



# Arts at the Core

At the Core of Civilization, at the Core of Education  
The National Task Force on the Arts in Education





# Arts at the Core

*I look forward to an America which will reward achievement in the arts as we reward achievement in business or statecraft. I look forward to an America which will steadily raise the standards of artistic accomplishment and which will steadily enlarge cultural opportunities for all of our citizens. And I look forward to an America which commands respect throughout the world not only for its strength but for its civilization as well.*

— John F. Kennedy at Amherst College, October 26, 1963



Few things inspire young minds more than experiences afforded through exposure to and participation in the arts. Regrettably, we are at a crossroads in our collective efforts to bring the arts into the core of student learning. As professional educators working in a variety of learning environments, you realize that the arts are slowly being marginalized in our schools. We must do what is necessary to reverse this trend.

This state of affairs is further compounded by the current downturn in the nation's economy, which is having a harmful effect on the ability of our schools to deliver a quality education to students. We at the College Board understand the fiscal realities of the day. Yet we believe it is particularly timely to stress the importance of the arts and their transformative power within the educational arena. Given our large membership of proactive schools, colleges, and universities, the College Board enthusiastically launched this National Task Force on the Arts in Education in 2008.

The College Board strives to make a difference in the lives of students nationally and internationally. I believe we have a responsibility to encourage the involvement of educators everywhere. Advocating for more arts experiences in our schools and providing the means for all students to participate in these creative activities can contribute significantly to their academic development.

I join the Board of Trustees and the membership in their support of this outstanding work on the arts in education. Yet I know that no one organization can do this work alone. That is why I applaud the NTFAE for joining with the many arts organizations and advocacy groups both inside and outside of education to mount the concerted effort to make us truly aware of the issues we must face if our students are to reap the benefits of the arts in their educational lives.

The NTFAE has released a report that offers recommendations and mounts an advocacy campaign to enhance and support the arts in our schools. I look forward to your support.

Gaston Caperton  
President  
The College Board

**Composed of more than 50 leading educators and artists, the National Task Force on the Arts in Education was launched in 2008 to address the opportunities and challenges facing arts education in the United States. As an advisor to the College Board, the NTFAE recommends strategies for placing the arts at the core of elementary, secondary and postsecondary education, including:**

- 1 Reaching underserved student populations**
- 2 Promoting student creativity**
- 3 Understanding the arts in a global perspective**
- 4 Integrating the arts into a greater number of College Board programs**
- 5 Engaging a greater number of professional artists in arts education**
- 6 Building partnerships and affecting policy at the national, state and local levels**

This booklet introduces you to several voices and ideas from the National Task Force on the Arts in Education. We hope that you find the following articles engaging and informative and that you will join us in our effort to promote the arts as a core component of learning in the 21st century.

The artworks throughout this booklet are selections from the 2009-10 AP® Studio Art Exhibit, which travels to venues throughout the United States. The exhibit honors outstanding AP Studio Art students and exemplifies the extremely high level of accomplishment that AP Studio Art students can achieve.

Continue reading to learn more about the specific recommendations that have been presented by the task force and approved by the College Board's Board of Trustees, and visit us online at [www.collegeboard.com/arts-task-force](http://www.collegeboard.com/arts-task-force) for more information.

Do you have a story about how your institution practices arts in education? Do you have any suggestions or questions for the task force? Share your comments and questions with us at [artstaskforce@collegeboard.org](mailto:artstaskforce@collegeboard.org).

Join the conversation and help us promote the fundamental role of the arts in American education.



*Untitled detail by Kegan Eastham, Mixed media.*

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*Untitled* by Sarah Louise Canning, Silk painting.

