

**W**hy are the arts essential for educating school students and citizens of all ages? Why now more than ever before? And why are the arts in schools and general participation in the arts experiencing serious declines just when we need them most? The arts have always been keys for expressing who we are and what we hope to become—from the earliest cave drawings to baskets and quilts and paintings, from human mimicry of animal cries to marching bands and symphonies and *American Idol*, from rain dances to square dances, and ballet.

But the arts are more than ways to express ourselves—vital as that is. They also have the capacity to educate people more broadly—to open our minds to new things, broaden our perspectives, develop tolerance for differences, encourage trial and error, see that problems can have more than one solution, and promote mental discipline. The arts do all these things because they engage us on so many different levels—intellectually, physically, and emotionally.<sup>9</sup> The arts develop our skills and our humanity.

### **The Arts in PK-12 Education:**

The arts contribute to academic achievement in reading and language skills and in mathematics. The arts promote a broad range of thinking skills, including reasoning ability, intuition, perception, imagination, inventiveness, creativity, problem-solving, and expression. The arts develop a number of social skills, including self-control, conflict resolution, self-confidence, collaboration, empathy, and tolerance. The arts motivate students to learn through active engagement, disciplined and sustained attention, and persistence and risk-taking. They also support a positive school environment for students and staff, along with opportunities for parent and community engagement.<sup>10</sup> The arts uniquely help students develop personal qualities and cognitive skills that transcend traditional academic disciplines.<sup>11</sup>

Students who have significant opportunities for studying the arts in school develop what Harvard researchers have identified as eight habits of mind comprising the “Studio Thinking Framework.” The project’s website reports: “Phase I documented art teachers’ pedagogical intentions and strategies, and also included a small pilot

study investigating whether students actually learned what their teachers taught. We identified eight categories of learning that arts teachers intend their students to learn and three classroom structures that teachers use to teach them.” These habits of mind have the potential to help students learn in all areas of the curriculum and develop important skills for later success in today’s increasingly complex and interconnected society. The eight habits are:

- ❖ Developing craft: learning to use and care for tools and learning artistic conventions.
- ❖ Engaging and persisting: learning to embrace problems of relevance or of personal importance and to develop focus and other mental states conducive to working and persevering.

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The arts are keys to self-expression, but they also contribute to academic achievement, promote a broad range of thinking skills, develop social skills, motivate students, and support a positive school environment.

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- ❖ **Envisioning:** learning to picture mentally what cannot be directly observed and imagine possible next steps in making a piece.
- ❖ **Expressing:** learning to make works that convey an idea, a feeling, or a personal meaning.
- ❖ **Observing:** learning to attend to visual contexts more closely and thus to see things that otherwise might not be seen.
- ❖ **Reflecting:** learning to think and talk with others about one's work or working process, and learning to judge one's own work and working process and the work of others in relation to standards of the field.
- ❖ **Stretching and exploring:** learning to reach beyond one's capacities, explore playfully without a preconceived plan, and embrace the opportunity to learn from mistakes and accidents.
- ❖ **Understanding the art world:** learning about art history and current practice, and learning to interact as an artist with other artists and within the broader society.<sup>12</sup>

Students show improved attendance and behavior in schools involved in arts initiatives,<sup>13</sup> and students with low levels of arts involvement are almost three and one-half times more likely to drop out of school by 10<sup>th</sup> grade than students with high levels of arts involvement.<sup>14</sup>

Study of the arts in high school correlates with increased SAT scores, and the longer students are involved in arts studies, the greater the gains. A study in 2000 of SAT scores from 1987-1998 showed that SAT verbal scores of students with no arts courses averaged 413—compared with 455 for students with four years of arts courses. Similarly, math SAT scores for students with no arts courses averaged 473—compared with 497 for students with four years of arts courses.<sup>15</sup> These patterns have persisted through the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2010, the average SAT verbal score for students with less than one year of arts courses was 477—compared with 536 for those with four years of arts courses. The average 2010 SAT math score was 496 for students with less than one year of arts courses—compared with 539 for those with four years of arts courses.<sup>16</sup>

Young people who participate in the arts for at least three hours three times a week for a year are four times more likely than others to be recognized for academic achievements, three times more likely to be elected to class officer, four times more likely to participate in a math or science fair, three times more likely to win a school attendance award; they read for pleasure twice as often, and perform community service four times as often.<sup>17</sup>

These young people are most likely to become our leaders of tomorrow.

