



Thought Leader Forum on Arts and Education

Assuring Equitable Arts Learning in Urban K-12 Public Schools

*Hosted by Grantmakers in the Arts and Grantmakers for Education
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Introduction

The theme of the Forum: **Assuring equitable arts learning in urban K-12 public schools** was jointly determined by Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) and Grantmakers for Education (GFE) who served as co-hosts for the event. GIA and GRE hosted a total of 30 funders representing private foundations, corporations, and public agencies who support the arts, education, or both, through arts education funding initiatives. Context and provocation was provided by Cyrus Driver, director of Program Learning and Innovation at the Ford Foundation, Nick Rabkin, senior research scientist, NORC at the University of Chicago, David Sherman, consultant to the American Federation of Teachers, and Richard Kessler, executive director of the Center for Arts Education. The meeting was facilitated by John McCann, president, Partners in Performance, Inc.

This first in a series of Grantmakers in the Arts Thought Leader Forums was held on June 24, 2010 at the Marriott Waterfront Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland.

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Executive Summary of the Forum

John McCann

Arts Education and the Purposes of Schooling

Cyrus Driver set a context for the day by sharing three observations informed by his 25-year career in public education reform;

1) Strengthening the arts in public schools is a cultural problem, and will be solved not through more research and data, but through a change in beliefs and norms, basically a change in the public's consciousness about the arts and their value to education.

2) With the central priorities of education in the United States being social reproduction and economic prosperity, Driver advised the group to recognize that through economic ups and downs during the 30 years since 1980 the access to arts in education has been in continual decline, again reinforcing the lack of the arts being embedded as a core cultural value.

3) Driver does not see this decline as all gloom and doom, and urged the group to see the current redefinition of public education as an opportunity to get in on the 'ground floor. As so many frameworks and structures are being examined, including extending the school day, expanding of the school year, new technologies and their influence on how learning occurs, the evolving federal role in education, and the fact that assessment is in for a 'lot of change' all provide avenues for the arts to enter into the discussion. In order to influence the norms and values and engage in the 'reset moment' for education, Driver proposed three strategies.

- 1) Build new coalitions: "powerful people with powerful ideas"
- 2) Identify and embrace "unlikely allies" such as the union and the business community
- 3) Create a new level of "common cause" beyond the current internal fractures in the arts education community

In response to questions from the group, Driver also suggested:

- Look internationally, especially to Indonesia and Japan, who have, for different reasons embraced the arts as vital to education
- Take lessons from Big Thought in Dallas on how they have grown 'to scale' by utilizing evaluation to advance from grassroots beginning, to seven schools to fifteen schools, and then via Wallace Foundation funding,

has become recognized as an essential element of the Dallas educational structure.

Following Driver's introductory presentation, three speakers responded to what GIA/GFE views as critical barriers to achieving equitable arts learning in urban K-12 public schools. Each speaker had prepared and circulated a paper in advance of the session. These papers and audio files of the presentations, including Driver's introductory remarks, are available at www.grantmakersinthearts.org

Barrier #1: The rationale/arguments in support of arts education are not sufficient to advance equitable access for all urban public school students nor place arts education at the table of major education policy discussion and decision-making.

In response to the challenge of achieving equitable arts participation in urban schools, Nick Rabkin identified five key areas where arts education activity correlates with improved education outcomes in the United States.

- Academic performance, and the fact that the solid research about the positive influence of the arts is currently being drowned out.
- Motivation and discipline, and that cognitive sciences now show how individual motivation, discipline, and self-regulation improves with the arts, even worse, people think arts lack discipline.
- 21st century skills and higher order thinking, and that data correlate these essential capabilities with the arts.
- Improving school climate, and that arts participation improves morale, engages students in active learning, reduces conflict and violence. While the arts are shown to improve school climate, they are often loud, messy and disorderly.
- Aspirations for social mobility, and while a complex argument supporting arts in schools, a majority of parents, administrators, and policymakers see the arts as a pathway to upward mobility.

In spite of the data supporting these beneficial contributions, Rabkin noted that childhood arts education participation **decreased** by 25% from 1980 to 2008, with greater decreases for Latino and African American children. This followed a steady **increase** from 1930-1980 while participation increased by 180% to an average participation rate of 65%.

Rabkin offered four practical strategies in response to these declining rates of participation.

- 1) Build a stronger research-based case for the value of arts learning.
- 2) Resolve divisive internal debates.
- 3) Develop clearer concise messages, and employ diverse strategies for delivery.
- 4) Create networks beyond the arts for learning, dissemination, and advocacy.

Lastly, Rabkin addressed the internal arguments about the value of arts integration. "Whatever you may think about arts integration, it is the most significant innovation in the field over the last two decades and a leading example of constructivist education in public schools – perhaps *the* leading example." Rabkin goes on to say that, "interviews with key informants in a dozen districts suggest to me that district policymakers may be more open to integration, given their resource constraints". He adds that there have been no nationally coordinated efforts to develop the practice, advocate for it, or design systemic approaches to its implementation. He suggests support be provided for development of networks (and institutions) to advance arts integration.

Barrier #2: A lack of knowledge and technical skills related to teaching and learning, including basic data on what children are receiving in the classroom, arts pedagogy, budgeting, scheduling, assessment, and more, inhibits equitable access to arts education.

While reminding participants about the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) longstanding commitment to arts education, David Sherman, now a consultant to AFT and a member of the Board of Directors of the Center for Arts Education, admonished the federal No Child Left Behind initiative ('if it is tested it counts') and its successor, Race To The Top (dealing only with the 'business of public education') as further marginalizing the arts in schools. This has been exacerbated, according to Sherman, by a state level 'data frenzy' and sole focus on 'measurable outcomes'. In response Sherman offered a 10-point approach to achieving higher levels of equitable access to arts education in urban settings.

1. Support the organizations involved in developing the Common Core standards to make sure they continue to integrate the arts with other subject areas and promote the development of common arts standards on the agenda.
2. Provide grants to organizations to facilitate the placement of stories, opeds, PSAs, editorials, etc. in the mass media (written by a variety of authors) educating the public and raising awareness about how we are hurting children by not providing them with a well-rounded education, and how the elimination of the arts in particular is holding back their development as deep and critical thinkers and productive citizens.
3. Assist appropriate non-profits and others to get on the agendas of key national, regional and local organizations' annual conferences to influence their members about the issues at hand and how they relate to the constituencies they represent, e.g. NAACP, National School Boards Association, National PTA, La Raza, Council of Great City Schools, national associations of principals and teachers, civil rights groups, American

Association of Supervisors and Administrators, National Governors Association, etc.

