

National Arts Policy Roundtable

Americans for the Arts National Arts Policy Roundtable 2007 *Thinking Creatively and Competing Globally: The Role of the Arts in Building the 21st Century American Workforce*



Background

In the 21st century, the competitive edge belongs to the most innovative businesses. While business leaders increasingly list creativity among the skills all workers need to succeed in the global economy, our nation's education system has remained largely unchanged since the 19th century industrial economy. How can we build a 21st century workforce that is both knowledgeable and creative? What role can and will the arts play? In October, 2007, 32 leaders from the public, private, education and arts sectors met to discuss *Thinking Creatively and Competing Globally: The Role of the Arts in Building the 21st Century American Workforce*, at the Americans for the Arts National Arts Policy Roundtable, co-convened by Americans for the Arts and the Sundance Preserve.

Fundamental Principles

To strengthen the role of the arts in building the 21st century workforce, Roundtable members agreed that leaders across sectors—public, private, education, and culture—must recognize that:

- (1) Literacy in the arts is an essential educational goal for the 21st century;
- (2) The arts both nurture and enhance creative inquiry and innovation; and
- (3) To maximize creativity and innovation skills, opportunities for arts learning must begin before kindergarten, and continue throughout higher education, as well as in the community and workplace.

Recommended Actions

Roundtable members made recommendations for action across sectors in three areas:

RESEARCH: Build a body of compelling evidence that demonstrates how the arts foster creativity and innovation wherever learning occurs, including pre-K and K-12 schools, higher education, the workplace, and the community.

- ★ Conduct a national benchmarking study on arts education in pre K-12 public schools;
- ★ Documenting high-quality in- and after school programs by artists and arts groups;
- ★ Identify existing or conduct new research on the effects of arts training and building creativity and innovation skills; use these findings to develop case studies, models and tools.

MESSAGING: Promote the arts as an effective vehicle for cultivating the creativity, innovation, and inquiry skills of all Americans. Emphasize that arts education not only prepares students (pre-K through college) for entry into the workforce, but also fosters excellence among workers at every career stage.

- ★ Create a shared vocabulary that links the arts, creativity and business competitiveness;
- ★ Develop a national awareness campaign that demonstrates Knowledge + Creativity = Competitive Edge.

STRATEGIC ALLIANCES: Develop strategic alliances with individuals and organizations that are concerned about America's competitiveness in the 21st century global economy and that understand the need for developing creativity and innovation skills in the workforce.

- ★ Work with partners to develop a shared agenda and implement new strategies for global competitiveness and education in the 21st century;
- ★ Partner with national groups to support creativity and innovation skills, promote messages, and cultivates allies.



Generous support for this program has been provided by:
Davis Publications, Inc. and
The Ruth Lilly Fund of Americans for the Arts

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