### **Effects Persist into College and Adulthood:**

A recent 12-year longitudinal study follows 12,000 high school students through age 26. A key finding is that students with intensive arts involvement in middle and high school had higher academic achievement, higher rates of college attendance, and higher rates of persistence in college than those with low arts involvement in middle and high school. Interestingly, these findings were especially pronounced for low-income students and English language learners in arts-rich high schools. Of low-income students from arts-rich high schools, 31 percent received mostly As and Bs in college (compared with 20 percent from arts-poor high schools), and 37 percent had earned bachelor's degrees by 2000 (compared with 17 percent from arts-poor high schools).

As young adults, they also were more likely to have jobs that paid family-sustaining wages, more likely to vote, and more likely to volunteer.

Among English language learners from arts-rich high schools, 60 percent were pursuing a bachelor's degree at age 20 (compared with 39 percent from arts-poor high schools).<sup>18</sup>

### **The Arts and Human Development:**

It certainly is important that the arts support the academic and social development of PK-12 and college students, but it is essential that they also contribute to human development itself. In 1974, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) commissioned a report on the arts process in education. That report noted: "the arts process has a unique function to fulfill in the context of basic education. The components of this process are compatible with and conducive to learning in all subject-matter areas. They require that the student invest more

of his personal self in the learning process. The simple reason for this is that the components inherent in the arts experience make maximum use of diverse, individualized capacities. They take into serious account the fact that the person's whole being affects what, how, when, where, and why learning takes place."<sup>19</sup> The arts not only help people to learn but also to understand and fully develop their human potential.

"Over the past two decades, landmark studies have associated arts participation and arts education with cognitive, social, and behavioral advantages in individuals across the lifespan: in early childhood, in adolescence and young adulthood, and in later years."<sup>20</sup>

William Lehr, Jr., Chairman, President, and CEO of Capital BlueCross and a noted central Pennsylvania civic leader, recently published an op-ed in the Harrisburg *Patriot-News*. He wrote: "The arts are universal. The arts feed the soul. They bring people together from all parts of our society. The arts provide the means and the mediums for expression, impression, and aspiration. The arts also are central to community resiliency."<sup>21</sup>

### Citizens Think Arts Education is Vital:

People actually understand and believe in the importance of arts education. According to a 2005 national Harris Poll, 93 percent of Americans believe the arts are vital to providing a well-rounded education; 86 percent think arts education encourages and assists in improving children's attitudes toward school; and 83 percent believe arts education helps teach children to communicate effectively with adults and peers.<sup>22</sup> More recently, 81 percent of likely Pennsylvania voters indicated that a comprehensive K-12 education needs to include arts education.<sup>23</sup>

The challenge for supporters of the arts and arts education is to remind policymakers that the arts are just as crucial in lean times as in good times, because they positively impact our minds, our health, our communities, and our economy, and because they prepare children and adults for the complexities of the world around us.

### The Arts and Arts Education in Decline:

But despite all of this, the arts and arts education are in serious decline. The National Endowment for the Arts has conducted a national *Survey of Public Participation in the Arts* in 1982, 1992, 2002, and 2008, and is

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“Hard times require public officials to make the most of every asset and to adopt policies that maximize the state’s recovery potential. The arts are a proven part of that mix.”

—William Lehr, Jr.  
President and CEO,  
Capital BlueCross

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scheduled to conduct another survey later this year. Among key findings in the 2008 survey:<sup>24</sup>

- ❖ In 2008, 34.6 percent of American adults visited an art museum or attended a live arts performance—down from 39 percent in 1982 and 41 percent in 1992.
- ❖ Attendance *per se* might not be quite so important if it were not for the strong link between attending and creating art (and the importance of developing creativity for personal success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century). According to the 2008 survey, 30 percent attended and created or performed—down from 42 percent in 1992.
- ❖ Between 1982 and 2008, the percentage of all 18-year-olds reporting they had taken arts classes declined from two-thirds to less than half—a decline of 23 percent.
- ❖ The declines were even steeper for African-American (49 percent) and Hispanic (40 percent) students. This is especially notable since Pennsylvania Department of Education data show the percentage of public school students of color has increased since the mid-1990s from 19 percent to 29 percent.<sup>25</sup>
- ❖ Those who receive arts education as children are more likely to create or perform art, engage with the arts via media, and take arts classes as adults.