4. Call for a meeting of key foundation, arts and education representatives with Secretary Duncan to discuss the issues at hand and in particular, how we can be helpful in implementing his public commitment to arts education (including its role in the ESEA reauthorization).
5. Fund organizations to prepare concise materials for parents and school boards to give them the questions they should be asking their districts and schools about the arts education services their students are receiving.
6. Provide a grant to an appropriate organization to assemble a list of highly effective schools across the country that have persevered and thrived by incorporating strong arts education curricula and offerings and use these schools as living case histories of "yes we can" in items 1-4, above.
7. Support efforts to reach out to arts organizations that work closely with schools across the country to learn how they have been able to continue their work in this challenging economy.
8. Provide funding to produce a DVD (and resource guide) with students, parents, teachers, principals, etc. talking about the impact the arts have had on their schools and the quality of the education they provide.
9. Fund an in-depth study of the world of arts and arts-related careers in all walks of life in terms of career development for students, as well as possible themes for new small schools and those undergoing redesign.
10. Fund a convening of arts organizations, school district representatives and others to put together a set of recommendations for the reauthorization of ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) that relates to the role of the arts and arts education in K-12 schooling. Then, meetings and testimony can move ahead with key Congressional leaders, particularly those on the education committees in the House and Senate.

It was the final point that prompted the greatest amount of discussion amongst the participants. With the reauthorization of ESEA scheduled for the spring of 2011, the group felt it imperative to develop a strategy, either with the Arts Working Group (Americans for the Arts) or otherwise to influence the reauthorization language this fall.

Barrier #3: A shortage of coordination and a decline in the development of new systems for delivering broad-based resources in urban centers has inhibited access to quality arts education for urban school students and their families. Resources include teachers, teaching artists, volunteers as well as funding and different vehicles of delivery (including in-school and out-of-school time, community-based, virtual).

A final provocation was offered by Richard Kessler who began by citing how the arts have been fundamentally

redefined---primarily through technology---from the four traditional disciplines around which the existing standards were developed from 1996-1999, into a 'virtual kaleidoscope' that opens the art making process to everybody. As an example, he cited how the digital realm can now allow all students in an entire school to instantly become photographers. Additionally, what was once a simple construct of primarily having arts teachers" teach arts classes in schools' now has multiple, and ever-increasing dimensions including online instruction, teaching artists, parent volunteers, after school programs, and community based projects. "Just imagine a principal, with little knowledge of the arts, and with little to no budget trying to make sense of this new world, especially with the increasing demand for more standards, benchmarks, and exit requirements."

In response to this swiftly--and constantly changing--reality Kessler offered a series of responses for consideration.

1. Invest in research that provides better understanding of the variety of ways in which quality programs are delivered equitably.
2. Further examination of how disparate approaches are and can be better coordinated. (Kansas City Arts Project as an example.)
3. Invest in a deeper understanding of what quality arts integrations looks like.
4. Encourage research and development. (This could be fertile for Arts Education as audience development research has been advantageous for live arts and presenting organizations).
5. Support overall research and development in arts education.
6. Attempt to balance the natural desire to provide core support with the need to invest in the future.
7. Foster dialogue among teaching artists, teacher and administrator unions, and charter management organization.
8. Build coalitions -- find the common conversations. (This was cited as a current weakness for the field.)
9. Consider what might be learned from the sometimes hard-hitting, proactive approaches to school reform made by some of the nation's largest foundations. Kessler cited the Gates Foundation as an example.
10. Support building relationships between education grant makers and arts grant makers (How do we raise money? How do we speak out? How do we continue building relationships as needed)?

Kessler concluded by noting, "The history of arts education has been studded with initiatives by major national foundations that wax and wane. I know the issue of dependency very well -- Dana Foundation was a long-time supporter, but left Arts Education when Bill Safire died. This creates more issues than people think."

The forum closed with each participant, based on what they had heard from the provocateurs and discussed throughout the day, identifying important strategic steps forward.

There is a need to develop a long term vision for arts education (in general) and in urban schools in particular.

- Reframe the conversation toward 21st century education
- Look to international models for inspiration and effective practice
- This vision will need a top line strategy.
- Assure an 'integrated' strategy (work together!)
- Inform reauthorization of ESEA
- Learn from/link with STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics)
- Eliminate internal fracture (e.g. arts integration/arts for arts sake)
- Identify and fund capacity building needs
- Develop better understanding of costs of arts education (cost analysis)
- Link arts to 'creativity' framework

Access to relevant, reliable, evidence-based research and data is essential.

- Gather and curate data on outcomes, effective practice, etc.
- Create a central clearinghouse (portal) for unfettered access

A research agenda is required to fill in any existing gaps.

- Target research initiatives
- Screen to guarantee high quality researchers/ methodology
- An effective approach to 'messaging' that conveys the unifying vision and is supported by the research.
- Speak with one compelling and clear voice
- Bring likely (and unlikely) allies to the table
- Engage directly with multiple stakeholders (students, experts, etc.)
- Target the message in ways that reduces the 'knowledge deficit' (of those who have no experience with arts education)

The meeting concluded with Chris Tebben (GFE) stating, "It was powerful for me to listen to these ideas. This has been a real opportunity to shape and integrate our thinking." Janet Brown (GIA) added, "We will look for the next intersection of GFE and GIA, as I know there is a real push for substantive change at this moment".

John McCann is president, Partners in Performance, Inc.

Can the Arts Become Part of the 'Basics' of our Public Education?

*Cyrus E. Driver*¹

Can the arts² become part of the 'basics' of U.S. schooling in the current moment? I give a two-part answer, the first is less than optimistic: The arts have a tenuous, often contradictory relationship to long-run purposes and structures that define schooling and, as a result, the arts will likely remain on the margins of public education for most children for many years. To be sure, we do see strong, enduring arts education in our wealthier public school communities and elite private schools, reflecting how the distribution of quality arts education acts as a societal barometer of privilege. Yet even in our most affluent communities the arts are not fully integrated into the norms, routinized practices, and structures that underlie our public school system, what David Tyack calls the 'grammar of schooling'.³

I illustrate this problem by considering the arts in relation to two primary purposes of US schooling: 1) economic prosperity, and 2) assimilation/social reproduction. While other purposes drive schooling, and historical 'path dependencies' may also marginalize or bolster the arts in schools, these illustrations show the depth of the problem we face in making arts education part of the 'basics.' Yet, I am not an utter pessimist! The second half of this paper suggests that the current context and our agency, our ideas and actions, shape our future as much as past structures. We are in a period of high anxiety regarding many aspects of U.S. economic and social life, and public education may be more susceptible to change now than it has been for a long time, perhaps affording opportunity to reposition the arts more centrally. This piece concludes with a few ideas and unanswered questions that might guide a strategy to advance the arts in this way.

