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APPENDIX C

Editorials

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New NEA Research Report Shows Potential Benefits of Arts Education for At-Risk Youth

Youth Have Better Academic Outcomes, Higher Career Goals, and Are More Civically Engaged

March 30, 2012

Washington, DC -- At-risk students who have access to the arts in or out of school also tend to have better academic results, better workforce opportunities, and more civic engagement, according to a new NEA report, *The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies*. The study reports these and other positive outcomes associated with high levels of arts exposure for youth of low socioeconomic status.

The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth study uses four separate longitudinal studies (three from the U.S. Department of Education) to track children, teenagers, and young adults who had high or low levels of arts engagement in or out of school. Those activities included coursework in music, dance, theater, or the visual arts; out-of-school arts lessons; or membership, participation, and leadership in arts organizations and activities, such as band or theater.

The study focuses on the potential effects of arts engagement on youth from the lowest quarter of socioeconomic status. Although most of the arts-related benefits in this report applied only to these at-risk youth, some findings also suggest benefits for youth from advantaged backgrounds.

"Arts education doesn't take place in isolation," said NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman. "It has to take place as part of an overall school and education reform strategy. This report shows that arts education has strong links with other positive educational outcomes."

Among the key findings:

Better academic outcomes -- Teenagers and young adults of low socioeconomic (SES) status who have a history of in-depth arts involvement ("high arts") show better academic outcomes than low-SES youth with less arts involvement ("low arts"). They earn better grades and have higher rates of college enrollment and attainment.

- Low-SES students who had arts-rich experiences in high school were ten percent more likely to complete a high school calculus course than low-SES students with low arts exposure (33 percent versus 23 percent).
- High-arts, low-SES students in the eighth grade were more likely to have planned to earn a bachelor's degree (74 percent) than were all students (71 percent) or low-arts, low-SES students (43 percent).
- High-arts, low-SES students were 15 percent more likely to enroll in a highly or moderately selective four-year college than low-arts, low-SES students (41 percent versus 26 percent).
- Students with access to the arts in high school were three times more likely than students who lacked those experiences to earn a bachelor's degree (17 percent versus five percent).

- When it comes to participating in extracurricular activities in high school, high-arts, low-SES students are much more likely also to take part in intramural and interscholastic sports, as well as academic honor societies, and school yearbook or newspaper -- often at twice or three times the rate of low-arts, low-SES students.

Higher career goals -- There is a marked difference between the career aspirations of young adults with and without arts backgrounds.

- High-arts, low-SES college students had the highest rates of choosing a major that aligns with a professional career, such as accounting, education, nursing, or social sciences (30 percent), compared to low-arts, low-SES students (14 percent) and the overall SES sample (22 percent).
- Half of all low-SES adults with arts-rich backgrounds expected to work in a professional career (such as law, medicine, education, or management), compared to only 21 percent of low-arts, low-SES young adults.

More civically engaged - Young adults who had intensive arts experiences in high school are more likely to show civic-minded behavior than young adults who did not, with comparatively high levels of volunteering, voting, and engagement with local or school politics. In many cases, this difference appears in both low-and high-SES groups.

- High-arts, low-SES eighth graders were more likely to read a newspaper at least once a week (73 percent) compared to low-arts, low-SES students (44 percent) and the overall SES sample (66 percent).
- High-arts, low-SES young adults reported higher volunteer rates (47 percent) than the overall sample and low-arts, low-SES young adults (43 and 26 percent).
- High-arts, low-SES young adults voted in the 2004 national election at a rate of 45 percent, compared to 31 percent of low-arts, low-SES young adults.

The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies was prepared for the National Endowment for the Arts by James S. Catterall, University of California Los Angeles, with Susan A. Dumais, Louisiana State University, and Gillian Hampden-Thompson, University of York, U.K. The report is one of the NEA's latest efforts to conduct and commission research that examines evidence of the value and impact of the arts in other domains of American life, such as education, health and well-being, community liveability, and economic prosperity. *The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth* is available at arts.gov.

About the National Endowment for the Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector. To join the discussion on how art works, visit the NEA at www.arts.gov.

