



# Arts at the Core

Recommendations for Advancing the State of Arts Education in the 21st Century

National Task Force on the Arts in Education  
Final Report Presented to The Board of Trustees  
The College Board  
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September 2009

#### Dear Colleagues:

It is our distinct pleasure to provide this report, which represents nearly two years of work by the National Task Force on the Arts in Education (NTFAE). The College Board's Board of Trustees charged the task force to develop and articulate a vision for arts education in the United States with the hope that the College Board will use its considerable resources and influence to achieve and sustain an integrative vision for the arts in education.

Among the NTFAE's high priorities was the need to launch a major and newly focused conversation to develop strategies for making a profound and lasting impact on the role of the arts in education and, ultimately, the meaning of citizenship. We believe the recommendations held herein will move us in the direction of success, which will be fully realized when all K–16 students have the opportunity to engage the arts in ways that draw upon their creativity and contribute to their lifelong learning.

Given the current state of affairs in regard to the arts in the nation's schools and colleges, seeking a complete understanding of their role in the education enterprise was a considerable challenge. However, through the diligent work of the NTFAE Steering Committee, the assistance of regional and national arts education organizations and the support received from the College Board Office of Academic Initiatives, we believe that the report's contents and recommendations have the potential to enrich the role of the arts in American education.

We are not alone in our concerns. In a recent letter to school and education community leaders, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, stated that:

In June, we received the 2008 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in the Arts results for music and visual arts. I was reminded of the important role that arts education plays in providing American students with a well-rounded education. The arts can help students become tenacious, team-oriented problem solvers who are confident and able to think creatively. These qualities can be especially important in improving learning among students from economically disadvantaged circumstances. However, recent NAEP results found that only 57 percent of eighth-graders attended schools where music instruction was offered at least three or four times a week, and only 47 percent attended schools where visual arts were offered that often.

Secretary Duncan went on to emphasize that the federal government's role is intended to bring about a sea change in the ways students are exposed to the arts in the nation's schools. Given its highly regarded advocacy role in education, the College Board has the opportunity to join this government effort and call for greater clarity regarding the vital role of the arts in student learning.

The work of the NTFAE has brought to the surface new information on the marginalization of the arts in K–16 education. Through a consultative process involving our arts education collaborators, we learned even more about the need for broader quality arts education programs. A vision for the way forward was derived from these interactive consultations. Throughout the report you will note the urgent need to collaborate with other education and arts organizations on these complex issues.

The importance of the arts in the lives and future of our children and young adults is traditionally underestimated in American culture. The NTFAE was formed with the intent to change that perception to one in which the arts play a significant role in a well-rounded and complete education for young people. We believe the College Board can help our nation understand this concept. The goal of the NTFAE was nothing less than to re-envision education in the United States. We sought to articulate and incorporate a vision for the arts in our educational system, a vision that includes providing professional development opportunities and empowering teachers, and engaging greater numbers of professional artists in the field of education in the arts. We also were acutely aware of the need to reach underserved populations and, whenever and wherever possible, to integrate the arts' capacity for innovation, enrichment and creativity with other disciplines — so the arts become a natural part of the academic life of the students.

The NTFAE received major support and encouragement from many individuals and groups; however, we would like to offer special acknowledgments to College Board President Gaston Caperton, Senior Vice President Lee Jones, Vice President Dorothy Sexton and Director Nancy Rubino. Were it not for their guidance and encouragement, the success of this task force would not be realized.



## Arts at the Core

### Recommendations for Advancing the State of Arts Education in the 21st Century

Working in an environment of mutual respect and professionalism with the other arts stakeholders has been a rewarding experience for all involved. Although the report is completed, the work to enact the recommendations has only begun. It is our collective hope that the NTFAE report will bring into sharper focus the critical issues affecting the arts in education and the need for the College Board and its member institutions to offer their much-needed support for the furtherance of this vital and integral part of American education.

#### Steering Committee of the National Task Force on the Arts in Education

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### Executive Summary

#### Leading a New Direction in Education

*“In addition to giving our children the science and math skills they need to compete in the new global context, we should also encourage the ability to think creatively that comes from a meaningful arts education.”*

— BarackObama.com

Throughout its long history, the College Board has been a national leader in education, and a steadfast advocate for equity, access and excellence in education. Thanks to its vision and professionalism, state and national expectations have improved, leading directly toward a strengthening of education throughout the United States, particularly as it pertains to teaching, assessment and college readiness. However, other factors have had an adverse effect on our schools. Data from recent studies conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, among others, show that our nation’s educational system is now in crisis, and that our students’ knowledge and performance are lagging behind many other developed countries in every subject.<sup>1</sup> Without a change in course, our schools are heading down a path that will leave our students inadequately prepared for 21st-century society.