Economic Prosperity

US public education has shown much alignment with our economic system, which is now reified in American culture as a foundational achievement of Western progress. The organization of public schools is largely isomorphic with 20th century economic structures (e.g. hierarchy/division of labor in school districts, "shopping mall" high schools), though it sometimes reflects vestiges of bygone eras (our enduring summer vacations, loved by children but costly to their parents)! Such alignment makes sense as schools have been expected to prepare children with knowledge, skills and dispositions to work in our economy. Values of rationality and technical efficiency, manifest now in a desire to measure student progress and hold students and teachers

'accountable' for results, undergird this purpose, and the 'three R's' are seen by most as the sine qua non curricula for success on the job and at home.

We have been hard pressed to show how the arts are of equal importance to our economy or the stated values that support it. Historically, the arts have had few direct links to labor markets, and mainly ones that aren't lucrative, and the pure contribution of the arts to economic value and growth is not seen as high. Moreover, the complexity and non-linearity of arts education and arts-driven learning itself work against a pervasive valuing of technical efficiency and rationality. The arts are nice but not necessary, a luxury after a hard day's work.

To complicate matters, this purpose of enabling economic prosperity connects to some egalitarian aims of schooling. For example, the idea that schools are primary pathways for individual mobility and social equity is deeply embedded in the American psyche. The democratization of higher education, including the community college movement, extends this view, as does the recent push for uniform 'college and career-ready standards' as a lever to level the playing field of economic opportunity.

The problem is that the politically progressive school reformers we might consider allies often view mobility and equity as primarily driven by access to economic prosperity, and so their support for the arts is ambivalent at best. On one hand, they favorably glimpse how the arts can promote student voice and thereby enliven democracy, and they recognize the inequity in providing arts for some but not others. On the other hand, they see literacy, math, and reforms like career academies, small high schools and the like, as more directly affecting economic opportunity and thereby social equity. I have found it quite troubling that progressive voices in school reform, and many who proclaim equity as a primary aim, often snicker at becoming arts education advocates, believing their scarce resource of school reform advocacy is better expended elsewhere.

Assimilation and Social Reproduction

U.S. public schooling has also sought to 'Americanize' children by conveying values, habits and knowledge of the dominant culture. This contentious purpose has been manifest in recent decades through 'culture wars' and efforts to end bilingual education, and is implicit in notions of 'soft skills' and 'study habits' that prepare students to be good workers, parents and citizens. Some argue that this purpose serves the status quo by helping to assure the reproduction of a social hierarchy, asserting that this process is laden with power dynamics that mute or diminish culture and the voices of less powerful groups. While I agree with much of this analysis, I am more sanguine on at least the general notion of reproduction through schooling. Human existence across generations largely benefits from wisdom of the

past, consistency of values, and tradition, stability and order. Shared identity is forged through common experience over time, and in schools this means much the same curricula, instructional practices, routines and rituals.

I do believe children and families from less powerful groups should have more agency in the shaping of education, and the arts may enable this. The arts can challenge assimilation and social reproduction by complicating whose knowledge is privileged, how we interpret knowledge and even the act of knowledge creation. The arts also contradict the prevailing understanding of 'normal' classroom instruction, the so-called 'banking model' of a teacher imparting and students regurgitating, in favor of a constructivist approach. As a funder of integrated arts education, I often believed that our best exemplars acted as Trojan Horses to subvert adult/teacher authority over truth and interpretation. Student imagination and expressions through art act, as Dick Deasy says, to 'democratize the classroom,' particularly for students who are less adept in using accepted conventions of English grammar. Here, the arts are not so much a luxury as potentially disruptive.

These illustrations hopefully show that the arts in our schools may be fine in theory but many people, deep down, perceive them to be at best a luxury, at worst an irritant and problem (unlike the essential three R's and increasingly the subject of science). Arts outcomes don't easily resonate with much of what is valued in our economy, and besides, we have difficulty measuring these outcomes anyway. So in a world of limited resources, particularly for children of color in cities, are the arts, at the end of the day, really a priority for their success in America? The answer in the past 35 years has been 'no,' except during robust economic times when all children gain more access to the arts. By 'we,' I mean those among us with the power to largely decide what children are seen as deserving of what opportunities.

Going Forward

However, we are not wholly Quixotic in pushing for the arts to be part of the basics. The future is determined not only by institutions and structure but also by circumstance, our ideas and acts. While much of the grammar of schooling has seemed immutable, we have also seen a dramatic reshaping—100 years ago we had over 100,000 school districts! Change does happen in schooling, albeit slowly, when those in power feel so moved to advance new ideas.

In this moment, we are in a crisis of confidence about our economy, the environment, our government and how we productively engage extraordinary cultural diversity. Schools are grappling with this moment too, fueled by the growing awareness of how information technologies are reshaping how students learn, and understand the world. In response, we are seeing initial testing of what Jeannie Oakes calls 'disruptive ideas' that start to re-align schools to a new economic and social reality. Sadly, many of these ideas don't

command the same attention as far less imaginative or useful reforms that now dominate much of the airwaves.

The arts could be integrated among some of the better ideas at play in school reform, but for this to happen most effectively, we will need to make some strategic bets. For example, the work of Big Thought in Dallas, TX shows that arts integration can act as a linchpin to link schools, community partners, government and families around a 'creative learning system' that engages students in deeper learning during and after school hours, placing the arts at the center of a large-scale reform that begins to re-define how and where education takes place. This work capitalizes upon and adds content to a growing movement in education to extend the length of the school day and year, one tack that might be a priority strategy. I have seen similar links emerging with innovative high school designs like multiple pathways and the growing community schools movement, and I imagine there are other opportunities to strategically forge common ground with other school reform efforts.

We may ask how the arts should be integrated into the discussion of how people learn, since presumably learning itself is a core skill to be taught in schools. Gardner's 'multiple intelligences' is now just thirty-years old, and arts integration as a field is younger. Should we push on this core question of the centrality of arts learning to human thought and understanding? Do we believe that Daniel Pink is correct in arguing that aesthetic creativity/design are core competencies for success in the 21st century economy, and therefore the arts should be a pillar of a 21st century education? If we answer in the affirmative, we then may ask how we construct a stronger economic prosperity argument.