There are additional challenges for arts advocates and policymakers revealed by the latest (2009) *National Arts Index*:<sup>26</sup>

- ❖ Between the base year of the index (2003 = 100.0), the overall index has declined to 98.4 in 2008, its lowest point since the calculations began in 1998.
- ❖ Between 1998 and 2007, the percentage of foundation and corporate philanthropy directed to the arts declined from 14.8 percent to 10.6 percent.
- ❖ State funding of state arts agencies (in constant dollars) declined from \$478.6 million in 1999 to \$331.0 million in 2009.

In Pennsylvania, during the most recent five years (between 2006-07 and the 2011-12 state budget enacted by the General Assembly), state arts funding was reduced by 45 percent, and state funding for museums and historic preservation was reduced by 38 percent.<sup>27</sup> Then, in January 2012, in a series of mid-year budget cuts affecting many state agencies, the Governor announced a three percent reduction in state funding for the administration of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), bringing its total five-year funding cut to 40 percent.<sup>28</sup> Only weeks before the publication of this report, the Governor presented a 2012-13 budget proposal that will keep the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA) funded at its current level and cut PHMC by an additional five percent.

### Other Arts Education Issues and Concerns:

In discussions with arts educators and other advocates for effective arts education in the schools, we have become aware that a number of issues and concerns need to be addressed in order to advance arts education and to keep the arts from being further isolated and marginalized.

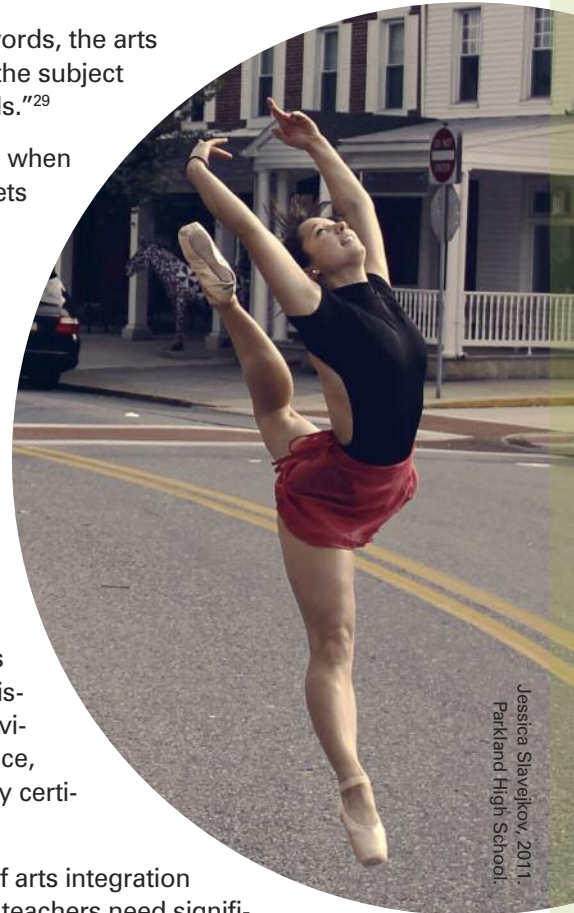
The first of these is arts integration. It has long been understood that when practiced effectively by educators who are properly prepared in a school that values all subjects, including the arts, arts integration can be very useful to student learning in non-arts classrooms. As the PDE explained arts integration in 1974, "The idea of the arts in basic education means that the arts will be infused with other major areas of the curriculum in such a way that they mutually nourish one another to the benefit of all

students. In other words, the arts ought to permeate the subject matter in the schools."<sup>29</sup>

But today—at a time when school district budgets are increasingly strapped—arts integration is suggested by some for a very different reason, which this report does not support. There seems to be growing interest in arts integration, as allowed by the state's curriculum regulations, because some see it as a way to eliminate discrete courses in the visual arts, music, dance, and theatre taught by certified arts educators.

