



THE GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE

LITERACY



IN THE

ARTS



A FRAMEWORK FOR
ACTION



REPORT TO GOVERNOR LINCOLN A. ALMOND
JUNE 2001



— FROM THE RI
SCHOLASTICS
AWARDS 2001

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FRONT AND BACK COVER ART:
FROM THE RI SCHOLASTICS AWARDS 2001

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RHODE ISLAND EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
RHODE ISLAND STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS
VSA ARTS OF RHODE ISLAND

WE ENVISION A RHODE ISLAND
WHERE ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH
HAVE ACCESS TO RICH AND
CHALLENGING ARTS LEARNING
OPPORTUNITIES IN THEIR HOMES,
SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITIES, THUS
ENABLING THEM TO BECOME
CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKERS,
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS,
RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS,
AND KNOWLEDGEABLE ADULTS.

THE GOVERNOR'S LITERACY IN THE ARTS TASK FORCE



— OAKLAND BEACH
SCHOOL POP-UP BOOK
DESIGN PROJECT

On March 25, 1999, Governor Lincoln Almond charged this Task Force “to examine the relationship between education reform and the arts, and to make policy recommendations on how the arts can have a significant impact on the educational agenda of Rhode Island.” (Executive Order, March 25, 1999)

HISTORY AND APPROACH

HISTORY

The need to examine the role of the arts in education reform was raised at the Brown University/Providence Journal Public Policy Conference on the Arts, held in February 1997. As a participant in the Rhode Island public policy conference, Governor Almond and several members of his Cabinet articulated the need for a more systematic look at how the arts are serving the public purpose in Rhode Island, including the area of education. Also at that conference, Commissioner Peter McWalters challenged the audience to consider how the arts could have real meaning in “changing the face of education in Rhode Island.”

In this context, Governor Almond established, by Executive Order, the Task Force on Literacy in the Arts, as a joint effort of two state bodies, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA), and the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). The Governor specifically charged the Task Force “to examine the relationship between education reform and the arts, and to make policy recommendations on how the arts can have a significant impact on the educational agenda of Rhode Island” (Executive Order, March 25, 1999).

The Rhode Island State Council on the Arts and the Rhode Island Department of Education have worked in partnership on issues of arts and education for over a quarter of a century. This task force presented an opportunity to continue that tradition.

Nineteen leaders from the arts, education and business communities were then appointed by Governor Lincoln Almond to serve on this Task Force. The Task Force was chaired by Dr. Warren Simmons, Executive Director of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, and co-convened by Randall Rosenbaum, Executive Director of RISCA, and Peter McWalters, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. Dr. Ann M. Galligan, Co-director of the Cultural and Arts Policy Research Institute at Northeastern University, directed the project. Sherilyn Brown, Director of the Education Program at RISCA, and Richard Latham, program officer at RIDE, acted as staff. Charlotte Diffendale, education specialist at RIDE, was also instrumental in the formulation and design of the Task Force. Janice Kissinger was project assistant.

Other members of the Task Force (in alphabetical order) included:

| | |
|---|---|
| MS. ALICE CARLAN RI Congress of Parents and Teachers | MS. ELISABETH NEWMAN Music Teacher, Bristol-Warren |
| MS. NANCY CARRION Educational Center for the Arts Teacher, Providence | MS. LINDA NEWMAN RI Association of School Administrators Director of Curriculum, East Greenwich |
| MS. JEANNINE CHARTIER VSA Arts RI | MR. RAYMOND POULIOT National Education Association RI Teacher, East Greenwich |
| MS. KIM COTTER-LEMUS RI Federation of Teachers | MR. STEPHEN SAUNDERS RI Art Education Association Supervisor of Visual Art K-12, Warwick |
| MR. TIMOTHY C. DUFFY RI Association of School Committees | DR. EDWARD SCHEFF RI Alliance for Arts Education |
| MR. OSKAR EUSTIS Trinity Repertory Company | MS. MARTY SPRAGUE Dance Alliance, Inc. Dance Educator, Providence |
| DR. JOYCE HINDLE-KOUTSOGIANE RI Theatre Education Association Principal, Cumberland | DR. PAUL SPROLL RI School of Design Head, Department of Art Education |
| DR. WILLIAM HOLLAND Commissioner RI Office of Higher Education | |
| MR. DAVID NEVES RI Music Educators Association Music Supervisor, Scituate | |

The Task Force wishes to acknowledge the participation and contributions of Dr. Nancy Carriuolo, Associate Commissioner, Rhode Island Office of Higher Education; Peter Geisser, Rhode Island School for the Deaf; Susan McGreevey-Nichols, Roger Williams Middle School; and Pamela Ward, Trinity Repertory Company. In addition, it wishes to thank all those who took the time to participate in the public dialogue process.



— FROM THE RI
SCHOLASTICS
AWARDS 2001

APPROACH

Members of the Task Force initially identified four main themes which served to guide their deliberations:

1: WHAT ROLE CAN AND DO THE ARTS PLAY IN OVERALL EDUCATION REFORM?

2: WHAT IS THE STATUS OF ARTS LEARNING IN SCHOOLS AND IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS? WHAT IS GIVEN, TO WHOM, BY WHOM, AND TO WHAT EFFECT?

3: WHAT IS THE STATUS OF TEACHER PREPARATION AND TRAINING, BOTH FOR ARTS EDUCATORS AND CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND FOR ARTISTS AND COMMUNITY EDUCATORS?

4: IS THERE A ROLE FOR HOME AND COMMUNITY IN ARTS LEARNING?

To address these questions, the Task Force reviewed a wide range of scholarly research and writing and held seven public dialogue sessions at locations around the state (see Appendix C). The Task Force also commissioned a report and heard from scholars, teachers, arts practitioners, parents and students. The Task Force saw and heard arts presentations and/or personal testimony. Participants were drawn from East Greenwich High School, the Rhode Island School for the Deaf (Providence), Hope High School Arts Magnet (Providence), Cumberland Middle and High Schools, Woonsocket High School and its arts-based School-to-Career program, Bristol-Warren Arts Magnet (Reynolds School), Oliphant School/

Middletown School Department, and the Carriage House Theatre & After-School Program (Providence). The Island Moving Company (Newport) and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform (Providence) also provided workshops.

National speakers included Dennie Palmer Wolf of Harvard University's Project Zero; Joseph Dominic of the Heinz Foundation; Dawn Ellis, author of *Gaining the Arts Advantage*; and Adria Steinberg of Jobs-for-the Future in Boston, Massachusetts. Researcher Shirley Brice-Heath (Stanford University) and philosopher/author/educator Maxine Greene (Teachers College, Columbia University) also invited Task Force members to workshops and lectures.

Community and arts organization representatives served as panelists at a community dialogue session. These representatives included Bert Crenca of AS220, Tyler Denmead of New Urban Arts, Dorothy Jungels of Everett Dance Theatre, Don King of Providence Black Repertory, Jonny Skye-Njie of City Arts, and Kurt Wooten of the Brown University Arts Literacy Project. Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director of Trinity Repertory Company and member of the Task Force, also joined the panel. Dr. Paul Sproll, Head of the Department of Art Education at the Rhode Island School of Design and member of the Task Force, moderated the discussion.

The Task Force also acquired information and baseline data through surveys collected from Rhode Island K-12 school districts, institutions of higher learning, arts educators,

artists, and community organizations.

Initial findings from all of the above were prepared in June 2000, and these findings informed Task Force discussions and data analysis during fall 2000/winter 2001. In April of 2001 the Task Force circulated its findings and solicited feedback from a wide range of respondents. This feedback was used in the preparation of the final document.



FRAMING THE CHALLENGE

The promise of Rhode Island's education reform movement is that it will raise all children and youth ("all kids") to high standards. While the state is making strides toward that goal, it is clearly not there yet. According to the Rhode Island Department of Education's report on the year 2000 state assessment results, a significant number of children are still being left behind in reading comprehension, analysis and interpretation of what they read, and mathematical problem-solving. Also, as the report states, "Serious educational investments must be made for low-income and nonwhite students and for the nearly one in five students with some form of disability." Results in the areas tested show the "strong impact of income, race,



and disability on educational achievement at the present time.” The report states that there are also urgent issues related to the very low reading and writing skills of students whose first language is other than English.

