



**Education Commission**  
of the **S t a t e s**

# Governor's Commission on the Arts in Education

Findings and Recommendations

July 2006

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Education Commission  
of the States

## Dear Colleague:

To the surprise of many people in the education policy arena, I chose the arts in education as the focus for my chairmanship of the Education Commission of the States (ECS). While there are many competing priorities in public education that are deserving of support, this choice of focus for my ECS Chairman's Initiative was a simple one. It was simple because I know both from deep personal experience and from the evidence I have seen in schools that arts education must be a vital part of every child's education. From improving academic and student achievement to enhancing our nation's overall economic competitiveness, the arts offer many practical benefits. In fact, I would suggest that the future of our economy is based on establishing a creative class and creating a generation of people who can think artistically. That's why an arts education has value in and of itself.

The Governor's Commission on the Arts in Education, which crafted the following report, has spearheaded the work of the ECS Chairman's Initiative. This commission was composed of leading experts and policymakers who are advocates for the arts in education. It calls on governors, legislators, chief state school officers, higher education officials and other education leaders at the federal, state and local levels to make arts education an essential part of every student's education. This call cannot come too soon, especially for policymakers and education leaders at the state and local levels, where many decisions about education policy are made.

I hope you will join the Commission and me in considering the findings and recommendations contained in this report, and in taking action to make these issues a matter of national priority. As my two-year chairmanship comes to a close, I am pleased that ECS will continue to be engaged in this issue. I look forward to supporting future efforts to ensure that the arts are not extracurricular, extraneous or expendable, but instead an essential part of a well-rounded education for all of our students.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely yours,

**Mike Huckabee**

Governor  
State of Arkansas  
ECS Chair 2004–2006



*"We owe it to each young Arkansan to ensure that whatever their talents are, the doors are open for them. After all, education is about opening doors. An early introduction to the arts can start Arkansas children down that road to lifelong learning."*

**Mike Huckabee,**  
Governor of Arkansas

## Introduction

With the leadership of its 2004 chairman, Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, the Education Commission of the States (ECS) has focused on the arts in education for the past two years. ECS believes that maintaining a commitment to the arts in public schools is essential, and ECS will continue to support the arts in education because, as stated by Governor Huckabee, "the future ability of our economy and this country will be based on the fact that we have students who are able to be more creative with what they've learned than anyone else."

As part of his chairman's initiative, "The Arts—A Lifetime of Learning," in March of 2005 Governor Huckabee appointed a Governor's Commission comprised of representatives of K-12 and higher education, arts organizations, government agencies and state legislatures. The charge to the Commission was to identify what ECS and its constituents can and should do to support the arts in education through stronger and more effective state policies.

This report offers a summary of state arts education policies; examines policymakers' perspectives on the arts in education and the tools they need to promote the arts in education; reviews existing research on the benefits of learning in and through the arts; and identifies areas in which additional research is needed. The report closes with suggestions for future action on the part of ECS.

ECS, with the support of the Governor's Commission, recommends an increase in support for the arts in our nation's schools. We are convinced that arts education is a function of both supportive policy and quality practice.

## A Summary of Current State Arts Education Policies

In October 2005, Governor Huckabee released ECS' *Artscan*, an online searchable database – available at [www.ecs.org/artscan](http://www.ecs.org/artscan) – that contains summaries of state policies related to arts in education from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. This database draws upon information in the Arts Education Partnership's *State Arts Education Policy Database*, and is designed as a resource for policymakers and advocates who are working on strategies to promote the arts in education through state policy.

*Artscan* data show a range of state policies that support the arts in education, including mandated classroom instruction, high school graduation requirements, admission requirements to state colleges and universities, and state-level arts assessments. For example, as of November 2005, *Artscan* shows:

- Thirty-six states and the District of Columbia include the arts in their high school graduation requirements, either as a requirement or an elective.
- More than half of the states require regular classroom teachers – primarily those in elementary schools – to take coursework in or demonstrate knowledge of the arts to receive certification or licensure.
- Nearly every state requires schools or districts to provide arts instruction to students in various grade levels, and some states require these courses to be taught by teachers certified in the arts.
- All states, with the exception of Iowa, have state-level standards in the arts.<sup>1</sup> Iowa does not have state-level standards for any subjects.

## Examples of State Policies that Support Arts Education

While many states have included the arts in high school graduation requirements and require schools at various levels to offer arts instruction, some states have developed even more assertive policies to promote the arts. Examples of state policies drawn from *Artscan*, are listed below.