Ideas matter in school reform, but politics and power are more often determinant. Movements that have been most effective in shaping schooling have had to sustain power over decades—witness the current accountability movement that began nearly thirty years ago and is still going strong. There are in fact constituencies with the power to effectively advocate for the arts in schools. It is heartening, though patently unfair, that the arts remain much more solid in communities and schools of privilege. I live in middle-class Hastings-on-Hudson that has six full time arts and music teachers for 1,200 children, after-school theatre, a 100-student elementary school orchestra, etc. We have seen slippage in recent years reflecting, even in my town, a view that the arts are not fully at the core of education. Yet, I would be stunned if the arts were fully 'cut' as we see in our lower-wealth neighbor Yonkers.

Hastings is a place where parents generally value independent thought and creativity in children (up to a point of course!), and recognize these as core attributes of success, indeed of privilege. Hastings parents differ little from those in low-wealth communities except in our power—we organize and go ballistic if the arts are at risk. Recent alliance-building and advocacy by the NYC Center for Arts

Education shows that community organizations and the families that they represent are passionate about seeing the arts restored to New York's schools. Parents and many educators recognize the myriad benefits of the arts, particularly quality arts integration, but to date they have not had the sustained power to make the arts a reality. While some of our Ford-supported work has shown the potential of building local coalitions to bring integrated arts education to thousands of children, these efforts remain fragile.

A second challenge, then, is to strategically build a movement around our shared vision for arts education. As we look to past movements, we see that our ideas must be adequately compelling to move policymakers. We also need to look at how we position arts education allies within broader progressive movements, for school reform and elsewhere. To date we have yet to adequately 'inventory' our core advocates and allies, as well as those who resist and those who simply are not interested. A broader coalition, beyond the usual suspects, could be realized, comprising business leaders, those in the 'creative sector,' progressive educators who believe in constructivist teaching, and families and community groups who are seeking a more engaging set of learning experiences for their children.

I hope this general overview has provoked thought about the depth of the challenge faced by the arts in becoming part of the 'basics,' and about the many strategic questions that confront those of us who endeavor to make this happen. I hope we might use some of these ideas to launch our discussion in Baltimore about how we indeed go forward.

Cyrus Driver is director, Program Learning and Innovation at the Ford Foundation.

Notes

1. This paper reflects the perspective of the Cyrus E. Driver and does not represent the positions or viewpoints of his employer, the Ford Foundation.
2. By the 'arts' I mean both the teaching of arts disciplines, and the integration of the arts into the teaching of other subjects. I don't distinguish here since this paper discusses broad problems and solutions. Do know that nearly all of my knowledge and experience in the field has been in the realm of arts integration through my work in Ford-sponsored initiatives from 2002-2009.
3. While I draw upon research focused on educational history, this is not a scholarly paper but one that largely summarizes my various experiences as an education policy reformer, a funder and a public school parent in a middle-class suburb.

Looking for Mr. Good Argument: The Arts and the Search for a Leg to Stand on in Public Education

Nick Rabkin

Barrier #1: The rationale/arguments in support of arts education are not sufficient to advance equitable access for all urban public school students nor place arts education at the table of major education policy discussion and decision-making.

Public education has always been a challenging environment for the arts. From the start, advocates of arts education needed to make compelling arguments to include it in the curriculum. Their arguments won a subordinate role for the arts in public schools. But if our goal is to weave artistic thinking and practice into the fabric of public schooling and make arts education as accessible to poor children as it is for the elite, they have failed.

There are echoes of arguments from the 1850s in the arguments we make for arts education today, and they are good arguments. They have their limits, and we need to make them stronger, but they are not failing because they are without merit. They fail because they are contradicted by popular and deeply held beliefs, assumptions, and policies about the arts, schools, and learning that are simply not arts-friendly.

They fail because of the long tradition of applying a manufacturing model to schools – students as raw materials to be fashioned into finished products; standardization and order as the highest values; and ‘efficiency’ the organizing principle – from ‘scientific management’ and Taylorism in 1910 to ‘data-driven policy’ and ‘performance management’ in 2010. They fail because market-driven strategies narrow curriculum, dumb-down assessment, discourage student-centered instruction, and are hostile to experimentation and patient problem solving. These market-based principles are embraced without compelling evidence that they are effective, suggesting education policy is far less ‘data-driven’ than policymakers want us to believe.

They fail because schools are victims of the broad consensus that government is wasteful and too big. Schools have been starved financially since California’s Proposition 13 and the widespread fiscal crises in urban America in the late 70s and 80s. Arts education costs money, and the starvation will undoubtedly reach new levels in this sustained recession.

So I don’t blame the arguments. They are sound and compelling, when people are willing to listen. That does not mean that they can’t be stronger, or that we have sufficient research, or that they can’t be better adapted to the realities

Grantmakers in the Arts

I’ve described. Let’s explore the limits of key arguments for arts education:

Equity: Math and literacy are at the top and the arts near the bottom of a hierarchy of academic value in schools. The arts will not be a priority for policymakers until low-income students are performing well in priority subjects, or unless we can make a case for the contributions arts learning makes to literacy and math. Hierarchy trumps equity. What’s more, policymakers in urban districts believe, with reason, that they are the victims of budget inequities built into state education systems. Budget trumps curriculum.

Academic performance: There is a significant association of arts learning with higher student performance across the curriculum, including math and reading. But the logic of this association is not clear to most people who understand the arts as affective and expressive, not cognitive or academic. The research is solid, but it amounts to a drop in an ocean of education research, and tends to be drowned out. Some of it is easily dismissed because of the confounding association of arts education and socio-economic status, the most powerful predictor of academic success.

Motivation and discipline: There’s also significant evidence that self-regulation and attitudes toward school improve when students are involved in arts learning. These findings contradict the association of the arts with license and freedom. Since many believe that a lack of discipline is at the heart of the problem in schools, the arts are disadvantaged again.

21st century skills and higher order thinking: We argue that skills most important in the 21st century – for work and social relations – are associated with arts learning. The arts develop the dispositions to be creative and intuitive, deepen perception, identify and solve problems, make plans, consider alternatives, reflect, adapt, and continue learning. They develop social skills – collaboration and teamwork - and dispositions like empathy. Yet the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, the leading advocate for higher order skills in education, hardly mentions the arts at its website.

Improving school climate: There is significant evidence that arts education improves school climate, teacher morale, collaboration, school-community relations, and builds community amid conflict and violence. Engaging students with interesting and meaningful work may be the best strategy for improving school climate, but the single most powerful indicator of school climate for many administrators, as it was a hundred years ago, is order and discipline. Because they are often messy, loud, and because the arts are not standardized, there is an unconscious association of the arts with disorder.

