

Environmental Scan for Development of AEP Strategic Plan 2007-2009

General Social Conditions

1. Rapidly changing social and economic conditions driven by new technologies and communications systems
2. New knowledge being created and applied in science, the arts and the humanities
3. New modes of access to knowledge and information
4. Emerging new centers of economic and political power worldwide
5. Demands for an imaginative, innovative, flexible and technologically sophisticated work force
6. Ideological, political, and religious conflicts throughout the world
7. Changing demographics and diversity of populations in developed nations
8. Unequal access to educational opportunities and resources at home and abroad
9. Upcoming mid-term and Presidential elections

Forces Affecting Public Education in the United States

1. Public concern over the performance of social institutions including the schools
2. Demand that schools demonstrate performance in measurable ways, currently addressed through standardized testing
3. Desire for evidence-based approaches to school management and instruction
4. Traditional structures and modes of instruction in schools are products of past agricultural and industrial conditions and resistant to change
5. Education is primarily a state responsibility but with a tradition of local control, which produces a decentralized policy environment and uneven distribution of resources
6. Research in the cognitive and human development sciences is pointing to new ways of learning and teaching
7. Emerging concerns among parents that schools are narrowing the curriculum under the pressure of testing in ways limiting to the development of children

8. New efforts are being made to re-imagine the structures and processes of school, some with significant backing of philanthropists, others by community and grassroots organizations
9. Children and young people through media, technology, and mobility have experiences, access to information, and perspectives not well accommodated by schools
10. Recruiting, retaining, and preparing knowledgeable, effective, and inspiring teachers requires new systems of preparation and rewards
11. School populations are increasingly diverse
12. Drop out rates among adolescents and among teachers continue to rise

Opportunities and Challenges for Arts Education

1. Public attitudes moving in a potentially supportive direction – growing concern that the development of the whole child is not being addressed
2. Growing body of research on the cognitive, personal, and social processes engaged in creating, performing, and responding to the arts and the relationship of these processes to other domains of human activity
3. The value of innovation, imagination, and creativity being asserted by political and business leadership
4. The role of the arts as forms of cultural expression and the contexts within which inclusive communities can be formed that evidence tolerance and democratic behavior
5. New interest in the philanthropic sector for supporting arts education
6. A commitment to cooperative and collective action emerging through coalitions and partnerships among arts, education, and philanthropic organizations
7. Growing professionalization of the role of teaching artists and the arts education activities of nonprofit organizations
8. Public interest in experimentation with different forms of public education – after-school and community-based learning, charter schools, magnet schools, small schools, etc., and a concomitant search for new approaches to curriculum and instruction
9. New technologically driven forms of media, communications, and product development that embody artistic skills and expression
10. Methods of assessment used in the arts offer an established and demonstrated complement or alternative to standardized testing

11. Impending reauthorization of No Child Left Behind

12. Inequitable access to arts education as a whole and to specific art forms in the 15,000 American school districts

13. The “shrinking curriculum” impact of standardized testing with effects on the scope and depth of teaching and learning in public schools