. And, as a noun, essential is defined as something that is fundamental.

Essential or fundamental to what? To life, perhaps?

Consider this quote from Katherine Anne Porter: “The arts live continuously, and they live literally by faith; their nature and their shapes and their uses unchanged in all that matters through times of interruption, diminishment, neglect; they outlive governments and creeds and societies, even the very civilizations that produced them...They are what we find again when the ruins are cleared away.”

If essential to life then not to education?

David McCollough, historian, author and host of the PBS series *The American Experience*, reminds us that our nation's founders, from John Adams to Thomas Jefferson valued the arts and humanities as essential components of a complete education. Jefferson, observed McCollough, divided education into three areas: Memory, Reason, and Imagination: Memory encompassing history; reason embracing philosophy and mathematics; and imagination standing for the arts.

But beyond the imagination we exercise through the arts, increasingly the understanding, skills, and “habits of mind” essential to making both a living and a life are often profoundly learned in and through study of the arts.

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## The Six “Cs”

Over the years, I've developed a penchant for alliterations, and particularly with the letter “C.” My wife, Annie, will tell you it's because that's the grade I received most often in high school; however, I like to think it's because of the “four C's” identified in the Endowment's report *Toward Civilization* as the substance of arts education: Civilization, Creativity, Communication, and Choice among products of the arts.

At any rate, here are six reasons for why the arts are essential to both education and to life:

**Curiosity:** For all children in schools, we must help them sustain that sense of wonder they naturally bring to school in the earliest years. Dr. Ernest Boyer, the former U.S. Commissioner of Education, and, until his death in 1995, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, often made this observation: Children come to kindergarten and first grade asking a single-word question literally hundreds of times each day, and that question is “why?” But by about the 5<sup>th</sup>-grade, he contended, that “why?” is replaced by another overriding question. Do you know what it is? “Will this be on the test?” And thus the search for understanding based on curiosity ends and the one for the “right answers” begins.

**Creativity:** Frank Gehry was asked about his visions for the Experience Music Project complex he designed for Paul Allen in Seattle. Gehry responded that Paul Allen, whose foundation commissioned the revolutionary design, wanted to symbolize the pursuit for creativity inherent in his dream for the Experience Music Project.

To begin his design, Gehry reflected on his experience teaching in elementary schools, where he observed a “snuffing out” of the creative spark. “It gets cut off at about seven or eight years of age,” Gehry said. The school and the system “cut you off from your own instincts and creative juices.” Even though the arts can’t necessarily claim exclusivity in instilling creativity, who would argue with the contention that creativity is the “stock in trade” of arts education.

In *Sparks of Genius*, MacArthur Genius Award Winner Robert Root-Bernstein and his wife, Michele Root-Bernstein, make a convincing case that the creative impulse occurs in the mind before logic or linguistics come into play. According to the Root-Bernsteins, the impulse first manifests itself in the forms of our emotions, intuitions, images or physical feelings. What ultimately results, they contend, is a translation of the initial creative impulse into formal systems of communications – those being words, equations, pictures, music or dance. Thus, to deny a child opportunities to develop her capacities in all these communication channels, enabling the creative spark to become a flame, is to deny that child a *complete education*.

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**Critical Thinking:** The arts teach students how the parts of a work of art fit together, how to create works of art using disparate materials and ideas, and how to judge the quality of a finished product. A former president and CEO of ARCO, William Kieschnick, said; “Those at home with the nuances and ambiguities of art forms are far more likely to persist in the quest to resolve ambiguity in the practical world.”

The nationally recognized art educator, researcher, and theorist Elliott Eisner has identified seven intellectual abilities critical to success in life; among these are:

- ❑ ability to make judgments in the absence of a rule;
- ❑ ability to think in metaphor;
- ❑ to devise multiple solutions;
- ❑ to discern and be attentive to the importance of nuance in life.

All of these of course are inherent in art making.