Additionally, the education world is beginning to take a closer look at what the standards movement is accomplishing for children’s learning. Chairman Simmons was involved in the formulation of the standards movement nationally. In the opening Task Force orientation, he addressed the unintended impact that standards have had nationwide in sidelining the arts. In later discussions the Task Force observed that standards help to clarify what it is we want children to know and be able to do. However, there was some concern about both the sidelining of the arts and the practice of implementing standards as standardized learning. In fact, research shows just the opposite: that a variety of strategies are needed to help all children to achieve at high levels. Chairman Simmons emphasized that we must pay more attention to the developmental needs of our children, honoring their learning differences, if

we are to help all children reach high standards. In fact, this attention to differences was the intent of the standards movement, to acknowledge the many paths to one goal.

If we are truly to prepare all young people to reach high standards, the Task Force recognizes the need to look beyond what have historically been considered the “basic” subjects and the traditional ways to learn. The Task Force believes that the arts are well suited to address this challenge, as they provide multiple pathways for knowing, interpreting and effectively communicating understanding in an ever-changing world.

POTENTIAL FOR THE ARTS TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGE

“THE PROCESS OF STUDYING AND CREATING ART IN ALL OF ITS DISTINCT FORMS DEFINES THOSE QUALITIES THAT ARE AT THE HEART OF EDUCATION REFORM....CREATIVITY, PERSEVERANCE, A SENSE OF STANDARDS, AND ABOVE ALL, A STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE.”
— U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION RILEY, 1995

From its investigations the Task Force found that Rhode Island is not alone in considering the role of the arts in school reform and youth development. Three major national studies recently were released on these topics. The first, *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* (1999), a report sponsored by the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities and the Arts Education Partnership, detailed a number of studies assessing the nature and effectiveness of arts learning. Many of these studies found that learners can attain higher levels of achievement through ongoing engagement with the arts.

Another of the *Champions of Change* findings is that the arts need not be characterized solely by their ability to foster learning in other disciplines. Learning in the arts and learning through the arts are mutually supportive, and each serves important functions. Research suggests a more dynamic model for the arts and overall achievement – more of a rotary than

a one-way street. In this model, learning in one domain supports and stimulates, but does not directly cause, learning in other domains.

As reported in *Champions of Change*, schools are not the only venue in which young people grow, learn and achieve. Stanford University's Shirley Brice-Heath (who opened a workshop at Trinity Repertory to Task Force members) reported on a decade of studying after-school programs for youth. Her research shows that the youth in all these programs – sports/academic, community service, and arts – were doing better in school and in their personal lives than were young people from similar socio-economic backgrounds not in the programs. To her surprise, youth in the arts programs did the best.

CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE RESEARCH DISCOVERED THAT LEARNING IN AND THROUGH THE ARTS COULD HELP LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD FOR YOUNGSTERS FROM ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS.

This last critical point echoes the research of *Coming up Taller: Arts and Humanities Programs for Children at Risk* (1996), which found a link between the arts and positive youth development, particularly for youth traditionally considered at-risk.

Finally, *Gaining the Arts Advantage* (1999) looked at key elements found in school districts across the country that value the arts. The elements include effective partnerships between and among a wide range of interested parties, including parents, teachers, school boards and community organizations and groups.

In Rhode Island, the role of the arts in school reform and youth development is beginning to attract the attention of researchers as well. The following is a sampling of local programs and the initial findings that are emerging from these efforts.

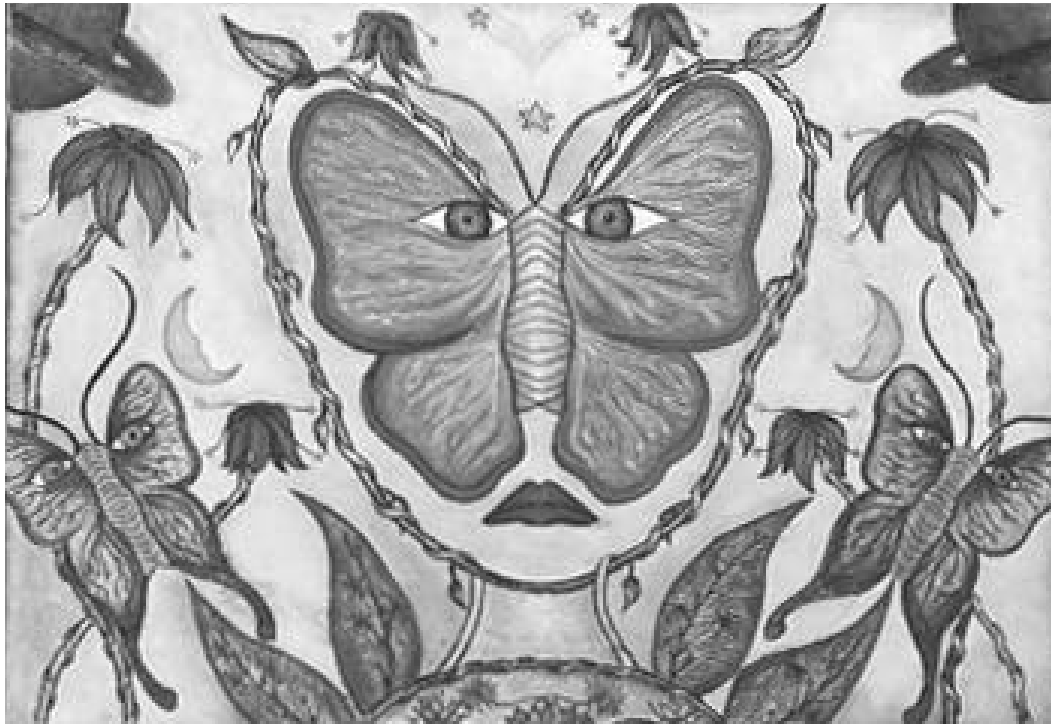
At Brown University, researchers are in the process of studying the relationship of theatre to literacy as part of the Arts Literacy Project. High school students from urban school districts work with Trinity Repertory actors and classroom teachers to improve literacy skills through engagement with challenging texts in rigorous and creative ways including the use of performance. The program provides a range of activities, including professional development for teachers and actors linking the performing arts with literacy skills. The program also offers challenging academic and artistic opportunities for low-income students in resource-poor schools to meet new standards-based learning outcomes. Research findings to date demonstrate that teacher/actor collaboration creates a strong, positive community of practice in classrooms and makes print texts compelling and comprehensible. In addition, researchers are finding that when curriculum is student-centered and designed to culminate in purposeful performances of understanding, students are motivated to learn appropriate strategies and develop literacy skills.

At the K-12 level, a new initiative, Spectra Rhode Island, recently provided compelling evidence for being a powerful mechanism for comprehensive whole-school change. One of its elementary schools credited the adoption of the Spectra program for its recent positive SALT (School Accountability for Learning and Teaching) visit report. Specifically, Spectra focuses on creating a professional learning community that helps students achieve high academic standards through a multiple intelligence approach, placing the arts, including dance, music, theatre, and visual arts, at the core of academic achievement and social success.

Previous efforts at the elementary level include studies conducted at the Curvin-McCabe School in Pawtucket, RI, by Brown University brain researcher Martin Gardiner. The results have been reported in the international journal *Nature* (1996). The study examined the link between music instruction and ongoing student achievement. The study found a positive correlation between integrated learning in the arts and academic achievement in

content areas such as mathematics.

Finally, an experiment in youth development has been undertaken by a partnership between AS220 (an exhibition and performance space for artists) and the Rhode Island Training School. Youth from the Training School experience arts learning while incarcerated and continue to be supported by working with AS220's artists once they leave the facility. This project is an experiment in using the arts to reintegrate youth successfully into the community. Results are not in yet, but students are responding positively to the support of the arts outside the training school.



— WARWICK PUBLIC
SCHOOLS VISUAL
ARTS PROGRAM

KEY FINDINGS

The guiding principles listed in this report are based on the key findings outlined in this section.

