

Milestones in the History of the Arts Education Partnership

1988: The National Endowment for the Arts issues its congressionally-mandated report, *Toward Civilization*, which shows that the arts are in jeopardy in America's schools and includes a series of recommendations for improving arts teaching and learning.

1989: President George H.W. Bush and the nation's governors agree on a set of National Education Goals, but exclude the arts. Advocates unite in a nationwide campaign to have the arts added.

1991: The National Assessment Governing Board approves inclusion of the arts in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). A national assessment is scheduled to take place in 1996.

1992: U.S. Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander announces an "America 2000 Arts Education Partnership" to act on the recommendations found in *Toward Civilization*. Secretary Alexander also encourages the formation of the Arts Education Partnership Working Group, led by the Kennedy Center's then chair, James Wolfensohn, and the Getty Trust's then president, Harold Williams. The group issues the report *The Power of the Arts to Transform Education*.

1994: The Clinton Administration adds the arts to the core subjects found in the National Education Goals as part of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act passed by Congress and signed by President Bill Clinton. The Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, directed by the Music Educators National Conference, publishes *The National Arts Education Standards*. The National Assessment Governing Board publishes *The Arts Education Assessment Framework* for NAEP. *The Framework* is the outcome of the National Assessment Consensus Project, coordinated by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Following a co-sponsored conference, the U.S. Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Arts jointly release the report *Arts Education Research Agenda for the Future* to stimulate arts education research.

1994: U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley and National Endowment for the Arts Chair Jane Alexander convene more than 100 national organizations in a Goals 2000 Arts Education Planning Process to address three objectives: to affirm the arts as fundamental to quality education and reform; to articulate how the arts can contribute to achieving the National Education Goals; and to identify how individuals and organizations could work together to assure that the arts become a central component of state and local education reform plans. Participants produce a plan: *The Arts and Education: Partners in Achieving our National Education Goals*. They recommend "the development of an ongoing partnership among the participating organizations." The U.S. Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Arts agree to support the development of this "Goals 2000 Arts Education Partnership."

1995: In June, the U.S. Department of Education and National Endowment for the Arts enter into a cooperative agreement with CCSSO and National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) to provide administrative support for the Partnership. The Partnership begins operations and holds its first meeting of participating organizations in October. National forums on critical issues and trends in education and the arts become a central Partnership activity.

1998: The Partnership conducts a national teleconference, *Arts Literacy for a Changing America*, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education to discuss the findings of the 1997 arts assessment conducted by NAEP.

1999: The Partnership is renamed the "Arts Education Partnership (AEP)."

AEP releases the first of its seminal reports and research publications, *Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts that Value Arts Education*, at an event in a New York City public school with First Lady Hillary Clinton and Jane Pauley in attendance. The report provides case studies and profiles of 91 school districts across the country offering arts education throughout the K-12 levels.

AEP releases *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*, a compilation of seven major studies all of which include evidence of enhanced learning and achievement outcomes when students engage in a variety of arts experiences.

AEP releases a guide to arts and education collaboration, *Learning Partnerships: Improving Learning in Schools with Arts Partners in the Community*, as a tool to create and enhance arts education partnerships in every community.

2000: The AEP Steering Committee adopts a new strategic plan for 2000-2003. It sets precedence for future activity by establishing a series of goals and outcomes, priorities for collective action, and guidance as to how partners can play an active role in AEP.

2002: The Bush Administration and Congress enact the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and include the arts as a core academic subject. The U.S. Department of Education and National Endowment for the Arts continue their commitment to AEP through a cooperative agreement with CCSSO and NASAA.

AEP and its partnering organizations publish *No Subject Left Behind*, an analysis of the opportunities to support arts education in NCLB. AEP releases *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, a groundbreaking compendium of research, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Many major news outlets feature stories on the research, including *USA Today*.

2003: AEP releases its Strategic Plan for 2004-2006 which identifies priorities for collective action in public support, standards and assessment, pursuing available data, securing federal and state funds, identifying and disseminating research, increasing partnerships, targeting higher education and national education associations, and focusing on promising practices in professional development.

2005: In October, AEP celebrates its 10th anniversary at the AEP National Forum in Charleston, S.C.

AEP releases *Third Space: When Learning Matters*, a book discussing the findings of a three- year study of the role of the arts in transforming high poverty schools. Commentators describe it as “an alternative vision of both the process and result of school reform.”

2006: The AEP Steering Committee, composed of more than 40 organizations, develops the AEP Strategic Plan: 2007-2009 and the AEP Strategic Communications Plan: 2006-2008. The plans adopt assumptions that the arts play a crucial role in the public concern for a more comprehensive educational experience for all students that prepares them for success and contributions in complex, diverse and technologically-driven global societies and economies.

AEP, in cooperation with the NASAA, releases *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement*, a summary of its prior research findings, which places them in the context of current policy debates and public attitudes.

AEP publishes *From Anecdote to Evidence: Assessing the Status and Condition of Arts Education at the State Level*, based on the principles and practices of five states where data collection has influenced state arts education policy and funding.