**Conversant and comfortable with the power of ideas:** Alan Greenspan has said that our country is now functioning in an “economy of ideas,” one in which brainpower trumps brawn. Reflecting on the need for arts education in light of Greenspan’s observation, former Secretary of Education Richard Riley said; “In this age of information and when our economy is increasingly built on ideas, it is a serious mistake to shortchange our children’s instruction in the arts.” And shortchange it we surely do when we fail to give children the opportunities to express their most profound ideas, which are often the ones borne of human emotions that escape everyday words and verbal discourse, through dance, drama, music or the visual arts.

**Communicate using electronic media:** In his book, *Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation*, Donald Tapscott observes that students today represent “an ethos of curiosity and investigation” very different from those of us who gained information from books and television. They are multi-tasking, learning from digital sound and image bites and communicating in the same manner. They use cell phones, create web pages that feature their artistic creations, send e-mails and converse through instant messenger – usually doing several of these things simultaneously.

More than any generation before them, today’s young persons are in command of their own learning and are frustrated at best and turned off at worst when the pedagogies of a past generation fail to compete with the learning culture outside the classroom.

And while we scramble to supply them with the latest generation of graphing calculators, laptops, notebooks and Palm Pilots that connect to the Internet, we must not allow the arts to become the stepchild of educational technology. In fact, the art studios, rehearsal rooms, and theaters may be the most important places in schools to equip with the latest in digital technologies.

Jason Ohler, a professor of education technology at the University of Alaska, writing in *Educational Leadership*, made a compelling case for art as the 4<sup>th</sup> R. The multimedia environment of the Web, he said, “requires students to think and communicate as designers and artists.” Who can deny that in our society – and now increasingly in our schools – text-based literacy is giving way to an art-based literacy – the 4<sup>th</sup> R?

Then there’s finally the 6th “C”: **Correlations** between the learning in the arts and students’ academic achievement and social development. Increasing evidence of these linkages has given rise to debates of the *intrinsic* versus the *instrumental* values of arts education. For me, arts-for-arts sake is always the prime reason for the arts being in education, and the effects they may have on learning in other subjects or on students’ social or personal development are *salient by-products* of strong arts programs.

To discuss these correlations, we have a respected resource – *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Students’ Academic and Social Development*, a compendium of 62 arts education studies that reveal relationships between learning in the arts and cognitive capacities and motivations that underlie academic achievement and effective social behavior. The studies suggest that for certain populations

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of students – those from economically disadvantaged circumstances, students needing remedial instruction, and young children – learning in the arts may be especially helpful in boosting learning and achievement. *Critical Links* and many other resources are available from the Arts Education Partnership at [www.aep-arts.org](http://www.aep-arts.org).

## Actions to Take

Now that we've considered six reasons for why arts education is essential, the task seems straightforward. Three coordinated actions would be in order:

First, achieve commitment from lay citizens; second, establish the arts as central – a core subject – in local schools; and third, win acceptance of the arts by teachers and administrators that includes them acquiring the skills needed to carry out a comprehensive arts education program.

Unfortunately, the task, for both historic and contemporary reasons, is not so simple.

### *The Historic Perspective*

The historic reasons why the case for the arts as essential is not easy to make are outlined in my recent article, "Finding the Will and the Way: 30 years of Mixed Progress," in *The State Education Standard*, the journal of the National Association of State Boards of Education. In it, I likened getting the arts to be recognized and treated as a core subject to the plight of Sisyphus, who works tirelessly to get a large stone up a hill.

For many arts education advocates today, the effort began nearly 30 years ago with *Coming To Our Senses*. An illustrious panel, headed by David Rockefeller, Jr., and comprised of a former U.S. Commissioner of Education, artists, educators, and corporate and philanthropic leaders, coined two phrases still in use today – "the arts are basic," and "arts literacy."

The arts are basic to individual development since they more than any other subject awaken all our senses – the learning pores."