## Approved Recommendations from the Task Force on the Arts in Education

Arts education in K–12 schools, colleges and universities is facing an escalating crisis, which, if not dealt with soon, will deepen in both intensity and gravity. It will continue to directly, and adversely, affect the quality of education available to our students and, most importantly, the well-being of the nation. In order to reverse this trend, and because the arts are a powerful way to both understand and shape the world, the National Task Force on the Arts in Education recommends a set of short- and long-term actions that will enable the College Board to take a leadership role in making the arts accessible to all students. The NTFAE has identified these overarching recommendations, to be followed by specific actions that will begin to resolve the issues identified by this task force. Therefore, the College Board will:

- 1 Utilize arts programming as an effective tool to improve education in general and as a solution to achieve access and equity for all students.**
- 2 Exercise its broad influence to encourage College Board members to implement and sustain quality programs for all K–16 students in dance, music, theater and the visual arts.**
- 3 Expand student potential by promoting creativity, innovation and critical thinking skills; recognizing achievement in the arts; and raising the visibility of the arts throughout its programs and within its member K–16 institutions.**
- 4 Integrate the arts into its programs and services, recognizing that infusing arts across the curriculum is an invaluable learning tool.**
- 5 Ensure that the global arts, which include folk, traditional and indigenous classical arts, are infused into its programs and services.**
- 6 Promote the engagement of professional artists and scholars in the fields of dance, music, theater and the visual arts in K–16 education.**
- 7 Collaborate with member institutions, policymakers, education and arts communities, and funders to promote policies that lead to effective practices and quality programs in the arts.**
- 8 Initiate and sustain alliances with arts and education organizations to develop collaborations that support the arts in K–16 education.**





Untitled by Katherine Ordoñez, Pen and acrylic wash.

## Letter from the Chair

There is no better or clearer way for young people to understand our diverse world and history than through the arts. The arts enable students to feel connected with virtually all ethnic groups and with all religions and beliefs. The arts help us understand the way people look and looked, the way they live and lived, and the rituals and pageants of their cultures.

We live in an age of numbers, anonymity and quantifiable curricula. We must carefully examine the differences between studying the arts and, for example, studying math and the sciences. In math one can give an incorrect answer, but in the arts, solutions or answers often cannot be judged by quantifiable criteria. The arts are accountable to other criteria quite removed from right or wrong answers. Even to discuss the significance or meaning of the arts, we must enter into the contemporary discourse of virtually all discrete disciplines — historical and social concerns, gender, morality, geography, language — in short, to even

start addressing the content of the arts we must address the entire human condition.

Several years ago, the *New York Times* art critic, Michael Kimmelman, reviewed *The Gates*, a major conceptual piece by Christo and Jean-Claude installed in Central Park. Some New York residents were very critical of these intrusive structures into “their” park. Kimmelman addressed these concerns by stating, “... the fact is the arts can be said to serve no real purpose; they are merely indispensable.” I see that a major purpose of the NTFAE is to emphasize the importance of this “indispensable” phenomenon.