Aspirations for social mobility: Though not used as an explicit argument for arts education, this is a contextual subtext that favors the arts in schools. Some parents, policymakers and administrators see the arts as a pathway to desirable upward mobility for their children.

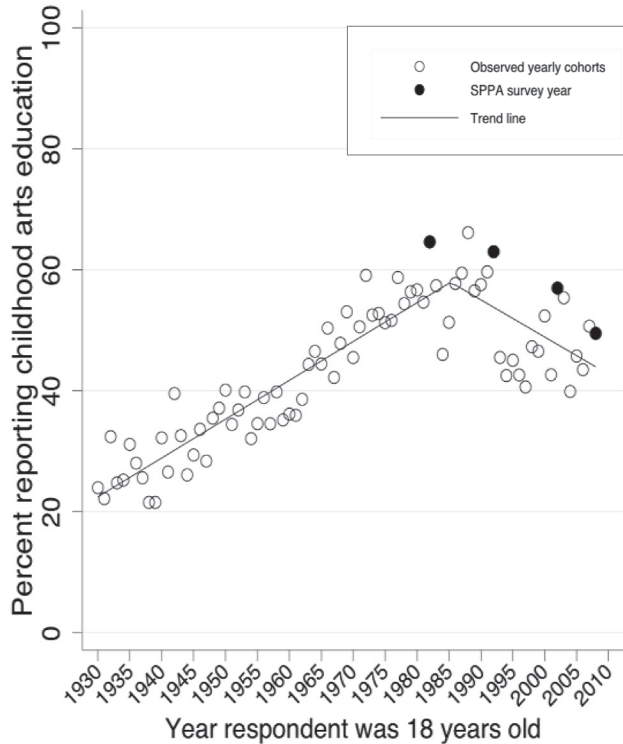


Figure 1 (Surveys of Public Participation in the Arts, 1982 – 2008)

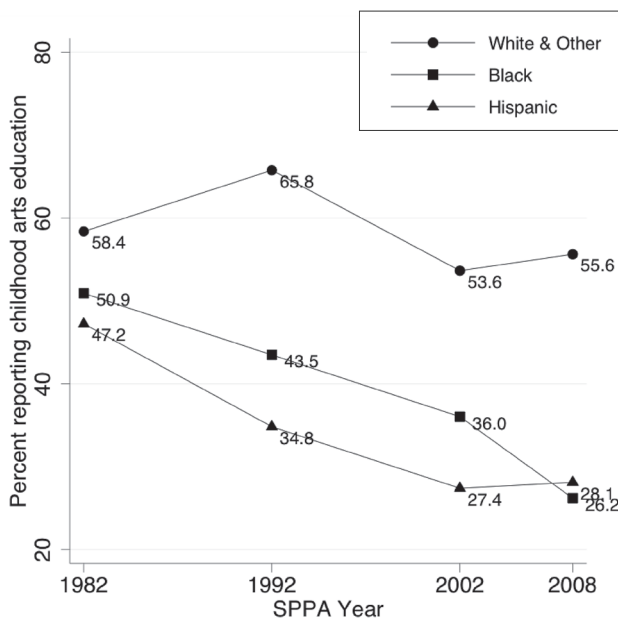


Figure 2 (Surveys of Public Participation in the Arts, 1982 - 2008)

The arts gained ground in our schools over much of the 20th century, but they have lost ground over the last three decades. In 1930 less than a quarter of 18-year olds had lessons or classes in the arts. By 1980 about 65 percent of 18-year olds had had them, an increase of 180%. But by 2008 fewer than half received an arts education, a slide of 25%, concentrated among African American and Latino children.

Two important responses to these trends emerged by the early 1990s. National advocates for arts education developed model standards in the arts disciplines, hoping to raise their academic credibility, spread the standards to the states, include the arts among mandated subjects, and protect jobs of certified arts faculty. "Discipline Based Arts Education," the largest philanthropic initiative in the period, was structured around four 'foundational disciplines' – art making, art history, criticism, and aesthetics – a sequence of instruction, and in-depth training for art teachers. DBAE is now in the DNA of the arts National Assessment of Educational Progress and local arts education plans coast to coast. The big decline in childhood arts education is an indicator that the strategy was less successful in preserving specialists' jobs.

A more grassroots approach also developed, focused on the potential of the arts to contribute to student performance in core academic subjects; cognitive, emotional, and social development; higher order skills; cultural literacy; work readiness; and student dispositions toward learning and school. Intellectually, the approach descended from the tradition of Dewey's constructivist education, grew from elaboration of artist residencies and workshops that emerged in urban schools in the 1970s, and was inspired by successes of community-based arts programs. Ironically, constructivist education thrives only in elite schools today and swims against the tide of reform today. In contrast to DBAE, which strove to make art education more like other school subjects, this work leaned toward making art education less like school. It came to be referred to as 'arts integration,' and program evaluators reported significant positive effects on students, particularly low-income students. Researchers and practitioners collaborated on a theoretical and pedagogical foundation that, like DBAE, stresses 'art making' and 'making connections,' but diverges from DBAE by being:

- Purposely inter-disciplinary, connecting the arts to other subjects;
- Focused on student experience;
- More focused on partnerships between artists and classroom teachers than arts faculty;
- Less focused on disciplinary standards, scope, and sequence;
- More focused on developing the cognitive processes of art making – planning, exploration, reflection, revision, etc. – than on the technical skills of art making;

- And using those processes as the basis of integration with writing, math, science, etc.

Arts integration has been adapted by initiatives from coast to coast, but lacks the institutional structures that support DBAE, and it has not yet been imprinted in the DNA of arts education. What's more, a complex and damaging debate about the merits of integration has divided arts education advocates.

Here are four recommendations for gaining traction with our arguments in this challenging environment:

Build a stronger research-based case for the value of arts learning.

- Research the short and long-term outcomes of arts education – cognitive, academic, social, emotional, and creative – including serious evaluation of promising current programs and retrospective longitudinal studies of students who have been through good programs. Focus on both “21st century” higher-order skills and dispositions and “the basics,” and look for evidence of the connections between the two.
- Research pedagogy, curriculum, and the dose most likely to generate positive outcomes. Why, how, and how much arts education delivers good outcomes? Complex questions like these suggest a multi-disciplinary approach and scholarly and popular reporting. Neuroscience, cognitive linguistics, evolutionary psychology, and scholarship on the arts and cognition by artists and leading arts education practitioners is needed. Philanthropic initiative could leverage support from federal funding sources like NSF. A long-term investment will provide significant validation to the field.
- Research on cost and efficiency. These are priority concerns for policymakers. How much does arts education cost? Can it be more efficient? Without joining the cult of efficiency in schools, we need to be able to say if arts education is an efficient strategy for delivering good outcomes.

