

A Portrait of Arts and Education in our Public Schools



March, 2008

About PCCY

Founded in 1980, Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY) serves as the region's leading child advocacy organization and works to improve the lives and life chances of its children.

In 2007, we changed our name to Public Citizens for Children and Youth to better reflect our expanded work in the counties surrounding Philadelphia.

PCCY's Picasso Project has been supporting arts directly and advocating for arts education in Philadelphia public schools since 2002.

PCCY is a committed advocate and an independent watchdog for the well-being of all our children.

Special Thanks

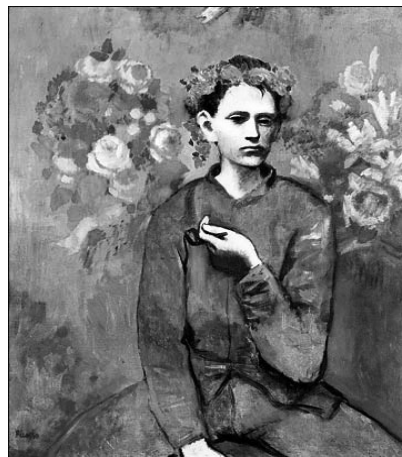
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Art on a wall: \$104 million for Pablo Picasso's Boy with a Pipe.

Art in a young person's life: Priceless.



Arts and Education in Our Public Schools

Public schools in Philadelphia and nationally have been investing less time and fewer resources in teaching and introducing school children to the arts. Once a system punctuated with leading artists and musicians teaching and working with students, the School District of Philadelphia in 2006 reported that 67 of its 269 schools had no full-time music teacher, and 55 had no art teacher. Nearly a quarter of its schools – 66 – had neither an art nor a music teacher. Though no extensive survey of arts in Philadelphia schools has been conducted, knowledgeable observers estimate that half of Philadelphia's students have no access to arts instruction.¹

However, a new tune may be emerging for arts education in Philadelphia – driven to some extent by a growing public and private drumbeat for its return. Those beating out this tune include parents, students, advocates, regional art institutions and the Philadelphia School Reform Commission. In its October 2007 “A Framework for the Next Chapter of School Reform in Philadelphia,” the Commission cited “exposure to art and music for all students” among its top priorities: “The SRC views this as an intrinsic element of a child's education – a ‘must’ that benefits student outcomes in other academic areas.”²

Further, there is growing philanthropic interest in supporting a long range initiative to advance and enhance arts in Philadelphia schools and the lives of the city's children. And Mayor Nutter has urged that we insist that music, art and cultural activities be a more standard part of the curriculum, “not just an extra you get if you are lucky enough to go to a certain school.”³

Arts are: A Sound Investment in the Economy

Recent studies have underscored the value of the arts on the region's economy and workforce. Calling the nonprofit arts and cultural sector of Southeastern Pennsylvania a “powerful economic engine,” the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance last year credited the arts with generating \$1.3 billion in annual expenditures and 40,000 jobs.⁴ Meanwhile, Innovation Philadelphia placed the economic output of employment in the region's for-profit creative industry at \$60 billion, supporting 766,000 jobs.⁵ In a recent study of Workforce Readiness highlighted in Education Week, more than one third of employers ranked creativity and innovation among the top ten important attributes for high school graduates.⁶

“I think one of the messages that has been extremely effective is linking the arts and arts education to economic development,” says Wisconsin's State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster, in a conversation with Doug Herbert, special assistant and acting chief of staff at the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement.

“We’re trying to save our rural communities; we’re trying to attract high-skilled jobs to replace all the thousands and thousands of manufacturing jobs that we’ve lost. And we’re continually hearing from the business community that our kids don’t have the skills to compete in the global economy... Our message has to be – and I think the business community really understands this – that the arts are not a luxury, they are essential.”⁷

Arts Are: A Sound Investment in Our Children and Youth

Proof of the arts’ positive impact on a child’s development and outlook on life has hardly been a solo in the dark. A 2002 meta-analysis of 62 studies by nearly 100 researchers concluded that school children who are exposed to the arts perform better at reading, writing and math than those who focus purely on academic study.⁸

A report of the Washington, D.C., - based Arts Education Partnership found that drama helped students with social relationships, complex issues and emotions.⁹ The study continued “that music improves cognitive development; dance promotes originality, expressive skills, tolerance and persistence; and the visual arts improved content and organization of writing, interpretation of text and reasoning about scientific images.¹⁰ Other studies say students involved in the arts are less likely to drop out of school, be truant or present behavioral problems, with the impact particularly strong for low-income children in need of academic remediation.¹¹ Locally, parents and students reported becoming more positively involved in schools through the arts.¹²