## State Legislation Requiring Arts Education

Arkansas passed a law that requires every public elementary school in the state to provide instruction for no less than 40 minutes in visual art and in music based on the state visual art and music frameworks each calendar week of the school year. Instruction must be provided by a teacher certified to teach art or music. Legislation also created the Future Art and Music Teachers Pilot Program, which gives students in grades 11 and 12 in at least six schools in the state an opportunity to offer music and visual art instruction to K-6 students.

## Admissions Requirements to State Colleges and Universities

Some states have encouraged student participation in the arts by making such participation a requirement for admission to state colleges and universities. Examples of states currently utilizing this approach include:

- **California.** To qualify for admission to the University of California and California State University systems, students are required to complete one year of visual and performing arts chosen from dance, theatre, music or visual arts.
- **Minnesota.** Minnesota State Colleges and University Board policies require students to have completed courses in grades 9 through 12, including one year of arts (visual arts and the performing arts of theatre, music, dance and media arts).

As admissions policies for higher education often drive what is being taught in high schools, these policies can also help increase course offerings in the arts at the K-12 education levels.

## Arts Assessment

While most states consider the arts as part of the basic or core curriculum (according to the *Artscan* database, 44 states and the District of Columbia require schools or districts to offer instruction in the arts), only **Kentucky** uses a statewide exam to assess students in the arts. Kentucky's statewide assessment program helps ensure school accountability for student achievement of the state's academic expectations. The Core Content for Arts and Humanities Assessment, developed by Kentucky educators, is based on Kentucky's Learning Goals and Academic Expectations and has been influenced by the National Standards for Arts Education, the National Assessment of Educational Progress Arts Assessment Framework, and current work from other states.<sup>2</sup>

While Kentucky offers guidance in the form of a state-level test that some states may want to consider, eight states – **Arizona, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania** and **Washington** – have chosen to pursue arts assessment at the district level.<sup>3</sup> In **Oklahoma**, the state changed from a statewide test to requiring districts to test each student in grades 3-8 in the fine arts and report the results to the state board on an annual basis.<sup>4</sup>

In **Washington**, legislation requires that by the end of the 2008-09 school year, “districts must have elementary, middle and high school assessments or other strategies to assure that students have an opportunity to learn the essential academic learning requirements in...the arts.” This legislation prompted action from the Washington State Department of Education, which has now developed performance-based measures for the arts in education.<sup>5</sup>

## Using No Child Left Behind Funds to Support the Arts

Arizona's “content-rich curriculum” initiative is investing \$4 million in comprehensive school-reform funds (Title I-F) and Title V under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to support arts education improvement efforts at 43 schools throughout the state. The initiative is based on the success of Tucson's Opening Minds Through the Arts program, which received federal support from the Department of Education's Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination Program.<sup>6</sup>

*“An investment in the arts can help narrow the achievement gap between ethnic groups and raise achievement levels in high poverty schools.”*

**Tom Horne,**  
Arizona Superintendent  
of Public Instruction



*“The importance of the arts in No Child Left Behind is clear. They’re an important part of a well-rounded, complete education for every student. The knowledge and skills that learning in the arts imparts uniquely equip young persons for life. What’s more, combining music, art, dance, and drama with subjects such as math, reading, and language can be highly effective, enhancing student engagement and increasing academic achievement.”*

**Margaret Spellings,**  
U.S. Secretary of Education

According to Arizona State Superintendent Tom Horne, “I wanted to prevent schools from narrowing their curriculum. Because I had discretion over the comprehensive school reform funds, I could put those [funds] into arts programs. Tucson’s district-level success with Opening Minds Through the Arts was instrumental in getting this done because it provided evidence that an investment in the arts can help narrow the achievement gap between ethnic groups and raise achievement levels in high poverty schools.”<sup>7</sup>

Former Education Secretary Rod Paige, in a letter to state and local superintendents in 2004, reminded them that the arts are a core academic subject under NCLB, and as such, are eligible for Title I and other NCLB funds, citing Arizona’s use of Title I support to replicate the Opening Minds Through the Arts model statewide. More recently, Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings has affirmed the flexibility of federal education funds to support the arts.<sup>8</sup>

However, some indications show that NCLB continues to have an impact on arts education. *From the Capital to the Classroom*, released recently by the Center on Education Policy, found that 22% of school districts surveyed had reduced time spent on art and music as a result of the demands of NCLB.