Resolve divisive internal debates.

- Research can clarify issues, but there needs to be constructive dialogue among institutional leaders and leading practitioners about the role of teaching artists and arts specialists in schools, and about the relationship of discipline-based and integrated arts education. There's been good progress on the latter in Chicago, where philanthropic leadership has made a big difference. We need national progress as well.

Develop clearer concise messages, and employ diverse strategies for delivery.

- Reaching hearts is as important as reaching minds, and we need vehicles that are artful, not just scholarly. Three examples of directions this might take: Dan

Meyer's brilliant TED talk on how to make math education powerful. “Experiential advocacy” - events that are significant enough that key policymakers will attend and experience arts education. And the masterful show, *No Child...*, about the work of a teaching artist in a Bronx high school. One high octane arts ed experience is more potent than five scholarly papers.

- More strategic focus in our advocacy and communications. Arts Ed Washington has had great success with a focus on principals. Good arguments can be made for similar focus on parents, superintendents, key legislators, and school board chairs. We need to test diverse strategic initiatives in many states.
- If you doubt that we need to be more concise, consider this: The introduction to the art standards is 8000 words; the introduction to the math standards is 700. If you doubt we need more powerful messages, consider these two equivalent paragraphs from those sources. Does the arts paragraph offer a compelling reason why they should be studied in school?

Figure 3.

“We live in a mathematical world. Whenever we decide on a purchase, choose an insurance or health plan, or use a spreadsheet, we rely on mathematical understanding. The World Wide Web, CD-ROMs, and other media disseminate vast quantities of quantitative information. The level of mathematical thinking and problem solving needed in the workplace has increased dramatically. In such a world, those who understand and can do mathematics will have opportunities that others do not. Mathematical competence opens doors to productive futures. A lack of mathematical competence closes those doors.”

“The arts are deeply embedded in our daily life, often so deeply or subtly that we are unaware of their presence. The office manager who has never studied painting, nor visited an art museum, may nevertheless select a living-room picture with great care. The mother who never performed in a choir still sings her infant to sleep. The teenager who is a stranger to drama is moved by a Saturday night film. A couple who would never think of taking in a ballet are nonetheless avid square dancers. The arts are everywhere in our lives, adding depth and dimension

to the environment we live in, shaping our experience daily. The arts are a powerful economic force as well, from fashion, to the creativity and design that go into every manufactured product, to architecture, to the performance and entertainment arts that have grown into multibillion dollar industries. We could not live without the arts--nor would we want to."

Create networks beyond the arts for learning, dissemination, and advocacy.

- Arts education is deep in its own silo. We need to build meaningful networks and joint work with educators in other subjects who are also committed to a new educational paradigm. This work should be supported in urban districts, and networked nationally.
- Whatever you may think about arts integration, it is the most significant innovation in the field over the last two decades and a leading example of constructivist education in public schools – perhaps the leading example. Interviews with key informants in a dozen districts suggest to me that district policymakers may be more open to integration, given their resource constraints. BUT, there have been no nationally coordinated efforts to develop the practice, research and theory of integration, advocate for it, or design systemic approaches to its implementation. Provide support for development of networks (and institutions?) to advance arts integration.

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Arts Education in American Public Schools: How did we get to where we are and how do we move ahead?

David Sherman

Barrier #2: A lack of knowledge and technical skills related to teaching and learning, including basic data on what children are receiving in the classroom, arts pedagogy, budgeting, scheduling, assessment, and more, inhibits equitable access to arts education.

As a sixth grade classroom teacher in the Fort Greene section of Brooklyn in the early '70s, I was indeed among the fortunate to have an art teacher colleague who helped transform me from being an average teacher to being what many considered a "special" teacher. Through exposure to and active engagement in dance, theater, music, fine arts, photography, sculpture and more, I learned how to enliven the curriculum for my hundreds of students over the years in everything from reading to math to science and beyond. We expanded the walls of our school by attending performances of a new start-up dance company (Alvin Ailey), sketching the Brooklyn Bridge cross cables from its walkway, studying masterworks at the Metropolitan Museum, and writing original plays which we put on after scrounging to see some on Broadway and off. The young people involved, who mostly resided in a low-income federal housing project, did great on their standardized tests in reading and math with their well-rounded curriculum and very little "test prep" drill and kill. Yes, exposure to the arts and a rich arts education program can transform not only individuals but entire schools and all the students within them.

Just as I as a teacher needed the right person and a bit of a push, school boards, superintendents, principals, teachers and parents also need a "shove" to increase their knowledge of and support for arts education. Much focus is now being placed on the achievement gap between low- and middle-income students, as well as amongst students of different racial and ethnic groups; however, relatively little discussion is out there in the public and the media about the gross inequities and supports available to different socio-economic groups of students. The narrowing of the curriculum epidemic that has become a by-product of the testing and test-prep mania instigated by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has been, for the most part, focused on students and teachers in low-income communities. Which middle- or upper-middle-class suburban or urban schools would tolerate the elimination of the arts, including the performing arts and music? How would those school boards and parents react?

It is for these reasons that the decrease and/or elimination of arts education (and other essential areas of the curriculum) in our schools has become a major equity issue. The U.S. Constitution guarantees our youth a free public education provided by states whose own constitutions or laws usually mandate that schooling be well-rounded, rigorous and equitable to ensure that each student is prepared to become a contributing member of society. Yet how many states are now living up to their own rhetoric? How many are requiring that their state education agencies (SEAs) monitor and enforce subject area requirements for art and music, at a minimum? I would say few, if any.

The federal influence on the narrowing of the curriculum has taken another recent hit with the Race to the Top (RTTT) frenzy. That program, which has some admirable components, also misses the boat by focusing on the "business" and human resource parts of education as opposed to the instructional and developmental. The discussion and controversy around this program have focused on increasing charter schools, providing merit pay, mounting data systems and getting rid of "bad teachers." (These last two last statements apply equally to most—though not all—national foundations that support education.) As states have been racing to the middle to win large sums of money (that cannot be used to offset their deficits), their efforts have included very few initiatives around the arts or other lost parts of the curriculum. Innovation, which should be a major criterion for these grants, is not really a priority. The Innovation grants (i3) under RTTT, the smallest part of the program, have been submitted. One can only wonder right now how many of the grantees will include arts education as part of their winning programs?

