



NEWS AND INFORMATION

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Congress approves \$40 million high mark for arts in education programs

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Americans for the Arts, the nation’s leading nonprofit for advancing the arts, applauds a number of recent measures that are guiding the next stage of arts education reform in the United States. These actions taken by Congress, Administration officials, school administrators, and educational organizations is a recognition of the pressing need for more policy support across all sectors for arts education funding, research, and curriculum and professional development.

On Sunday, Congress passed a FY 2010 omnibus package which includes \$40 million for the Arts in Education (AIE) programs at the U.S. Department of Education. This is the largest appropriations ever for AIE since its inception in 2002 and is a \$2 million increase from last year. More than \$14 million of the FY 2010 AIE budget is allocated to the Model Development & Dissemination Program at the Department of Education which will allow for a new round of competitive grants to key arts education programs around the country. These grants support projects that strengthen student learning through standards-based arts education and integration of arts instruction into other subject areas.

“Our nation’s commitment to arts education must be strengthened so that the arts are implemented as a part of the core curriculum in every school. The arts are an integral part of every child’s development, preparing them for school, work, and life in the competitive 21st century global economy,” said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. “Congress’s support of additional funding for Arts in Education is a significant step in having visual arts, music, theater, and dance education be essential subjects of learning in our schools.”

Last week the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) announced its support for guidelines of national data collection in all core academic subjects. This news is directly in line with the national arts education advocacy efforts set by Americans for the Arts this past year.

Having the state school chiefs call for a level-playing field among the data collection in all core academic subjects is another significant step towards moving arts education into a more equitable position among reading, math, and science.

Other recent news in arts education reform includes a study conducted by the Florida Department of Education that shows a direct correlation between higher academic success and the number of years Florida students were enrolled in visual or performing art classes. The key findings reveal that for all high school students in the Florida study, the more music and arts classes taken, the higher the student achievement in such measures as graduation rate, GPA, FCAT, and the SAT. Additionally, in September, the College Board released recommendations from its National Task Force on the Arts in Education, which addressed the current challenges facing arts education, identified the benefits of arts learning, and listed what needs to be done to advance it in the 21st Century.

Arts education is also not going unnoticed by the White House. In remarks given at a reception for the Kennedy Center Honors on December 6, President Obama said: "Let's never forget that art strengthens America. And that's why we're making sure that America strengthens its arts. It's why we're reenergizing the National Endowment of the Arts. That's why we're helping to sustain jobs in arts communities across the country. It's why we're supporting arts education in our schools"

In another timely interview with the Associated Press on December 6, U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan said, "I'm convinced when students are engaged in the arts, graduation rates go up, dropout rates go down." Secretary Duncan also recently called on Congress to soon begin the process to reauthorize the Elementary & Secondary Education Act, commonly known as No Child Left Behind.

Americans for the Arts is the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education in America. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City, it has a record of more than 50 years of service. Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. Additional information is available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

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