## **A Summary of Policymaker Perspectives on Arts Education**

ECS conducted telephone interviews with 21 policymakers from across the country to better understand their orientation to arts in education.<sup>9</sup> The policymakers often expressed support for the arts in education; however, many did not perceive a demand among their constituents for new policies supporting an increased arts presence in the public school curricula. Even if such demand were to increase, policymakers indicated they would need several types of tools and information to produce new policy, including:

1. **Research evidence.** Policymakers in the ECS survey indicated they would especially like to see research specific to their own states (or those with similar demographics) showing a link between student participation in the arts and academic achievement, dropout prevention and workplace skills. (Current research findings regarding the benefits of the arts in education are discussed below).
2. **Data.** The policymakers would like to see data showing the availability of the arts to students in their states (for example, student-teacher ratios, arts instructional time or the availability of highly-qualified arts teachers or regular classroom teachers with training in the arts).
3. **Policy examples.** The policymakers also mentioned examples from other states designed to build district capacity, such as professional development in cross-curricular integration of the arts and strategies to encourage teacher collaboration and public-private partnerships.

### **Examples of the Types of Tools and Information Policymakers Need**

A few state coalitions (often including state departments of education and state arts agencies, philanthropic organizations and arts advocacy organizations) are producing state-specific reports that offer the types of research, data and policy examples that policymakers in the ECS survey indicated they need. Examples of states that have issued or will issue reports include **California, Michigan, New Jersey, Kentucky, Illinois and Washington**. These reports offer valuable findings, including:

- Examples of challenges posed by decreases in arts enrollments and highly qualified arts teachers, disparities in arts funding and arts course offerings for schools in rural areas or with lower enrollment, and limited instructional opportunities in dance and theater.
- Illustrative indicators of support for arts education. This state-specific information can be essential in helping to make the case for policymakers and other education leaders to pay more attention to arts education.

The following are examples of reports that states have produced in recent years. These reports can serve as examples for other states and offer policymakers a view of the types of useful data that such projects are

capable of yielding. The findings of these reports, which can help to make the case for future state-level action to increase the arts in education, can be accessed through the ECS Web site ([www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org)).

**California** – In 2005 the California Alliance for Arts Education released *Quality, Equity and Access: A Status Report on Arts Education in California Public Schools Grades Pre-K through 12*. The report identified state and federal policies that affect visual and performing arts in California public schools, and cited data that documents the implementation of arts education at the state and district levels. Some key reports that were cited include:

- The Music for All Foundation's *Sound of Silence* report, which found that enrollment in arts education courses in California decreased by 24.4% from the 1999-2000 through 2003-2004 school years, a loss of 461,806 students. Also according to the report, "many low-income, low performing elementary schools have curtailed or eliminated general, and in some cases, instrumental music."
- A study of Oakland schools, which revealed that students who had not met district and state standards were sometimes excused from music classes to take additional math and language arts courses.
- A 2001 Los Angeles County Arts Commission study, which showed that most of the school districts allocated less than 1% of their total budget to arts education. The study also found that arts education programs were not coherent or sequential, and were mostly dependent on parent fundraising and grants.

**Illinois** – The 2005 report, *Arts At the Core: Every School, Every Student* issued by Illinois Creates, a statewide coalition of education, business, civic and arts advocates, documents the results of a statewide survey of superintendents and principals. While the report found almost no opposition to arts education from superintendents and principals, it identified large gaps between the arts education offered across Illinois schools and districts. It showed that in general, students in rural areas and in small school districts received the least instruction in the arts. Lack of funding and time available in the school day were cited by superintendents and principals as reasons for the disparity between their support for arts education and their ability to provide a comprehensive arts program for students. Illinois Creates issues recommendations regarding arts assessment, arts specialists at the school level and comprehensive plans for arts education in Illinois.

**Michigan** – *Arts Alive* is a survey report commissioned by ArtServe Michigan/MAAE, the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs, and the Michigan Department of Education in 2001. The report identified a need for more facilities, materials and supplies; more time for arts education; more certified arts and visual arts specialists; and more student exposure to dance and theater classes. While the report found that the rural and urban schools responding to the survey had similar levels of arts education efforts, schools with larger enrollments had more arts education than smaller schools. Funding remains the major barrier for schools that want to maintain or increase their arts programs.