FINDING 1: ARTS LEARNING ACROSS HOME, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY IS CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF RHODE ISLAND'S "ALL KIDS TO HIGH STANDARDS" EDUCATION AGENDA.

In its year-and-a-half period of investigation, the Task Force has found that the arts play an important role in the following:

LITERACY

By our very definition, this Task Force is about improving literacy, the use of symbol systems to guide thinking, communication and expression (Kathryn H. Au, *Literacy Instruction in Multicultural Settings*, 1993). Traditionally, literacy has been understood to be text-based, yet other non-text symbol systems are gaining use in our culture. We are becoming increasingly visual in our orientation. Literacy, as we think of it in the 21st century, includes the ability to

understand and use communication that is both verbal and non-verbal, i.e., the ability to read music or a text, analyze a poem or painting, design a website, and create a dance or play. As *The Journal of Educational Leadership* (October 2000) described, “The arts are becoming the fourth ‘R.’ In an era when students design Web sites for projects and integrate video, graphics and animation into their presentations, art is fast becoming the new literacy for our times.”

The arts are part of symbol systems young children learn to master at an early age. The



– OAKLAND BEACH
SCHOOL POP-UP BOOK
DESIGN PROJECT

arts – dance, music theatre, and the visual arts – offer children crucial opportunities to express themselves and their understanding of the world around them. They provide valuable ways for young learners to master concepts and demonstrate their understanding in meaningful ways. This form of early literacy allows young people to develop as effective communicators and problem-solvers. The arts cultivate the direct experiences of the senses as well as engaging the mind. They benefit the *student* because they cultivate the whole child, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination, and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication.

“THE ARTS PROVIDE FORMS OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION THAT CAN STRENGTHEN THE PRESENTATION OF IDEAS AND EMOTION.” – NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ARTS EDUCATION

This concept involves all aspects of classroom learning, not just arts learning. The English, Language Arts, and Literacy Dialogue, a group of K-16 faculty convened by the Rhode Island Office of Higher Education in 2000-2001, echoed this sentiment. This body concluded that all teachers are responsible for supporting student literacy, not just the reading specialist. Thus, teachers across the curriculum must be prepared to provide learning opportunities to foster literacy, both in the traditional sense of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and as we broadly define it to include nonverbal communication.

ARTS AS STRATEGIES TO MEET HIGH STANDARDS

Rhode Island's comprehensive education strategy strives to reach all children and youth by providing them with appropriate opportunities to attain high standards. As we have discovered, the arts provide a variety of verbal and non-verbal strategies to help students succeed with meaningful challenges of many kinds. Also, the process of creation in the arts is by definition about striving to achieve at high levels. As Joseph Dominic of the Heinz Foundation stated at the Task Force's February 2000 meeting, "Kids catch fire differently." He added, "We've become obsessed with testing. We need to strive for greater balance in understand-

ing what kids know and when they know it. If we really are to reach our goal of getting 'all kids to high standards' then we are going to have to organize differently."



— ROGER WILLIAMS
MIDDLE SCHOOL

As the work of Howard Gardner of Harvard's Project Zero has shown, the arts provide multiple pathways for student achievement, reaching out to the kinesthetic learner as well as to those who learn aurally and visually. Gardner's research into learning led him to believe that "intelligence" should be understood and measured in more ways than logical-mathematical and linguistic. However, school-based teaching and learning are focused primarily on these two kinds of intelligence. In *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century* (1983), Gardner describes many of the overlapping ways of knowing in addition to those above. The ways include the spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. These are intelligences that are directly addressed by the arts. Students who have difficulty learning through logical-mathe-

tical and linguistic approaches can benefit through the inclusion of multiple intelligences in teaching and learning strategies.

This research has particular importance given the state's need to focus on children with disabilities. As *Coming Up Taller* (1996) suggests, the arts give voice and movement to many disenfranchised in traditional academic settings because the arts offer effective ways of tapping a broader range of the kinds of knowing or "intelligences" described by Professor Gardner. If we are to reach "all kids" we must support the multiple ways of knowing provided by the arts. The arts have proved to be an important lever in accessing populations previously outside the scope of traditional teaching and learning.

Secondly, as *Champions of Change* (2000) re-enforces, the arts are effective catalysts for growth, particularly with students of low socio-economic status. Students with high levels of arts participation outperform "arts poor" students on virtually every measure of the National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS:88) database from the US Department of Education, which tracks 25,000 students at four-year intervals. Increased academic performance connected with arts participation was most prominent with low socio-economic

status students. As the article “Involvement in the Arts and Human Development” (pp. 1-18) concludes, the probability of being highly involved in the arts remains almost twice as high for students of economically advantaged families. The probability of low arts involvement is about twice as high if one comes from an economically disadvantaged family. Thus, school and community have an important role to play in providing quality arts opportunities in order to help all students achieve high standards regardless of their socio-economic status. Given that 37% of all RI households with children had a family income less than \$35,000 (defined as under or near the poverty line), this role must be a statewide priority (*2000 RI Kids Count Factbook*).

In terms of more effectively assessing student learning, the arts provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate what they know and can do in all subject areas. The arts also offer teachers in all subject areas effective tools to assess learning in non-traditional ways. This move toward demonstrations of learning and proficiencies, at the core of school reform, has always been a part of the artistic process. In fact, many of the components long familiar to

those in the arts are now considered part of effective teaching and assessment strategies. These include problem-solving projects, collaborative, team-based work, and demonstrations of learning through portfolios and exhibitions.

“ARTS EDUCATION CAN LEAD TO INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY; ACHIEVING STANDARDS INVOLVES AUTHENTIC CONNECTIONS ALONG AND ACROSS OTHER DISCIPLINES.” – NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ARTS EDUCATION

The arts are integrative by nature. For example, the history of the civil rights movement can be studied through the sacred and secular music of African-Americans. Ancient cultures, such as those of Egypt, Greece or Rome, can be studied through their art forms. We see the arts as wonderful ways to build the interdisciplinary learning towards which many schools are striving.



– ROGER WILLIAMS
MIDDLE SCHOOL

MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES AND UNDERSTANDING

“THE ARTS PLAY A VALUED ROLE IN CREATING CULTURES AND IN BUILDING CIVILIZATIONS. THE ARTS MAKE UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS TO CULTURE, SOCIETY, AND THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS. AWAKENING TO FOLK ARTS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON OTHER ARTS DEEPENS RESPECT FOR ONE’S OWN AND FOR OTHER’S COMMUNITIES.”

– NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ARTS EDUCATION

Studying the arts of many cultures is central to Standard Three in the Rhode Island Arts Framework. The arts allow children and youth the opportunity to frame an understanding of their own culture and that of others, an important part of living in our diverse society and global economy. The arts provide opportunities to develop a lifelong form of “cultural literacy.” (Culture is understood as a system of knowledge and beliefs, values and practices society uses to define, sustain and transform itself.) Thus, the arts allow young learners opportunities to understand themselves better and to make meaning out of the diverse world where they live and will work.



— FROM THE OAK-
LAND BEACH ELE-
MENTARY SCHOOL
'ART CARS' PROJECT.
THIS PIECE WAS
CHOSEN TO HANG
IN WASHINGTON DC
AS PART OF THE
"HOW DOES ART
SHAPE YOUR
WORLD?" CONTEST,
SPONSORED BY VSA
ARTS OF RHODE
ISLAND

PREPARATION FOR THE WORKFORCE IN A CHANGING GLOBAL ECONOMY

"THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF TECHNOLOGY IS A FORCE NOT ONLY IN THE ECONOMY, BUT FOR THE ARTS AS WELL. THEY TEACH RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE USE OF ESSENTIAL TECHNICAL MEANS AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF DESIRED ENDS. THE INTELLECTUAL METHODS OF THE ARTS ARE PRECISELY THOSE USED TO TRANSFORM SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY INTO TECHNOLOGY."— NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ARTS EDUCATION

At the April meeting of the Task Force, Adria Steinberg of Jobs for the Future stressed that arts-based school-to-career programs such as the one offered by the hosting site, Woonsocket High School, provide valuable pathways for reaching all kids and providing them with meaningful opportunities in a career context. As communication-based and creative industries grow internationally, school-to-career opportunities in the arts can also provide students with skills and knowledge that lead directly to job-readiness for these expanding industries.

