

THE CRITICAL LINK

AEP is a national coalition of arts, education, business, philanthropic and government organizations that demonstrates and promotes the essential role of the arts in the learning and development of every child and in the improvement of America's schools.

The Partnership was formed in 1995 through a cooperative agreement among the **National Endowment for the Arts**, the **U.S. Department of Education**, the **National Assembly of State Arts Agencies**, and the **Council of Chief State School Officers**.

The Critical Link is a quarterly newsletter featuring articles and resources on emerging issues related to arts education and promising practices from AEP's partnering organizations.

Message from the Director, Richard Deasy

Welcome to the first issue of *The Critical Link*, the Arts Education Partnership's new electronic newsletter. The name stems from AEP's communications planning process that revealed that students, parents and the general public see the arts as connecting learners to essential knowledge and skills and as fostering connections among young people, schools, home and community.

This is the message that the Partnership hopes to convey through this newsletter and through many other activities. Many of you know that *Critical Links* is also the title of a compendium of research in arts education.

You will learn more about this compendium of research and of its impact across the country. We will also bring you news about emerging research in arts education as a regular feature, as well as the latest news from federal government agencies focused on arts and education.

AEP was founded to provide a network of support and communications for arts education stakeholders at the national, state and local levels. We hope that you find this newsletter useful and share it with others who value arts education.

In This Issue...

Message from the Director

Washington Watch

Spotlight on Research

News from the Field

Suggested Resources on...

Visit us on the web! www.aep-arts.org

(Past newsletters are stored in the archive)

Washington Watch: Federal Arts and Education Update

The US Department of Education has recently completed reviewing proposals for the third year of the Arts In Education Model Development & Dissemination grants. These grants are one of several programs administered by the Department's new Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) which serves to make investments in promising educational practices through a variety of grants programs. The Arts Education Partnership has learned that 211 proposals have been reviewed for the Arts Model program and 33 will be awarded. An announcement will be made before September 30.

Look for an announcement on OII's Arts in Education page at <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/programs.html> (click on the appropriate grant).

In the first two years of the program, the De-

partment has awarded grants to 18 model programs across the country. The Arts Model grants are intended to enable local partnerships to develop and create materials for replication or adaptation of current comprehensive approaches for integrating a range of arts disciplines into the elementary and middle school curriculum. The Arts Education Partnership is regularly communicating with and convening the Arts Model grantees at its meetings to encourage knowledge sharing among the grantees as well as AEP organizations.

For further information about funding opportunities for arts education from the US Department of Education, see "No Subject Left Behind" on the AEP web site at www.aep-arts.org/Funding.html (and check the "What's New" section for periodic updates.)

Targets of Opportunity:

- Full Partnership Meeting, September 19-20, New York City
- National Endowment for the Arts launches *Shakespeare in American Communities* Tour, Sept. 20 in New London, CT
- Full Partnership Meeting, January 25-26, 2004, Dallas, TX

Spotlight on Research

On the one-year anniversary of the release of *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, the Arts Education Partnership posed the following question to partnering organizations: *Did you or your organization use the "critical link" concept and message in any of your activities this past year? How?*

We thought the response was overwhelmingly positive. Here's a few examples of how the message, and the research, is being used by participating organizations.

* An interactive web site is being developed in one state that will support a network of local arts organizations that partner with schools and districts. A discussion group on

Critical Links will be included as part of their communications.

* In one district, the research was used repeatedly to defend the inclusion of the arts in elementary and middle schools. It has also been used in professional development sessions with teachers and other faculty to ensure their knowledge of the findings.

* One district's use in professional development workshops led to teachers creating their own studies which were shared at a subsequent workshop. A compendium of these teacher studies is being prepared.

How are you using Critical Links?

Featured AEP Publication

Name: Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development

Year: 2002

Author: Arts Education Partnership

Description: The Compendium summarizes and discusses 62 research studies that examine the effects of arts learning on students academic and social skills. It also examines motivations, attitudes, and dispositions fostered through learning the arts.

How to obtain a copy: Visit www.aep-arts.org and click on "Publications and Resources."

News from the Field

The Arts Education Partnership is working with Dr. Robert Horowitz, a New York City-based researcher, to write a report examining a series of large scale evaluations of arts education programs in schools across the country. His review of these evaluations will yield insights into the impact that six models are having on school change. These models include: Arts in the Basic Curriculum (S. Carolina); Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education; Center for Arts Education (NYC); Arts for Academic Achievement (Minneapolis); North Carolina A+ Schools; and Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge (a nationwide program.)

In a preliminary look at these sites, Dr. Horowitz is finding some important commonalities such as:

- Greater value and legitimacy placed on the arts in these schools and communities.
- Greater teacher leadership and collaboration.
- Improved learning environments and more opportunities for integrated instruction.
- Improved communications among teachers, arts providers, students and parents.

AEP expects to issue Dr. Horowitz's report later this fall. Check the "What's New" section of the AEP web site for details.

Arts Education Partnership

One Massachusetts Ave. NW #700

Washington, D.C. 20001-1431

(202) 326-8693,

(202) 408-8081 (fax)

<http://www.aep-arts.org>

Suggested Resources on... Integrating the Arts in the Curriculum

Creating Quality Integrated and Interdisciplinary Arts Programs—a new report from AEP summarizing discussions with 13 partnerships having success in integrating the arts across the curriculum. Report and partnership descriptions coming soon on the AEP web site in PDF version.

Renaissance in the Classroom: Arts Integration and Meaningful Learning—a comprehensive guide to K-12 arts integration across the curriculum. <http://www.capeweb.org>

The Arts in Every Classroom: A Video Library, K-5 and Workshop for Elementary School Teachers—Airing on the Annenberg/CPB Channel, the series shows classroom teachers and arts specialists using the arts in a variety of successful ways.

<http://www.learner.org>

Authentic Connections: Interdisciplinary

Work in the Arts - a paper from the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations.

<http://www.naea-reston.org/INTERart.pdf>

How to Subscribe to *The Critical Link*: send an email to aep@ccsso.org and in the message, type "subscribe Critical Link **your name**."

How to Unsubscribe from *The Critical Link*: send an email to aep@ccsso.org and in the message, type "unsubscribe Critical Link **your name**."

NOTE: The first two issues of *The Critical Link* will be delivered via AEP's listserv "ArtsEd." After that, you must be subscribed to receive subsequent issues.

We need your feedback! Send AEP your suggestions, questions or comments about *The Critical Link* by email to: aep@ccsso.org