**New Jersey** – The *New Jersey Arts Education Census Project* (NJAECP), to be released this fall, is a partnership of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the New Jersey Department of Education, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey and the Music for All Foundation. The NJAECP effort will provide accurate school-level information on arts education to inform policy development, to align resources to areas of need, and to ensure that there is equitable access to arts education for all New Jersey public school children. The initiative encompasses five objectives:

1. Implementing a statewide survey on the current status of arts education in New Jersey public primary and secondary schools
2. Connecting the survey results with additional demographic information
3. Creating a New Jersey Arts Education Research Center
4. Developing a national model that will link data between states
5. Creating a process to update data annually.

*"Data specific to my state is needed because many of my colleagues in the state legislature do not seem to accept research or data from other states. Specifically, we need to know the number of arts teachers in schools, the ratio of students to art teachers, and whether these numbers have decreased in recent years."*

**Michael Merrifield,**  
Colorado State  
Representative

The research will quantify student enrollment, teachers, time of instruction, facilities, professional development and policies in arts education programs for each school. It will also track spending patterns over time for arts education and provide a basis for analyses of the growth or decline of enrollment relative to other school programs. In addition, economic, demographic, census, school report card and growth forecasts will all be linked together to provide context regarding additional factors that impact access to arts education in a community.<sup>10</sup>

**Rhode Island** – In response to an Executive Order from Governor Lincoln Almond, the Governor’s Literacy in the Arts Task Force released a report in 2001. This report recommended a variety of strategies to provide a comprehensive arts education to all Rhode Island students, including identification and coordination of resources, policy alignment, professional development and public awareness.

**Washington** – Research from the *Arts for Every Student: Arts Education Resources Initiative* (AERI), was released in January 2006 by the Washington State Arts Commission. In it, only half of Washington’s principals reported an increase in their schools’ capacity to teach the arts over the previous five years. Of the four arts disciplines, music was taught most often, with visual arts next in frequency, and with very little instruction in dance or theatre provided at any grade level. In fact, many K-12 students in Washington State are not receiving any arts instruction. AERI’s research also showed that arts curriculum is often undocumented, and can disappear when an arts teacher leaves the school. Many schools also struggle with finding and/or training qualified staff, finding the time for the arts in schedules committed to literacy and math, and allocating money for the arts in tight budgets. Despite these challenges, educators across Washington State expressed a strong interest in knowing how to implement high-quality arts education, and said that they needed more information on curriculum development, arts integration, performance-based assessments and other topics.

The policymakers participating in the ECS survey as well as members of the Governor’s Commission on the Arts in Education (the “Commission”) recommend additional areas for future research. These include research and inquiry in teacher preparation, certification and professional development; disparities between rural and urban arts education opportunities; early childhood education and the arts; state-level policy-building strategies; civic dialogue and community involvement as relevant to arts education; the relationship between arts education and the economy; and media strategies to promote arts education.

## **Additional Areas for Future Research and Inquiry**

### **Teacher preparation, certification and professional development**

The training and preparation of teachers for careers in arts education was a top concern for Commission members, who pointed out that the arts, as a core subject in the NCLB, is subject to requirements for “highly qualified teachers,” as defined by NCLB. ECS’ *ArtsScan* data show that 31 states and the District of Columbia require that at the elementary level, regular classroom teachers complete coursework or demonstrate competence in the arts for certification, or that teacher education programs ensure teachers have completed some coursework in the arts. More information is needed, however, on how these policies are implemented and how best to fill open teaching positions.

Commission members believe that arts specialists and non-arts teachers need high-quality professional development to help them achieve highly qualified status for NCLB requirements, and to help them make important connections between the arts and other subject areas. This is an area in which federal support under Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants can support professional development for arts specialists as well as non-arts or general classroom teachers. The evaluation of the North Carolina A+ Schools Network, a comprehensive school reform initiative that views the arts as fundamental to teaching and learning, identifies professional development as essential for effective school-wide reform.

While supply and demand data for arts teachers are not available at the national level, districts that offer instruction in the arts must fill positions within the NCLB standards. Commission members suggest that alternative

certification may be an option for states to encourage more individuals with a Bachelor's of Fine Arts degree (BFA) or a strong arts background to become teachers. While more research is needed to ascertain the impact and potential of alternative certification programs for the arts, some state-level data document a decline in arts specialists and indicate that other teachers do not necessarily embrace the arts as part of the curriculum.

For example, based on a statewide survey of school districts, a 2005 report commissioned by the Kentucky Arts Council and conducted by the Collaborative for Teaching and Learning found that:

- One in nine districts had reduced the number of certified arts specialists over the past five years
- Only one in 17 districts had a qualified dance teacher, and only one in eight had a qualified drama teacher
- In a majority of districts, most teachers did not consider the arts as important as other academic subjects.