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Thinking must shift on arts

By Susan V. Booth

Atlanta Journal Constitution May 17, 2012

We hold these truths to be self-evident....

Bold words. Nation-founding words.

Our forefathers got it. No caveats, no exceptions.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

I was asked if I would write something about the importance of arts funding in light of a season that saw critical cries for help from some of our most-valued theaters, and the eventual shuttering of an institution with a 30-year history, Marietta’s Theatre in the Square.

If you’re connecting the dots and anticipating the cry that those institutions and their artists have had their rights stepped on, this isn’t that story.

Nor is this the argument that perhaps supply and demand has had its day in the cultural arena, and institutional Darwinism has run its course.

No, this is a modest proposal for a fundamental shift in our thinking.

Core to the pursuit of any happiness is an understanding of self.

Core to the pursuit of compassionately shared happiness within any community is an understanding of other.

Key to obtaining either is a capacity for reflective introspection and empathetic imagination. These aren’t standalone, academic pursuits.

If you’re a baby boomer, you won’t find coursework on introspection and imagination in the Three Rs, and if you’re a Gen X, Y or millennial, you won’t find it in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).

But regardless of generation, profession, ideology or ZIP code, chances are you’re a daily practitioner and beneficiary of introspection and imagination — because the capacity to understand yourself and the other guy flows through and is essential to everything we do.

So where'd you learn it? Where's your kid going to learn it?

One of the most impressive outcomes of arts exposure is a metric nobody thought to measure.

In UCLA's longitudinal study Champions of Change, there was an unexpected finding that accompanied the links between arts exposure and improved results in standardized tests, classroom leadership and attendance: Kids with significant exposure to the arts were 40 percent less likely to practice or countenance intolerant language or behavior toward their culturally different peers.

Those same arts-exposed kids were 40 percent more likely to count as friends kids who were culturally different than they were.

Turns out that a culturally robust community is a curious and compassionate community.

The supply-and-demand question isn't really about a supply of cultural organizations and a demand for the arts.

And as long as we keep arts-funding relegated to that small definition, we will always have cries for financial help and imperiled institutions.

But were we to acknowledge that our shared need for introspection and empathy flows through every facet of our daily lives and is therefore essential for us to support, then perhaps we'd stop talking about arts funding and start talking about humanity funding.

That's a hard notion to quantify in a budget line — whether on one's personal balance sheet or that of a civic entity.

But if we held the truth to be self-evident that armed with deep knowledge of self and other, we will build a better community, then perhaps this would be the one investment we'd never question.

(Susan Booth is artistic director of the Alliance Theatre.)

[Source: <http://www.ajc.com/news/news/opinion/thinking-must-shift-on-arts/nQTtS/>]

It's hard to argue for public funding

By Douglas McLennan

Atlanta Journal Constitution May 17, 2012

For the past 30 years, opposition to government funding for the arts has been a rote exercise for conservatives wanting to demonstrate ideological bona fides. It's not just about opposing arts funding, it's about actively seeking to defund the arts (two different things).

Arts funding is shorthand for a laundry list of evils, from rampant government handouts to profligate spending, suspicious values and out-of-touch elitism. Framed in these terms, who wouldn't be opposed? Opposing arts funding checks the boxes on numerous fundamentalist conservative issues.

I think as long as it's about money, the arts lose. As long as the conversation starts with funding, the arts lose. Yet that's where the arts often start; if the debate is about money, then we try to prove what a good investment the arts are.

But the problem with economic impact studies is that if someone isn't in the market to invest — no matter how good the return is — they won't. Concurrently, the problem with arguing aesthetic value is that if the aesthetic values aren't my aesthetic values, they don't sound compelling to me.

Conservatives have been successful not because they have a better economic case, but because they make an argument about values.

In a time when people are angry over a sour economy and a lack of accountability for those they perceive got us there, they preach caution, living within our means and trying to impose more responsible behavior. Argued in these terms, again, who wouldn't sign on?