As William Holland, Commissioner of Higher Education and a member of this Task Force, stated in his plan for higher education, the new global economy is characterized by "rapid change where technology is a given, globalism a reality, and competition is relentless." The arts have the potential for equipping all students with valuable skills and abilities for succeeding in the new global economy and in a society that is fast-paced and where many of our traditional notions of home and community are undergoing change and redefinition.

As discussed, the arts foster the kind of multi-level literacy and creative thinking processes needed to survive in such a world. As Dennie Palmer Wolf from Harvard University's Project Zero suggested in the Task Force's opening session, the arts are collaborative by nature, another indispensable skill for success in today's workplace.



SNAPSHOT

I walk from school and take a snapshot.

My mom says “Hey what have you got?”

“A lot of film,” I say to Mom.

“I’ve been taking pictures all day long

See the picture of my hand.

Don’t you think it’s rather GRAND!”

— FROM THE GRANITEVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PHOTOGRAPHY & POETRY PROJECT

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The arts allow for personal transformation. They give children and youth a vehicle for exploration and creation that opens the mind and imagination to see possibilities for living full and meaningful lives. Research has shown the arts are essential for developing the whole person and equipping him/her with the tools for success in the 21st century. Shirley Brice-Heath’s article in *Champions of Change*, “Imaginative Actuality: Learning During the Non-School Hours” makes the point that arts-based community organizations are more than just a safe place for kids to go after school. Brice-Heath sees these entities as a place where young people “expect to play many different roles, help make rules, and to be able to take risks by

trying something new, taking inspiration from unexpected sources, and creating new combinations of materials, ideas, and people” (p.23). In short, roles, rules and risk – a rewrite of the three “R’s” – characterize the best features of the arts learning environments that support youth development.

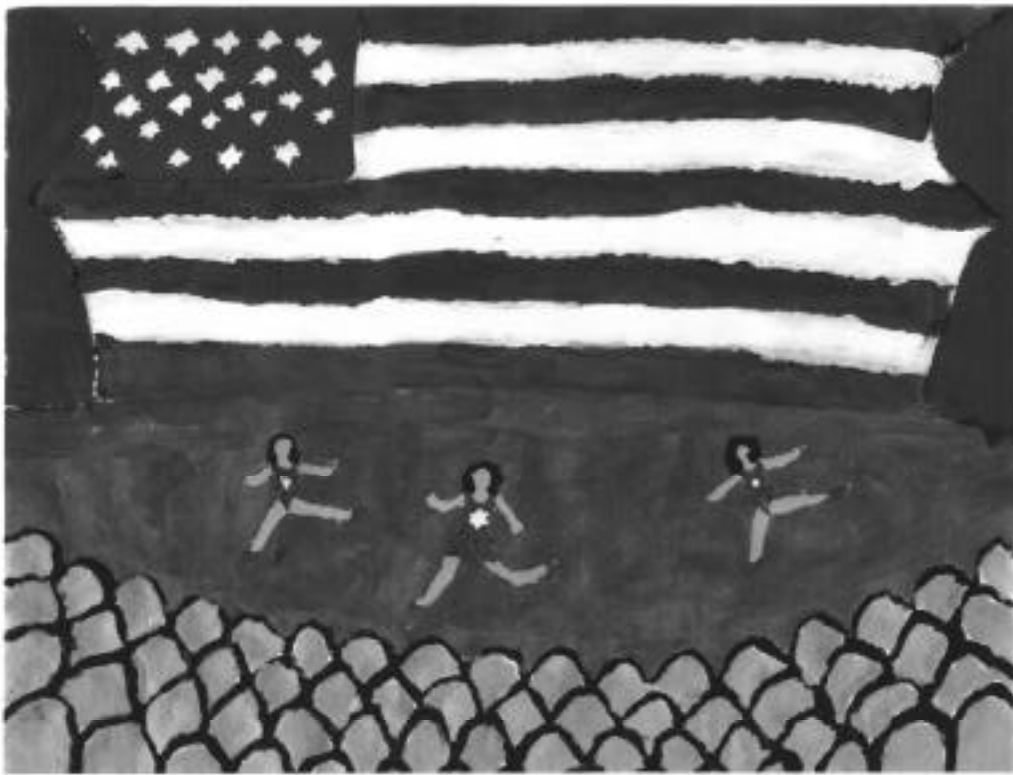
FAMILY/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The arts have the potential to align the educational roles and resources of home, school, and community, as well as to provide our children and youth more intellectual, social, and emotional support. The arts are also natural vehicles for bringing families and communities together. As Joseph Dominic of the Heinz Foundation dis-

cussed with the Task Force at its February 2000 meeting, the arts are part of the national and local conversation about educational leadership, along with partnership and teamwork between the school and community. The arts are part of a larger dialogue on how education, in partnership with community, is preparing our children and youth to meet the future. As such, the arts are one of the many components of overall school reform and redesign in operation today.



— RISD YOUNG
ARTISTS PROGRAM



— FALLON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. THIS PIECE WAS CHOSEN FOR THE WASHINGTON, DC EXHIBITION OF THE “HOW DOES ART SHAPE YOUR WORLD?” CONTEST, SPONSORED BY VSA ARTS OF RHODE ISLAND

FINDING 2: CURRENTLY IN RHODE ISLAND THERE IS A LACK OF EQUITY IN PHYSICAL AND PROGRAMMATIC ACCESS TO ARTS LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH, BOTH IN AND OUT OF SCHOOLS.

Rhode Island is a relatively small, but diverse, state. Its independent nature is evident in the variation and autonomy of its 36 school districts. As part of the fact-finding mission of the Task Force, it surveyed every school district in Rhode Island’s city and regional systems, in addition to a number of arts and community organizations, arts educators and institutions of higher education. As the results suggest, not all students have access to the same range of opportunities for arts learning, but pockets of comprehensive arts learning exist in many areas of the state. A total of 34 out of 36 school districts and over 150 arts educators and 45 arts and community organizations responded to the Task Force’s survey.

Surveys pointed to a wide range of classroom opportunities from district to district but found that the arts are taught on all three levels—elementary, middle and high school. However, a wide range in the minutes of classroom instruction, student loads and budget exists in all arts disciplines. In addition, implementation of the opportunity to learn standards, both physical and instructional, varied widely.

SCHOOL PROFILE: ELEMENTARY LEVEL

The size and the composition of Rhode Island’s school districts vary greatly. They range from small, rural Block Island with approximately 125 students to large urban and multi-ethnic Providence with nearly 27,000 students. Of those districts responding (n=34), there were variations in the student teacher ratios throughout the state. No district reported dance or theatre educators at the elementary level. The range of average minutes per week spent in arts learning in visual art and music also varied, from 30 to 50 minutes per week. Most districts reported the use of a dedicated art and music room in some but not all of their

schools at the elementary level. A smaller number reported multi-purpose arts rooms. The total dollars spent on the arts at the elementary level varied across the districts, with some reporting specific arts budgets and others reporting arts supplies being part of overall expenses. Other than general classroom instruction, chorus and band were the most cited examples of arts learning opportunities made available (n=27).

SCHOOL PROFILE: MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

On the middle school level, a substantial majority of those reporting require some level of class time in the arts. The visual arts and music are the most common option for middle level students. Theatre and dance, in most districts, remain outside the curriculum. Even in districts that did report a theatre or dance program, it tended to be an isolated option, offered

in one particular school rather than district-wide. Very few districts offered all four arts areas as part of the basic curriculum, but many districts did offer theatre and dance as after-school offerings. As in the elementary profile, it was evident on the middle-school level that urban school districts tended to have a greater range of arts offerings than suburban districts. In addition, many urban systems provide co-curricular arts opportunities in all four arts disciplines of visual arts, music, theatre and dance.