Any consideration of arts integration must recognize that teachers need significant preparation and opportunities for continuing professional development in integrated learning so as not to shortchange both the arts and the other subjects with which they might be integrated.<sup>30</sup> Arts integration should not be implemented in school districts at the exclusion of giving students a comprehensive and thorough arts education taught by highly qualified and effective teachers in all the major art forms.

A second concern is focused on the use of community arts resources, including teaching artists, in the education of public school students. Artists working with teachers can provide students with real-world contexts for their learning and thus increase learning opportunities for them,<sup>31</sup> so it is important to pursue policies that increase the likelihood that all students will experience these opportunities. However, it is also important to give priority to assuring that all public school students receive a comprehensive standards-based arts curriculum that is taught and assessed by teachers who are thoroughly prepared and certified.



Jessica Stavelkov, 2011.  
Parkland High School.



Later in this report we describe the Standards Aligned System (SAS), which is PDE’s online portal that provides teachers and school administrators with interactive instructional support tools. We have been told by some arts educators that their colleagues are reluctant to post their best practices on this portal out of fear that it will become so robust that school districts will replace arts educators with teaching artists who can obtain lesson plans and assessment ideas from SAS. We think this fear is largely unfounded, and arts educators’ failure (or refusal) to participate in building their own profession risks further isolating them and abdicating their potential for professional leadership.

### The Importance of the Arts:

During the past decade, most people have come to understand that Thomas Friedman was right when he said the world is flat,<sup>32</sup> that we live on a planet that is increasingly interdependent—economically, socially, and culturally. As Friedman himself put it recently, “We live in an age when the most valuable asset any economy can have is the ability to be creative.”<sup>33</sup> In order to be successful in this world, our society needs more critical thinkers and creative problem-solvers, and the arts provide people with ways of thinking, understanding, and communicating, as well as with skills that enhance their creativity and problem-solving. In an age in which all people, young and old alike, regardless of their learning styles, must be effective learners, the arts provide a window on learning for many. Pennsylvania needs to provide all students in PK-12 schools opportunities to learn in and through the arts. But these opportunities must extend to our communities as well, because all of us increasingly need to continue learning throughout our lifetimes. We need to understand complex challenges and find creative ways to meet them in order to seize the opportunities that lie before us—as individuals, as a Commonwealth, and as a nation.

From its colonial roots to the present day, Pennsylvania has had a proud and diverse cultural heritage of the arts, including portrait painters and woodworkers, symphony orchestras and town bands, novelists, journalists and bloggers, square dancers and polka and ballet dancers. Their cultural contributions come from the diverse ethnic backgrounds of Pennsylvania’s people. What all have in common is that they contribute various ways of seeing and understanding our world and opportunities for peo-

ple to make art and experience art, learn from one another, and, in the process, expand their own horizons. We need to appreciate, respect, protect, and build upon this heritage—as individuals, as a Commonwealth, as a nation.

Increasingly, the quality of life in our communities is defined by the arts and cultural opportunities they make available to their citizens and the breadth of the curriculum the schools offer their students. Increasingly, business location decisions are made on the basis of these quality of life issues more than on the basis of short-term financial incentives offered to corporations by state and local governments. Business leaders need to employ creative people, and creative people want to live in creative communities. In addition, business leaders themselves want to live and raise their own children in creative communities. “Increasing evidence suggests that a culture promoting innovation, creativity, flexibility, and adaptability will be essential to keeping U.S. cities economically vital and internationally competitive.”<sup>34</sup>