### Disparities in arts instruction in urban and rural areas and in high-minority schools

Policymakers and Commission members expressed concern over apparent disparities that exist in how arts education is available in urban versus rural areas. The U.S. Department of Education report, *Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools: 1999-2000* issued by the National Center for Education Statistics, indicates that equitable arts education instruction is not provided across urban, suburban and rural areas. The study found that at the elementary and secondary levels, fewer rural schools offered music instruction than urban schools, and at the secondary school level, only 6% offered dance instruction, while only 37% offered dance and theatre.<sup>11</sup>

These results are consistent with the findings in the Illinois *Arts at the Core: Every School, Every Student*, report mentioned earlier in this document on the disparities between arts education in rural and urban areas.<sup>12</sup>

*Academic Atrophy: The Condition of the Liberal Arts in America's Public Schools*, a 2004 report based on a survey of almost 1,000 elementary and secondary school principals in four states, showed that 33% of all principals surveyed anticipated future decreases in instructional time for the arts, while only 7% anticipated increased time. For schools with high minority populations, the projections worsened: 42% of principals of high-minority schools anticipated future decreases in instructional time for the arts.<sup>13</sup>

Commission members emphasize the importance of eliminating disparities to ensure that all students have access to arts education.

### Early childhood education and the arts

Early childhood education is part of an increasing number of state policies. During 2005, 26 states and the District of Columbia increased funding for state and local early education funding programs. Forty-one states and the District of Columbia currently operate state-funded preschools.<sup>14</sup> With the increased state-level focus on early learning, it is important to remember that the arts have been part of early childhood education for decades. According to the Arts Education Partnership report, *Young Children and the Arts: Making Creative Connections*, the arts play a central role in cognitive, motor, language and social-emotional development.

Members of the Commission believe it is essential to ensure that there is adequate support for the arts in education in emerging early childhood education policies and practice.

### State-level policy strategies for the arts in education

According to the ECS policymaker survey, many policymakers would like to hear from arts advocates, teachers and parents regarding the importance of the arts to their state and in their schools. An event convened in Ohio in 2005 by the National Endowment for the Arts demonstrated the positive impact of a

*"Arts education is an integral component of quality early childhood education; it is and has been at the core of quality early childhood education programs for decades."*

**Sharon Lynn Kagan,**  
Associate Dean for Policy,  
Teachers College, Columbia  
College, and member,  
Governor's Commission  
on the Arts in Education



statewide convening and discussion on state policy and the arts in education. This meeting also helped to produce a report that offers a guide to hosting an event to build statewide support for arts education.<sup>15</sup>

### Arts education to foster civic dialogue and community involvement

Many of the competencies for the arts encompass civic competencies. In addition, the arts provide many opportunities for civic dialogue and engagement. Governor’s Commission members would like to see more examples of how the arts can be used to support community involvement, such as “The Americans for the Arts Initiative Animating Democracy,” which supports the involvement of artists and cultural organizations in civic life.<sup>16</sup>

### Information on arts education and the creative economy

Some policymakers participating in the ECS survey expressed interest in having access to more information illustrating the connection between arts education and economic development and competitiveness. Policymakers and business groups believe in the importance of arts education and its value in preparing students for the Creative Economy, as defined below.

### Media strategies to promote arts education

ECS analysis shows that more work needs to be done to promote arts education in the media. The report, *Media Paints Arts Education in a Fading Light*, commissioned by ECS and conducted by Douglas Gould and Company, is a media analysis of how the arts in education is covered and framed by the media. Recommendations include increasing the media presence of public officials, arts advocates and researchers. Focusing on negative stories serves to increase public cynicism and masks the overwhelming number of successful arts education programs and initiatives. Positive stories can help districts and schools find additional resources and community support.<sup>17</sup>

## Current Research Findings on the Benefits of Arts Education

The ECS policymaker survey respondents and Governor’s Commission members agree that policymakers want more information regarding research connecting the arts with improved academic achievement. The first task is to more effectively communicate and disseminate existing research findings. Since policymakers indicated a preference for research that focuses on their own state – or a state with similar demographics – a second challenge lies in providing and communicating targeted research to support arts education policy efforts on a state-by-state or regional basis.