SCHOOL PROFILE: HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

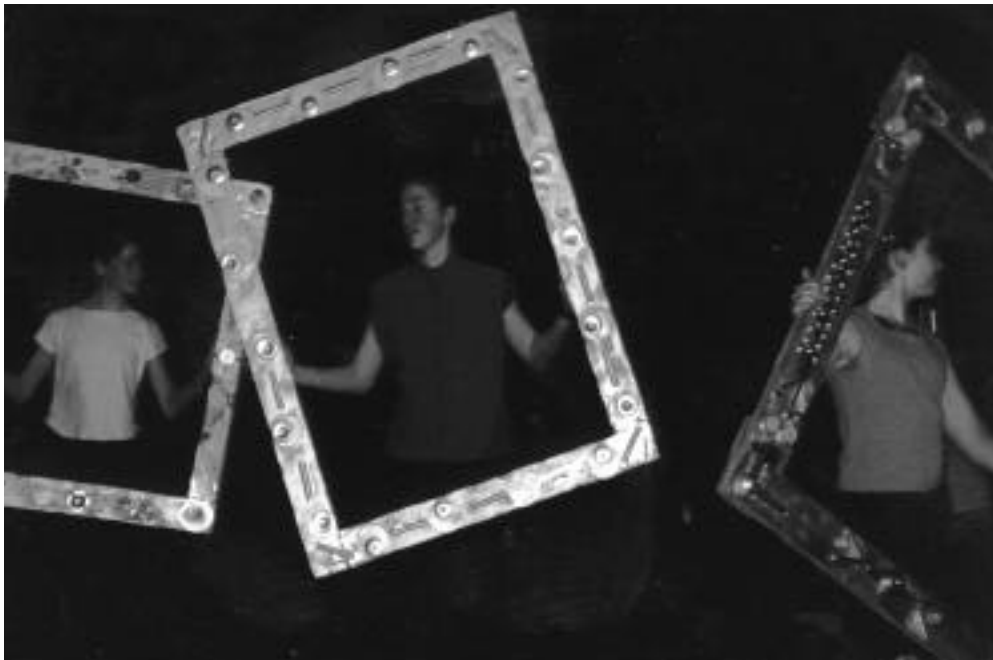
On the high-school level, Rhode Island has a state-mandated half-credit graduation requirement for college-bound high-school students. While most of the districts reported compliance with the mandate, many indicated that this figure did not include (in some cases) a significant percentage of their total population, as they were not college-bound. Again, on the high-school level arts learning opportunities varied by district. Urban districts tended to offer more arts-learning opportunities, across all four arts disciplines, than did many suburban districts. This situation was due, in part, to outside funding and greater levels of collaboration with the community.



— FROM THE RI
SCHOLASTICS
AWARDS 2001

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Forty-five arts and community organizations responded to the Task Force questionnaire. Thirty-one out of the forty-five provide youth-arts programming. In answering the question of what is given by whom, 26 programs employ professional artists, 7 use folk artists, 8 use certified arts educators, 14 use emerging artists, 6 use other youth as peer-tutors, and 11 use college students. Most organizations responding provide services to less than 500 students per year. The ages of these students vary from kindergarten to high school, but high school students make up the bulk of the population served by the community in urban settings. Elementary and middle-school students represent the greatest audience in programming in suburban and rural settings. Many of the organizations responding were non-arts community organizations that used the arts to reach and better serve their clients. A total youth population of 127,678 was reported served by these organizations, in cities and towns across Rhode Island.



— ALDRICH JUNIOR
HIGH SCHOOL

FINDING 3: THE TASK FORCE HAS FOUND A LACK OF STRONG, CAPACITY-BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WOULD SUPPORT QUALITY ARTS LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS THE STATE.

The Task Force found that a gap exists between its vision and the current infrastructure of arts learning in Rhode Island. As the findings suggest, the support structures in place are not adequate to train, equip and connect comprehensively the resources of those who provide students with quality learning opportunities across home, school, and community. This infrastructure encompasses both human and physical resources, both in and outside schools, and include materials, curricular tools, training and professional development for teachers, parents and community educators. There is a critical need to develop better mechanisms to support and connect existing opportunities. At the same time, gaps in resources must be identified and rich and varied new opportunities must be built.

SCHOOL PROFILE

To examine school-based issues from a different angle, the Task Force surveyed art, music and dance educators across the state about the resources and opportunities in their districts. The issue of resources is related to the national opportunity-to-learn standards that define what is needed to support best practice in the arts. The opportunity-to-learn standards are consistent with national goals for education reform. There are standards for 1) curriculum and scheduling 2) staffing 3) materials and equipment and 4) facilities. The standards seek to embody the promising current instructional practices in arts education and to reflect the most recent research. The educational environment we envision represents the best collective thinking of experienced arts educators concerning the conditions necessary for effective learning.

VISUAL ARTS EDUCATORS

Visual arts educators reported that the approximate number of students in their school(s) ranged greatly, as did the size of their individual classes. Fifty-seven percent of visual arts educators in grades K-5 reported the use of a dedicated classroom for visual arts instruction; fifty



– ALDRICH JUNIOR
HIGH SCHOOL

percent of educators in grades 6–8 used such a facility; and eighty percent of those in grades 9–12 did likewise. Elementary and middle school educators reported the lowest number of art rooms. In terms of averages for minutes spent in the classroom and for variations in budget, visual arts educators reported arts budgets ranging from \$0–3,000 in K–5 (average \$1,225); \$650–2,500 in 6–8 (average \$1,383) and \$1,000 to \$2,500 in 9–12 (average \$1,560). Over three-quarters of the arts educators surveyed said their budgets do not meet their teaching and curricular needs. When asked about assessment tools available to them, 83% reported that they used both portfolios and standards-based assessment, 50% authentic assessment, 58% traditional forms such as quizzes, and 91% reported incorporating informal assessment as well. Visual art educators were asked to list their most serious challenges. The number one response was not enough time for visual arts instruction. Other important concerns ranged from the lack of dedicated art rooms and storage facilities to large class sizes. They also cited no art classes for kindergarten students, and no certified visual arts supervisors.

MUSIC EDUCATORS

Again, as in the case of visual arts educators, music educators described a range of class size in districts throughout the state. Three-quarters of all music educators reported serving only one school per week, and the rest from 2–9 schools per week. Most teachers reported working in a dedicated music room. Minutes per week spent in the classroom ranged from an average of 55 for K–5, 104 for 6–8, and 138 for high school. Music budgets per teacher ranged \$800 annually for one third of those reporting, \$100–1,600 for over another quarter, and larger amounts for only a small number of respondents. The major issues reported for music educators were the cost of instrument replacement and repair and the purchase of sheet music. Many reported that some of these costs are passed along to students, either as fees or as fundraising. Such costs leave little room for expansion into areas of new technology such as MIDI, or new music literature. On a positive note, many educators reported working or collaborating in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teams within the school or district. As one respondent wrote, “The arts administrators need to be an integral part of the building. They need to integrate their programs with others.” When asked to describe the three main challenges faced, the greatest number of music educators named money, the second most common challenge was time, and the third was lack of support – from home, school, and community.



– CENTRAL FALLS
HIGH SCHOOL

THEATRE AND DANCE EDUCATORS

The population of theatre and dance educators in the state is much smaller than that of visual arts and music educators (seven dance educators responded to the survey, representing a majority of dance educators in schools). Yet this group made a number of important observations. Dance educators were concerned about the appearance that “what is important is tested” and the lack of a mandated assessment in the arts. Dance educators also expressed the desire to collaborate more with colleagues within the arts and across the curriculum. Dance and theatre tend to be relegated to after-school and extra-curricular positions. Many educators expressed the need for parity among the arts as well as across the curriculum.



— RHODE ISLAND
SCHOOL FOR THE
DEAF

COMMUNITY PROFILE

HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education in Rhode Island can and does have an impact on building capacity in a number of important ways. This impact includes teacher preparation in the arts (for arts and other educators), alignment of curriculum to standards (arts content and beginning teacher standards), professional development opportunities for K-12 and community-based educators, and access to arts resources within higher education for children, youth, and families. As the surveys revealed, some of these areas are being addressed, while others require more attention. The Task Force regards higher education as a key player and community resource, with potential for even stronger connections to home, school, and the community at-large.