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Two recent studies highlight the increasing importance of creativity in the business world today. In late 1997, the Conference Board (in conjunction with Americans for the Arts and the American Association of School Administrators) conducted a survey of 155 leading U.S. corporate executives on creativity as a skill for innovation in the workplace. The study affirmed that innovation is essential for competition and that creativity is integral to innovation. In fact employers responding to the survey ranked creativity/innovation as one of the top five skills that will increase in importance.<sup>35</sup> About two years later, the IBM Institute for Business Value and IBM Strategy & Change conducted a biennial survey involving interviews with over 1,500 corporate CEOs and public sector leaders in 60 countries (along with interviews of over 3,600 students from more than 100 universities around the world). “The degree of difficulty CEOs anticipate, based on the swirl of complexity, has brought them to an inflection point. Asked to prioritize the three most important leadership qualities in the new economic environment, creativity was the one they selected more than any other choice.” In fact, this was the choice of 60 percent of the executives. Sixty percent of the students also ranked creativity among the top three leadership qualities.<sup>36</sup>

As one business leader summarized his support for the arts: “a culturally rich community improves the quality of life, promotes economic development, can be a major factor in attracting new industry to the area, and helps attract and retain professionals.”<sup>37</sup>

We need Pennsylvania to be a great place to live, work, and raise a family—a Commonwealth of communities that are joyful, vibrant places in which citizens of all

walks of life can learn from arts experiences throughout their lives by creating and experiencing the arts. We need Pennsylvania to support the arts and education so people of all ages contribute to a strong and healthy economy through creativity, innovation, collaboration, out-of-the-box thinking, and effective problem-solving. And we need to support the arts because they contribute directly to economic activity by employing artists, designers, and managers.

There are over three-quarters of a million businesses in the United States—including more than 25,000 in Pennsylvania—that are involved in arts- and culture-related creative enterprises (a map showing the location of these creative businesses appears in Appendix A). In January 2011, there were 127,470 Pennsylvanians employed in these businesses—primarily in film, radio, and television; design and publishing; visual arts and photography; and the performing arts.<sup>38</sup>

Because the arts are about innovation—about the generation of meaning through forging new connections across traditional bounds by methodical trial and error—our participation in the arts affords us learning opportunities that build our creativity. The skills we learn from a quality education in and through the arts are the skills necessary for professional work in the creative industries.

Our economic competitors understand this. For example, despite the European fiscal crisis, in late November “the European Commission proposed the world’s largest-ever cultural funding program under the title ‘Creative Europe.’ The initiative, which would disperse a projected €1.8 billion (\$2.4 billion) between 2014 and 2020, represents a 35 percent increase in European Union expenditures on culture, and is part of a larger Pan-European goal to stimulate the economy through cultural enterprise.”<sup>39</sup>


In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the ability to read, write, and do simple math were about all that was required to become a successful, middle class citizen. By the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was also necessary to be able to understand complex texts and solve complex problems to become part of the emerging professional-managerial class. But additional skills and understanding are needed to become part of the creative class.<sup>40</sup> During the past several years, a consensus has emerged about what these skills—generally referred to as “21<sup>st</sup>-century skills” are:

- ❖ Mastery of core academic subjects including the arts.
- ❖ Development of learning and innovation skills including creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving, and communication and collaboration.
- ❖ Information, media, and technology literacy.
- ❖ Key life and career skills including flexibility, adaptability, initiative, self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity, accountability, leadership, and responsibility.<sup>41</sup>

A quality arts education helps students develop and master most of these skills.<sup>42</sup>

As one leading Pennsylvania business executive recently wrote: “Arts education and arts programs... prepare our youth for how work actually operates. Creative skills such as problem identification, ability to organize new ideas, visual literacy, and teamwork are all key to a 21<sup>st</sup>-century workforce.”<sup>43</sup>

There was a steady growth nationally in the percentage of children who studied the arts—from about 25 percent in 1930 to 65 percent in 1982. But ironically, despite our changing economic needs, there has been a slow and steady decline since then. In 2008, less than half had studied the arts during childhood.<sup>44</sup> Given the pressures on schools to increase passing rates on standardized reading and math tests and the declining fiscal resources available to public education, it is reasonable to expect this trend to continue unless there is strong and effective advocacy to support the arts for children and for learners of all ages.



To succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our children will need an education that recognizes the arts as a key component and that fosters creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration. They will need to develop, live in, and respect diverse and vibrant communities that promote the arts and culture and provide citizens of all ages with opportunities to participate in and learn from the arts. This is our challenge. This is our future.