- *Coming to our Senses* report

"The arts are basic to individual development," the report asserted, "since they more than any other subject awaken all our senses – the learning pores." The panel endorsed a curriculum that puts "basics" first, because the arts are basic. And they suggested not that reading be replaced by art but that "the concept of literacy be expanded beyond word skills."

I was among a generation of young arts professionals – in my case the manager of a local performing arts center with a nascent arts education program – who read the report and wanted to take action.

But the momentum of *Coming to Our Senses*, spurred by the personal energy and articulateness of David Rockefeller, Jr. and colleagues such as Lorin Hollander, James Michener, and Ray Eames, was overtaken by events, namely *A Nation At Risk*, in 1983. For many educators, the words of that report are inscribed on our collective memories. We had created a "rising tide of mediocrity," equivalent to a unilateral disarmament where public education was concerned. While the report did

not abandon the arts in education, it's call for more of the "basics" did not necessarily include the arts.

It's no coincidence that the arts were dropped from the regular schedule of subjects of the National Assessment of Educational Progress or NAEP or, as most Americans know it, *The Nation's Report Card*. Music and visual art were both assessed under NAEP in the decade of the 1970s, but were missing in action throughout the 1980s, and, as I'll note a little later, not part of NAEP again until the mid-1990s.

Another loss at the federal and national levels in the early 1980s was the abolishment of the Arts & Humanities Office of the U.S. Department of Education, which had been responsible for a relatively small, by federal standards, yet catalytic grants program throughout the 1970s.

Fortunately for arts education in the early '80s, a new Chairman of the Arts Endowment, Frank Hodsoll, who took note of the falling stock of arts in education and asked the Congress to charge the Endowment with the task of assessing the conditions of arts education and reporting the findings to the American public. A "blue ribbon" committee was formed and went to work in 1986 to survey school districts, hear from a broad range of education policy makers, arts leaders and education administrators, teachers, and others about the conditions of the arts in schools.

The results, published in 1988 in *Toward Civilization*, were sobering. The arts in education were characterized as being in *triple jeopardy*:

First, they were considered a "frill" and not a basic alongside reading, math, and science.

Second, in that pre-standards era, there was no common agreement across school districts, much less states, as to what students should know and be able to do in the arts.

Third, where the arts were taught, there was usually an exclusive focus on producing, performing, or creating in the arts. Not a bad thing; just a limited palette when a more comprehensive approach – one that also embraced the history of the arts, the development of critical judgments, and familiarity with principles of aesthetics – was desired for the arts as a core subject.

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More important than the findings, in hindsight, were the recommendations of the report. Why? Several reasons:

First, they went beyond the actions that the Endowment needed to take. The roles of the Department of Education and several of its divisions or semi-independent institutions, such as the National Assessment Governing Board and the National Center for Education Statistics, were acknowledged and called on to bring research and a renewed commitment to the arts in the Nation's Report Card to bear on arts teaching and learning. Chairman Hodsoll knew that respectability as a core subject would be possible when, among other things, arts education could develop and promote best or promising practices. He also knew that, in the minds of parents and the public, not

being in the NAEP assessments meant that the arts were simply not on the same playing field as other core subjects.

*Toward Civilization* also identified challenges for other players in the governance sector at the national, state, and local levels. The business sector and private philanthropy also had roles and tasks articulated.

The Endowment itself had a substantially new role to play. Since the 1960s, the Endowment fostered the start and the sustained the growth of the artist residency (later called the artists-in-schools) concept and its nationwide delivery mechanism of the state arts councils. *Toward Civilization* called on the Endowment and its counterparts in the states to be ombudsmen for arts education, taking on a concern for and active role in the policy arena.

Equally as important, the Endowment and the state arts agencies could no longer see themselves as only funders of arts education programs and activities. At the risk of wearing out the “C” alliterations, beyond being providers of cash, the public arts agencies needed to be *catalysts, conveners, and collaborators*.

At the Endowment, these roles often overlapped. Multiple collaborations with the Department of Education were occurring in the early 1990s. The springboard, however, was an historic event in 1989 when the President and the Governors announced the first National Education Goals, including one that called for all students to gain competency in challenging subject matter. However, the list of subjects – the “big five” – that constituted that subject matter did not include the arts.



