

Arts & Humanities News



Kentucky Department of Education

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Secretary Arne Duncan on Arts Education

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan spoke at the Arts Education Partnership's National Forum on April 9 about the importance of a "complete" education, including the arts, history, civics and other subjects. Speaking before a group of more than 200 arts educators from across the nation, Duncan discussed his own experiences with the arts as a child and the importance of the arts in his children's education.

In his opening remarks, Duncan said, "If there is a message that I hope you will take away from today's conference, it is this: The arts can no longer be treated as a frill. As First Lady Michelle Obama has said, 'The arts are not just a nice thing to have or do if there is free time or if one can afford it. Paintings and poetry, music and design ... they all define who we are as a people.'"

Several successful programs were pointed out along with many research articles covering the importance of the arts in student achievement. "There is no doubt that math, reading, writing and science are vital core components of a good education in today's global economy. But so is the study of history, foreign languages, civics and the arts. And it is precisely because a broad and deep grounding in the arts and humanities is so vital that we must be perpetually vigilant that public schools, from pre-K through 12th grade, do not narrow the curriculum," said Duncan.



Arne Duncan

For the [full text](#) of Secretary Duncan's address, go to the [U.S. Department of Education's](#) Web site.

"Existing and emerging technologies will always be a part of how changes in the arts disciplines are created, viewed and taught."

-- National Standards for Arts Education

Respond to the Program Review Survey

The Kentucky Department of Education is soliciting feedback from all stakeholders concerning the program reviews. A [survey](#) can be found under [Instructional Resources](#) on the [KDE Web site](#) and will be active through May 15.

We would like to get feedback from not only teach-

ers, but from parents, community and business leaders, and higher education.



The pilot schools will conclude their work by the end of April. Feedback from the pilot schools and from the survey will inform KDE as to needed adjustments to the review documents and the development of professional learning opportunities.

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Highly Effective Teaching and Learning; Learning Climate

The learning climate of an arts classroom is, ideally, a safe environment supported by the teacher in which high, clear expectations and positive relationships are fostered and active learning is promoted.

It takes both teacher and student to affect this desired climate. To accomplish this, the highly effective teacher will address several characteristics.

First, the teacher must create a learning environment where all students are active participants as individuals and as members of collaborative groups. Engaging lessons in which all students are creating, performing and responding to the arts is paramount to success. Teachers should incorporate thoughtful questions and discussions of student works both individually and by sharing with the group as the normal routine for the class. The highly effective teacher also will provide for reading and writing about the arts to help the student become more informed about arts literacy and communication. Students soon will learn to use reason, critique and analysis to bring meaning to all processes involved in their art and the art of others.

Second, the highly effective teacher motivates students and nurtures their desire to learn in a safe, healthy and supportive environment that promotes empathy, compassion and a mutual respect among students, between students and the teacher, and between students and artists. This is evident in the classroom where the students feel

at ease with one another as well as the teacher and visitors in the discussion of their work.

Further, the effective teacher encourages students to accept responsibility for their own learning and respects the right of each student to ask questions and to request resources to more fully understand, enhance or add clarity to the learning. By modeling and practicing informed questions and discussions, students become independent learners who seek out their own questions and answers.

The highly effective teacher's classroom is efficient as evidenced by classroom management skills developed to facilitate creating and performing activities, opportunities to explore the history and role of the arts in society and opportunities to respond to the arts.

Students of the highly effective teacher learn the value of diversity and cultural understanding and are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own learning and respect the rights of each student. The teacher has skillfully created an environment where all student work is valued, appreciated and used as a learning tool.

Additionally, the highly effective teacher provides sufficient time in class for students to actively engage in authentic hands-on arts related experiences as individuals and as members of collaborative groups. The classroom learning climate allows students to take artistic risks, and the

necessity of trial-and-error in the artistic process is reinforced. Opportunities for students' artistic products and/or performances to be viewed or experienced in a manner where the work is valued, appreciated and used as a learning tool by all stakeholders is the norm in this teacher's classroom.

Students of the highly effective teacher share in the learning experience as highly effective learners. This student will accept responsibility for his or her own learning by actively participating in authentic artistic experiences as an engaged partner. The student practices and engages in safe, responsible and ethical use of technology.

The highly effective student understands the responsibilities of group membership in collaborative artistic efforts and exhibits a sense of accomplishment, confidence, creativity, imagination and independent thinking. As a natural part of the artistic learning process, the student takes educational risks in class to perform and/or exhibits artistic products for peers and others and expresses informed, aesthetic responses to performing, creating or experiencing the arts. This student is comfortable with providing and receiving critiques of artworks.

See the complete characteristics of Highly Effective Teaching and Learning for the Arts and Humanities [here](#).

