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THE NATION'S ARTS REPORT CARD

Results reveal significant achievement gaps in both music and visual arts

Washington, DC, June 15, 2009 – The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) today released the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in the Arts. The NAEP Arts Assessment – also known as **The Nation's Arts Report Card** – reveals a significant achievement gap in student performance in music and the visual arts according to economic status, racial and ethnic identification, gender, and school type and location.

“These important findings confirm the persistence of barriers to achievement for far too many young people, and underscore the need to ensure access, equity, and quality in arts instruction for all students,” said **Sandra Ruppert, director of the Arts Education Partnership**, a national coalition of more than 100 government, philanthropic, arts and education organizations.

The NAEP Arts Assessment was administered to a nationally representative sample of 8th grade students in the U.S., and measures student knowledge and skills in music and visual arts. Dance and theater were not assessed. While the NAEP does not provide a comprehensive picture of the status of arts instruction in our nation's schools, it did include some questions about frequency of instruction. It is the first assessment of student achievement in the arts since 1997.

Among the key 2008 findings:

- For both music and visual arts, on average among the 8th graders assessed:
 - Students eligible for reduced or free lunch scored lower than students ineligible
 - Black and Hispanic students scored lower than White and Asian/Pacific Islander students
 - Public school students scored lower than private school students
 - Students in urban schools scored lower than students in suburban schools.
- The overall average score for 8th graders assessed was set at 150 on a scale of 300 for both music and visual arts, with a wide variance in scores between the lowest- and highest-achieving students.
- Compared to 1997, the average reported frequency of arts instruction for 8th graders remained about the same. However, according to data collected from school administrators, 8% of 8th graders attended schools where no music instruction was offered, and 14% of 8th graders attended schools where no visual arts instruction was offered. These findings show a slight improvement from 1997.

“All students deserve access to a complete education, and this includes a comprehensive arts education,” said **Gene Wilhoit, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers**, a national nonprofit organization of public officials who head state departments of elementary and secondary education. “The arts are ideally suited in both content and process to develop the skills and capabilities necessary for success in a complex, global environment.”

While the NAEP gives valuable information about what students know and are able to do in the arts, it also points to the need for more a complete national picture about the status and condition of arts education in our nation's schools.

More information available at : <http://www.aep-arts.org>, <http://nationsreportcard.gov>

The Arts Education Partnership was founded in 1994 and is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Education in cooperation with the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.