Bringing Arts Education Back on Stage

Many school districts, particularly those in large urban areas, confront ever-tightening budgets and the increasing demands of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements. Schools that do not show annual progress in the two testing areas of reading and math are threatened with sanctions – although the arts are included as one of 10 “core academic subjects.” The focus on math and reading tests has resulted in an unintended narrowing of the curriculum away from non-tested subjects. A Center on Education Policy Report found that 44 percent of the school districts surveyed had reduced instructional time for subjects including art and music at the elementary level since the enactment of NCLB.¹³

“We’ve raised the stakes for schools so high that the decisions are different,” according to Julie Bell, education program director with the National Conference on State Legislators. “That ultimate determination of whether your school’s going to succeed or not – that’s obviously what’s driving the budgets.”¹⁴ The reality that the arts play important roles in developing success for a school is often overlooked.

Education Secretary Margaret Spellings has discounted the notion that schools must choose between the tested subjects and the arts, saying, “This notion that these things are mutually exclusive, I completely reject.”¹⁵ Nevertheless, the decline in arts education is real as schools realign their limited resources.

Tom Horne, head of Arizona’s state education department and a classical pianist, looked at evidence from a study comparing four elementary schools in Tucson with rich arts programs to four with standard programs. Finding that the achievement gap was being closed in schools with rich arts programs, he used \$4 million of NCLB money that he had some discretion over, and put it all into arts programs in high-poverty schools.¹⁶

Schools and districts that are working to put the arts back into education are confronting the issues of time, money and personnel. Curriculum choices largely remain a function of local control, with schools and districts re-examining the avenues through which arts are provided to students. Instead of full-time, certified art and music teachers, some are choosing to focus more on “arts exposure,” “arts integration,” “arts in education,” or arts as an after-school offering.

“Arts exposure” is defined as “a performance or exhibit as a field trip or in the school.”¹⁷ “Arts integration” entails classroom teachers who – with the support of an arts specialist – weave the arts into daily classroom instruction and other academic subjects such as math, history and science. While supporters of this approach credit it with encouraging a “new kind of community of learners,”¹⁸ others point to the high degree of commitment and training required of classroom teachers, and the difficulties in scaling integration to a large school district. “Arts in education” brings local arts organizations and individual artists into schools as partners, providing programming ranging from one-shot performances to extensive artist residencies involving professional development, standards-linked curricula and involvement of school teachers.

A New York Times article emphasized that if educators want to improve music education, they should learn from the past, when music was part of the curriculum, and students had access to instruments, free lessons, and outside performances as a matter of course.¹⁹ The Institute for Education and the Arts considers arts exposure, arts after school, arts integration (used as an instructional model) and art classes taught by certified arts specialists on school staff part of an arts continuum. “School systems that fully embrace the value of the arts in a students’ education will incorporate all elements of this continuum,” according to the Institute.²⁰

Standards in Arts Education

All states set policies for exactly what students should know and be able to do – in the arts as in all areas of schooling. Pennsylvania standards call for a review of students’ knowledge and skills in visual and performing arts (dance, music, theatre and visual arts) at the end of grades 3, 5, 8 and 12, expecting them to “produce, review and revise original works of art.”²¹ However, Pennsylvania does not have an accountability mechanism enforcing students’ access to the arts. Nationally, about half of the states mandate that school districts meet state arts standards. To comply with these mandates, districts must have an arts plan that meets or exceeds the state standards and regularly report to the state on the status of arts in the district. Compliance across the nation is mixed.²²

Pennsylvania’s students are expected to be able to “identify arts events that take place in schools and in communities” and to understand the humanities through the arts – connected through “history, criticism and aesthetics” and including literature and language, philosophy, social studies and world languages. A student may be expected to “analyze a work of art from its historical and cultural perspective” or to incorporate the arts into problem-solving skills, comprehension of symbols and concepts and creative thinking.²³

But, many critics see Pennsylvania’s standards as the minimum for arts education in schools and many districts do not provide even that minimum. The Pennsylvania Alliance for Arts Education cites what they view as “erosion” in teaching of the arts in schools. That erosion or dilution is found in a narrow definition of the arts including little dance or drama as well as the difficulty of maintaining the arts as a teaching period with teachers often being “drafted” to fill in or teach other subjects.²⁴

Sketches of Communities and Cities *Growing* the Arts in Schools

Looking around, many cities, communities and states have joined forces to support the arts in schools.

