

WGAHE

Arts Education: Beyond Tradition and  
Advocacy

A View of Elementary/Secondary  
Education in the Arts from the  
Perspective of Higher Education

**ARTS EDUCATION: BEYOND TRADITION AND ADVOCACY**

**A View of Elementary/Secondary Education in the Arts**

**from the Perspective of Higher Education**

*A Statement of the Working Group on the Arts in Higher Education*

The arts—visual arts, theatre, music, and dance—challenge and extend human experience. They provide means of expression that go beyond ordinary speaking and writing. They are a unique record of diverse cultures and how these cultures have developed over time. They provide distinctive ways of understanding human beings and nature. The arts are creative modes by which all people can enrich their lives both by self-expression and response to the expressions of others.

Works of art often involve subtle meanings and complex systems of expression. Fully appreciating such works requires the careful reasoning and sustained study that lead to informed insight. Moreover, just as thorough understanding of science requires laboratory or field work, so fully understanding the arts involves firsthand work in them.

-The College Board<sup>①</sup>

The curriculum in the crucial eight grades leading to the high school years should be specifically designed to provide a sound base for study in those later years in such areas as English language development and assisting computational and problem solving skills, science, social studies, foreign language, and the arts. These should foster an enthusiasm for learning and the development of the individual's gifts and talents.

-National Commission on Excellence in Education<sup>②</sup>

<sup>①</sup> *Academic Preparation for College—What Students Need To Know and Be Able to Do*, New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1983, page 16.

<sup>②</sup> *Nation at Risk*, National Commission on Excellence in Education, Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983, page 26.

**Contents**

**Preface** .....

**PART I**

**Present Components--Future Agenda**

A Nation Concerned .....

Why The Arts; Why Literacy in the Arts?.....

Developing the Foundation for Basic Literacy in the Arts  
Disciplines.....

Tradition and Advocacy.....

Beyond Tradition, Beyond Advocacy.....

**PART II**

**Educational Imperatives**

Education in the Arts for All Elementary/Secondary Students.....

The Education and Training of Future Professional Artists.....

Preparation for Higher Education .....

Teacher Education.....

**PART III**

**Responsibilities for the Future**

Overview .....

Teachers .....

Local Governance.....

State Government.....

Federal Government.....

Professional Artists.....

Advocacy Organizations.....

Higher Education.....

**Conclusion** .....

## Preface

Democracies require educated populations to survive and prosper. Therefore, elementary and secondary education has always been a serious matter for Americans.

At present, national discussion concerning the future of our schools has intensified. This document reviews a fundamental issue for policy makers concerned with that future: the arts disciplines in elementary and secondary education. It begins with an analysis of present conditions and concludes with proposals for new approaches and new levels of cooperation among those involved professionally in education and the arts.

Positive action on these proposals is necessary if the arts are to make their fullest contribution to the knowledge and understanding of individual Americans.

This goal is related to the "pursuit of happiness" promised every citizen, and is essential to the highest level of individual participation in the continuous regeneration of democratic ideals and institutions necessary for the full utilization of our nation's resources.

Therefore, the issues discussed in this document require the serious attention of all those concerned about the future of the United States and the relationships of education and culture to the quality of that future.

PART I  
PRESENT COMPONENTS-FUTURE AGENDA

**A Nation Concerned**

Crisis. That is the situation in American elementary and secondary schools. Report after report tells us so, each calling for major reforms.

We agree that reform is needed, and soon. But what shall be the nature of this reform; what shall be its philosophical base; where shall it lead us as a society?

We believe that reform should be centered in a new focus on the individual. After all, the individual is the key to everything in a democracy. Education--the development of knowledge, understanding, skill, and intellect--is the key to the capabilities of individuals. These capabilities, their combination and interaction, are key to the quality of life in our society.

We agree with those who state that the nation must turn its energies to providing a basic, substantive, and discipline-centered education for all. Each American must be provided an equal opportunity to gain fundamental knowledge and skills not only in language, but in the arts, the sciences, mathematics, and the humanities--all of which are primary to human understanding.

This document focuses on what needs to be done about the arts component of general education. It also addresses the crucial importance of early identification and development of artistically talented youth. The process of elementary and secondary education is essential to the accomplishment of both these priorities.

**Why the Arts; Why Literacy in the Arts?**

The arts disciplines are basic: as means of communication, as historical components of civilization, and as providers of unique forms of knowledge. As such, they need no other justification as essential components of education. While study in the arts disciplines may enhance other skills and encourage personal development or may lead to a stronger economic base for professional presentation of the arts, these are not and should not be the primary reasons for their study.