The confusion here is a result of the divide between rhetoric and action on the part of the current administration in Washington. While the President and First Lady have made very generous comments about the importance of arts and arts education in preparing our next generation to lead this country, and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has issued a formal letter of support for the same, where is the action agenda to back up their rhetoric? It's certainly absent in the RTTT program and there has been little or no follow-up coming out of the US Department of Education. The blueprint issued by the administration for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), of which NCLB was the last iteration, also failed to mention the arts in any meaningful way. Now that Congress has rejected the administration's blueprint and is working on its own, the time has come to get to work with leaders on the Hill.

If public education has always been a state and local responsibility, why all the talk about the federal role? First, focus, direction and priorities always come from the top. Then, the federal government in the last ten years (NCLB and RTTT) has had a stronger than ever influence on what

goes on in local public schools. Next, states and districts have gotten caught up in the data frenzy and care less and less about the inputs and quality of public education and more and more about the “measurable outcomes”. And finally, money talks—and right now, the federal government is the only place standing that is providing substantive additional funds for public schools.

Accountability must be shared and school boards, superintendents, teacher unions, local elected officials, arts organizations and parents share much of the responsibility for what is going on. If the students in our schools are ever to become the leaders of the next generation, they will require the knowledge and capacity to be deep and analytical thinkers in a diverse world representing numerous cultures, languages and histories. And it’s those skills and insights that students get from a rich arts education. Even with the outside pressures coming from on high, some of the stakeholders responsible in schools across the country have held their students’ learning needs above the “reform du jour” agenda out there. There are many schools that have not deprived their students of what they are entitled to and have not only done well academically but are also fulfilling the true promise of public education.

How do we overcome the lack of knowledge about the importance and impact of arts education and refocus the stakeholders to elevate the arts and arts integration to their rightful place in **all** our schools and for **all** our children? I propose the beginning of an action agenda to consider:

1. Support the organizations involved in developing the Common Core standards to make sure they continue to integrate the arts with other subject areas and promote the development of common arts standards on the agenda.
2. Provide grants to organizations to facilitate the placement of stories, op-eds, PSAs, editorials, etc. in the mass media (written by a variety of authors) educating the public and raising awareness about how we are hurting children by not providing them with a well-rounded education, and how the elimination of the arts in particular is holding back their development as deep and critical thinkers and productive citizens.
3. Assist appropriate non-profits and others to get on the agendas of key national, regional and local organizations’ annual conferences to influence their members about the issues at hand and how they relate to they constituencies they represent, e.g. NAACP, National School Boards Association, National PTA, La Raza, Council of Great City Schools, national associations of principals and teachers, civil rights groups, American Association of Supervisors and Administrators, National Governors Association, etc.
4. Call for a meeting of key foundation, arts and education representatives with Secretary Duncan to discuss the issues at hand and in particular, how we can be helpful in implementing his public commitment to arts education (including its role in the ESEA reauthorization.) The issue of i3 arts education grants could play a role here, particularly since the administration is planning a second round with school districts and non-profits amongst eligible applicants.
5. Fund organizations to prepare concise materials for parents and school boards to give them the questions they should be asking their districts and schools about the arts education services their students are receiving.
6. Provide a grant to an appropriate organization to assemble a list of highly effective schools across the country that have persevered and thrived by incorporating strong arts education curricula and offerings and use these schools as living case histories of “yes we can” in items 1-4, above.
7. Support efforts to reach out to arts organizations that work closely with schools across the country to learn how they have been able to continue their work in this challenging economy, and share that information through various local and national venues.
8. Provide funding to produce a DVD (and resource guide) with students, parents, teachers, principals, etc. talking about the impact the arts have had on their schools and the quality of the education they provide. This can be used in the forums mentioned above as well as disseminated, to the degree possible, to school boards, national organizations, teacher unions, etc.
9. Fund an in-depth study of the world of arts and arts-related careers in all walks of life in terms of career development for students, as well as possible themes for new small schools and those undergoing redesign. This study should also include information on schools that are already doing this.
10. Fund a convening of arts organizations, school district representatives and others to put together a set of recommendations for the reauthorization of ESEA that relates to the role of the arts and arts education in K-12 schooling. Then, meetings and testimony can move ahead with key Congressional leaders, particularly those on the education committees in the House and Senate.

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When Form Doesn't Follow Function:

The Discontinuity between Arts Standards/ Traditional Instructional Design and the Reality of Arts and Education in the 21st Century

Richard Kessler

Barrier #3: A shortage of coordination and a decline in the development of new systems for delivering broad-based resources in urban centers has inhibited access to quality arts education for urban school students and their families. Resources include teachers, teaching artists, volunteers as well as funding and different vehicles of delivery (including in-school and out-of-school time, community-based, virtual).

Thirty years ago the arts virtually disappeared from most big city school districts due to budget cuts and teacher layoffs. Today, generations of teachers and administrators (and school board members) have been trained and placed in schools, in the district, with little or no arts education during their K-12 education and little or no arts education in their pre-service and in-service training as educators, effectively creating a profound *knowledge gap* as to what a principal, teacher, and school community needs to know and be able to do to provide a quality arts education to all of their students. This is applicable to practically all big city school districts across the United States.

On a parallel track is the dramatically changing fundamental nature of the arts and arts education. The dividing lines among the arts disciplines (and even among stylistic categories within disciplines) have blurred. At the same time we are witnessing the emergence of new disciplines. Technology has redefined how art is created, disseminated, and engaged with, giving groundbreaking access to arts on a global basis.

And of course, what was once a relatively simple way of defining and delivering arts instruction in school has become a virtual kaleidoscope, from traditional discipline-based instruction to arts integration, to in-school and out-of-school time, to youth development and community-based models. All are delivered by a flexible formula of certified arts teachers, classroom teachers, teaching artists, parent volunteers, online instruction, and more.

And all the while, there are schools with virtually nothing, the children denied what they are entitled to by right and by law in most states, even after a prolonged period of unparalleled economic growth in education spending.

For many big city schools, the design and delivery of the arts are now subject to this remarkably wide variety of options, from school to school and classroom to classroom, that no

longer hew to a "traditional" curricular and instructional approach. As a result, many believe that the traditional standards-based curricular and instructional approach to the arts is deeply flawed and even obsolete as the primary policy context and basis for arts instruction in America. For many, the arts standards, the formal national and state policy framework for the arts in education, have been forged as a political solution that exists to a large degree in the abstract. This statement is much more tied to big city school districts than to suburban and rural due to the belief that arts education is more widely available and traditional in suburban and rural schools. National studies from the Government Accounting Office, National Assessment of Educational Progress, and others appear to support this belief.