The public arts agencies needed to be catalysts, conveners, and collaborators.

A pent-up outpouring of concern and support for the arts as a core subject was unleashed on the newly created National Education Goals Panel in 1990-1991, as the Panel held regional hearings to listen to Americans suggest *how* we could achieve the new goals. The unprecedented number of testifiers on behalf of the arts had a “first- things-first” message for the Panel: Include the arts in the line up of core subjects or the Goals were incomplete.

At first the Panel, and particularly its chairman, Colorado Governor Roy Romer, were dumbfounded. Why would anyone want to debate the content of challenging subject matter and advocate inclusion of the arts when so much else was at stake? For instance, American students being first in the world in math and science, as was called for in another of the National Education Goals. Near the end of the series of the regional meetings, the drumbeat intensified when the then Chairman of the Arts Endowment, John Frohnmeyer, testified, adding a federal voice to the clarion call of respect for arts education.

The nearly yearlong process was a political coming of age for arts education advocates. Soon after the hearings ended, not only did Governor Romer appear at an Alliance for Arts Education national conference to affirm support for the arts as a core subject, but Education Secretary Lamar Alexander recruited two stalwarts of the arts – James Wolfensohn of the Kennedy Center and Harold Williams of the J. Paul Getty Trust – to co-chair a committee charged with considering what must be done to ensure respect and support for arts education.

The period of 1992 to 1995 was a watershed for arts education. As the special committee developed its recommendations to the Secretary of Education, the Endowment and Department of Education became partners on two critically important cornerstones for the arts as basic. First, the development of voluntary national standards in the arts, managed by the Consortium of Arts Education Professional Associations, was funded at more than \$1 million by the Arts Endowment, the Department of Education, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

At nearly the same time, the Endowment and others convinced the national board that oversees the NAEP assessments to return the arts to the subject line-up. With another \$1.25 million commitment, most of which the Arts Endowment provided, a national consensus process commenced in late-1992 to develop a framework for the eventual national assessment.

The two processes ran on parallel tracks and the managers of the efforts carefully choreographed a bureaucratic pas de deux to insure that one informed the other.

To the credit of all involved, and particularly those members of both the standards-setting and assessment-development committees, the two documents were delivered on schedule in early 1994 – the voluntary standards to Education Secretary Riley and the NAEP framework and testing specifications to the Department’s National Center for Education Statistics.

Beyond their obvious import, the two highly visible discussion processes and the prominence of the delivery of the standards document and assessment framework to the federal officials likely influenced the thinking of the new Clinton Administration and its Secretary of Education, Richard Riley. As the Administration and Congress developed the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, the “big five” subjects in Education Goal Three – the “challenging subject matter” goal – were expanded to include the arts. And, in a fitting symbol of the victory that represented for arts education advocates, President Clinton signed the Goals 2000 Act into law at an arts magnet school in San Diego.

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### Moving from Promise to Practice

In late 1994, the future looked bright – or at least brighter – for the arts in education. Discernable progress was being made in moving the boulder up the hill. The promise of the arts as basic was clearly set forth in the first-ever, federally established goals for education.

But in our public education system, federal is not synonymous with national. It’s a decentralized system in which the states and local school districts decide when and how to install arts programs in schools. Validation of the arts as core subjects in federal law, informed by national standards and a coming national assessment, would have to be met by policy enactments and resource commitments at the state and local levels.

Secretary Riley and Arts Endowment Chairman Jane Alexander recognized the limitations of the federal actions and so convened a series of meetings in 1994 attended by representatives of more than 100 national organizations from the arts, education, go43

vernance, and private sectors to consider the prospects for the arts as a core subject under Goals 2000. They challenged the participants to determine strategies and actions needed to parlay the promise of the arts in Goals 2000 to a reality in schools nationwide.