The goal of all elementary/secondary education in the arts, no matter what the career direction of the student, should be the development of basic literacy in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts. Basic literacy in the arts is *an understanding of and ability to work with artistic elements and structures in each discipline*. Such literacy is *grounded in study of the language and grammar of each art form as these are related directly to creation and performance*. *Studies in history, literature, and analysis are equally important in the development of artistic literacy*.

**Developing the Foundation for Basic Literacy in the Arts Disciplines**

A basic knowledge of language, structure, method, and skills in their use is essential for informed comprehension and work in any discipline. Therefore, it is especially crucial to develop such knowledge and skills in the arts during the school years. Despite the logic of this approach, other concepts for the arts in schools which bypass the basics have received wide attention.

To clarify this further, we will compare several approaches to teaching the arts with their counterparts in the teaching of reading.

**Approach A.** *Providing an environment conducive to artistic awareness, understanding, and respect*. For example: using elements of the arts as aids in teaching other subjects, providing an artistic environment in

schools through architecture and interior design, working to make the individual pursuit of aesthetic culture more accepted as a basic priority.

To expect this approach alone to be successful in teaching the arts is equivalent to the expectation of developing basic reading skills through daily tours of libraries or constant references to the importance of reading and use of words in science, mathematics, and physical education classes.

**Approach B.** *providing experience with professional presentations of the arts.* For example: bringing artists to schools for short residencies, providing opportunities for students to attend performances and exhibitions presented by professionals, providing access for students to recorded performances.

To expect this approach alone to be successful in teaching the arts is equivalent to developing basic reading skills by having professional actors appear periodically to read Shakespeare, Dickens, and other great writers, by taking students to professional presentations of plays, or by playing recordings of poetry.

**Approach C.** *Presenting the arts as humanities disciplines.* For example, focusing on the historical and cultural development of the arts, including the ability to recognize specific masterpieces.

To expect this approach alone to be successful in teaching the arts is equivalent to developing basic reading skills through a series of lectures about the history of English literature or discussions of specific masterpieces from literature or the stage.

**Approach D.** *Emphasizing the content and practice of the arts disciplines.* For example, learning basic language, grammar, and method as a foundation for future comprehension and work in an arts discipline such as playing an instrument, dancing, acting, painting.

Taking this approach in teaching the arts is parallel to the most efficient approach to teaching reading: study of the elements of the language and practice, using those elements in performance-based experiences such as reading, writing, and speaking.

In reading, and in the arts as well, it is clear that only basic work in subject matter provides the foundation for the individual development which is a social goal in a democratic society. Conducive environments, professional presentations, and humanistic studies, while necessary to develop and enhance basic knowledge, are not substitutes for the acquisition of fundamental skills.

### **Tradition and Advocacy**

#### **Basic Concepts**

***Components of the Arts Enterprise in the United States.*** The national arts effort consists of three principal elements, all of which have important connections with elementary/secondary education in the arts:

1. Education--instruction and teaching at all levels, both for the general public and the professional artist.
2. Creation/Presentation--making new works of art or performing and/or exhibiting them along with works of the past.
3. Support--promotion, management, audience support, and funding.

The related and overlapping nature of these activities is often acknowledged but not sufficiently understood or reflected in policy decisions on education in the arts at local, regional, and national levels.

***Art and Entertainment.*** Commercial enterprise in entertainment is intrinsic to American life. This activity often includes art, but while all art has an element of entertainment, not all entertainment is art. Works that embody the highest human achievement in the arts are uniquely valuable even when they may not be commercially viable. In addition, art itself must be distinguished from those works which use the various arts media solely for entertainment purposes.

Failure to distinguish between art and entertainment and the use of the arts in commercial and advertising contexts are realities and not harmful in and of themselves. Yet, this situation creates problems.

All too often, the arts are perceived by millions of Americans as relevant only in an entertainment or commercial context. Many types of art rarely presented as pure entertainment or in support of commercial messages run the risk of being broadly perceived as unimportant. As a result, the arts disciplines often are not regarded as having significant value in and of themselves. This, in turn, makes it difficult to develop general understanding of the importance, content, and needs of education in the arts.

***Curricular and Non-Curricular Education.*** All experiences contribute to an individual's education. However, there is a distinction between curricular and non-curricular education. If curricular education is defined as that which is planned in sequential order and takes place in an organized program of study over a period of time, then non-curricular education is that which is achieved through random personal experiences. Clearly, both are essential components of learning about the arts. Each complements the other, but neither is a substitute for the other.

### **The Traditional Approach**

The United States has a long tradition of involving the arts to some extent in elementary and secondary education. Since the early part of this century, music and art specialists have been employed by many school districts. Theatre and dance teachers have also enjoyed a significant but lesser presence.

This tradition has provided much: it has identified and nurtured many practicing artists and has provided a foundation for the increasing interest in the arts being shown by a broad spectrum of Americans.

