

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

When over 100 national organizations gathered in 1994 to consider how to advance arts education in America, they concurred with then U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, who had convened them in cooperation with Jane Alexander, then chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, when he said "I can't overstate the importance of (a) national partnership. If we are to be successful in lifting up our children's education...collaboration is essential among the various arts disciplines; between education and the arts; among all core academic subjects...all working together to improve teaching and learning." The organizations

affirmed this in a report urging the creation of the Arts Education Partnership: *The Arts and Education: Partnerships in Achieving Our National Education Goals*. Since 1995, continuing to deepen relationships among the original partners and reaching out to others to advance our collective mission has been a hallmark of AEP, as has been providing guidance on effective partnerships. Here we share three collaborations of significance to arts educators: our ongoing work with the American Educational Research Association; a new collaboration with the Education Commission of the States; and a new venture with a long-term partner, Young Audiences.

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(Past newsletters are stored in the archive)

Partnership Update

Starting this summer, arts educators can look forward to hearing a new and important voice targeting key state government leaders with statements about the importance of arts education. The incoming chairman of the Education Commission of the States (ECS) based in Denver, CO will be Gov. Mike Huckabee of Arkansas who has selected arts education as the overarching theme for his two-year tenure. ECS is planning a variety of efforts that will examine and promote the contributions of the arts on student achievement as well as the arts' impact on economic development.

As a service to its members, who are made up of governors, state legislators, and state education officials, ECS prepared a 4-page brief titled *The Arts in Education: An Arts-*

rich Education Helps Prepare Students for A Changing World, that is available in PDF format on the ECS web site at www.ecs.org. The brief introduces its members to some pressing challenges facing arts education while proposing a close review of promising research. In doing so, the brief summarizes some Arts Education Partnership research reports including *Champions of Change* and *Critical Links*.

Arts Education Partnership director, Dick Deasy, will be speaking on a panel July 15th at the ECS National Forum on Education Policy in Orlando along with Gov. Huckabee and Ann Galligan from Northeastern University. The panel will address the future of arts education and implications for state policy.

Targets of Opportunity:

- Full Partnership Meeting, June 18-19, 2004, Washington, DC
- National Endowment for the Arts offers grant competition for Summer Schools in the Arts (visit www.arts.gov for details)
- Full Partnership Meeting, October 3-4, 2004, Philadelphia, PA

Spotlight on Research

A new report from the Arts Education Partnership makes a number of key recommendations to researchers to consider multiple perspectives and issues while exploring the impact of arts education on students, teachers and schools.

The Arts and Education: New Opportunities for Research, is a 34 page report that is intended to engage education policymakers with new ideas about the contributions of arts education, and to challenge researchers from a variety of disciplines to closely examine the linkages between the arts and other aspects of education. Developed by a nine-member task force led by Gerald E. Sroufe, senior advisor

at the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the report also urges government agencies to collect data more rigorously and systematically so that researchers may analyze the impact of policy and funding decisions on arts education. Released at the AERA 85th Annual Meeting in April, the report is available from the Arts Education Partnership web site in the Publications section.

AEP hopes the research opportunities presented in the report will serve as the basis for interdisciplinary research forums across the country to explore the topics and propose steps that can be taken to secure support for the related research.

News from the Field

The Arts Education Partnership has partnered with Young Audiences' Arts for Learning Project (A4L) to establish a new professional development resource, including a Web site and Companion CD that features outstanding arts education partnerships across the country. The AEP A4L Nexus Site features three partnerships including Brown University's ArtsLiteracy Project, Dallas ArtsPartners, and Tucson Arts Connection. Recognized nationally for their excellence, these partnerships represent urban, suburban and rural school districts and communities. Each engages teachers and school personnel in active collaboration with community artists and cultural

organizations in school-based arts programs for students. They offer excellent examples of cooperative planning, professional development and quality instruction in a variety of art forms and in integrated arts.

AEP regularly identifies and honors partnerships that consistently improve the quality of arts learning for students. These partnerships, which are often featured at AEP national forums, also influence the adoption of policies supportive of arts education by school districts and cultural organizations. For more information about the AEP A4L site, visit www.arts4learning.org

Suggested Resources on...Arts Education Partnerships

Learning Partnerships Workshop (from *the Arts Extension Service*)
www.umass.edu/aes/learningpartners/index.html

ARTS SURVIVE: A Study of Sustainability in Arts Education Partnerships (from *Harvard Project Zero*)
pzweb.harvard.edu/ebookstore

Intersections: Community Arts and Education Collaborations (from *the Arts Extension Service*)
www.umass.edu/aes/publications/intersections.html

Trends in Arts Education Collaborations (Fowler Colloquium, Univ. of MD)
www.lib.umd.edu/PAL/SCPA/fowlercolloq2001paper1.html

Featured AEP Publication

Name: Learning Partnerships: Improving Learning in Schools with Arts Partners in the Community

Year: 1999

Author: Aprill, A., Deasy, R., and Dreeszen, C.

Description: Provides guidance on the rationale and principles found in successful arts education partnerships, and details about the impact that local and state level partnerships are having on improving education and the related benefits they bring to schools and organizations.

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

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