By January of 1995, the action plan was devised and the coalition that devised it had agreed to stay together and form the Goals 2000 Arts Education Partnership. Unlike most action plans hammered out in Washington and then widely distributed to the many constituencies involved, this one would not gather dust on shelves.

With support from the Arts Endowment and the Department of Education, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) partnered to create an office at CCSSO and to hire a staff, headed then as today by Richard (Dick) Deasy. The Partnership's accomplishments the past eight years are legion. Partnership task forces have issued reports on subjects ranging from early childhood education in the arts to research priorities to student assessment as well as teacher education. The Partnership is probably most widely recognized for research reports it has either itself developed or has assisted others in developing and disseminating, such as *Champions of Change (1999)*, which revealed how the arts positively impact and change the learning environment for students. More recently, *Critical Links*, the research compendium I mentioned earlier, has garnered much attention and praise from researchers, policymakers, and practitioners.

### The Contemporary Perspective – Where are We Today?

Now, let's turn to the present and begin with an assessment of when and how the arts are taught. The most recent data we have is from the 1999-2000 school year, and it's a relatively positive one – in the sense that music and art instruction were offered in most elementary schools (94 percent for music and 87percent for art). Similarly, at the secondary level, more than 90 percent of the schools surveyed offered instruction in music and art. However, the arts palette for schools was much more limited in dance and theater. Only 20 percent of elementary schools provided instruction in dance and only 14 percent in theater or creative drama. At the secondary level, the number of schools offering dance dropped to 14 percent and, owing to the incorporation of theater into English/language arts in many high schools, the percentage of high schools offering theater was nearly one half.

Enthusiasm for the figures of music and art offerings have to be tempered by the percentages of schools, particularly elementary schools, with full-time specialists. In elementary schools, only 55 percent of the schools with visual arts programs had full-time specialists. Nearly three-quarter of those with music instruction delivered it with full-time specialists.

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## *The Effect of No Child Left Behind*

Of course, since the survey in 2000, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was signed into law and its tenets, particularly the demands of student testing in math and reading, are now being felt by the nation's 15,000 school districts.

Among the questions that NCLB raises are what effect it is having on the arts. Unfortunately, all we have at this point are anecdotal answers. And, for every school district horror story I hear that blames test preparation for cut backs in or the elimination of arts instruction, I hear an offsetting story of the arts holding their own or even moving ahead. We need another national survey, and hopefully, based on calls by arts education advocates for a repeat of the 1999-2000 survey, the follow-up will occur in the 2005-'06 school year.

What is hard fact and not speculation is the severe economic downturn experienced by nearly all states the past several years, and its undeniable effect on education. Until two or three years ago, education funding was tantamount to a "third rail" of public funding, particularly at the state level. What had been thought to be untouchable – support for local school districts – has suffered and been sacrificed for the sake of balanced budgets in the face of shrinking state revenues.

Teacher layoffs, while undeniably occurring in the arts, are often times across the board. Class-size reduction campaigns have been moderated or shelved and other cost-reduction measures are the rule and not the exception in most school districts. Nonetheless, it's particularly discouraging when arts teacher are lost, for, as one music education leader has observed, the loss of specialists gives rise to the cancellation of the instructional programs in too many instances, and re-instituting them is often an insurmountable task for arts advocates.

There's also the concern that class time for the arts is being curtailed or cut to provide more time for reading and math. However, strong local policies and enlightened leadership by school boards, superintendents, and principals to protect the arts as essential to a complete education are ensuring that the arts have a continued role. In my home state of Maryland, the state board of education, with the support of the legislature and governor, have set clear expectations that arts instruction, based on the state's achievement standards, will be provided to all students. Annually, more than \$2.5 million is earmarked by the legislature for improvement of arts teaching and learning statewide.

We also know that parents support arts education. The 2003 *Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward the Public Schools* reported that 80 percent of Americans have a great deal or at least a fair amount of concern that relying on testing in English and math only to judge a school's performance will mean less emphasis on art and music and other subjects. Among parents of school students, the percentage rose to 82 percent.