It is clear that, at some point in their elementary/secondary years, a significant number of children and youth come into some contact with both curricular and non-curricular arts education. It is also clear that, somehow, this effort does not produce an appropriate level of artistic literacy and long-term interest in a reasonable percentage of the population. Part of the reason is that the traditional approach has lost its focus on subject matter by becoming embedded in the adverse conditions affecting all elementary/secondary education. However, more factors must be considered to complete the picture.

Beginning with the premise that exposure alone will not necessarily lead to literacy and involvement, the following three interrelated factors may be identified as root issues:

1. Overall, under current circumstances, the power of the electronic media to produce mass aesthetic values in non-curricular modes through concentrated exposure is greater than the power of curricular education.
2. Overall, the curricular education in the arts being given during school years does not reach enough of the population with sufficient intensity for significant periods of time to be effective in developing artistic ability and literacy.

3. Overall, the curricular basis of much study in the arts in the elementary and secondary years does not sufficiently emphasize the development of basic knowledge and skills in the arts disciplines.

These statements should not be read as indictments of individuals in any sector of the arts or education laboring daily to develop arts programs in the schools. There is no question that many arts education programs are extremely effective and productive. In a national sense, the question is not whether effective programs exist, but whether our programs are producing the level of literacy in the arts required for parity with other basic educational disciplines.

### **The Advocacy Approach**

Since 1965, the United States has embarked on new directions for support of the arts. That year saw the beginning of organized federal support for arts councils, and with it the growth of an advocacy movement dedicated to encouraging more Americans to be involved in the arts.

Like the traditional approach to arts education, this effort has made major contributions. More Americans now attend arts events, awareness of the arts has been heightened, and government at all levels has joined the private sector in supporting the presentation of art.

Naturally, this movement was quick to identify education in the arts as an important agenda item. As a result, the last decade has been replete with advocacy for the arts in education.

Unfortunately, this effort has been only marginally aligned with efforts of the traditional arts education community. Further, the advocacy approach tends to perceive arts education as one solution to the chronic financial problems of professional presenters of the arts. Larger audiences and a stronger political base in support of government funding seem to be the driving forces.

The traditional focus of education programs urged by the advocacy movement has been on providing students with passive experience--both of the arts and artists--rather than on teaching the arts as disciplines. Advocacy and arts experience are doubtless important in developing interest in the arts. However, advocacy and arts experience cannot be expected to replace substantive work in the disciplines as a basis for significant education in the arts.

### **Beyond Tradition, Beyond Advocacy**

We are convinced that the future of elementary/secondary education in the arts will be best served by moving beyond tradition and beyond advocacy. The foundation of skills provided by those involved in traditional education, the promotional zeal of advocates, and the exemplary work of outstanding artists and teachers must become the elements of an approach formed, operated, and evaluated on its delivery of basic literacy in the arts disciplines for all American of school age.

We must find ways to bring together the resources of the creation/presentation, education, and support components of the national arts effort. Each has much to contribute and much to gain from the success of K-12 arts education programs. However, the primary reasons for their involvement must not be mere economic survival, but rather the provision of basic skills and literacy in the arts for the American people.

## PART II EDUCATIONAL IMPERITIVES

### **Education in the Arts for All Elementary/Secondary Students**

**Effects on Society.** For all the reasons outlined in Part I, each elementary/secondary school student should be afforded the opportunity to develop basic literacy in the arts disciplines. This should be a fundamental component of education for every student. The benefits of this policy would be the development of citizens:

- \* more equipped with tools for understanding human experiences;
- \* more attuned to the nature of problem-solving in areas which require other than technological solutions;
- \* more capable of making informed judgments about cultural and aesthetic matters based on personal knowledge and skill, rather than by simply being carried along passively by media and other societal influences;
- \* more attuned to the roots of their culture, and thus more secure and more committed to their individual roles in the development of civilization.

**Effects on Higher Education.** The American system of higher education contains unparalleled resources for teaching the arts. Because of a national commitment to the training of professional artists within these institutions, there exists on most campuses both the resources and commitment to provide education in the arts for those who will find their life's work in other professions.

In fact, many institutions require some study in the arts as part of the standard curriculum for the baccalaureate degree. In addition, there are numerous opportunities for student involvement in performing groups and studio courses.

While the current focus on introductory studies in the arts is an important and necessary aspect of arts education in the United States, it is disappointing that advanced work in the arts at the college level is impossible for most students because of a lack of background. Certainly, the arts do not have parity with English, mathematics, and science where first-year college courses are based upon expectations that students will have studied these subjects throughout the elementary and secondary years.

