

Extra! New Report!

'CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE'

Just released, a new GE Fund/MacArthur Foundation report compiles the results of seven major arts education research projects and finds:

- Students with high levels of arts participation outperform “arts-poor” students on virtually every measure.
- The arts have a measurable impact on students in “high-poverty” and urban settings.
- The arts in after-school programs guide disadvantaged youth toward positive behaviors and goals.
- Learning through the arts has significant effects on learning in other domains.
- Arts experiences enhance “critical thinking” abilities and outcomes.
- The arts enable educators to reach students in effective ways.

Taken together, *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning and Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons From School Districts That Value Arts Education* provide arts education supporters with both evidence of *why* the arts are critical to teaching and learning and *how* to build strong district-wide arts education.



Both studies were developed with the support of the **GE Fund** and the **John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**, the **Arts Education Partnership**, and the **President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities**. *Gaining the Arts Advantage* also was sponsored by Binney & Smith, Inc. with the additional support of the National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. Department of Education, and the White House Millennium Council.

TO LEARN MORE:

Visit www.aep-arts.org and www.pcah.gov. Both studies are available online and can be downloaded in text and pdf formats. To request copies (quantities limited), contact the President's Committee.

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GAINING THE ARTS ADVANTAGE

HOW YOU CAN HELP GAIN THE ARTS ADVANTAGE FOR YOUR CHILD AND SCHOOL DISTRICT

- continued from front panels

PRINCIPALS:

In view of the national trend to site-based management, your support and that of your fellow principals in your school district are essential. You also help develop arts learning when you...

- regularly communicate your own interest in and appreciation of the arts to your school community. (Just including school arts news with the athletic news in your morning announcements is a big plus.)
- make room for the arts in your building and in your school day.
- support arts educators by including them as full-fledged members of the faculty.
- encourage your classroom teachers and arts specialists to work together in developing integrated, interdisciplinary projects and curricula.
- welcome community artists in your school and arts programs and work with your teachers, artists, and district arts coordinator to develop successful projects that improve learning and offer potential for further curricular development.
- work with other principals to support district-level arts initiatives.

DISTRICT ARTS COORDINATORS:

You are in a position to make the connections that make for strong district-wide arts education. You can...

- provide arts specialists and classroom teachers with information on successful arts-integrated units.
- encourage arts specialists and classroom teachers to consider community artists' participation when they develop curricular initiatives.
- promote professional development of all district educators in interdisciplinary curriculum and teaching.
- communicate the arts needs, plans, and programs of the district to the community and vice versa.

- participate in the activities of your local arts organizations and develop ongoing relationships, collaborative programs with well-defined goals, and partnerships in grant initiatives.

ARTS TEACHERS:

As you know, you teach not only the arts but also the *value* of the arts in all students' learning and lives.

Help educate parents and civic leaders as you...

- take advantage of back-to-school night, concerts, and arts shows to show and tell *why* the arts are vital to every child's education.
- share the latest research on arts education with your colleagues and community (see back panel - *Champions of Change*).
- encourage non-arts teachers to incorporate the arts into their disciplines. For example, create an arts component for a literacy campaign.

- practice your art and share it. Invite students, parents, colleagues to your exhibits, concerts, plays. Your arts involvement says that the arts are important in your life, and that teachers are learners, too.

A WORD – OR TWO – ON THE VALUE OF ARTS EDUCATION

One of the most helpful actions you can take to advance arts education in your school district is to develop your own personal statement on the value of the arts in learning. (New research findings in the study *Champions of Change* – see back panel – will help you make a strong case even stronger.) Then share it with parents, teachers, administrators and urge them to join your growing community of arts education supporters.

ARTS EDUCATION
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WHY YOUR CHILD NEEDS THE ARTS ADVANTAGE AND HOW YOU CAN GAIN IT

Lessons From Parents, Principals, School Board Members, Teachers, Superintendents, Artists, Arts Coordinators and Community Leaders Who Value Arts Education



DOES YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT HAVE THE ARTS ADVANTAGE?

Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts That Value Art Education is the first national study to examine district-wide arts education and identify strategies for its success.

Are these 13 "critical success factors" at work in your school district?