In Lower Merion Township — Pennsylvania’s Lower Merion School District is one district that mandates arts in its schools. Elementary school students must receive one hour of music and one hour of art a week. Fourth graders can choose one hour of additional instrumental music. Middle school students receive both music and art two out of six days. High school students can choose either art or music, for which orchestra, band and chorus are offered. In addition, courses such as Art Appreciation and the Effect of Art on Modern Culture are offered as electives towards a humanities requirement.²⁵

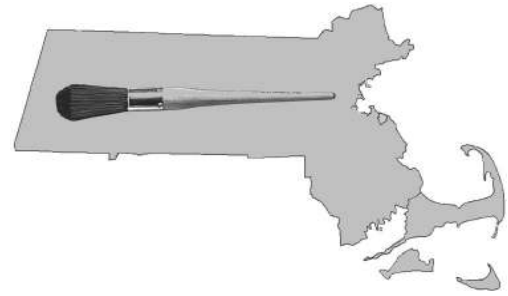


In Dallas — Arts education has become a movement. The Dallas Independent School District, arts organizations and the Ford Foundation are part of Dallas ArtsPartners, bringing arts institutions into classrooms, providing for visits to arts institutions, and engaging cultural institutions in helping arts teachers and classroom teachers implement arts education.²⁶ The School District provides 33 percent of the cost for the collaborative work. Federal initiatives (primarily for after-school programming) cover roughly 25 percent; the City Office for Cultural Affairs (which also gives \$4.1 million to arts organizations) provides approximately 10 percent. The Ford Foundation contributes \$2.7 million and the private sector provides an additional \$1 million.²⁷



Dallas ArtsPartners gave birth to the \$40 million Dallas Arts Learning Initiative, which also coordinates arts programming at the community level, creating arts “hubs” in community facilities and connecting them to the schools. The Initiative will add 140 new music and arts certified specialists to the district. The collaboration was supported by a \$25 million Wallace Foundation planning grant secured collaboratively with the school district and Big Thought, Inc. (formerly Young Audiences, Inc.).²⁸ Participating members of the Dallas Arts Learning Initiative set 45 minutes of art and music every week as a standard. Dallas stands as a national model for its firm standard, and for securing the funds to support it.

In Boston — Boston Public Schools' Arts Education Policy has it all: stringent standards, connection to community resources and accountability measures. All schools are required to employ sequential and integrated arts instruction. Students have minimum time-on-learning expectations ranging from 120 minutes per week in elementary schools, to 135 minutes per week throughout middle school; one full year of arts is required for high school graduation. Schools are monitored yearly in tandem with statewide efforts to assess arts education in Massachusetts. Even more striking, innovative schools may propose alternatives to the Arts Education Policy that meet the spirit of its requirements.



In Los Angeles — Hollywood knows how to support the arts: its public schools leverage funds with the entertainment industry. In 2002, Los Angeles County adopted a 10-year strategic plan entitled Arts for All: Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education, involving 1.7 million students and 80 school districts.²⁹ Support is provided by the Pooled Fund, a 2004 initiative started by the Entertainment Industry Foundation and fostered by Sony Pictures Entertainment that leverages both public and private monies.³⁰



Close to \$1.5 million in private funds have been matched by \$1.5 million from participating school districts. In addition, Arts for All has sought to organize an active coalition to establish advocates for sequential K-12 arts education in each of the 80 school districts in the county. The Los Angeles Unified School District taps the resources of community arts groups to provide professional development to teachers. The district also reports that it is well on its way towards its goal of providing every elementary school with at least four art teachers—in dance, music, visual arts and theater—340 out of 500 schools have met the goal.³¹

Sketches of the States *Growing* the Arts in their Schools



In Louisiana — Last year, Louisiana began requiring districts to develop curriculum guides consistent with current arts standards – followed by professional development and training to teachers and school administrators, and teaching artists how to implement the guides. The following year, visual and performing arts curricula were to be carried out on a pilot basis, followed by full implementation for all public K-8 students, and for high school students by 2010-2011. Louisiana set a time requirement – 60 minutes in the performing arts and 60 minutes of visual art instruction each week.³²

In New Jersey — Led by an advocacy initiative called Music for All, the year-old New Jersey Arts Education Partnership established a Census Project that surveys arts education implementation and access in districts statewide, tracking not only the number of arts teachers employed but inventories of supplies, instructional time, and resources at each school. The Project includes the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the New Jersey Department of Education, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, and Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey, and serves as a central clearinghouse from which to affect policy and implementation of arts education in New Jersey.³³



In New Mexico — In 2004, New Mexico Secretary of Education Veronica C. Garcia called her state “a leader in the nation in providing for fine arts education”.³⁴ The New Mexico Fine Arts Education Act added elementary school art, music, theater and dance directly to the public school funding formula. Currently funded at \$20 million dollars a year, the New Mexico initiative was rolled out gradually – initially providing \$49.42 per participating student (80,000) in its first year, and \$167 per pupil in the third year.³⁵



The initiative requires creativity at all levels. District applicants are asked to be “creative in designing elementary [school] programs, making use of and incorporating the art resources available within their communities.”³⁶ Proposals must be aligned with state content standards and benchmarks for the arts and provide for “developmentally appropriate, process-oriented assessment of student learning in the arts.”³⁷