Were the goal of basic literacy in the arts disciplines to be achieved in the elementary/secondary years, postsecondary institutions would be able to provide a larger body of individuals with a higher level of education in the arts. In turn, this would provide society with a more informed level of cultural leadership and further improve our capabilities to achieve the individual benefits outlined in the previous section.

**Resources.** No nation in the world now matches in scale and geographic distribution the personnel, curricula, and facilities for education in the arts in the United States. Our resources should be considered as a base for building the future, recognizing that in many cases vast improvements are needed to bring specific educational efforts up to reasonable standards.

Leadership resources--professionals in the education, support, and creation/presentation components of the arts--also exist throughout the nation. A central tenet of future planning is to provide improved services and support for the work of these professionals.

Even though many resources exist, there are societal problems and issues which influence the nation's capability to educate in the arts. Improvement can occur only when there is:

- \* a national commitment to basic literacy in the arts disciplines for all elementary/secondary students;
- \* a willingness to redeploy and expand resources needed to bring that commitment to fruition;
- \* an intensive effort by all components of the national arts enterprise to combine their respective resources to serve emerging needs at the local level.

Our society is diverse by design; therefore, even though there is a body of knowledge and skills essential for literacy in each arts discipline, there are no specific curricular panaceas or organizational structures which can be instituted on a nationwide basis to improve general education in the arts. In many ways, a future rise in artistic literacy is dependent upon a combination of factors far beyond curricular or organizational methodology. In addition, attempts to impose standardized methodologies on the nation as a whole go against the American tradition of pluralism and the concomitant emphasis on the development of teachers who use uniquely effective teaching approaches. Here as elsewhere in American life, individual and localized capabilities and approaches are the key to success. The national voluntary K-12 standards for the arts education published in 1994 provide a set of common goals for real initiative and creativity.

#### **The Education and Training of Future Professional Artists**

**Effects on Society.** The work of highly skilled professional artists provides the base of inspiration, the body of work, and the developmental impulse upon which all other artistic activity depends. Therefore, it is essential that the nation identify and prepare those who will preserve and expand our cultural heritage.

Since lost talent is a lost resource, the question arises whether a more comprehensive program for developing literacy in the arts disciplines within the school-age population would not reveal talent that is presently being lost to neglect. The arts lag behind the other basic disciplines because most students do not study them on a daily basis throughout the elementary/secondary years. Until there is greater parity in this regard, we cannot be sure that our most significant talent is being found and developed.

**Effects on Higher Education.** Unlike many other disciplines, it is essential to begin professionally-oriented studies in the arts prior to higher education if any degree of professional success can be expected. This is especially true in many performance areas of music, and in ballet, where a high degree of demonstrated competence is necessary for entrance to professional training programs at the freshman level. Most institutions preparing professional visual artists, actors, and modern dancers also expect portfolio and/or audition demonstrations of potential for success in professional curricula. It is important to note that professions such as law and medicine do not expect intensive professional education to begin until the completion of a four-year college curriculum. This is simply impossible in most fields of the arts, where a high level of pre-college preparation is essential.

The degree of our success in providing appropriate professional education for talented youth in the elementary/secondary years is the degree to which our professional training will be successful in the postsecondary years. The removal of arts education programs from the schools in some areas of the country has had a negative impact on the preparation of students from those areas entering professional curricula in the arts. It is essential that this trend be reversed so that our system of higher education can produce the results of which it is capable in developing the talents of young professional artists.

**Resources.** Our present resources and their deployment are far better suited to pre-professional training in the arts than to developing basic literacy in the arts for all elementary/secondary students. Our efforts in the

elementary and secondary schools are joined by those of private teachers, community schools of the arts, arts programs of religious congregations, and preparatory departments in institutions of higher education.

Some observers of American arts education have suggested that too many of our resources are used for training students with artistic talent to the neglect of students with average abilities in the arts. This subject deserves intensive study by all components of the national arts enterprise. The focus of such a study should appropriately be on arts curricula in elementary and secondary schools. The national voluntary K-12 arts standards of 1994 provide a starting point.

For example, recent years have seen the development of elementary and high schools devoted to the performing and visual arts. This represents a new and important level of commitment to professional training in the arts in the precollege years. However, it is important that the existence of these institutions not become a justification for segregating the arts from the mainstream of elementary/secondary education.

The American educational system must accommodate the needs of both the general student and the artistically gifted. Each student will reach his or her potential only if appropriate resources are provided in schools and communities.

### **Preparation for Higher Education**

**All Students.** In the spring of 1983, the College Entrance Examination Board\* presented an outline of the basic academic skills students should achieve in high school to be prepared for college study.