ARTS TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMMING

The survey indicates that no single college or university provides the complete range of arts disciplines in teacher preparation programming in the arts. The following programs are offered:

Providence College: Music Education

Rhode Island College: Art Education, Music Education
 Rhode Island School of Design: Art Education
 Roger Williams University: Dance Education
 Salve Regina University: Music Education, Theater Education
 University of Rhode Island: Music Education

Rhode Island College is by far the largest trainer of arts educators (art & music) and offers teacher preparation programming at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

It is important to note that some form of arts education is a curriculum requirement for students enrolled in the Elementary Education programs at Providence College, Rhode Island College, Salve Regina University, and the University of Rhode Island. In general, a 1-2 credit hour course satisfies the requirement. However, Roger Williams University requires all Elementary Education students to take a three-credit arts integration course.



– OAKLAND BEACH
SCHOOL

STANDARDS

All four institutions responding – Providence College, Rhode Island College, Rhode Island School of Design, and Salve Regina University – report a high level of program alignment to standards in arts education. The institutions report significant alignment to the National Standards for Arts Education and moderate to significant alignment to the Rhode Island Arts Framework. All institutions report a significant level of alignment to standards outlined by the National Art Education Association and the Music Educators National Conference.

It is interesting to note that Providence College, RISD, and Salve are at the time of this report each in the process of preparation for program approval visits by the Rhode Island Department of Education. The institutions report that their programs have undergone a significant review as a result of the introduction of the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards. RIC indicates that, at this time, the extent of their alignment is moderate.

PRESSING CHALLENGES

Of all the challenges identified by the respondents, none appears more pressing than that of securing quality field placements for practicum students and student teachers. Indeed, there was unanimous agreement that this is a major problem that seriously affects arts teacher preparation programming. The expression of concern, however, is not limited to those concerned with the training of arts educators; the concern affects the entire teacher preparation community in the State and has been a central point of discussion at The Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education’s K-16 Academic Dialogues and Teacher Preparation and Policy Group (TPPG).

Further, several respondents report that arts education program “consistency” suffers when adjunct faculty themselves are not current with the new demands of standards-based

work in the arts. However, it was noted by some Task Force members that adjunct faculty who teach K-12, using standards, are an asset to higher education's incorporation of standards into arts learning.



— RHODE ISLAND
SCHOOL FOR THE
DEAF

ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

As our community dialogues and surveys suggest, capacity building is an ever-present issue for community organizations. Staffs are small in comparison to the workload, and personnel often have job descriptions that focus on more than just education. Budgets are often tight, with organizations constantly responsible for raising funds from earned and unearned sources to maintain their operations. Unlike schools, arts-producing and other community organizations often have primary missions that focus on arts production or exhibition, delivery of social or religious services, or other non-education purposes. Therefore, an extra commitment of resources (staff, funding, space, materials) is required to focus on arts learning for children and youth. In spite of this problem, many community organizations struggle to find the resources to provide significant arts learning opportunities. Social service organizations offer after-school arts classes, artists become mentors, and arts organizations partner with schools. All these efforts tend to exist in isolation from one another, each searching on its own for resources.

FINDING 4: IN SPITE OF RHODE ISLAND BEING ARTS-RICH, THERE IS NO STATEWIDE COORDINATION OF ARTS LEARNING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACROSS THE SECTORS OF HOME, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY.

The Task Force has found that, in order to be most effective, arts learning needs to be comprehensive and systematic in its delivery. Arts learning happens in a variety of different settings— in the home, during the school day, and after classes end in schools and in community settings. If the goal is to reach all young people and provide them with the opportunity to

learn, this learning must be rich and seamless and be designed to meet the needs of a diverse young population. This diversity takes the form of academic levels of achievement, socio-economic status, geographic location and racial or ethnic backgrounds.

Just as the Narragansett Bay Commission focuses on how the state utilizes its coastal resources, Rhode Island needs to find better ways to coordinate and share our rich natural resources in the arts to support all children and youth regardless of where they live in the state. *Gaining the Arts Advantage—Lessons from School Districts that Value Arts Education* (1999) found in its research that in districts with strong arts education, the community—broadly defined as parents and families, artists, arts organizations, businesses, local civic and cultural leaders and institutions—was actively engaged in the support and programming of the district’s arts education. The critical similarity among these successful school districts is that each system made connections among the different spheres of home, school, and community.

The desire for this kind of seamless and mutually supportive relationship across arts disciplines and home, school, and community sectors was echoed in our surveys and conversations statewide. As testimony from the arts and cultural community at the May meeting of the Task Force at the Carriage House suggests, Rhode Island is an arts-rich environment, but there is desire for more coordination among the arts and education partners and cultural resources involved in educating our youth. As evidenced by the results of the organizational surveys, many community organizations provide rich and diverse programming in a wide range of art forms and in a variety of settings including after-school programs in social service and religious organizations. Yet many expressed the concern that their efforts were often disconnected from the arts learning provided in the schools. Individual artists in the audience also expressed the desire to find more effective ways of integrating with schools. The need for better communication

and coordination with school districts was expressed because the members of Rhode Island’s cultural community are equally concerned with reaching all kids and providing them with quality opportunities to attain high standards.

Young people flow daily between and among the spheres of home, school, and community, but statewide arts learning policies and programs may not. Connections between and among arts disciplines and home, school, and community sectors vary greatly from community to community in Rhode Island. The Task Force has come to believe more completely than ever that the arts have the potential to align the educational roles of home, school, and community, providing children and youth with intellectual, emotional, and social support.



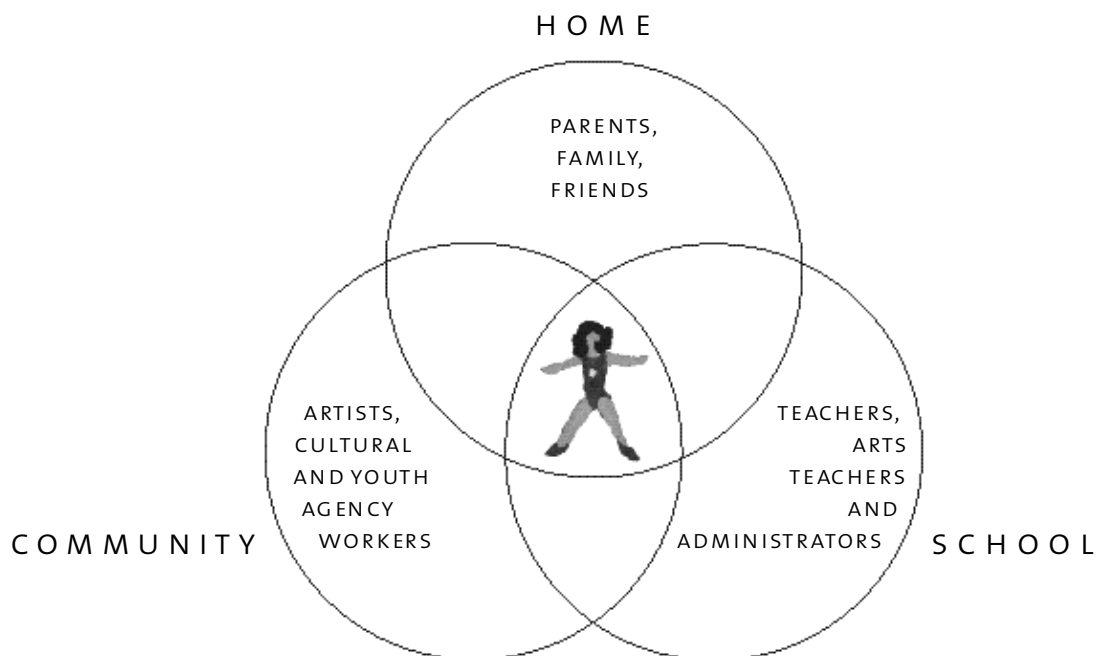
— (ABOVE AND RIGHT) FROM THE RI SCHOLASTICS AWARDS 2001





PORTRAITS OF THEIR
FRIENDS, TAKEN BY
THE STUDENTS OF
GRANITEVILLE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
AS PART OF THEIR
PHOTOGRAPHY AND
POETRY PROJECT

WHERE DO STUDENTS LEARN THE ARTS?