Leonard Lehrer,  
Chair, National Task Force  
on the Arts in Education

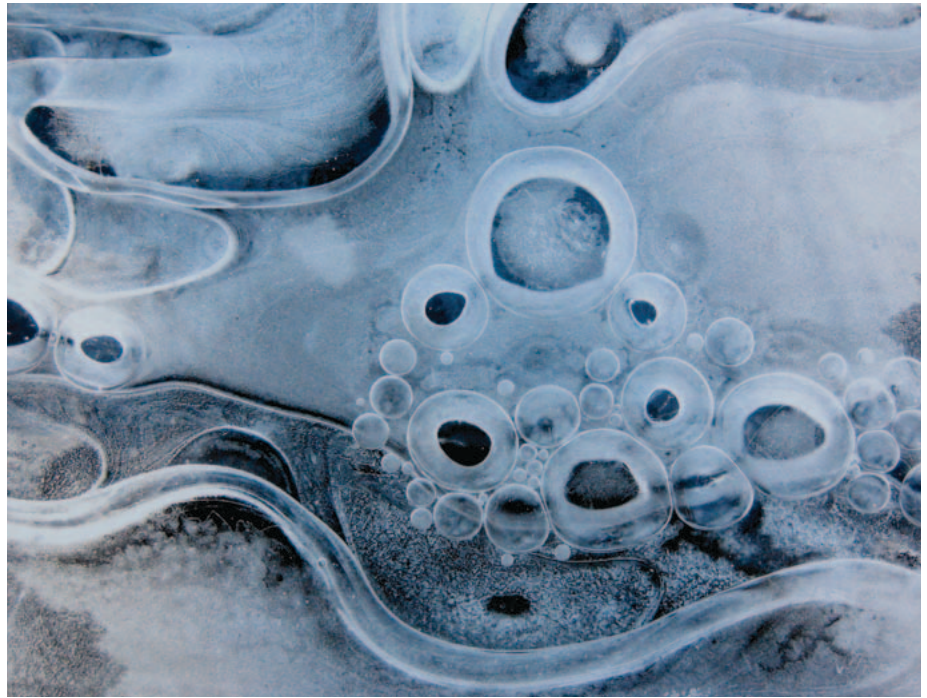
# Arts at the Core

## “What Is Art?”

Robert Lazuka, Professor,  
School of Art, Ohio University

The arts connect us with our culture, and help us experience and understand the world in ways that differ from other subjects. Through sight, sound and movement, the arts activate the senses to awaken our emotions and our deepest thoughts. Through them we step from the ordinary into the extraordinary, entering realms of imagination, fantasy, beauty, tragedy and transcendence.

Why, then, are the arts among the first areas on the “chopping block” when administrators and legislators seek ways to trim school budgets? Why aren’t arts programs evaluated in high schools even though the arts are listed among the 10 core areas in the No Child Left Behind Act? And why aren’t grades in arts classes counted in students’ grade point averages at many universities when students apply to their programs? These policies and actions belie a lack of respect for, or perhaps mistrust for, the value of arts experiences and the effectiveness of artistic training in education. To some, art is simply a “nonessential luxury,” or a form of entertainment. To others, the arts are elitist and contentious. Perhaps because the arts can be interpreted in many ways, and do not offer “right” and “wrong” answers, they can seem difficult to comprehend. Many people choose to ignore the arts rather than struggle to understand them. However, if we continue to allow the omission and demotion of the arts in education, where might we hope to find the next Tennessee



Untitled by Tyler Ray, Photograph.

Williams, or the next Georgia O’Keefe, Wynton Marsalis or Twyla Tharp?

Even if our own children never become our future “superstars,” it is just as important for them to paint their own portraits, to play a crisp, rising arpeggio, or try to execute the perfect pirouette. The soul does not live on math and science alone. Those who built our streets and cities may have relied largely on numbers and formulae to construct them, but we owe the life and culture that fills them to the passion and imagination associated with the visual and performing arts.

*“The soul does not live on math and science alone.”*





Untitled detail by Kolton Babych, Mixed media.

*“Properly conceived, the arts can constitute a great integrating force in the school curriculum.”*

## Arts Integration

Kim Wheatley, Director, Southeast Center for Education in the Arts, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

**Nexus:** The arts are embedded in human DNA. Children instinctively create art, movement, music and drama as they explore and learn. Integration inherently occurs in nature, daily life and society — certainly in our interrelated, symbiotic 21st-century world. So why then aren't the arts naturally and integrally woven throughout formal education? Curriculum integration is an instructional approach that enables teachers and students to identify and explore concepts and issues without regard to artificial subject-area boundaries. Applying knowledge and skills learned in one subject to another subject area complements and deepens understanding in both. “Properly conceived, the arts can constitute a great integrating force in the school curriculum. But to achieve such an end, they must be viewed as a component of every discipline, for their subject matter is as broad as life itself.”<sup>1</sup>

**Efficacy:** Arts integration is predicated on arts education. “A basic intent of the National Standards for Arts Education is that the arts be taught for their intrinsic value. But because forging connections is one of the things the arts do best, they can and should be taught in ways that connect them both to each other and to other subjects.”<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, when integrating the arts into multi-disciplinary experiences, there is a tendency to use them as a vehicle for learning in other subjects rather than as part of holistic instruction. Having students listen to music while they write may provide atmosphere and inspiration, but they are learning nothing about the music. Teachers need to build their knowledge, skills and confidence with integration principles and practices so that integration of the arts is essential not peripheral.

**Synthesis:** We live in an increasingly complex, diverse, globalized and media-saturated society. Education must be reinvented to meet the needs of our ever-changing 21st-century world. Students have to be able to function, create and communicate personally, socially, economically and politically in local, national and global venues. Schools must develop an interdisciplinary culture of inquiry where students work independently and collaboratively, employing critical thinking and multiple intelligences for imaginative problem solving. How is this possible? For an exemplifier of 21st-century learning, consider arts education and arts integration.