(\* The College Entrance Examination Board is a nonprofit membership organization that provides tests and other educational services for students, schools, and colleges. The membership is composed of more than 2,500 colleges, schools, school systems, and education associations. Representatives of the members serve on the Board of Trustees and advisory councils and committees that consider the College Board's programs and participate in the determination of its policies and activities. The statement quoted is from *Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need To Know and Be Able To Do*, New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1983.)

This outline gives the arts parity with English, mathematics, science, the social sciences, and foreign languages as essential preparation for higher education. We believe that these statements articulate goals for all high school students.

The College Board statement on the arts is as follows:

"Students going to college will profit from the following preparation in the arts:

- \* The ability to understand and appreciate the unique qualities of each of the arts.
- \* The ability to appreciate how people of various cultures have used the arts to express themselves.
- \* The ability to understand and appreciate different artistic styles and works from representative historical periods and cultures.
- \* Some knowledge of the social and intellectual influences affecting artistic form.
- \* The ability to use the skills, media, tools, and processes required to express themselves in one or more of the arts.

"College entrants also will profit from more intensive preparation in at least one of the four areas of the arts: visual arts, theatre, music, and dance.

"If the preparation of college entrants is in the visual arts, they will need the following knowledge and skills.

- \* The ability to identify and describe--using the appropriate vocabulary--various visual art forms from different historical periods.
- \* The ability to analyze the structure of a work of visual art.
- \* To know how to express themselves in one or more of the visual art forms, such as drawing, painting, photography, weaving, ceramics, and sculpture.

"If the preparation of college entrants is in theatre, they will need the following knowledge and skills.

- \* The ability to identify and describe--using the appropriate vocabulary--different kinds of plays from different historical periods.
- \* The ability to analyze the structure, plot, characterization, and language of a play, both as a literary document, and as a theatre production.
- \* To know how to express themselves by acting in a play or by improvising, or by writing a play, or by directing or working behind the scenes of a theatre production.

"If the preparation of college entrants in music, they will need the following knowledge and skills.

- \* The ability to identify and describe--using the appropriate vocabulary--various musical forms from different historical periods.
- \* The ability to listen perceptively to music, distinguishing such elements as pitch, rhythm, timbre, and dynamics.
- \* The ability to read music.
- \* The ability to evaluate a musical work or performance.
- \* To know how to express themselves by playing an instrument, singing in a group or individually, or composing music.

"If the preparation of college entrants is in dance, they will need the following knowledge and skills.

- \* The ability to identify and describe--using the appropriate vocabulary--dances of various cultures and historical periods.
- \* The ability to analyze various techniques, styles, and choreographic forms.
- \* The ability to evaluate a dance performance.
- \* To know how to express themselves through dancing or choreography."

In the spring of 1994, the national voluntary K-12 arts standards were published after a massive project involving teachers, artists, government and national arts and evaluations agencies for summarizing what students should know and be able to do in the arts. The document reads as follows, Were the competencies

expressed in 1983 by The College Board and in 1994 by the Standards project being developed pervasively in the elementary and secondary years, we would achieve basic literacy in the arts disciplines for all students irrespective of their future plans for higher education.

These statements and their meaning for elementary/secondary education deserve national attention and action.

**Professional Artists.** In addition to the basic competencies outlined above for all students, those expecting to enter training programs to become professional artists will need significantly greater achievement in the discipline of their choice. The degree of attainment expected can best be determined by reviewing the entrance and retention requirements of major professional schools in each arts discipline.

### **Teacher Education**

**Educational Values and Teacher Education.** Concern about America's schools seems to center on recognition that a variety of competing and often worthwhile interests have combined to move schools too far from their fundamental purpose of giving students a basic education in subject matter.

Since teacher education and development are based on the structure and content of schooling, significant attention must be given to this area in consideration of basic literacy in the arts for all elementary and secondary students.

Our current system and process for teacher education reflect prevailing values about the role of the arts in schools. Unfortunately, our national policy, simply stated, seems to be that the arts are good and worthwhile, especially for those students who show "talent," but not particularly essential as a component of basic studies for all students.

A serious commitment to the goal of basic literacy in the arts disciplines would therefore call for significant changes in our overall approach to teacher preparation.

**Job Expectations and Teacher Education Curricula.** Present teacher education curricula prepare general classroom teachers and specialist teachers. In the elementary years, most students work with a single general classroom teacher throughout the school day. This teacher's efforts may be supplemented by specialists in such areas as the arts and physical education. At the high school level, most teachers have specialist training in the discipline they are teaching. Therefore, for discussion purposes, we focus on the postsecondary arts education for general classroom teachers and specialist teachers in the arts disciplines.