Dawn Ellis, the speaker at the May meeting, and an author of *Gaining the Arts Advantage* mentioned previously, made the point that if we place the young person at the center, the relationship between home, school and community takes on new meaning. When systems are created, whether they are in or out of school, if they are offered in the name of *education*, they should be about the student. Each of these spheres has differing sets of values and operational goals and norms. Yet when the child is placed at the center, the potential for the goals and values of these spheres to align and to work in unison increases greatly. (Ellis, unpublished report, 2000.)

Home is the first setting where a child begins his or her education. As the National PTA reports, parent (home) involvement is the number one predictor of student success. Arts learning in the home may take a variety of forms, encompassing a diverse array of cultural, spiritual and ethnic traditions and practices. Ironically, as Ms. Ellis states, while home may affect the young person's education the most, the home is the least talked about in arts education circles.

School is the place where the child becomes a student of art. As *Gaining the Arts Advantage* found, when the school system is strong in arts education, the student learns about art, music, theatre, and dance from teachers who are versed in these content areas and who are able to help them grow. In very good systems, the arts are valued and included in the schools' mission statements, are integrated into overall curriculum design and are supported with the necessary resources.

Community is broadly defined as the larger environment beyond home and school, which includes arts organizations, colleges and universities, social service agencies, community centers, programs serving children and youth, religious and ethnic organizations. This collection of groups supports and makes learning opportunities in the arts available to young

people, either during the school day or in after-school or summer periods. Urban and sub-urban communities tend to have more of these resources at their disposal than rural communities, and thus, schools often serve as an after-school resource in such communities.

When adults work together across boundaries of home, school, and community, deeper arts learning opportunities can occur. This learning could occur in the form of artists who understand teaching, teachers who practice their art, individual artists as parents and community leaders, and parental involvement with parent teacher organizations (PTO's) and school boards. Working together does not mean assuming each other's roles. Rather the Task Force is suggesting that the three have valuable and unique roles to play in the education of every child. When these roles are intentional, children and youth are supported in a coordinated fashion, making the best use of our resources.



PICTURE

cool, dark

smiling, running, walking

hanging in a tree

blurry, funny

photo

— FROM THE GRANITEVILLE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PHOTOGRAPHY AND POETRY
PROJECT



– WARWICK PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

After completing a review of research and conducting public dialogue, the Task Force developed a statement of its vision and guiding principles.

WE ENVISION A RHODE ISLAND WHERE ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH HAVE ACCESS TO RICH AND CHALLENGING ARTS LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN THEIR HOMES, SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITIES, THUS ENABLING THEM TO BECOME CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKERS, EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS, RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS, AND KNOWLEDGEABLE ADULTS.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Arts learning across home, school, and community is critical to the success of Rhode Island's "all kids to high standards" education agenda.

The arts provide children and youth with a variety of learning strategies to meet high standards in the arts and other subject areas.

The arts are a basic form of literacy in the 21st century. The ability to understand and communicate is based on both verbal and non-verbal systems of symbols. The abilities to read music or a text, analyze a poem or painting, design a website, and create a dance or play are invaluable tools for communicating.

Comprehensive learning in the arts can make a significant difference for all children and youth, especially those from low socio-economic backgrounds, helping them to achieve at higher levels than without the arts.

The arts allow children and youth the opportunity to frame an understanding of their own cultures and of others, an important part of living in our increasingly diverse society.

School-to-career opportunities in the arts provide students with skills and knowledge that lead to job-readiness for the expanding fields of communication-based and creative industries.

The arts foster the multi-level literacy needed to thrive in a rapidly changing global economy, thereby providing students with the necessary skills of teamwork, problem solving and creative thinking.

The arts provide children and youth a vehicle for personal transformation by opening their minds and stimulating their imaginations to see possibilities for living full and meaningful lives.

The arts have the potential to align the educational roles and resources of home, school, and community by providing children and youth with intellectual, social, and emotional support.

The arts are essential for developing the whole person and can be a critical tool for positive youth development.

— OAKLAND BEACH
SCHOOL



GOALS

In keeping with these guiding principles, the Governor's Literacy in the Arts Task Force recommends that the following goals be realized by the year 2008:

GOAL 1

All children and youth will have curricular experiences in school that will allow them to demonstrate proficiency in one or more art forms by graduation.

GOAL 2

All children and youth will have ongoing access to community-based arts learning to enrich and extend their knowledge and skills.

GOAL 3

All children and youth will have ongoing access to professional arts experiences that are school-linked and community-based.



– WARWICK PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

In order to meet its goals, the Task Force believes that the gap that exists between its vision and the current status of arts learning in Rhode Island must be addressed. The Task Force also recognizes that in order to reach its goals, there needs to be an unprecedented collaboration of the three worlds – home, school, and community – in which young people live and learn each day.

Therefore, the Task Force recommends an arts learning network to coordinate efforts incorporating home (parent/family involvement), school (K-12 education), and community (e.g., higher education, arts organizations, youth development agencies, and ethnic organizations). Established as a public/private partnership, the proposed network would facilitate public engagement, assist in aligning resources (public and private/state and local), and facilitate dialogue and action between and among its partners, assisting them in serving their constituents.

The Task Force recognizes the magnitude and complexity of this undertaking. Currently, no existing organization in Rhode Island has the capacity to address this challenge. Therefore, the Task Force recommends the continuation of its

work through a transition team. The purpose of the transition team would be two-fold. Its first charge would be to develop, within one year, a detailed action plan for the realization of the Task Force's three goals. Design groups created by the transition team around the proposed goals and strategies would accomplish this planning. The action plan would include benchmarks to measure progress toward the goals. Secondly, the transition team would be charged with establishing the structure of the "arts learning network" outlined above. This network would then be responsible for implementing the action plan.

The transition team would be composed of a diverse group of stakeholders (representative of home, school, and community) and would function as a steering committee for the design groups. The transition team would advise and report to the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, the Rhode Island Department of Education, and the Rhode Island Office of Higher Education.

The transition team would incorporate the following activities into its plan, addressing

resources, policy, professional development, and public awareness.

RESOURCES

- ☞ Map the arts learning resources that are available for children and youth in each of Rhode Island's cities and towns. Identify the gaps in resources and develop a plan to coordinate and strengthen these resources so that "all kids" have access to comprehensive arts learning, both in and out of school.
- ☞ Align resources for arts instruction with the National Opportunity to Learn standards
- ☞ Cultivate strategic alliances between and among institutions of higher education to increase access for children, youth, and families to existing or new arts resources in higher education (e.g., facilities, free tickets, interpretive discussions, and community classes).
- ☞ Encourage greater utilization of schools and other public facilities for arts learning beyond the school day and year.
- ☞ Coordinate statewide and community-based programs to ensure that all children each year attend performances/exhibits of visual art, music, dance and theatre, as outlined in Rhode Island's Arts Framework, K-12.
- ☞ Foster greater dialogue between and among community-based arts programs supporting children and youth.
- ☞ Ensure that all young adults have access to youth development programs in the arts.

POLICY

- ☞ Ensure that all students experience a sequential visual and performing arts curriculum in school aligned to the National Standards for Arts Education and the Rhode Island Arts Framework, K-12, and taught by certified arts educators.
- ☞ Assist schools and districts to find ways to develop standards-based dance and theatre education where none currently exist.
- ☞ Change Rhode Island's high school arts graduation requirement to a standards-based demonstration of knowledge and proficiency for all students, based on Rhode Island and national arts standards.
- ☞ Promote opportunities to build stronger relationships between arts educators and other core subject educators, thus developing a richer context for all subject area learning.
- ☞ Advocate for demonstration of standards-based arts proficiency as an entrance requirement to state colleges.
 - ☞ Encourage higher education to examine the structure and content of required arts education courses for elementary education majors in light of state and national arts standards and to provide official venues for dialogue between arts and science faculty and education faculty.
- ☞ Support the K-16 Academic Dialogues' recommendation for statewide requirements for cooperating teachers and its recommendation for placements with teachers meeting the statewide requirements.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ∞ Coordinate menus of arts-based professional development opportunities for those who provide formal and informal learning in home, school, and community. This audience includes (but is not limited to) parents, arts educators, educators outside the arts in K-12 and higher education, teaching artists, guidance counselors, and staff in social service, youth development, and early childhood organizations.
- ∞ Encourage K-12 and higher education to provide professional development in the arts for school and community educators.
- ∞ Support standards-based professional development for visual and performing arts educators.
- ∞ Coordinate professional development for community arts programs based on best practice in youth development arts programming.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

- ∞ Designate a Year of Arts Learning and develop a multifaceted public awareness effort about the value of arts learning for children and youth. Involve a broad array of leaders, including children and youth, as spokespersons.
- ∞ Define, identify and further develop examples of excellence in arts learning in home, school and community. Disseminate these examples through conferences, workshops, and publications.
- ∞ Provide opportunities for parents and families to learn in and through the arts and ways to understand better the value of arts learning for all children and youth.