While more work is needed to provide state-specific research findings, policymakers need to be aware that significant research work already links arts education to stronger overall academic achievement and social development. Key findings from current research link strong arts education programs to:

- **Improved performance in reading and math**

- The results of a voluntary survey of SAT test takers reveals that students who take arts courses have higher math, verbal and overall SAT scores than students who do not take arts classes. Although more research is needed to interpret the relationship, this study (including use of a large sample size of one million high school students and use of a meta-analysis methodology to assess the consistency of the findings over time) offers a foundation for future research on the relationship between learning in the arts and improved SAT scores.<sup>18</sup>
- Analysis of the *National Educational Longitudinal Study* (NELS:88) by University of California researchers shows a relationship between arts involvement and academic achievement, as indicated

*“When I talk to business groups, I say, ‘Let’s focus on what you tell us you’re really looking for: problem solvers, critical thinkers, people who have good interpersonal skills and who can communicate and articulate.’ Then I say, ‘Well, look to the students who are engaged in arts activities, and you’ll see that they indeed have those skills.’”*

**Elizabeth Burmaster,**  
Wisconsin Superintendent  
of Public Instruction

by better grades and improved standardized test performance. These findings are consistent for students from the lowest socio-economic quartile of the 25,000 students surveyed.<sup>19</sup>

— A study of the Arts for Academic Achievement program in Minneapolis indicated a significant relationship between arts-integrated instruction and improved student performance in reading and mathematics for students in grades 3 through 5.<sup>20</sup>

- **Improved student engagement and motivation in school**

— A summary of the studies in the *Critical Links* research compilation reveals a connection between the arts and increased student engagement and motivation, including improved attendance and educational aspirations.<sup>21</sup>

— A series of seven studies in the report *Champions of Change* consistently shows the power of arts education to reach students who are disengaged from school, and to help them connect more effectively with their peers.<sup>22</sup>

— The Arts Education Partnership publication, *The Third Space: When Learning Matters*, provides evidence of the potential for arts programming in high-poverty schools to create new opportunities for teaching and learning, and for building communities within and external to the schools.<sup>23</sup>

- **Improved social and civic development**

— *Critical Links* studies also show that students exposed to the arts gain more empathy and self-control, and develop improved conflict-resolution and social-tolerance skills.<sup>24</sup>

— Skills that students gain through arts education may be valuable for civic education and the development of civic competencies, especially civic skills and dispositions.<sup>25</sup> Such competencies include development of respect and appreciation for other people's views or perspectives.

- **Enhanced economic development and workforce preparation**

Sir Ken Robinson, a member of the Commission, describes the importance of the Creative Economy: "America needs a workforce that is flexible, adaptable and highly creative; and it needs an education system that can develop these qualities in everyone."<sup>26</sup>

The Creative Economy, which includes industries such as architecture, design, the arts, museums and the entertainment industry, relies upon people who can think creatively, adapt quickly to new situations and problem-solve. This industry, which is growing at a faster pace than total U.S. business growth,<sup>27</sup> increases the demand for workers with the skills that are gained through the arts in education.

- **Improved school climate**

— An evaluation of the North Carolina A+ Schools program, a comprehensive school reform initiative that includes arts education in its reform strategies, supports the idea that the arts can be integrated into the school curricula, and can create a more positive school culture while also strengthening ties to surrounding neighborhoods and communities.<sup>28</sup>

— A series of studies in *Champions of Change* shows that the arts can help improve the climate for learning as disciplines and classrooms are integrated and the physical appearance of a school is enhanced.<sup>29</sup>

Many of these studies can be found in the *Critical Links* compendium, which can be found on the Arts Education Partnership Web site at [www.aep-arts.org](http://www.aep-arts.org). An additional resource, *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement*, was released in 2006 by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and the Arts Education Partnership. This booklet connects the arts to academic achievement and student success and can be found at [www.nasaa-arts.org](http://www.nasaa-arts.org).

*"The arts provide a dynamic that is not present in most academic subjects, and make learning a richer experience."*

**Sandy Garrett,**  
Oklahoma Superintendent  
of Public Instruction  
and member, Governor's  
Commission on the Arts  
in Education

*"Making arts education a budget priority requires an extraordinary sense of political will, and purpose, and dedication. But none of us should settle for having our children cheated and not having the capacity to participate and be vitally involved in an arts education as a part of their total school experience. We've got an obligation to touch the talent of every child, not just the handful that fit our predetermined molds of what education should produce."*

**Mike Huckabee,**  
Governor of Arkansas

## Recommendations to Strengthen Arts Education

The Governor's Commission on the Arts in Education affirms the importance of state education policies that support the arts. Touching the talent of every student and offering opportunities through arts instruction both in arts courses and integrated throughout the curriculum is what helps nurture the creative spirit upon which our economy is built. While the ECS Governor's two-year initiative, "The Arts—A Lifetime of Learning," has provided a platform for discussing the issues confronting arts education, the next stages of work are clearly at the state level. As the nation's premier nonprofit, nonpartisan state education policy organization, ECS can provide the necessary materials and information to help state policymakers and education leaders create and support policies that ensure all students will have the opportunity to experience and participate in the arts during their school careers.