**Elementary Level.** The general classroom teacher, at the elementary level, carries major responsibility for the comprehensive education of students. Under present conditions, general classroom teachers cannot be expected to provide instruction for basic literacy in the arts disciplines. We are faced with a closed circle resulting from our failure to develop basic literacy in the arts for all individuals. Were this being accomplished, all general classroom teachers would have basic skills in the arts. At present, general literacy in the arts is not a reality, and we cannot develop it to the level necessary for instructional effectiveness by providing only one or two courses in an arts discipline as part of teacher education curricula. There is also no evidence presently available that provision of in-service training over short periods of time will provide the required competence.

We must remember that generalist teachers in the elementary schools are expected to teach language, mathematics, social studies, and science--subjects they studied not only in college, but daily in elementary and secondary school. Few have had such a background in the arts. It is this gap of knowledge and experience that must be closed by providing future teachers with basic arts skills if general classroom teachers are expected to share the burden of providing literacy in the arts for elementary school students.

Specialist teachers of the arts at the elementary level are present in a number of school districts. However, the low priority afforded the arts disciplines results in these teachers having only a small amount of time with a large number of students. Often, one teacher is expected to serve all the students in several schools. No matter how effective these teachers may be, it cannot be expected that such a minimal amount of classroom time will develop artistic literacy. We would not expect students to develop literacy in English with a 30-minute lesson once a week.

**Secondary Level.** A relatively small number of specialist teachers, at the secondary level, now focus on providing studies in the arts on an elective basis. Most of the emphasis in these studies is on student performances and exhibitions, activities which are important both in themselves and as part of a broader arts education program.

There are several problems in expecting arts specialist teachers to serve a broad population of students in the secondary schools.

One problem is that their time is largely consumed with presentation activities: that is, with the necessary rehearsals and preparation for student concerts, plays, and exhibitions.

The other major problem is that many arts specialists have not been prepared in their teacher education programs to guide instruction leading to basic arts literacy for all students.

**Summary.** Current personnel resources cannot be expected to cover the magnitude of the efforts suggested by the 1983 recommendations of the College Board or the 1994 voluntary K-12 standards.

To develop the capabilities needed for basic literacy in the arts disciplines, adjustments will be necessary in elementary teacher education curricula. The primary directions will involve providing greater emphasis on the arts in educating the general classroom teacher, and greater emphasis in the curricula for arts specialists on the content, organization, and management of more intensive arts education for all students.

It is clear that these developments cannot happen quickly. Perhaps two decades will be required to place such a program into operation in incremental steps. A long-term and focused commitment will be necessary if we are to bring the capabilities of our teachers in line with our objectives for general arts literacy.

**The Role of Higher Education.** America's institutions of higher education are the settings for the education of teachers. In addition, higher education is the focus of most research and development in elementary and secondary education. Fortunately, our resources in higher education include the presence of pervasive professional activity in the arts which is essential in teacher education, whether for the general classroom teacher, the specialist teacher in non-arts fields, or the specialist arts teacher. Unlike many other countries where teacher preparation and professional education in the arts disciplines are in separate institutions, our approach provides for the integration of these activities. This tremendous resource is often under-utilized because of present teacher education priorities.

Higher education will be central to the success of any effort to improve education in the arts for all Americans. Our higher education efforts in the arts need the assistance and cooperation of all the other elements of our arts and education enterprises in order to be effective in serving the nation's expanded needs in the development of basic literacy in the arts. As is the case in the elementary and secondary schools, required changes may lead to the redeployment of certain resources. It will be necessary to provide a better education in the arts for all prospective teachers. However, institutions of higher education cannot be expected to make these changes unless there is a clear signal from those who manage elementary/secondary education that such changes are desired and that the individuals so trained can be utilized.

## PART III RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE

### **Overview**

Teaching the arts as basic subject matter to all elementary/secondary students involves many elements of society. All involved must share a commitment to teaching the arts as disciplines, and be willing to play appropriate and rational roles in bringing this about. Cooperation is essential to produce the change of values and the funding that will be necessary for success: the level of cooperation among all components of the arts enterprise needs to be increased in support of these goals.

### **Teachers**

Teachers are the key to education. Excellent teachers can transcend a host of difficulties. Ineffective teachers can render students little service and can be responsible for negative feelings about education and the life of the mind, this to the continuing detriment of an individual's educational development. Each individual teacher is important, for it is his or her knowledge, commitment, and skill that will be reflected in his or her work in the classroom. No organized methodology imposed from above nor popular crusade can replace internalized values and knowledge.

Thus, teachers must be informed about the arts. They must be able to teach the arts from a base of personal knowledge and understanding. They must see the relationship of their work in the arts to the progress of civilization.

Organizations of teachers, especially teachers of the arts disciplines, have worked tirelessly and contributed much in this direction. The expertise of teachers and their collective influence through their organizations are crucial to the success of any broad-based effort in arts education. While all groups having responsibility for education in the arts will need to make adjustments as we move beyond tradition and beyond advocacy, organizations of specialist arts teachers should have an easier time than most because of their long commitment to the basic objective of literacy in the arts.