— LONSDALE ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL

CONCLUSION

This is an exciting time for all of us in Rhode Island as we begin the new millennium. Yet the stakes have never been higher for our children and youth as they face the challenges of an ever-changing, diverse world and new global economy. The time is ripe for a new awareness of the benefits of the arts and the creation of new statewide policies that harness the power of the arts and foster the fullest range of learning opportunities for our young people in meeting these challenges.

In order for the arts to have a meaningful impact on the lives of our youth, we must address the challenges facing Rhode Island students, investigate and formulate appropriate responses, and take action to give them the tools necessary to succeed.

As testimony before this Task Force suggests, a “window of opportunity” exists for the arts to provide leadership by equipping students with the knowledge, understanding, skills and imagination to see the possibilities and the promise the future holds.

Arts learning for “all kids” can be achieved. Research has found exemplary arts learning opportunities and practices throughout the state where many children and youth are well served. For example, a half-credit graduation requirement in the arts is being met in most districts by college-bound students. Furthermore, some arts-rich urban school systems in this state defy the conventional logic that socio-economic status of a community is a primary indicator of arts opportunities for young people.

Yet these examples are not the norm across the state, and many other children and youth could be better served. While the half-credit graduation requirement reaches many young people, it does not reach all students in Rhode Island schools - only the college-bound. While many urban districts report a rich environment for the arts, it still is not in every school within those districts and not for all arts disciplines.

Rhode Islanders — schools district personnel, teachers, administrators, artists, community leaders, school board members, and students — all expressed a desire for a system that works better to serve “all kids” with comprehensive arts learning. This desire includes better

communication across the spectrum of arts educators, professional arts and community providers, parents and policymakers, better coordination of programming and allocation of resources in each community and across the state, and more effective training and support given to those who provide these services.

In conclusion, as Jessica Davis, a cognitive developmental psychologist at Harvard University and the director of the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Arts in Education program states, "The Arts need to be incorporated into every child's learning – not to improve test scores, but to provide individuals with the necessary tools to make and find meaning... The arts need to be incorporated into every child's learning for the more important purpose of enabling a future generation to participate across circumstance, culture, and time in the ongoing human conversation that is perpetuated through the arts." ("Art for Art's Sake," *Education Week*, 10/16/96).



G R E G

He is wearing black and white

The same colors as the pictures sight.

What other colors would there be if

my camera pictured differently?

APPENDICES

A. GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Executive Order 99-2

March 25, 1999

LITERACY IN THE ARTS TASK FORCE

WHEREAS, the arts are integral to the success of Rhode Island's Comprehensive Education Strategy because a comprehensive arts education program provides opportunities for students to achieve at high levels and is a catalyst for broad public involvement in education; and

WHEREAS, an effective education prepares students for living in a diverse society, and the arts help them achieve an in-depth understanding of many cultures and their history; and

WHEREAS, the arts teach skills necessary to the skilled worker and workplace of tomorrow; and

WHEREAS, the arts play a significant role in helping children to develop the skills of literacy and a love of learning; and

WHEREAS, studying the arts allows students to understand the past, experience and derive meaning from the present, and envision and shape the future.

NOW, THEREFORE, I LINCOLN C. ALMOND, by the virtue of the power vested in me as Governor of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, do hereby order as follows:

1. There is hereby created a Literacy in the Arts Task Force, a joint effort of the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, to examine the relationship between education reform and the arts, and to make policy recommendations on how the arts can have a significant impact on the educational agenda of Rhode Island.

2. In order to determine its findings and shape policy recommendations; the Task Force shall meet regularly, hold public dialogue sessions, and commission written input from selected experts in the field of arts and education policy.

3. The Task Force shall consist of 19 members jointly recommended by the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts and appointed by the Governor, with the Governor designating the Chair from the appointed

members,as follows:the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education or designee;the Executive Director of the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts or designee; the Commissioner of Higher Education or designee;the President of the Rhode Island Association of School Committees or designee;the President of the National Education Association of Rhode Island or designee;the President of the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers or designee;the President of the Rhode Island Congress of Parents and Teachers or designee;the President of the Rhode Island Alliance for Art Education or designee;the President of the Rhode Island Music Education Association or designee;a designated representative of the Rhode Island Association of Health,Physical Education,Recreation,and Dance;and the President of the Rhode Island Theatre Education Association or designee. The remaining members shall be chosen from the business and arts communities,with a strong regard for persons who have a commitment to providing young people with experiences in the performing and visual arts or who have a background in education.

4.The Task Force may hire such assistance and incur such expenses as may be necessary to carry out its purpose, not to exceed the amount raised for this purpose.

5.This Task Force shall meet regularly and shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor, General Assembly, Board of Regents,and Arts Council Board no later than 18 months following the organization of the Task Force.

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately upon the date hereof and shall expire upon the submission of the Task Force's final report.

So Ordered:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lincoln C. Almond". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Lincoln C. Almond

Dated:3.23.99

B. DEFINITION OF TERMS

ACCESS: The ability to participate fully because physical, geographic, financial, and programmatic barriers have been removed.

ARTS: Cultural creative expression including dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.

ARTS LEARNING: The range of formal and informal education and experiences where there is learning in and about the arts (e.g. school arts courses, arts organization incorporation of a student into a dance company, parent teaching a traditional weaving form as part of an ethnic heritage).

COMMUNITY: The larger environment beyond home and school, including arts organizations, colleges and universities, social service agencies, community centers, child/youth programs, religious and ethnic organizations, etc.

COMPETENCIES: Demonstrated standards-based skills and/or knowledge judged on evidence provided by the learner.

COMPREHENSIVE: Inclusive of all four art forms, dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.

CURRICULUM: Scope and sequence of content and assessment of student learning.

HOME: Primary residence where children and youth are raised, whether in a private home by a parent or other primary caretaker(s), a shelter, or other location.

LITERACY: The ability to understand and use communication that is based on both verbal and nonverbal single systems, e.g., the ability to read music or a text, analyze a poem or painting, or create a dance or play.

LITERACY IN AND THROUGH THE ARTS: A continuum, with literacy in the arts representing the study of an art form for its own sake, and literacy through the arts representing the arts as vehicles for learning outside the arts, e.g., self-knowledge.

POLICY WINDOW: This concept describes how policy issues move onto the government agenda and toward decision and action. The process of opening a “policy window” involves three converging streams: discovering and defining a problem, developing and advocating a feasible solution, and marshalling a set of political forces (Kingdom, 1995).

SCHOOL: Public or private K-12 educational system.

STANDARDS: Statements of what we expect students to know and be able to do, best achieved through a variety of teaching and learning strategies.

C. HOST SITES AND TASK FORCE MEETINGS

1999

SEPTEMBER 15 (ORIENTATION)

Aldrich Mansion, Warwick

OCTOBER 26

Rhode Island College, Providence

NOVEMBER 23

RI School for the Deaf, Providence

2000

JANUARY 11

Hope High School, Providence

FEBRUARY 15

Blackstone River Theatre, Cumberland

MARCH 14

Oliphant School, Middletown

APRIL 11

Woonsocket High School, Woonsocket

MAY 16

Carriage House Theatre, Providence

JUNE 13

Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Providence

2001

SEPTEMBER 18

Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Providence

OCTOBER 17

Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Providence

NOVEMBER 21

Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Providence

DECEMBER 5

Brown University, Providence

JANUARY 23

Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Providence

FEBRUARY 27

Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Providence

MARCH 27

Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Providence

APRIL 24

Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Providence

MAY 15

Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Providence

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