*For more information, view Annenberg Media's Connecting with the Arts video workshop and library series at [www.learner.org/resources/series199.html](http://www.learner.org/resources/series199.html).*

1. Chris Fowler, *Strong Arts, Strong Schools: The Promising Potential and Shortsighted Disregard of the Arts in American Schooling* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

2. *National Standards for Arts Education* (Reston, Va.: Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994). Available at <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards/overview.cfm>.

# Arts at the Core



Untitled detail by Daeun Han, Acrylic.

## Raising Student Achievement In and Through the Arts Can Help Put More Students on the Path to Success in High School and Beyond

Sandra S. Ruppert, Director,  
Arts Education Partnership

President Barack Obama has set an ambitious goal for the nation: By 2020, all K–12 students will be prepared to succeed in college and the workforce. Most Americans agree with the president’s assessment that a “complete and competitive education for the 21st century” means all students will need some form of education or training beyond high school. Yet,

while we recognize that higher levels of educational attainment for all students will open more doors to a better life, we haven’t been able to keep more than 7,000 students each day from heading quietly for the exits before they’ve had even a chance to earn a high school diploma.

Fewer than seven in 10 U.S. students graduate from high school on time, according to the latest data available from the U.S. Department of Education. For students of color and for students who are living in poverty or reside in large urban areas, the odds of on-time graduation are even slimmer. Barely half (51 percent) of African American students successfully complete high school, while only 55 percent of Hispanics do.

*“Arts learning experiences play a vital role in developing students’ capacities for critical thinking, creativity, imagination and innovation.”*

For many of the 1.3 million young people who leave high school each year without a diploma, the path that eventually leads to this educational dead end begins in middle school. The National Assessment of Educational Progress — often referred to as “the Nation’s Report Card” — provides a snapshot of student achievement in various subject areas at crucial transition points, including eighth grade. In June 2009, the results of the 2008 NAEP Arts Assessment in music and the visual arts were released; it was the first NAEP Arts Assessment conducted since 1997.

The 2008 results tell a disappointing but incomplete story of eighth-grade student achievement in the arts. In music, for example, eighth-graders had just a 50–50 chance on average of being able to identify the correct response on any of the multiple-choice questions. In the visual arts, eighth-graders on average were able to identify the correct answer only 42 percent of the time. As troubling as the overall lackluster performances are the significant disparities in achievement based on socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, gender, and type and location of schools.

Does it really matter if the performance of eighth-grade students on the NAEP arts assessments is at best mediocre and that significant achievement gaps



*“... the benefits of high levels of arts participation can make more of a difference for economically disadvantaged students.”*

based on socioeconomic and other characteristics continue to persist? It matters only if we as a nation are truly serious about reaching the president’s goal of preparing all K–12 students by 2020 to succeed in school, work and life.

Arts learning experiences play a vital role in developing students’ capacities for critical thinking, creativity, imagination and innovation. These capacities are increasingly recognized as core skills and competencies that all students need as part of a high-quality and complete 21st-century education. And, as a matter of social justice, we must be concerned when students are denied access to a high-quality education — one that includes learning in and through the arts — simply because of where they live or go to school.

Eighth grade is a crucial turning point for students as they prepare to make the transition from middle school to high school. By ninth grade, researchers can predict with a high degree of accuracy which students are most at risk of dropping out of school based on three factors: absenteeism, behavioral problems and course failure.

We know the arts can make a difference in the academic lives of eighth-graders. A decade ago, the Arts Education Partnership published groundbreaking



*Meter in Blue* detail by Sarah Obtinalla, Watercolor.

research that compared eighth-graders highly involved in the arts with those who had little or no involvement and found consistently better outcomes for the highly involved students: better grades, less likelihood of dropping out by grade 10 and more positive attitudes about school. It also showed that the benefits of high levels of arts participation can make more of a difference for economically disadvantaged students.<sup>1</sup>

The next NAEP Arts Assessment is scheduled to occur in 2016. The eighth-graders who participate in that assessment will be part of the high school graduating class of 2020 — the first class in which we can measure whether we have met the ambitious goal of ensuring that all K–12 students are prepared to succeed in college and the workforce.