The program provides technical assistance to interested applicants and requires accountability from grant recipients – with an advisory committee consisting of local school board members, state department of education representatives and a parent advisory committee to annually review program goals and priorities and make recommendations to the state’s board of education.³⁸ Applications are scored, with funds distributed based on “scoring priorities.”³⁹



In California — An organized statewide advocacy effort of citizens and the business sector led to one of the largest single arts education appropriations in recent U.S. history. In 2006 the state provided a \$105 million arts and music block grant. In 2007, the state followed up with an approximate \$110 million allotment. The Department of Education in 2006 also issued a one-time \$500 million music and physical education grant for professional development and equipment in schools.⁴⁰

Despite the size of the block grant, in a state the size of California, the funds will translate into a per-pupil expenditure of just \$15.97⁴¹ – to be used for hiring additional staff, professional development, purchasing supplies (including books) and equipment.⁴²

In Rhode Island — Lacking the funds to provide students with instruction mandated by a new state graduation requirement in arts proficiency, Rhode Island joined with community arts organizations to establish the Rhode Island Arts Learning Network. Through this Network, students can receive in-school credit for arts they pursue during out-of-school time.⁴³



In Illinois — The Illinois Arts Alliance has developed policy priorities and recommendations for change. These include urging the Governor, General Assembly, Board of Education and other state agencies to identify sustained funding; and encouraging state colleges and universities to include arts courses in the high school GPA calculations, requiring at least one unit of credit in the arts for entrance.⁴⁴



In Mississippi — A \$150,000 Ford Foundation grant and strong advocacy efforts from parents spurred a school-community partnership in 2005 in Jackson, Mississippi. The Ask For More Arts Collaborative has worked to integrate the arts into elementary classrooms and to convene arts organizations, artists, and citizens to build advocacy to sustain arts education.⁴⁵

At the state level, Mississippi's Whole Schools Initiative (WSI) prepares and supports teachers weaving the arts into regular classroom instruction in an arts integration model. Noticing the level at which participating students were meeting literacy benchmarks, teachers became increasingly committed to the new curriculum approach.⁴⁶

No Child Left Behind and the Arts - A Challenge and Opportunity

At the federal level, some Congressional leaders have begun to recognize the unintended impact of the No Child Left Behind law on arts education. Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, sought to counter the negative results with plans to include arts in NCLB's most recent iteration. Kennedy urged funding for states, districts and schools to expand learning time for students and to require states to track how much time students are spending in arts and music.⁴⁷

And in the House, Rep. George Miller, D-CA, Rep. Howard McKeon, R-CA and key colleagues proposed a grant program in Title I to strengthen instruction in music, arts and a number of other non-tested subjects.

Efforts to reauthorize NCLB stalled in both houses during the last Congressional session however, and the form and timeframe for another effort at reauthorization remains unclear at this time.⁴⁸ As Philadelphia decides on a path for bolstering arts education on the district and state level, there are possibilities that NCLB can change in a way that directly affects arts education on a local level.

Philadelphia: A Palette of Possibilities

Philadelphia's arts community has many artists and programs working together and separately to provide more arts to students in our schools. They and many others are unwilling to wait for a magical solution to the crisis in arts education. Recognition of the value of the arts in education – to the students as well as to the vitality of the community – has spread into both the public policy and arts advocacy communities. The School District of Philadelphia – with input from community stakeholders – is currently composing an arts policy, examining standards-based curriculum and instruction; accountability, assessment and compliance; multicultural education; career pathways and community partnerships and support. With a number of new reports stressing the region's economic dependence on the arts and efforts by various funding entities to create coalitions and leverage resources for arts education, Philadelphia is poised to take the critical next steps.

As Philadelphia's diverse group of city and school policy makers, philanthropists, funders, arts institutions and business leaders begin to join forces to promise arts education for the city's children and youth, there is much to do.

We should:

- Come together as a community and recognize the value of the arts in the lives and learning process of Philadelphia's children as a part of and apart from other academic areas;
- Commit that all students have the opportunities to engage in and learn with the arts;
- Assess the current status of the arts in schools, set benchmarks and track progress, agree on action steps, monitor and report to the community;
- Establish a comprehensive approach to bringing and returning arts education to Philadelphia schools, including increasing certified teachers, arts in education programs, and arts integration models; and
- Build support of key stakeholders in the public and private sectors at all levels to build champions.

Bringing arts back to the school stage will require many different strategies and champions. Our success will help fulfill the promise of a well educated citizenry.

***“I would teach the children music, physics and philosophy,
but the most important is music, for in the patterns of the arts
are the key to all learning.”***

- Plato

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