The Commission recommends that ECS:

- Produce annual progress reports to provide updates on the ECS Arts in Education initiative and the activities identified in this report.
- Work with pilot states to strengthen arts education policies. Potential indicators to identify pilot states include the level of existing arts education policy support and effective practice, availability of data related to arts education and the level of support from state and district leaders.
- Develop tools for state policymakers, including in-state data collection and research relevant to the arts in education, more information on the connection between the arts and academic achievement, and policy options for supporting the integration of arts into the curriculum.
- Collect data and disseminate information about how states are addressing issues related to arts education, including arts assessment and the provision of highly qualified arts teachers.

The Commission recommends that ECS seek additional funding to:

- Produce policy option papers regarding the demand for highly qualified teachers in the arts, including alternative routes to certification, enhanced professional development, tools for arts specialists and classroom teachers to integrate the arts in education, and the identification of successful elements of arts integration in schools.
- Provide further analysis to identify options and tools for assessing achievement in the arts and in other areas of academic achievement as the result of arts education.
- Expand the *Artscan* database to include more in-depth, state-by-state information on indicators of teaching quality and arts assessment at the state and district levels.
- Identify alternative sources of funding for the arts in education.
- Analyze existing national school reform efforts sponsored by foundations and identify the influence of these reforms on arts education, especially as reform efforts address disparities in urban, rural and high-minority schools.
- Further explore the connections between arts education and youth civic engagement to include the ways that arts education programs help develop students' civic skills and dispositions.

This report will be released at the 2006 ECS National Forum on Education Policy as the culmination of Governor Huckabee's ECS Chairman's initiative. ECS commits itself to sustained attention to the issue of arts education and will include the issue in future ECS meetings and events, including the National Forum. ECS will also provide periodic updates of the outcomes of the recommendations of this report.

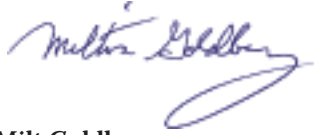
## Governor's Commission on the Arts in Education Members