The following are essential:

- \* Teachers must endeavor to articulate in their communities and school districts the need for attention to basic education in the arts disciplines for all students.
- \* Teachers must seek opportunities to improve their ability to serve all students in arts courses and activities and to develop appropriate course work for those students not now being served.

### **Local Governance**

Whether a school board overseeing public education, or a group of trustees with responsibilities for a private institutions, local governance is a source of basic policy for schools. Without a commitment here, basic literacy in the arts for all Americans cannot become a reality.

Even though intellectual arguments may be compelling, each governing body faces a host of practical problems in providing serious education in the arts for all students. Although most localities will not be able to achieve the ideal immediately, there are several things that can be done now.

The following are essential:

- \* Commitments must be made to maintain and enhance current curricular programs in the arts as a base for future expansion and development.
- \* Teaching of the arts in the schools must be expanded as quickly as possible in ways designed to bring the arts into the mainstream of education as disciplinary subjects of equal importance to other basic academic subjects.
- \* Literacy in one or more of the arts disciplines must become a consideration in the development of hiring policies for new general classroom teachers.
- \* A commitment must be made to develop greater public understanding of the fact that arts curricula in schools are intended primarily for the development of skills and knowledge, not merely for socialization, entertainment, or image-building for the institution.

### **State Government**

Each state government has much to contribute since the states control most of the contexts for both elementary/secondary education and teacher training. We endorse the following statements of the National Conference of State Legislatures\* with respect to K-12 arts education, and encourage the immediate development of legislation to give these recommendations the force of law throughout the nation:

(\* The National Conference of State Legislatures is the official representative of the country's 7,500 state legislators and their staffs. Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, the NCSL is funded by the states and governed by a 46 member Executive Committee. The NCSL has three basic objectives: to improve the quality and effectiveness of state legislatures; to assure states a strong, cohesive voice in the federal decision making process; and to foster interstate communication and cooperation. The statements are quoted from *The Arts and the States*, published by NCSL in 1981, and the Record of the NCSL Arts Committee Meeting of November, 1982.)

#### **"Basic Education**

Amend the State Education Act to redefine basic education to include arts education at the elementary and secondary levels.

#### **"Sequential Arts Curriculum**

Provide incentives for effective sequential curricula in the arts disciplines at the elementary and secondary levels.

#### **"Arts Specialist Teachers**

Provide or make available arts specialist teachers to every school.

#### **"Gifted and Talented**

Include children gifted and talented in the arts within categorical state funding of gifted and talented programs.

#### **"In-Service Teacher Training**

Make available state funds to interested school districts to provide in-service arts education training for elementary school teachers.

#### **"Schools for the Arts**

Consider funding schools for the arts to provide intensive training opportunities for artistically gifted and talented school-age children.

#### **"Arts in Higher Education**

Provide a continuing source of funding for arts education programs and professional training in special art forms within state-supported institutions of higher education."

In connection with this last recommendation, it is essential that state governments work to ensure that teacher certification standards reflect the need to develop arts specialist teachers who have a thorough grounding in at least one arts discipline and general classroom teachers who have basic knowledge and skills in the arts.

The recommendations of national accrediting agencies and teacher organizations in the arts are the best guidelines for the development of these state certification policies.

### **Federal Government**

Substantive education in the arts is a major component of the future development of American civilization. The federal government should use the variety of means at its command to explain this fact to the nation.

The federal government can and should be effective in assisting with basic research, pilot projects and follow-up studies, and other developmental activities.

Beyond its own service-oriented development efforts, the federal government should approach arts education in the way that it has approached professional presentation of the arts. The federal government has been extremely successful in assisting local presenters of the arts to carry out their programs in ways they think best. There has not been any attempt to impose methods, repertory, or exhibition policies on the recipients of federal attention and support.

In education, there is always the danger of appearing to be arbitrary in favoring particular educational methods or philosophies to the exclusion of others. The federal government cannot and should not attempt to make curricular policy for arts education, but it can encourage the creation of policies at the local level which would utilize local resources, expertise, and initiative.

The following are essential:

- \* Commitments must be made to maintain assistance for programs which, in support of the creation, presentation and management of the arts, promote a lively, broad-based, and enduring national arts enterprise.
- \* Public recognition must be given to the significant resources already available in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education to address local needs in arts education.
- \* Professional performance in schools must be continued; however, it is essential to integrate such performances with ongoing curricular programs responsible for developing basic skills and knowledge in the arts disciplines. The encouragement of such integration in local settings must become a greater priority in federal arts and education efforts.
- \* The arts and humanities are closely related and interdependent. Federal policies and procedures must reflect this fact.
- \* Support must be found for a program of significant basic research in arts education. Long-term research related to the evaluation of various curricular approaches is particularly important.