- ✓ a community actively engaged in the arts politics and instructional programs of the district – inside and outside the schools?
- ✓ a school board providing a supportive policy framework and environment for the arts?
- ✓ a superintendent regularly articulating a vision for arts education in the district?
- ✓ a cadre of principals that collectively supports the policy of arts education for all students?
- ✓ teachers who practice their art and are encouraged by district administrators to grow in their art as well as in their teaching competence?
- ✓ district arts coordinator(s) who facilitate program implementation and maintain an arts supportive environment?
- ✓ parent/public relations programs to inform the community and gain its participation and support?
- ✓ national, state, and other policies, and programs employed by the district to advance arts education?
- ✓ an elementary foundation in the arts?
- ✓ opportunities for higher levels of student achievement through specialized programs?
- ✓ continuous improvement in arts education through reflective practices at all school levels?
- ✓ planning with a comprehensive district-wide education vision but incremental implementation?
- ✓ continuity in leadership in the school and in the community?

GAINING THE ARTS ADVANTAGE FOR YOUR CHILD AND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Tomorrow's workforce – and especially its leaders – will need broad abilities beyond technical skills. There will be a demand for people who are creative, analytical, disciplined, and self-confident – people who can solve problems, communicate ideas, and be sensitive to the world around them.

– Joyce Hergenhan, President, GE Fund

How will today's children and tomorrow's leaders develop those broad abilities, which educators are now calling the 4C's: cognition, communication, culture, and creativity?

"Hands-on participation in the arts is a proven way to help develop these abilities," the GE Fund's president observes, pointing to brand new research. (See *Champions of Change*, back panel.)

Children who receive an elementary foundation in the arts; ongoing, comprehensive, sequential education in music, drama, dance, and the visual arts; who are afforded opportunities for higher levels of achievement – these are children who will step into tomorrow's world with "the arts advantage." They will bring to it a quick mind, focus, discipline, imagination, judgment, personal drive, experience in teamwork, attention to detail, grasp of the big picture, and an essential urge to continue learning.

"The strongest single factor in determining whether a school district provides arts education is the community's insistence, support, and participation in making it happen. So everyone who has a stake in our children's success should see arts education as their cause."

– Hillary Rodham Clinton



Q. WHAT CAN I DO? A: LOTS OF THINGS.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

Whether you are an artist, arts council member, civic leader, or interested citizen you can...

- speak at school budget hearings on the value of the arts in a child's education.
- vote for local officials who support a vision for education that includes the arts.
- participate in your district's and community's concerts, plays, dance programs, and art exhibits.
- invite the district arts coordinator to serve on your arts council board and establish joint arts community-school district goals and integrated initiatives.
- volunteer to share an artistic skill, such as accompanying on the piano or talking about your graphic design work.
- offer to help write grant proposals or seek partners for district arts education initiatives.
- monitor the district's progress in key "critical success" areas such as planning; providing an elementary foundation and advanced opportunities; and the use of arts assessment techniques to improve student, teacher, and administrator performance.

AN ENSEMBLE EFFORT

Building and sustaining strong district-wide education requires a community's ensemble effort, finds *Gaining the Arts Advantage*.

Everyone can play an important part in that ensemble. Beginning in the column at left are suggestions from community members, school district administrators, and teachers all around the country who are doing just that. *Gaining the Arts Advantage's* 91 profiles and case studies – representing widely different school districts in 42 states – offer hundreds of useful strategies and action steps from real people working in "real world" contexts. You can learn more from these districts – from Maine to Miami, Anchorage to Arlington County, VA – by visiting the study at: www.pcah.gov/gaa or www.aep-arts.org.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS AND SUPERINTENDENTS:

Colleagues across the country in similar leadership roles urge you to:

- take the lead by assessing the community's commitment to the arts in learning before setting educational goals.
- develop an arts-supportive policy framework and an infrastructure that supports teaching and learning in and through the arts.
- provide ongoing professional development for arts specialists and classroom teachers.
- treat the arts as equal to other school subjects when budget cuts are required and apportion resources in accordance with the plan.
- consider the artistic qualities of buildings and the needs of arts education programs during facility renovation and development.
- hire and support strong district arts coordinators to link the district and the community, work collaboratively with principals, arts specialists, and curriculum specialists, and seek competitive funding for professional and curriculum development and innovative arts programs.
- encourage entrepreneurial thinking. Districts with outstanding arts programs seek and obtain federal, state, and local government grants, private grants, and use of community facilities for events. – continued on back panels



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Why Your Child Needs the Arts Advantage and How You Can Gain It

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