If we are to meet that goal, we must take seriously our commitment to close achievement gaps and keep all students on the path to high school graduation and beyond. Arts learning opportunities — both as stand-alone classes and as classes integrated with other subject areas — must play an integral role in providing students with the complete education they need to succeed. Let’s hope we see the results of our efforts in 2016.

*Excerpted from a longer essay. To view the full text, visit the AEP website at [www.aep-arts.org](http://www.aep-arts.org).*

1. James S. Catterall, Richard Chapple and John Iwanaga, “Involvement in the Arts and Human Development: General Involvement and Intensive Involvement in Music and Theater Arts,” in *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* (Washington, D.C.: Arts Education Partnership, 1999).

# Arts at the Core

## Arts and Underserved Populations

Bernard Young, Professor, School of Art, Arizona State University

The National Task Force on the Arts in Education recognizes the importance of the arts for underserved students. African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans are underrepresented among high-achieving students in the United States at all levels of education and across all subjects, including the arts. One of the missions of the NTFAE has been to develop recommendations for educators and administrators to increase the number of underrepresented students who have access to a sustained education in the arts.

The College Board is a steadfast national advocate for equity and access in education. This includes a commitment to improving the quality of preparation for college and increasing the rates of admission to college, and completion of a college education, for students from underserved populations. The NTFAE is proud to further this mission of the College Board by prioritizing equity in and access to an arts education for underserved populations.



12 by Katherine "Kat" Lee, Digital drawing.

*"African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans are underrepresented among high-achieving students in the United States at all levels of education and across all subjects, including the arts."*





*Untitled* by Katarzyna Mitera, Pen and watercolor.

## Note of Thanks

On behalf of the members of the National Task Force on the Arts in Education, I would like to express our gratitude for the many individuals and organizations that have contributed to this work. To the College Board staff, we are particularly grateful for the contributions of Dorothy Sexton, Nancy Rubino and her assistants Ione Lloyd and Erica Saleh, and University of Michigan doctoral candidate, Desdama Rios.

We owe a special thanks to Leonard Lehrer for his inspiring work as chair of the Arts Academic Advisory Committee, which led to the creation of the NTFAE. Lehrer continues in a leadership role by serving as the task force's chair.

The task force membership includes individuals and organizations with long histories of focusing on the arts and the arts in education. The expertise the members bring to this conversation and the collaboration now at hand will prove

even more beneficial as we move the arts in education agenda to a broader level.

The success of the NTFAE can in large measure be attributed to its steering committee. Our deliberations over the last 18 months have shaped the scope and direction of the task force's work. The steering committee members bring an informed perspective on the arts. Together, their collective wisdom has contributed immensely to the success of this work.

Finally, I would like to thank Gaston Caperton, president of the College Board, whose leadership and support has inspired our ability to engage individuals in the public and private sectors to develop an arts in education agenda that will serve the nation well.

Lester P. Monts, Chair,  
NTFAE Steering Committee,  
Past Chair, Board of Trustees,  
The College Board





**The National Task Force on the Arts in Education is made up of leaders in arts education. Steering committee members include:**

**Lester P. Monts**, Chair, NTFAE Steering Committee, and Senior Provost for Academic Affairs, University of Michigan

**Leonard Lehrer**, Chair, NTFAE, and Director, Printmaking Convergence Program, Department of Art and Art History, The University of Texas at Austin

**Robert Blackey**, Professor of History, California State University, San Bernardino

**Jo Beth Gonzalez**, Theatre and English Teacher, Bowling Green High School, Ohio

**Mac Arthur Goodwin**, Educational Consultant in the Arts, Goodwin's Arts Consulting

**Robert Lazuka**, Professor, School of Art, Ohio University

**Pamela Paulson**, Senior Director of Policy, Perpich Center for Arts Education

**Bernard Young**, Professor, School of Art, Arizona State University

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Do you have comments or questions for the National Task Force on the Arts in Education? Send us your thoughts at [artstaskforce@collegeboard.org](mailto:artstaskforce@collegeboard.org).

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Back cover: *Depths* by Lizzie Mamantov, Mixed media.

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