### Professional Artists

While almost all American artists have a connection with education at some point in their careers, for purposes of this section we are speaking of artists who earn their living primarily outside elementary/secondary education.

We have stated that the work of professional artists is the center and basis for all activities in the arts, and we reaffirm that here. We have also stated that students cannot become literate in the arts disciplines through experiences alone, and we also reaffirm that here. Young people need more exposure to practicing artists than is currently available. However, to be effective, these experiences must be serious and of the highest quality; they must be integrated into an education program of substance and of sufficient duration and logical sequence. Above all, in elementary/secondary education, the role of professional artists and presentation organizations is to supplement and inspire the daily studies necessary to produce literacy and individual capability in the arts.

The following are essential:

- \* Professional artists must become powerful spokesmen for discipline-centered arts education in the schools with an emphasis on developing a public attitude toward the arts that is as serious as their own. Historians and critics of the arts must provide assistance in this regard.
- \* Professional artists must work in cooperation with arts teachers and others in the education establishment at local, regional, and national levels to develop a viable program of arts literacy for all elementary/secondary students.

### Advocacy Organizations

Governmental arts councils and similar private sector organizations devoted to increasing support in the arts have much to contribute: the techniques of advocacy and the commitments of advocates are vital. However, advocacy for the arts or even advocacy of arts experiences for students cannot substitute for discipline-centered education programs where the arts have parity with science, history, or language.

The following are essential:

- \* Advocacy organizations must join artists, teachers of the arts, and the education community in a campaign to develop greater literacy in the arts disciplines.
- \* Advocacy organizations must support the establishment and operation of programs to develop arts literacy in the elementary and secondary schools and assist those who are professionally engaged in bringing them about.

### Higher Education

Higher education needs to prepare for the changes required in moving America's arts education effort beyond tradition and beyond advocacy. Changes in approach, redeployment of resources, and reordering of priorities are new challenges. Many of these challenges will be faced in relation to the pace of change possible in other sectors involved in the composite effort. Like all other groups with responsibility, higher education's role will be to change and adjust, to move beyond the status quo to a new level of capability and service.

The following are essential:

- \* The arts enterprise in higher education must marshal all its resources to promote a substantive, literacy-based approach to arts education at the elementary and secondary levels.
- \* Higher education must provide developing artists and teachers of the arts with skills and attitudes necessary to be effective in the development of literacy in the arts for all elementary/secondary students.
- \* Higher education must continue and expand its research and policy development capabilities in arts education.
- \* Higher education must take action to bring the old recommendations of the College Entrance Examination Board and the new goals of the national voluntary K-12 arts standards to full realization. Admission policies, including national standardized testing, need remedial attention in this regard.
- \* Institutions of higher education must develop stronger relationships with local schools.

### Conclusion

The goals, objectives, and operations suggested in the foregoing sections represent an enterprise which Americans must volunteer to undertake if we intend to move beyond tradition and advocacy to basic literacy in the arts for all Americans. No group or government agency can impose a national solution from a central source.

To have real success, we must make literacy in the arts basic by making arts education discipline-centered and substantive. We cannot advertise our way to improvement by convincing ourselves that we have succeeded through less fundamental means, however attractive this might be in the short term.

We must recognize that all components of the arts enterprise must change, grow, and develop, and that true partnership among the components is essential for progress to be made.

We must not be sidetracked by considerations other than the education of students. The arts do not teach themselves any more than do physics, French, or history.

We must recognize that the quality of our nation's cultural future will depend largely upon our ability to be successful in providing a comprehensive education for all citizens.

Nations committed to basic educational skills for all have already shown their capacity to surpass us in certain technical and economic areas. Increasingly, our economic and cultural well-being will depend upon a renewed national commitment to a comprehensive educational agenda that includes basic arts literacy.

So much has been said by so many to support these views, so many of the contributions of Western civilization are based on these principles, and so much has been done in the last year to bring us once again to the realization of what our nation must do to fulfill its potential and its promise, that we can delay no longer. The time to begin is now, for the full realization of that potential and promise is contingent on what we are able to achieve in providing basic literacy in the arts disciplines for all Americans.

The Working Group on the Arts in Higher Education is a cooperative project of the National Association of Schools of Music, National Association of Schools of Art and Design, National Association of Schools of Theatre, National Association of Schools of Dance, and the International Council of Fine Arts Dean. These organizations represent the academic and administrative leadership of over 1000 post secondary schools and departments providing professional education and training to artists and teachers of the arts as well as arts instruction for all college students.

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