If it were only as easy as hiring a certified music teacher with a traditional curriculum based upon existing state standards; but alas the arts standards of the mid-90s that persist across virtually all states in the nation call for an array of disciplines that are rarely provided in any schools in complete sequential form from K-12, even in the best of circumstances.

The challenges to traditional approaches abound: In urban school districts, one eighth grader may have had sequential visual art instruction since kindergarten, while her desk mate may have had absolutely nothing. Standards have been written based on an ideal K-12 sequence in each of the four historic arts disciplines, but these are in direct conflict with seat time and graduation requirements, which are rarely met, even though they are often no more than one year in middle school and one year in high school.

In addition to a lack of compliance with instructional minimums, integration of the arts goes largely unrecognized within standards. Teaching artists remain outliers, and state departments of education shy away from any attempt to enforce compliance. Even high school graduation requirements, which in most cases can only be satisfied by instruction via certified arts teachers (New York City is a prime example), are circumvented through shadowy gimmicks such as "credit recovery" or simply ignored.

What is more, in an age of growing accountability, including most recently the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) cornerstone of *No Child Left Behind* (primarily an annual measure of year-to-year progress in state standardized tests in ELA and math), the arts have been increasingly marginalized as a matter of policy and practice, due to the lack of available means to assess, measure, and evaluate not only student achievement through standardized measures, but also the challenges in gauging teacher performance and practice, school leadership through the arts, etc.

Taken together, all of the above issues conspire in a vicious cycle to thwart access to a quality arts education. Unless and until our schools can travel back in time, remedying decades of "curriculum narrowing," we will require vastly new tools and designs.

Imagine for a moment that you are an urban school principal looking to build an arts education program. Consider the above challenges and programmatic options. Consider the state standards. Consider what is presented to you by your employer, a big city school district. How does one go about making the critical design and leadership decisions that will determine what the children in that school receive? How does a school leader navigate through all the possible options?

After more than a decade of national and state arts standards, large urban school systems that promote standards-based instruction centrally provided by certified arts teachers, where available, remain unable to provide adequate levels of instruction, even after a historic rise in school spending across the country over the past eight years.

While looking at this from the perspective of someone who has advocated fiercely for compliance with minimum state standards and requirements, I would also argue that research and development need be undertaken to rethink the ways in which the arts are designed, delivered, supported, organized, and, of course, measured in order to advance arts education today.

We must recognize that the arts *exist* in a multitude of ways from school to school and district to district and, rather than being party to an unrealistic ideal, we must better understand the ways in which the arts are being configured today: what decisions are being made, how they are being facilitated, what is the variety of designs, etc. And we must begin to reconsider things such as training, credit, disciplines, and standards, so as to establish a better road map and foster *intentional*, well-informed designs and decision making, rather than those that, by default, are lacking in equity, quality, efficiency, and relevance to the particular needs of individual school communities. We must empower school communities to formulate a sustainable vision for the arts in their schools.

I am not suggesting that we invoke the age-old arguments of discipline-based versus integration or certified arts teacher versus teaching artist, but rather that we adopt an almost ethnographic approach that would seek to further our understanding of the variety of ways in which arts education resides within our big city schools today. What is new, how is quality determined, how are student needs met, and how can this wide range of curricular and instructional practice be applied to new models of support, standards, delivery, funding, and measurement?

No one can argue against the need to rethink/redesign schools in order meet the demands of education and the needs of students today. That being said, new approaches to arts education already exist, and, dare I say, some of these approaches should inform what schools could and should look like in the future. We must not make the mistake of waiting for schools to be redesigned to accommodate arts education.

And of course, there is the issue of coordination. There are some who believe that you can coordinate your way to equity. I disagree. While there is little doubt that better coordination among schools and cultural providers does improve delivery and provide potential for greater efficiencies, I would argue that such improvement without a more comprehensive array of complementary efforts will hit a glass ceiling fairly early on. Instead, coordination should be viewed as a part of a much larger issue. When added to more progressive views of what qualifies as arts education and who teaches it, coordination ultimately becomes amplified in its importance and potential scale.

As we all know, there are no easy answers or solutions. Nevertheless, I offer the following general recommendations to provoke discussion at the GIA/GFE June Thought Leader Forum:

Invest in research that provides a better understanding of the variety of ways in which quality programs are delivered equitably within big city school districts and the implications for future policy and design. Here, one might envision an almost ethnographic approach to researching the variety of approaches to arts education in schools and communities.

Further an examination of how disparate approaches are and can be better coordinated in school districts, including in-school and out-of-school time, extended days, and via online learning.

Invest in a deeper understanding of what quality arts integration looks like, how it is organized, measured, developed, and supported, in order to reframe the very role and nature of arts integration within arts and education policy.

Encourage research and development among grantees, stimulating work across disciplines, types of educators, uses of technology, etc. Arts education funders should steal a page from the incubator-type funding that has been directed towards things like audience development and support for individual artists. Schools, arts organizations, and teaching artists should be challenged and empowered to take risks and experiment.

Support overall research and development in arts education, including advanced work in teaching artist training, parent training, principal leadership development, arts and technology, assessment, etc.

Attempt to balance the natural desire to provide core support during difficult economic times with the need to invest in the future.

Foster dialogue among teaching artists, teacher and administrator unions, and charter management organizations. Identify organizations in your community that are service oriented and well situated for this type of work. Ask yourself which organizations are about building communities and coalitions.

Invest in organizations that work with national and local arts education policy. The arts education field has been weak in this policy area, including analysis, agenda building,

legislative and regulatory drafting, and credibility within the education reform field.

Consider what might be learned from the sometimes hard-hitting, proactive approaches to school reform made by some of the nation's largest foundations and how such an approach might be adapted to benefit arts education.

Support the building of relationships between Grantmakers for Education and Grantmakers in the Arts. Create a more dynamic relationship between public education funders and arts education funders, fostering common ground, greater opportunities to share and learn, and the vehicles to distribute knowledge and support across both the arts *and* education.

Finally, the history of arts education has been studded with initiatives by major national foundations that wax and wane, often leading to instability. Consider The J.D. Rockefeller III Fund, GE Fund, Annenberg Foundation, Ford Foundation, The Dana Foundation, etc. This issue should be deeply considered by the funding field, with some sort of point of view established as a policy statement by GFE and GIA.

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