

THE CRITICAL LINK

The Critical Link is a quarterly newsletter featuring articles and resources on emerging issues related to arts education and promising practices from AEP's partnering organizations.

AEP is a national coalition of arts, education, business, philanthropic and government organizations that demonstrates and promotes the essential role of the arts in the learning and development of every child and in the improvement of America's schools.

The Partnership was formed in 1995 through a cooperative agreement among the **National Endowment for the Arts**, the **U.S. Department of Education**, the **National Assembly of State Arts Agencies**, and the **Council of Chief State School Officers**.

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Targets of Opportunity:

- AEP National Forum, February 5-6, 2006 in Tacoma, WA. Focus: Critical Issues in Arts Education: Partnering with Philanthropy.
- Arts Advocacy Days, March 13-14, 2006 in Washington, DC.

Voices of Leaders: Impact of the Arts Education Partnership

This month AEP is celebrating its 10th anniversary. The Partnership originally began in the midst of the Goals 2000 era as an effort to ensure that the arts were included as a part of education reform efforts at the federal and state levels. At its inception, a plan was put into place to provide guidance to organizations and arts education leaders to work together in assuring that the arts played a central role in all students' education. In looking back over the past 10 years, we have asked AEP Steering Committee members who have played a central role in the development of AEP to answer the following question "what have been the top developments and achievements in fulfilling the goals of AEP since 1995?"

• B.J. Adler, Executive Director Alliance for Young Artists & Writers writes "*AEP has been a "field of dreams" for a field of dreamers! Before the Partnership came together we all labored in relative isolation and could only be called a "field" because we did the same type of work. The Partnership has provided a real network.*"

• Michael Blakeslee, Deputy Executive Director of MENC-The National Association for Music Education: "*The Arts Education Partnership was founded in response to an acute problem – the fact that the educational establishment of 1995 did not consider the arts to be as important as other subject areas. The partnership effectively served as a nexus for the flow of ideas and resources to and through arts education, to the final benefit of American students.*"

• Mimi Flaherty, Senior Director for Education at the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts: "*I am struck that the Partnership was convened around three objectives*

in 1994 that remain central to our efforts today. For the past 10 years, AEP has continued its convening role and has identified and addressed issues through forums, task forces, research, and reports. I consider a hallmark of the Partnership's efforts to be the call to action. A meeting or document is the result of collective action by leaders across artistic disciplines, organizations and associations; the final message is always presented as the next steps.

• Scott Noppe-Brandon, Executive Director of the Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education: "*For me, the greatest achievement of all has been AEP's ability to serve the field of arts and education as convener, moderator, and mediator. Through the wise council and determined leadership of the director and staff, AEP has distinguished itself as the leading organizational voice for our field, imagining and articulating with vision and clarity a future that continues to inspire. Through careful strategic planning, AEP leadership and partners have tackled most of the complex issues that drive today's discussion of education, such as research, advocacy, networking, professional development, standards, and accountability.*"

• Pamela Paulson, Deputy Director of the Perich Center for Arts Education: "*AEP has been a significant player in moving arts education into the 21st century by systematically identifying a research base to bolster credibility among decision-makers, guide teaching practice, and inform program development. Both compendia produced by AEP, *Champions of Change* and *Critical Links*, are important contributions to the field.*"

Visit AEP online to see a copy of the Strategic Plan for 2004-06, and view current goals.

Spotlight on Research

In its early days, AEP produced a video that would demonstrate the impact of studying and participating in the arts. Titled *The Arts and Children: A Success Story*, the video is an engaging 10-minute advocacy tool featuring Meryl Streep. Focusing on the need for arts programs in schools across the country, the video features comments from students, teachers, parents, researchers and community leaders.

As AEP approached its 10th year, many felt that it was time to produce a new video (or DVD) with key arts and education voices envisioning the nation's future and the role of arts education for all students. *Visions of the Future: Education and the Arts* is a new 10-minute DVD that was shown to attendees at the AEP forum in Charleston in its preliminary form. *Visions of the Future* is intended for use with state and local policy makers.

Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee speaks on the DVD directly to the policy makers that have decision making authority over education resources. This new DVD also captures important messages about recent research in the field, and how the arts are a must for future workforce skills. Among the featured speakers is an important voice, Milt Goldberg who served as the director of the 1984 report, *A Nation At Risk*. He expresses his regret that the arts were not included in that ground-breaking report.

The Arts and Children: A Success Story makes a perfect complement to *Visions of the Future*, so AEP is making them both available on one DVD starting in December. Look for details on the AEP web site after December 5th.

News from the Field

It was only fitting that the AEP 10th Anniversary forum take place in South Carolina, the birthplace for an idea that became the national Arts Education Partnership. Taking place on October 1-2 in Charleston, SC, attendees from across the country were able to visit with, and learn from, representatives from across South Carolina who have played a significant role in shaping the arts education efforts over the past two decades. The Arts In Basic Curriculum (ABC) Project, which began as a statewide initiative in 1987, has served as a model for many statewide arts education partnerships. At the recent AEP forum in Charleston, one could see the outgrowth of years of hard work as leaders from Charleston, Greenville, and Beaufort spoke about arts education in their schools. Among the highlights from their sessions, these communities have become successful in the following ways:

- Greenville School District has endorsed its first Arts Education Plan, which envisions a partnership among schools, parents and arts organizations to affirm the central role of imagination, creativity and the arts in culture, in society and in building communities.
- Charleston schools received a US Department of Education Model Schools grant to duplicate the successes of its nationally recognized Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary School which infuses the arts into the curriculum for all of its 530 students.
- Beaufort County School District in partnership with Beaufort County Government have made significant long-term investments in arts education, both in and out of schools. Beaufort schools (as well as Greenville) were featured in "Gaining the Arts Advantage," available in print from AEP.

Suggested Resources on...Arts Education Advocacy

Three Rs Are Essential, but Don't Forget the A—the Arts, by Eliot Eisner.
<http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/3789/>

Art. Ask for More Public Awareness Campaign.
<http://www.americansforthearts.org/>

Support Music: A Service of the Music Education Coalition.
<http://www.supportmusic.com/>

Entertainment Industry Foundation National Arts Education Initiative
<http://www.eifoundation.org/national/naei/>

We need your feedback! Send AEP your suggestions, questions or comments about *The Critical Link* by email to: aep@ccsso.org

Featured AEP Publication

Name: What should the Arts Education community know about literacy?

Year: June 2004 AEP Forum report

Cost: free to download

Description:

This transcript from the June 2004 AEP forum features an engaging discussion among Doug Herbert, US Dept. of Education, David Bloome, National Council of Teachers of English; Vivian Gadsden, University of Pennsylvania; Barbara Kapinus, National Education Association; and Eileen Landay, Founder of the ArtsLiteracy Project at Brown University.

How to obtain a copy:

Visit <http://www.aep-arts.org> and click on "AEP Forums" then "Forum Reports"

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