2007: AEP publishes *Arts Integration Frameworks, Research & Practice: A Literature Review*, to capture and describe reports, books, articles and research summaries regarding arts integration between 1995 and 2007.

AEP publishes *Working Partnerships: Professional Development of the Arts Teaching Workforce*, a report of AEP’s Task Force on Higher Education, to identify and document promising practices for engaging higher education institutions in partnership with the school and arts communities in the pre-service and in-service professional development of the arts teaching workforce.

2008: AEP publishes *The Art of Collaboration: Promising Practices for Integrating the Arts and School Reform*, describing strategies for integrating arts into the lives and curricula of urban public schools as a means of fostering system-wide educational improvement.

2009: In June, the National Assessment Governing Board releases results of the 2008 NAEP in the Arts, often referred to as the “Nation’s Arts Report Card.” AEP publishes an *Analysis of NAEP Arts Assessment Results*, which highlights broad and persistent achievement gaps in music and visual arts based on socioeconomics, race, ethnicity, gender, and school type and location. AEP also collaborates on the NAEP Arts Assessment Toolkit, providing resources for stakeholders to take action.

2010: AEP develops and updates the strategic framework for 2010-2013. This strategic framework clarifies AEP’s mission and direction and provides an emerging road map for achieving this vision. AEP plans to focus on harmonizing the field to create research and policy frameworks with and for its partners in arts learning over the next three years. AEP also continues to build on its core strengths to convene, collaborate, connect and communicate with and among its partners and other stakeholders.

2011: With support from the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, AEP publishes *What School Leaders Can Do To Increase Arts Education*, providing three concrete actions – supported by low-cost or no-cost strategies – school principals can take to increase arts education in their schools.

In collaboration with the Quincy Jones Musiq Consortium, AEP reviews an extensive body of research to identify high-quality evidence-based studies that document student learning outcomes associated with an education in and through music and publishes the findings in *Music Matters: How Music Education Helps Students Learn, Achieve, and Succeed*. The results show conclusively that music education equips students with the foundational abilities to learn, to achieve in other core academic subjects, and to develop the capacities, skills and knowledge essential for lifelong success.

2012: The U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences release *Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools: 1999-2000 and 2009-2010*, a report on student access to arts education and the resources available for such instruction. The study is the third of its kind to provide national data on arts education; the first study was conducted during the 1994-1995 school year and provides baseline data on public schools’ approaches to arts education. AEP develops a toolkit for understanding, communicating and utilizing the *Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools* report.

AEP launches [ArtsEdSearch](#), the nation’s first online research and policy clearinghouse focused entirely on student and educator outcomes associated with arts learning in and out of school. Featuring user-friendly summaries of high-quality research and overviews of current research examined through different lenses, *ArtsEdSearch* provides reliable and objective information about the academic, cognitive, personal, social and professional outcomes of an arts education.

2013: Drawing on research available through *ArtsEdSearch*, AEP publishes *Preparing Students for the Next America: The Benefits of an Arts Education*, providing a snapshot of how the arts support achievement in school, bolster skills demanded of a 21st century workforce, and enrich the lives of young people and communities.

2014: The members of AEP’s Advisory Committee and other key arts in education stakeholders update AEP’s strategic plan for 2014-2017 and join together to create the first Arts in Education Action Agenda.

AEP launches [ArtScan](#), a searchable clearinghouse of the latest state policies supporting education in and through the arts from all 50 states and D.C. Based on materials available through ArtScan, AEP publishes *A Snapshot of State Policies for Arts Education*, a research and policy brief summarizing the results of a 2014 analysis of current state policies for arts education.

2015: [The Arts Leading the Way to Student Success: A 2020 Action Agenda for Advancing the Arts in Education](#), released in March, sets forth an ambitious plan for achieving the Action Agenda’s five-year aspirational goal: “By the year 2020 every young person in America, at every grade level, from pre-kindergarten through grade 12, will have equitable access to high quality arts learning opportunities, both during the school day and in out-of-school time.”

The Obama Administration and Congress enact the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and include the arts as a part of a well-rounded education.

The U.S. Department of Education and National Endowment for the Arts select [Education Commission of the States](#) to serve as the new host organization for AEP. Believing that informed policymakers create better education policy, Education Commission of the States works with state education leaders to provide unbiased policy research and reports, targeted technical support and the opportunity to learn from peers in other states. As a policy center within Education Commission of the States, AEP has a unique and powerful opportunity to work with key state leaders to advance the *2020 Action Agenda for Advancing the Arts in Education* and promote AEP's mission to ensure every child has access to a complete and competitive education that includes the arts.

2016: With states around the country beginning to implement the work outlined in ESSA, one of AEP's priorities is to ensure that the arts and education communities have the resources necessary to engage in the many opportunities ESSA opens up for expanding the arts in U.S. classrooms. In coordination with partner organizations, AEP compiles and shares [ESSA policy resources](#) with the arts education community and releases [ESSA: Mapping opportunities for the arts](#). This report highlights the ways that states and districts can engage the arts in the ongoing work of ESSA and is designed to continue growing as ESSA implementation proceeds.

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