

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**.

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Targets of Opportunity:

- Arts Education Partnership national forum, January 30-31, 2005, Los Angeles, CA
- *Arts Education: Improving Students' Academic Performance* - a U.S. Department of Education live TV/ web broadcast March 15, 2005 8-9PM EST Details at <http://www.ed.gov/news/av/video/edtv>

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

It's a season of change and transition as we enter a new calendar year: a second administration for President George W. Bush; significant shifts in Congressional leadership; changes in state-houses, city governments and legislative bodies across the country. For the Arts Education Partnership, we will observe in October of this year our tenth anniversary, which will prompt reflection among all of us on what we have achieved and have yet to accomplish in the years ahead. This issue of *The Critical Link* touches on the latest news from Washington, but also reminds of unfinished agendas. In the waning days of the current Congress, appropriations for the arts education programs of the U.S. Department of Education stayed strong – sustaining a growth

that began five years ago as testimony to the federal support in law and funding for the importance of arts learning for all students. National Public Radio joins other media in giving increasing attention to the ups and down of arts programming in public schools. And the continuing need to engage higher education more fully in partnership with schools and cultural organizations still looms large in AEP's strategic plan. We are reminded of our early days by citing one of our first productions: the video introduced for us by Meryl Streep: "The Arts and Children: A Success Story." It's still timely. And its title is still entirely accurate. Join us, as always, in continuing to prove that good schools require the arts – for all students.

Visit us on the web! <http://www.aep-arts.org>
(Past newsletters are stored in the archive)

Washington Watch: Federal Arts and Education Update

Arts education advocates have some good news coming from Washington, D.C. this month. Congress has finished its business for this year, which includes approving a spending bill that adds new dollars to the Arts in Education Program at the U.S. Department of Education. For the 2005 fiscal year, the total appropriation is \$35.633 million – a slight increase from last year. An significant increase of almost 35% was given to the Arts In Education Model Development and Dissemination Grants program which will permit a new round of competitive grants this year. The Professional Development for Arts Educators Grants program was increased to \$7,936,000. The Arts in Education program also authorizes noncompetitive awards to VSA arts and to the John F. Kennedy Center

for the Performing Arts for their arts education programs for children and youth. Both organizations received a small increase over last year's amounts. No funding was appropriated this year for Cultural Partnerships for At-Risk Youth. Visit <http://www.ed.gov> for further details (click on Arts Education). As President Bush's second term in office begins on January 20th, the U.S. Department of Education will also welcome a new Secretary. Current Education Secretary Rod Paige will step down, and the President has nominated Margaret Spellings to take over the Department. Her approval by Congress has not yet take place but it is expected to happen early in the new year. AEP will keep *Critical Link* readers informed if other leadership changes occur at the Department in 2005.

Spotlight on Research

One of AEP's goals is to increase the number and strengthen the capacity of teachers of the arts and the partnerships that support them. AEP focuses primarily on K-12 schools but also embraces higher education. In fact, AEP's Strategic Plan for 2004-06 places a priority on securing support from institutions of higher education, as universities are central to integrating arts education into pre-service programs and in-service professional development for classroom teachers, arts specialists, teaching artists, and college faculty. AEP convened 13 exemplary higher education partnerships in 2002 and released the publication, *Teaching Partnerships: Report of a National Forum on Partnerships Improving Teaching of the Arts*. The recommendations in

that report have continued as a focus and were a topic of discussion at the October 2004 AEP Forum in Philadelphia. Martha McKenna, provost of Lesley College in Cambridge, facilitated two breakout sessions to identify successful strategies for productive collaborations with universities. The ideas that emerged are being developed into an executive summary. AEP will hold a follow-up discussion at its January, 2005 Forum to identify provosts, deans, and faculty from colleges universities across the country who are key figures in developing collaborations with arts organizations in their community. If you are interested in learning more about this initiative, send an email to rebeccab@ccsso.org

News from the Field

Performance Today, National Public Radio's daily classical music program, presented a look at music education in American schools during the week of November 15-19, 2004. The series, titled *Reading, Rhythm, and Rhythmic*, offered interviews and conversations with U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, AEP Director Dick Deasy, National Symphony Orchestra Conductor Leonard Slatkin, and many other advocates, principals, teachers, parents, artists and students. A look at the status of music and arts education was discussed from the range of local and national perspectives, including commentary on the impact of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Listeners heard a number of success

stories including how an inner city elementary school in Baltimore, MD improved academic performance through its music program. Korva Coleman, the host of *Performance Today*, with AEP's assistance spent several months investigating the condition of music education specifically, and arts education in general, which led to the series. Since the series aired, NPR has received substantial feedback, according to Marty Ronish, Editor of *Performance Today*. NPR is currently considering how it can integrate aspects of the series into its other news programs. To learn more about the series, visit the PT web site at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4170557>

Suggested Resources on...Higher Education Partnerships

Teaching Partnerships: Report of a National Forum on Partnerships Improving Teaching of the Arts
<http://aep-arts.org/Publications.htm>

Learning Through Music: School Partnerships with the New England Conservatory
<http://nec-musicined.org/schoolpartnerships.html>

Arts in Teaching and Teacher Education
<http://depts.washington.edu/cedren/Initiatives/ATTE.htm>

Arts Education In Maryland Schools (click on Higher Education Task Force)
<http://www.aems-edu.org/programs.php>

Featured AEP Publication

Name: The Arts and Children: A Success Story (video)

Year: 1996

Cost: \$19.95 for members, \$23.95 non-members plus shipping

Description:

This 12-minute video featuring actress Meryl Streep was produced by AEP to present a summary of major research findings on the role of the arts in student learning.

How to obtain a copy:

Visit <http://www.nasaa-arts.org> and click on "Publications"

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