

Summary of ESEA Reauthorization Meeting on Arts Education

On January 20, 2010, the United States Department of Education (ED) held a meeting for arts stakeholders to hear comments and suggestions regarding arts education and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The meeting was hosted by Jim Shelton, Assistant Deputy Secretary of the Office of Innovation and Improvement, Carmel Martin, Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, and other senior ED staff. Over 60 individuals representing various local, state and national arts organizations, both governmental and nongovernmental, were in attendance. The list of attendees can be found in Appendix A.

Additionally, over 100 letters addressed to Secretary Duncan “from teachers, leaders of national and local organizations and businesses” were submitted “concerning the value of arts education in [the] nation’s schools.” These suggestions are also included in the summary which follows. The summary, provided below, includes broad themes and specific recommendations from stakeholders relating to instruction, professional development, and accountability.

Broad Themes

Stakeholders:

- are encouraged by the initial support and openness of this Administration, especially as it pertains to its support for education and the arts in America’s schools;
- strongly support, in principle, the reauthorization of all sections of ESEA pertaining to the arts, i.e. select parts of Title I, Title II, and Title V (select policy recommendations follow at greater length under “Legislative Specifications”);
- believe No Child Left Behind, while drafted with good intentions, has had unintended negative consequences on American education and on the arts in particular;
- strongly endorse the continued inclusion of the “arts” in ESEA as a “core academic subject” (Title IX, Part A, Subpart 11, Section 9101);
- recommend that the definition of “music and the arts” be further elaborated to read “music and the arts (dance, theater, visual arts, and music)”;
- believe that full inclusion of the arts in ESEA is vital to closing the achievement gap present in and across America’s schools;
- emphasize, based on numerous studies, the importance of the arts in providing a holistic education for the nation’s youth;

- emphasize, based on numerous studies, the correlation which exists between participation in the arts and improved attendance, retention, and academic performance in other “core academic subjects”;
- recommend that a comprehensive arts education be available to all American students, including sequential courses at the secondary level;
- recommend that the conduct of regular assessments and maintenance of data systems be mandated to inform the future direction of the arts in America’s schools;
- support both the establishment and enforcement of national standards in the arts for students and national certification in the arts for arts educators;
- recommend that all relevant government committees dealing with education, when feasible, include representatives of the arts;
- recommend that federal funding match the commitment leveled toward other academic areas;
- recommend that the U.S. Department of Education better disseminate the outcomes of its grant programs;
- recommend that the federal government encourage others to disseminate findings in the areas of arts models and professional development, regardless of funding source;
- support increased funding from state and local sources in the areas of arts models and professional development; and,
- recommend that “museum education” be considered a teaching tool.

Legislative Specifications/Suggestions from Stakeholders

Expanded Accountability

Current Law: Title I, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 1111: mandates that all states adopt challenging academic content standards and compile an annual report card in subjects determined by the State. States must include measurement in, at the very least, the following subject areas: mathematics, reading or language arts, and science.

Proposed Amendment: Add language that requires States to collect and report comprehensive information about the status and condition of ***all*** core academic subjects, including the arts, on an annual basis. This comprehensive information could include student enrollment, pupil/teacher ratios, amount of instructional time, budget allocation, teacher subject certification, full-time equivalent teacher load, or other such measures chosen by the State to be significant in the subject area.

Explanation: The addition of this language would require that States report the current condition and outcomes of arts education within their borders and prevent the widespread marginalization of the arts despite their designation as a “core academic subject”. A mandated annual report which must include the state and outcomes of arts education would provide a structural incentive to State and local educational agencies to place a greater emphasis on the arts. Furthermore, the addition of the recommended language would demonstrate that the Administration views the arts on par with other core academic subjects.

Mandated Funding

Current Law: Title II, Part A, Subpart 5, Section 2151: provides grants to State educational agencies, local educational agencies, State agencies for higher education, and eligible partnerships in order to increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom and highly qualified principals and assistant principals in schools.

Proposed Amendment: Add language which explicitly mandates the dedication of categorical and direct funds for: in-school arts classrooms with appropriate equipment and supplies; multi-year sequence of arts course offerings; and, professional development for certified arts teachers.

Explanation: The addition of this language removes room for interpretation and prioritization when it comes to funding the arts. The legislation currently implies that funding *may* be used for the advancement and expansion of the arts; however, State and local educational agencies are often forced to redirect funding and energies which may have been used for the arts into other areas more prominently highlighted by No Child Left Behind. Adequate, reliable arts education funding will ensure that desired student outcomes are achieved using every tool at the nation’s disposal.

Dissemination of Best Practices

Current Law: Title V, Part A, Subpart 15, Section 5551: helps ensure that all students meet challenging State academic content standards and challenging State student academic achievement standards in the arts and supports the national effort to enable all students to demonstrate competence in the arts.

Proposed Amendment: Add language which encourages the creation and dissemination of successful arts programs.

Explanation: The addition of this language would support the further enhancement, expansion, documentation, evaluation, and dissemination of innovative, cohesive arts education models.

Expanded Access

Current Law: Title V, Part A, Subpart 15, Section 5551: helps ensure that all students meet challenging State academic content standards and challenging State student academic achievement standards in the arts and supports the national effort to enable all students to demonstrate competence in the arts.

Proposed Amendment: Add language mandating the instruction of visual arts, music, dance and theater for every child in the public school system, starting at the early childhood level and concluding with graduation from the secondary level.

Explanation: The addition of this language would promote increased retention rates, greater high school graduation rates, less substance abuse, improved academic performance, and the development of essential skills for the 21st century (i.e., imagination, teamwork, creative problem solving, nuanced thinking, and long-term commitment to skill development).