Against this, how does arguing for public funding for the arts get anywhere? The argument seems so ... small ... so self-serving. By the time it's about money, the argument has already been lost. The arts actually are about values. The question is how to argue them before the argument ever gets to funding.

(Douglas McLennan is the founder and editor of ArtsJournal.com.)

[Source: <http://www.ajc.com/news/news/opinion/its-hard-to-argue-for-public-funding/nQTtN/>]

ARTISTIC ENDEAVORS: Arts can't fall victim to tight school budgets

Thursday, March 22, 2012, 11:02 AM

The Patriot-News, By Patriot-News Editorial Board

Back to basics.

Tighten the belt.

Accountability.

And testing, testing, testing.

In the underfunded boot camp that American education has become, the arts seem to be everything we hate.

In today's classrooms, we like our facts cold and hard, lined up with precision and ready to be checked on a standardized test. The arts are perceived as soft and fuzzy, sometimes messy to teach, always difficult to measure.

“To be or not to be?” What kind of question is that?

It's a question that can help to turn fact-memorizers into successful human beings.

At least, that's the argument made by the authors of “Creating Pennsylvania's Future Through the Arts and Education,” a new study from the nonprofit Education Policy and Leadership Center.

The study begins by citing the kind of fact that would warm the heart of any statistician: The national wealth generated by the so-called creative sector now accounts for \$1.7 trillion annually, as much as the manufacturing and service sectors combined.

That doesn't mean we have more actors and musicians than we do bankers, lawyers and factory workers. It means that today's top careers require more than rote knowledge. They require problem solving, imagination and improvisation. They are less about doing the same thing over and over, and more about figuring out how to navigate an ever-changing future.

Math can help a student do that — not simple arithmetic but problem solving.

Science can help do that — the kind of science that requires students to sift through

data and test hypotheses.

But nothing does it better than the arts. Harvard researchers identified ways of thinking that the arts teach with power and precision. They include:

Envisioning: learning to picture mentally what cannot be directly observed, to imagine complex or future situations.

Engagement and persistence: learning to tackle a problem, focus on a solution, create a plan to achieve it and persevere against obstacles.

Teamwork: learning to work with others, accepting criticism to improve one's own skills and the greater effort.

A 12-year UCLA longitudinal study, cited in the Pennsylvania report, followed 12,000 high school students through age 26. It found that students with intensive arts education in middle school and high school, on average, had higher test scores, attended college more frequently and stayed in college more often. And the results were true for poorer students as well as wealthier ones.

For example, the study found that 37 percent of low-income students with a rich experience of the arts earned bachelor's degrees. Only 17 percent of low-income students with little arts education earned a B.A.

Yet the Pennsylvania report found the arts under attack in public schools — a victim of tight budgets and the relentless perception that the arts are the “frills” of the school day.

Nationally, there was a steady growth in the number of students who studied the arts from some 25 percent in 1930 to 65 percent in 1982. Yet despite the fact that our economy depends more than ever upon the kind of collaborative, creative problem solving embodied in arts education, there has been a steady decline over the past quarter century.

By 2008, fewer than half of the nation's high school graduates had studied the arts, and arts programs have been slashed even further in the past four years as the recession has hit school funding.

Of course, the recession isn't going away and school districts need to make tough choices.

The good news is that the Pennsylvania report identifies several low-cost or no-cost ways to encourage arts education.

At the state level, lawmakers and educators have already identified arts education

as a core subject.

Yet in developing new graduation standards, it's not yet clear if the arts will make it. Without a Keystone Arts Exam — and it's kind of tough to make “to be or not to be?” a multiple choice question — school districts will always be tempted to cut or eliminate arts education so they can teach to the test.

This new report from the Education Policy and Leadership Center only reinforces what research has shown time and again: The “soft and fuzzy” arts teach the kind of hard-to-learn skills that our children and grandchildren need to compete in the 21st-century workplace.

Lawmakers should demonstrate that they're the smart ones. They need to make certain that school districts are required to teach the arts and rewarded for doing so with more than polite applause.

[Source: http://www.pennlive.com/editorials/index.ssf/2012/03/artistic_endeavors_arts_cant_f.html]