

conclusion

During the past several years, Pennsylvanians and those we have elected to policymaking positions have enabled, and to some degree caused, a decline in arts and culture and arts education despite the Commonwealth's proud heritage. If these were frills, the decline might just reflect misplaced priorities. But they are essential if Pennsylvania is to grow and prosper, if our economy is to regain its strength, and if our communities are to be vibrant creative places to live and raise the next generation of good citizens.

Now more than ever, the complexities of the world in which we live—and the world our children will inherit—demand that learners of all ages be well-educated, well-rounded creative problem-solvers. The arts make unique contributions to the development of a well-educated citizenry, as documented throughout this report.

To secure a healthy, prosperous and vibrant future for all Pennsylvanians, the Commonwealth needs to become a state of creativity. And for Pennsylvania to become a state of creativity, our citizens need—and our leaders need to provide—policies that promote the arts, culture and heritage.

That is why we make the recommendations that appear in the previous chapter. Those recommendations are designed to advance five key goals:

- 1. Citizens of all ages in all Pennsylvania communities have access to a rich and diverse array of arts and cultural experiences.**
- 2. All PK-12 students, including those with disabilities and those who are gifted, are provided a high-quality, comprehensive, sequential, standards-based arts education that includes visual arts, music, dance, and theatre.**
- 3. All PK-12 arts teachers and elementary and special education teachers who provide instruction in the arts are highly qualified and effective.**
- 4. Artists and arts organizations effectively collaborate with schools and educators to strengthen the arts provided to all PK-12 students and the arts and cultural experiences available to citizens of all ages.**
- 5. Artists, arts organizations, arts education professional associations, and other arts education stakeholders and community leaders effectively collaborate to promote and sustain advocacy efforts to increase policymaker and public support for public**

policies that will strengthen standards-based arts education opportunities provided to all PK-12 students and the arts and cultural experiences available to citizens of all ages.

The first goal has the potential to broaden the way adults experience life in our communities and increase their preparedness for success in our complex, global environment. The second and third have the potential to revitalize the education of our children, increasing their opportunities for successful adulthood. The fourth has the potential to strengthen the bonds between our schools and communities, with each adding value to the other. And the fifth is essential if we are to have any real hope of achieving the first four.

These goals will not be met simply because they are worthy or important—or even vital. They will be met if policymakers understand that their constituents—the citizens of this Commonwealth—expect them to enact, implement, enforce, and provide adequate funding to support policies that will result in achieving these goals.

There is much work to be done. The work is vital. The time is now.

Creativity is not just for the talented few. It is not a frill. It is central to who we are as individuals and what we hope to become as a society.