“Activities that trivialize artistic processes such as filling in outlined shapes or working with materials of limited quality such as broken crayons or ripped and dirty costumes were seen as failing to respect children’s capabilities and interests and not recognizing art’s deep power and possibilities.”

--The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Art Education

Kentucky Historical Society Arts & Humanities Resources

KHS Museum Theatre

Add a special dimension to Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) exhibitions with this unique arts and humanities experience. Museum Theatre combines curriculum-based history content with live theatre. Plays are based on primary sources and performed in the exhibition galleries surrounded by objects and content related to the production. The theatre is free with museum admission. Reservations required for visiting school groups.

The Museum Theatre program also offers in-school programs during the school year. Each 50-minute program includes a performance of your choice and arts-related creative dramatic activities designed to teach students how to use and gain a better understanding of primary source materials.

Outreach fees are \$200 for the first session and \$100 for each additional session. For more information regarding Museum Theatre, contact greg.hardison@ky.gov.

KHS Digital Collections

Access digital images, sound, video and text from the KHS collections of historic photographs, manuscripts, oral history, maps, rare imprints, library resource lists, artwork and museum artifacts; direct link <http://205.204.134.47:2005/>.

KHS Field Trips

"Great Revivals" Tours highlight five stylistic design eras, from the early 19th century to the early 20th century, and Kentucky's treasures from those times. Through discussion and activities, students will learn about the evo-

lution of decorative styles and the changing tastes of 19th-century Kentuckians. For more information on the exhibition, click [here](#).

"Learning to Look" introduces early elementary classes to the museum experience. As students encounter artifacts, paintings and sculptures in the galleries, they will build observation skills and descriptive vocabulary. Close examination, discussion and activities foster literacy and analysis skills.

To schedule a KHS tour, contact leslie.mcwhorter@ky.gov.

KY Arts Council Awards Artist Residency Grants to Nine Schools

Ed Lawrence,
KAC



The Kentucky Arts Council (KAC) awarded \$14,040 in Teacher Initiated Program grants for short-term artist residencies scheduled to take place in the fall of 2010. These grants give professional artists an opportunity to demonstrate their art forms and provide students and teachers repeated hands-on experiences in the making of art. Artists also collaborate with teachers to design and implement innovative programs that provide the tools to continue utilizing art across the curriculum after the residency is completed.

Residencies vary widely, depending on the planning of the teacher and the artist or artists hired for the residency.

This group of residencies includes mural projects, explorations of cultural traditions, creative writing and bookmaking.

"The Kentucky Arts Council strongly supports arts in education," says Lori Meadows, executive director of the Kentucky Arts Council. "We would like to see more applications for the Teacher Initiated Program in the future, because we know how these residencies help students learn about the arts and about other subjects through the arts."

The grant amounts are based on the length of the residencies, which can be for one to four weeks. The grant awards are \$540, \$1,080, \$1,620 and \$2,160, respectively. Altogether, 26 weeks of residencies have been funded through this semi-annual

round of Teacher Initiated Program grants. The schools select artists from the Kentucky Arts Council's Arts Education Roster, which is available at <http://artistdirectory.ky.gov/aer/>.

The next application deadline is Oct. 15, for residencies occurring in the spring of 2011. For more information about the Teacher Initiated Program, contact Carrie Nath at (502) 564-3757, ext. 486, or carrie.nath@ky.gov.

KAC, the state arts agency, creates opportunities for Kentuckians to value, participate in and benefit from the arts. Kentucky Arts Council funding is provided by the Kentucky General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Arts Education Promotes Emotional Intelligence

As arts education is pushed further to the margins by the current emphasis on standardized testing, a tool for nurturing children's social and emotional development is being lost.

By: [Tom Jacobs](#), January 7, 2010

Arts education, which tends to be something of an afterthought in many American school districts, is facing an even tougher time than usual. Twin threats — budget cuts necessitated by dwindling tax revenues and the push to focus on math and reading skills as measured on standardized tests — have left music and art classes in a particularly vulnerable state.

What is being lost — and what, if anything, can be done about this trend — is addressed in two scholarly papers published in the new issue of the *Arts Education Policy Review*. One notes students whose education is dominated by rote learning will not be prepared for “the jobs of tomorrow,” while the other explores the value of the arts in helping kids understand their emotions.

In [“No Child Left Behind and Fine Arts Classes,”](#) [Tina Beveridge](#) of Lower Columbia College in Longview, Wash., details the obvious and subtle ways a test-centric approach to education devalues arts instruction. (Obvious: School districts being judged on student test scores have little incentive to fund such programs. Subtle: The courses that remain are often classified as “fun,” which conveys the unintentional message “the arts do not require skill, knowledge, commitment or work.”)