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## Getting to the Top

The case for arts education got help this past fall from an important ally – the National Association of State Boards of Education or NASBE. The Endowment was pleased to support a special study group of NASBE in 2002. It was called the Lost Curriculum Study Group and was charged by the Association’s board to examine the status of curriculum in the nation’s schools, particularly regarding the arts and foreign languages. After a year of intense work, the Study Group came to several conclusions:

- There is a solid body of research pointing to the benefits of including the arts in the curriculum, both for their intrinsic and instrumental values.
- While the arts are not necessarily “lost,” they have been marginalized and are increasingly “at risk” of being lost as part of the core. Example: While virtually all states have adopted arts education standards, only a few have incorporated them into their accountability systems.

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To address these two key conclusions, the Study Group offered a set of 10 recommendations, covering standards for both students and teachers, curriculum and instruction, accountability and assessment, and funding.

Be sure to either obtain a copy of the Study Group’s report, *The Complete Curriculum: Ensuring a Place for the Arts in America’s Schools*, from the NASBE Web site – [www.nasbe.org](http://www.nasbe.org) - or you can download a copy of an article by Lori Meyer from the Association’s winter issue of its journal which summarizes the work of the Study Group and enumerates the 10 recommendations.

While I’ll not belabor the recommendations here, let me highlight three challenges we must meet to get to the top of the hill.

The last of the NASBE’s recommendations shall be first – **Funding**.

The singular recommendation reads: Urge Congress and legislatures to make a greater commitment to the arts. At the federal level, funding for K-16 education in the arts and the sciences could not be further apart. While the support for all of the NEA’s activities hovers at \$125 million, out of which about 10 percent is focused on education activities. There’s of course a hoped-for increase of \$18 million requested by the President for next year that will include added support for arts education. Contrast that with the budget of the National Science Foundation at nearly \$5 billion, of which just under \$1 billion is dedicated to K-16 educational improvement in math, science, and technology.

Even if you combine the Arts Endowment’s support for arts education with funding from the Department of Education for arts education – this year at about \$22 million for competitive grants – federal funding for arts education is limited. However, in the case of Endowment Learning in the Arts support, it can be the catalyst for a needed project or perhaps foster partnerships between arts organizations and local schools. In Santa Fe, for example, a grant from the Endowment is

supporting ArtWorks, a partnership between the city schools and the local arts agency to provide elementary school teachers with professional development by artists trained in the Lincoln Center Institute's Aesthetic Education model.

The National Dance Institute of New Mexico is using an Endowment Arts Learning grant this year to support dance instruction for elementary students in rural communities in the northern part of the state. Other NEA grantees in the Santa Fe/Albuquerque region this year include the Girls Film School at the College of Santa Fe; Fine Arts for Children and Teens; Sweet Bird Classics, a nationwide distributor of *Boombax Classroom*, an innovative radio program on classical and world music; and Working Classroom.

And in the next month, the Endowment will announce 239 Learning in the Arts grants for Fiscal Year 2004, and up to eight of them will be for projects in New Mexico.

The second general recommendation - **Valuing Arts Education**.

From safeguarding a role for the arts in early-childhood programs, especially pre-school and kindergarten, to ensuring a full Carnegie Unit in the arts for high-school graduation, state and local school boards need to value the arts as serious, core subjects. And we need to insure that arts courses in high school count toward students' GPAs. In too many states and districts this is not the case, and the unintended consequence is that guidance counselors (and parents alike) discourage students from taking arts electives. Along the same lines, we need to increase the availability of Advanced Placement courses in art and music.

Include discussion of arts education standards and local curricular expectations at back-to-school nights as well as including the arts in parent-teacher conferences, especially in elementary school.

And here's my personal pet peeve: Include discussion of arts education standards and local curricular expectations at back-to-school nights as well as including the arts in parent-teacher conferences, especially in elementary school.

The third area of recommendations – **Leadership**.