### CHAIRMAN



**Hon. Mike Huckabee**  
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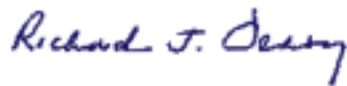
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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Education Commission of the States (ECS). *Artscan* database. Denver, CO: ECS, 2005. [www.ecs.org/artscan](http://www.ecs.org/artscan) (accessed February 12, 2006).
- <sup>2</sup> Kentucky Department of Education Web site, [www.education.ky.gov](http://www.education.ky.gov) (accessed February 12, 2006).
- <sup>3</sup> Education Commission of the States (ECS). *Artscan* database.
- <sup>4</sup> Many other states and national organizations have documented resources to help districts assess the arts in education, whether or not required by legislation.
- <sup>5</sup> Office of State Superintendent of Instruction Dr. Terry Bergeson's Web site. *The Arts Classroom-Based Performance Assessments*, [www.k12.wa.us](http://www.k12.wa.us) (accessed February 28, 2006).
- <sup>6</sup> Arizona Department of Education Web site. *State of Education, 2005*. [www.ade.az.gov](http://www.ade.az.gov).
- <sup>7</sup> Tom Horne interview with Doug Herbert, Phoenix, AZ, January 20, 2006, *State Superintendents Are Powerful Advocates for the Arts in Education*, Education Commission of the States, 2006.
- <sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Education Web site. *Teachers Ask the Secretary*, [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) (accessed April 8, 2006).
- <sup>9</sup> Education Commission of the States (ECS) conducted telephone interviews with 21 policymakers between November 21, 2005 and February 27, 2006. Six state senators, eight state representatives, one state board of education member, two deputy commissioners of education, three current state superintendents and one former state superintendent were interviewed. All of the legislators serve on their respective education committees, and most chair these committees. Political affiliation among these policymakers was approximately equal, with nine Republicans, 10 Democrats and two unidentified.
- <sup>10</sup> Robert Morrison, President, Music for All Foundation, in email to Susan Vermeer Lopez, March 3, 2006.
- <sup>11</sup> The FRSS (Fast Response Survey System) survey has not been repeated since the 1999-2000 report, and updated national level data collection of this type is needed.
- <sup>12</sup> Illinois Creates: The Illinois Arts Education Initiative. *Arts at the Core: Every School, Every Student*, Chicago, IL, 2005. [www.artsalliance.org/docs/education/ArtsAtTheCore.pdf](http://www.artsalliance.org/docs/education/ArtsAtTheCore.pdf). A study by an arts education coalition found that students in Illinois do not have equal access to arts education and that the state falls below national averages in providing instruction in each of the four arts disciplines.
- <sup>13</sup> Claus von Zastrow and Helen Janc. *Academic Atrophy: The Condition of Liberal Arts in American's Public Schools*, Council for Basic Education, Washington, D.C., 2004.
- <sup>14</sup> *Votes Count: Legislative Action on Pre-K Fiscal Year 2006*, November 2005. Pre[K]now, Washington, D.C. [www.preknow.org](http://www.preknow.org).
- <sup>15</sup> Deborah Vrabel and Michael E. Sikes. *Lessons Learned A Guide for Developing School Leaders for the Arts: Based on the 2004 NEA/Ohio Summer Institute for School Leaders*, Columbus, OH: Ohio Arts Council, 2005. [www.oac.state.oh.us/GrantsProgs/NEAleadership/OtherResources.asp](http://www.oac.state.oh.us/GrantsProgs/NEAleadership/OtherResources.asp). The Institute Process Guide is a step-by-step guide for conceiving and sponsoring an institute for school leaders at either the state or local level.
- <sup>16</sup> Americans for the Arts Animating Democracy Web site, [www.americansforthearts.org/animatingdemocracy](http://www.americansforthearts.org/animatingdemocracy) (accessed June 12, 2006).
- <sup>17</sup> *Media Paints Arts Education in Fading Light*, prepared by Douglas Gould and Company for Education Commission of the States, Denver, CO, 2005.
- <sup>18</sup> Kathryn Vaughn and Ellen Winner, "SAT Scores of Students Who Study the Arts: What We Can and Cannot Conclude about the Association." In Richard Deasy (Ed.), *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, Washington, D.C. Arts Education Partnership: 2002, 96-97.
- <sup>19</sup> James S. Catterall, *Involvement in the Arts and Success in Secondary School*, In Richard Deasy (Editor), *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, Washington D.C. Arts Education Partnership: 2002, 68-69.
- <sup>20</sup> Debra Ingram and Karen R. Seashore, *Arts for Academic Achievement: Summative Evaluation Report*, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, University of Minnesota, 2003.
- <sup>21</sup> *Highlights: Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, [www.aep-arts.org/CLhighlights.doc](http://www.aep-arts.org/CLhighlights.doc) (accessed February 10, 2006).
- <sup>22</sup> Edward Fiske (Ed.), *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*, "Arts Education Partnership and President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities," Washington D.C., 1999.
- <sup>23</sup> Richard Deasy and Lauren Stevenson, *The Third Space: When Learning Matters*, Arts Education Partnership: Washington D.C., 2005. This book explores how the arts can help disadvantaged schools succeed through a case study of 10 districts.
- <sup>24</sup> *Highlights: Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, [www.aep-arts.org/CLhighlights.doc](http://www.aep-arts.org/CLhighlights.doc) (accessed February 10, 2006).
- <sup>25</sup> Judith Torney-Purta and Susan Vermeer, *Developing Citizenship Competencies from Kindergarten through Grade 12: A Background Paper for Policymakers and Educators*, Education Commission of the States, Denver, CO: ECS, 2004.
- <sup>26</sup> Sir Ken Robinson was appointed by the British government to chair the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education and was responsible for the report, *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education*. Robinson is also the author of *Out of our Minds: Learning to be Creative*.
- <sup>27</sup> Americans for the Arts, *Creative Industries 2005: The State Report*, Washington D.C., 2005. This report measures the scope and economic size of the arts in America.
- <sup>28</sup> Catherine Awsumb Nelson, *The Arts and Education Reform: Lessons From a Four-Year Evaluation of A+Schools*, North Carolina A+ Schools, Thomas S. Keenan Institute for the Arts at the North Carolina School of the Arts, 2001.
- <sup>29</sup> Edward Fiske (Ed.), *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*, "Arts Education Partnership and President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities," Washington D.C., 1999.

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