Professional Development

Current Law: Title V, Part A, Subpart 15, Section 5551: helps ensure that all students meet challenging State academic content standards and challenging State student academic achievement standards in the arts and supports the national effort to enable all students to demonstrate competence in the arts.

Proposed Amendment: Add language which encourages States to promote professional development opportunities for arts educators and the creation of national teaching standards in each arts discipline.

Explanation: The addition of this language would encourage States to supplement the resources being provided by the federal government in this area. Cohesive, concrete goals are best accomplished using a coordinated, multi-pronged approach.

The State of Arts Education

Current Law: Title V, Part A, Subpart 15, Section 5551: helps ensure that all students meet challenging State academic content standards and challenging State student academic achievement standards in the arts and supports the national effort to enable all students to demonstrate competence in the arts.

Proposed Amendment: Add language which requires States to engage in the gathering and monitoring of longitudinal arts education data.

Explanation: Data gathered by government from monitoring the current state of arts education would prove to be invaluable. The statistical analysis and interpretation of this data would supplement the knowledge currently being generated by various organizations. More importantly, this data will allow the field to compare arts education across both time and space.

The Arts Defined

Current Law: Title IX, Part A, Subpart 11, Section 9101(1)(D): defines “core academic subjects” as “English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.

Proposed Amendment: Add language that defines the “arts” as “creative activities and products of the theater, the visual arts, dance, music, and multimedia combinations of the above.”

Explanation: The addition of this language would recognize all traditional forms of art and place them on par with both one another and other core academic subjects. Furthermore, it recognizes the value of each art form in cultivating different forms of expression and innovative thinking.

Appendix A

Attendees

John Abodeely	Manager of National Partnerships, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Soula Antoniou	President, VSA arts
Darrell Ayers	Vice President of Education, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Michael Blakeslee*	Deputy Executive Director, MENC: The National Association for Music Education
Jane Bonbright	Executive Director, National Dance Education Organization
Jennifer Castagna	
John Ceschini	Executive Director, Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance
Townley Clardy	Manager, Performing Arts Alliance
Leo Coco	Senior Policy Advisor, Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP
Paul Cothran*	Executive Director and Vice President, VH1 Save the Music Foundation
Sarah Cunningham	Director of Arts Education, National Endowment for the Arts
Rob Davidson	
Amy Duma	Director of Teacher and School Programs, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Rima Faber	Program Director, National Dance Education Organization
Dennis Fehr*	Director, National Education Task Force
Andy Finch	Co-Director of Government Affairs, Association of Art Museum Directors
Carol Fineberg*	Arts and Education Consultant
Amy Fitterer	Director of Government Affairs, Dance/USA and OPERA America
David Flatley	Executive Director, Center for Community Arts Partnerships
David Freudenthal	Director of Government Relations, Carnegie Hall
May Gwinn	Arts Advocate
Debora Hansen	Education Associate, Delaware Department of Education
Kelly Hastings	
Hollis Headrick	Arts, Education and Philanthropy Consultant, Hollis Headrick Consulting
Jonathan Herman	Executive Director, National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts
Callie Herzog	Manager of Government Grants, Carnegie Hall
Jonathan Katz*	Chief Executive Officer, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
Richard Kessler*	Executive Director, The Center for Arts Education
Lynne Kingsley	Operations Manager, American Alliance for Theatre and Education
Najean Lee	Government Affairs & Education Advocacy Manager, League of American Orchestras
Kathi Levin	Liaison for Legislative Affairs, National Art Education Association
Mary Luehrsen*	Director of Government Relations, International Music Products Association
Myrna Mandlawitz*	Government Relations Professional
Ann Manning*	
Karen M.C.-Keys*	Arts Education Curriculum Manager, Cleveland Metropolitan School District
Mary Ann Mears	President Emeritus, Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance
James Modrick	Vice President of Affiliate and Education Services, VSA arts
Heather Noonan*	Vice President for Advocacy, League of American Orchestras
James Palmarini*	Director of Educational Policy, Educational Theatre Association

Gladstone Payton	Associate Director of Federal Affairs, Americans for the Arts
Teka Phan	Program Assistant, Arts Education Partnership
Rory Pullens	CEO, Duke Ellington School of the Arts
Deborah Reeve	Executive Director, National Art Education Association
Narric Rome*	Director of Federal Affairs, Americans for the Arts
Nancy Rubino*	Director of Academic Initiatives, The College Board
Sandra Ruppert*	Director, Arts Education Partnership
Dale Schmid*	Visual & Performing Arts Coordinator, New Jersey State Department of Education
David Schmid	
Sarah Scott	Project Assistant, Arts Education Partnership
R. Barry Shauck*	President, National Art Education Association
David Sherman*	Consultant to the AFT President, American Federation of Teachers
Natalie Shoop	Government Affairs and Grassroots Coordinator, Americans for the Arts
Scott Shuler*	Arts Consultant, Connecticut State Department of Education
Michael Sikes	Senior Associate for Research and Policy, Arts Education Partnership
Judy Simpson	Director of Government Relations, American Music Therapy Association
Tracy Slater-Rigaud	Director, Coming Up Taller
Laura Smyth	Senior Associate for Communications and Partnerships, Arts Education Partnership
Matt Sullenbrand	Assistant to the Executive Director, National Association of Schools of Music
James Tucker, Jr.	Coordinator of Fine Arts, Maryland State Department of Education
Mimi Willis	Senior Director of Education, Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts
Suzanne Wright*	
[Speaker*]	