The need for leadership is more critical since it underpins the other two. And it's needed at several levels:

**School boards** – state and local – heed to heed the advice and recommendations of colleagues like those of the NASBE Study Group.

**Local superintendents** – pay attention to the “critical success factors” for strong, district-wide arts education programs identified in *Gaining The Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts that Value Arts Education*, including:

- Support teachers practicing their art and encourage them to grow in their arts as well as their teaching competence.
- Have district arts coordinators who facilitate program implementation and the sustaining of an arts-supportive environment.

- Foster a comprehensive, district-wide education vision coupled with a thoughtful implementation plan that apportions resources over time to reach all schools and students.

**Principals** – Be an educational leader who values the arts and promotes that valuing by your teachers and parents.

Here’s some discouraging findings from the 1999-2000 national survey. Principals were asked: *To what extent do you think various individuals at your school consider the arts an essential part of a high-quality education?* Two-thirds of the elementary- and three-quarters of the secondary-school principals said the administrators at their schools – including themselves – considered the arts essential to a *great extent*. However, the same principals perceived that their less than one-half of their non-arts teaching staff considered the arts as highly essential. And parents, according to the principals, valued the arts as essential even less – only 39 percent of elementary and 41 percent of secondary school parents.

Clearly, the question needs to be asked: If you, as the instructional leader, value something so highly, why is that not translating to the faculty and parents?

With all this in mind, let’s consider where New Mexico is at present, and let’s use the prescription that seemed so straightforward at the beginning.

**Getting the commitment of lay citizens.** The National Overture that tonight’s program is a part of, through its series of workshops, demonstrations, and roundtable discussions of teaching both in and through the arts, is a great means of building understanding of the essential nature of arts learning. From that understanding – on the part of teachers, parents, and the public – commitment can be secured.

**Establishing the arts as essential – core subjects in the schools.** Your state’s new Fine Arts Education Act, with its support to elementary schools, is reaching more than 70,000 students, providing for the hiring of arts specialists, the services of artists who work under the supervision of certified teachers, and much needed equipment and materials. And with the doubling of this support – from \$4 million this school year to \$8 million next – the prospect of extending this support statewide can be realized in the future. I hope you also will look to the Arts Endowment’s Learning in the Arts grant category for support that can further efforts to make the arts a core subject.

**Winning acceptance of the arts by teachers and administrators.** This includes helping them to acquire the skills needed to plan and implement comprehensive arts education programs. Once again, the National Overture is providing diverse offerings of workshops and roundtables to help teachers understand arts integration – the blending of memory, reason, and imagination as Thomas Jefferson conceived of a complete education.

The National Overture is providing diverse offerings of workshops and roundtables to help teachers understand arts integration – the blending of memory, reason, and imagination that Thomas Jefferson conceived of as a complete education.

As you in New Mexico, as well as all of us throughout the nation who are concerned with arts education, contemplate these three deceptively simple actions, let us be vigilant and strong, recalling that these were, in fact, the recommendations of *Coming To Our Senses* in 1977!

For the past quarter century, we have failed to provide the *will* – the policy infrastructure – and the *way* – the teachers, curriculum, and instructional resources – to make the arts a core subject. As a result, two generations of American students have received less than a complete education in our public schools. Let us work together – policymakers, educators, artists, and arts professionals, parents, and civic and corporate leaders – to ensure that our young people have a complete education.

Let me close my remarks with a rationale for arts education from one of my mentors, Ernest Boyer. I had the pleasure of serving under Dr. Boyer’s leadership as the president of the board of Very Special Arts in the 1980s. Setting aside the arguments for the intrinsic versus the instrumental reasons for the arts in education, Dr. Boyer often reflected that we need the arts as basic for our children “if we are to survive with civility and joy.” In our world today, I can think of few more compelling reasons for why the arts are essential in both the education and lives of our children.

Dr. Boyer often reflected that we need the arts as basic for our children “if we are to survive with civility and joy.”

Thank you.

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