



Improving Art Education for Every Child through a Highly Qualified Arts Teaching Workforce

The Arts Education Partnership has long recognized the essential role of the arts in the development of creativity and imagination in every child and that a critical component of providing arts instruction is a highly qualified arts teaching workforce.

The Arts Education Partnership organizations affirm the central role of imagination, creativity, and the arts in culture and society; the power of the arts to enliven and transform education and schools; and collective action through partnerships as the means to place the arts at the center of learning. Arts Education Partnership organizations know that to achieve this mission - for the arts to become part of the core curriculum for every student in America - we must address two fundamental challenges:

- ∞ *We must convince education decision makers that the arts are profound ways of knowing and communicating about oneself and the world that must be made available to all students as a matter of equity.*
- ∞ *We must ensure that those who teach the arts have the highest possible artistic skills and pedagogical abilities. (Teaching Partnerships, 2002)*

While progress has been made in addressing the first challenge, as evidenced in the adoption of national standards for arts education in 48 states, the second challenge remains elusive. To address this challenge, the Arts Education Partnership has created a Higher Education Task Force to identify and document theories and strategies for engaging higher education in partnership in the pre-service and in-service professional development of the *arts teaching workforce*. The *arts teaching workforce* is defined as classroom teachers, arts specialists, teaching artists, and members of arts and cultural institutions who provide arts instruction.

Political and education leaders acknowledge the important role of the arts in the education of every child. In July 2004 then U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige sent a letter to all school districts across the Nation, stating: "I believe the arts have a significant role in education both for their intrinsic value and for the ways in which they can enhance general academic achievement and improve students' social and emotional development.... NCLB included the arts as a core academic subject because of their importance to a child's education." (*Letter of Secretary Paige to Superintendents*, July 2004) Governor Mike Huckabee, Chairman of the Education Commission of the States, is focusing his initiative on the arts in education "to ensure every child has the opportunity to learn about, enjoy, and participate directly in the arts." (*ECS Chairman's Initiative: The Arts – A Lifetime of Learning*, 2004-2006) The National Association of State Boards of Education also suggests that increased attention must be paid to the arts if we are to provide a comprehensive education to every child: "State policymakers must ensure that adequate time, adequate funding, and adequate opportunities are available for high-quality professional development for arts instructors...and establish relationships between local school districts and

universities in order to provide arts teachers with an adequate system for professional development.” (*The State Education Standard*, Winter 2004)

If we are to realize the vision of these policy makers, education in the arts must be part of the everyday life of every child. To accomplish this, we need a highly a qualified *arts teaching workforce*. Building on the Art Education Partnership’s success over the past ten years in promoting collaborative initiatives across the country that engage K-12 public education, national arts and education associations, and community arts and cultural institutions, the Task Force on Higher Education is focusing on the essential ingredients of successful partnerships with higher education for the professional development of the arts teaching workforce. Since colleges and universities have the primary responsibility for teacher pre-service education as well as a major role in the in-service professional development of the *arts teaching workforce*, it is important that schools of education lead in the creation of partnerships within the university with arts and sciences faculty and outside the university with the larger arts and education community. The Task Force also recognizes the critical role of higher education in developing arts education leaders among the K-12 administrators, classroom teachers, arts specialists, teaching artists and arts and cultural institutions.

The Task Force has identified three initiatives for the coming year:

- I. Creation of *models or portraits of working partnerships* with higher education drawing on criteria from the Arts Education Partnership’s publication *Learning Partnerships: Improving Learning in Schools with Arts Partners in the Community*. (1999)
- II. Publication of a *technical assistance manual or guide for implementing partnerships* based on theories and strategies for engaging higher education in partnerships in the pre-service and in-service professional development of the *arts teaching workforce*.
- III. Development of *forums for leaders in higher education and the arts* to come together to discuss the leadership role of higher education in partnerships.

At the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education in January 2006 members of the Higher Education Task Force will present models of successful higher education partnerships including: Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), Lesley University’s Integrated Teaching through the Arts, and the Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education. Following these sessions the Task Force will host an Open Forum to discuss criteria for successful partnerships and guidelines for higher education in establishing and sustaining these partnerships. The Task Force will seek active participation of the audience in developing strategies for engaging higher education leaders (including deans, provosts, chairs and faculty leaders in departments of education, the fine arts and arts and sciences) in advancing this initiative.



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