Beveridge finds considerable irony in the fact that the original stated goal of the 2001 federal [No Child Left Behind Act](#), which mandated standardized testing, “was to close the achievement gap in education.” She argues that by narrowing the focus of education to a few testable topics, it

ends up doing just the opposite.

“If we marginalize all non-tested subjects, we create a system in which only the affluent members of our society have access to the most comprehensive and well-rounded educations, which widens the achievement gap rather than closes it,” she writes.

Specifically what arts-deprived kids are missing is explored in [“How the Arts Help Children to Create Healthy Social Scripts”](#) by [Liane Brouillette](#) of the University of California, Irvine. She argues that for children to become successful adults, they need to know more than just how to read, write and multiply. They need to learn fundamental social skills, such as the ability to “persist in goal-oriented activity, to seek help when needed, facilitate development and delivery of Professional Learning activities, and to participate in and benefit from relationships.”

The arts are an invaluable teaching tool in this regard, in that they “naturally and frequently involve group tasks,” she notes. “Activities such as dramatic play or dancing in unison provide a venue for learning collaboration and cooperation.”

Brouillette interviewed 12 first-through fourth-grade teachers who had participated in an artist-in-residence program for at least one semester. The program brought professional artists into their inner-city classrooms for one hour per week.

“It was the teachers whose students had participated in drama workshops who spoke most eloquently about the impact of art lessons on students’ interpersonal skills,” she writes. “The

teaching artists who taught drama had put a strong emphasis on teamwork, also insisting that children act as respectful and responsive audience members when others presented their work.”

“Most drama activities were designed to explore narratives that were already covered in language arts or social studies texts,” she adds. “Through the incorporation of creative drama, however, teachers felt that children experienced this familiar material in a deeper way. Acting out a scene required deeper exploration of the meaning of the words, and therefore led to better comprehension.

“Teachers especially valued the opportunity that the acting exercises provided for discussion of emotions, bullying and friendship — sensitive topics that were difficult to address elsewhere in the curriculum without students feeling embarrassment or defensiveness.”

Brouillette concludes by proposing arts advocates — and anyone else who realizes the skills learned in arts classes “are basic to the maintenance of a healthy democracy” — campaign to enlarge the scope of teacher training.

“If all teacher certification programs at the elementary level were to equip teacher candidates with arts-based techniques for supporting the social-emotional development of children,” she writes, “this would not only benefit students but also create a broader base of support for the arts.”

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The Arts Are Good For ...

Students

- ◇ Arts-rich schools teach to the whole child, taking in mind differences in learning styles and addressing the cognitive, social and emotional domains of all learners.
- ◇ Arts teach students that there are multiple correct answers to many problems and ask them to apply creative thinking for possibilities to each challenge.
- ◇ Arts help students understand themselves as in control of their own learning experiences and outcomes and enable them to craft effective solutions as individuals and in groups.
- ◇ Arts build healthy self-esteem and provide students with outlets for creative expression through a learning atmosphere that is supportive and responsive.
- ◇ Arts help them come to value their school experience; students actually want to come to school.

Teachers

- ◇ Arts provide them with valuable “a-ha” moments. They see their students in a different light, even helping them see exciting new potential in “problem” students based on observed new roles, involvement in learning and doing, and positive interactions with fellow students and teachers.
- ◇ Arts help them come to know more about their students' interests and abilities based on what their students know and can do in creating, performing and responding to the arts.
- ◇ Arts provide their students with multiple entry points for learning and help them address content based on prior knowledge, experience and skills.
- ◇ Arts create a classroom learning environment that is charged with excitement and energy and challenge their students to learn through creative, real-world applications to problems.
- ◇ New understanding and experiences required through the arts help teachers see themselves as “learners” along with their students, often bringing a fresh approach to their instructional practice.

Schools

- ◇ Arts help reduce the achievement gap by reaching and teaching students in new ways, especially students from economically disadvantaged circumstances and those who find more language-based instruction difficult.
- ◇ Arts help create a teaching and learning culture that is charged with excitement and supportive and responsive to the learning needs of both teachers and students.
- ◇ Arts provide a continuous, fresh approach to teaching and learning. Both faculty and students want to be at school.
- ◇ Arts help address the unique social, emotional and cognitive learning needs of problem students, who often thrive in supportive settings where they can address challenging content through creative new approaches. The arts enable these kids to shine.
- ◇ Arts provide multiple avenues for engaging the larger community and parents through activities and events that showcase their children and that are aimed at accomplishing larger community and parent engagement goals of the school.

References and Resources

Dennis Horn, CTL (Collaborative for Teaching and Learning), Louisville KY.
Lauren Stevenson, Arts Education Partnership, Washington DC.
Kimberly Sheridan, Harvard Project Zero, Cambridge MA.
James Catterall, UCLA Graduate School of Education, Los Angeles CA.

The Business of Learning



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