The NTFAE believes that the shortcomings of the educational system cannot be fixed by tweaking or patching, but rather they require a systemic change. We think that the current system, which segregates subjects and types of learning, splinters the effectiveness of learning by divorcing content from context and purpose. Exclusion of the arts experience in schools means that students miss out on valuable cultural learning experiences as well as chances to develop their innovative thinking skills. With the high school dropout rate growing higher each year, we cannot afford to deny students the opportunity for increased academic engagement through arts learning.

In sharp contrast to our current system, we propose a new curricular model with the arts at the core, integrating many subjects and types of learning in order to give them context and meaning. The NTFAE believes that our educational system needs a new paradigm, and that the College Board must help lead the way. The arts — all the arts — help students develop skills in group interaction, self-esteem, reflection, decision making and innovative thinking. With the arts at its core, this new paradigm could provide a more effective learning environment that would induce the creative thinking needed for the 21st-century global society, and reinvigorate our youth and our teachers.

**The NTFAE believes that the College Board can promote and utilize arts programming as an effective tool to improving education in general and as a solution to achieving access and equity for all students.** Studies consistently show that the arts are effective in keeping students in school, engaging students in learning and promoting high achievement. This is particularly true among low-income and minority groups.<sup>2</sup> For example, many disadvantaged students who might be struggling with their studies often find a connection with the arts. Some students might find the physical activity required in music and dance more satisfying and more stimulating than reading at a desk or typing at a computer. Work in the theater requires engagement and cooperation with others; develops skills in language, movement, timing and organization; and demonstrates the need for commitment and persistence, and the great value of cooperation. In the visual arts, students learn decision-making skills, innovative thinking, the value and impact of content, and many of the spatial and organizational skills taught in the other arts. Studying the arts allows for more than a single “right” answer. In the arts, students explore, analyze and discuss possibilities using different scenarios, and critique the resulting interpretations.

*“As skillful educators have found, teaching students to be creative is a deliberate process, much like teaching students to be literate or to be able to solve mathematics problems. It takes more than simply handing out materials; expert teachers break down the creative process to enable students to identify the problem, gather relevant information, try out solutions and validate those that are effective.”<sup>3</sup>*

Obstacles that prevent equity and access for all students, and especially for those studying the arts, must be removed. Among these is the fact that many schools remove grades received in arts classes before calculating the grade point averages (GPA) of students seeking admission to college. In addition, arts courses are not required for graduation at many high schools even though the arts are identified as one of the 10 core curriculum areas in the Elementary and Secondary

1. Stuart Kerachsky, “NCES Statement on TIMSS 2007,” Available at [http://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/commissioner/remarks2008/12\\_9\\_2008.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/commissioner/remarks2008/12_9_2008.asp).

2. Throughout this report we will refer to low-income and minority groups as “underserved” students.

3. *Learning in a Visual Age: The Critical Importance of Visual Arts Education* (Reston, Va.: National Art Education Association, 2009).



## Arts at the Core

### Recommendations for Advancing the State of Arts Education in the 21st Century

Education Act (ESEA), more commonly known as the No Child Left Behind Act. The very clear implication is that, since the arts are not required, they certainly cannot be considered important. This view of the arts prevails in our system, and we believe that the College Board has a responsibility to take a leadership role in reversing it.

The arts are intrinsic to who we are as human beings, and just as they have always been at the core of what we call “civilization,” they should be at the core of the education we provide for our children. In a letter (August 2009) to school and education community leaders, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, stressed “the importance of the arts as a core academic subject and part of a complete education for all students,” and he noted how “the arts play a significant role in children’s development and learning process.”

**The NTFAE urges the College Board to exercise its broad influence to encourage its members to implement and sustain quality programs for all K–16 students in dance, music, theater and the visual arts.** One way in which the College Board could utilize its influence is to endorse a statement that stresses the importance of the arts and connects the arts to the role they play throughout our lives: for the full development of Americans as human beings, for the way the arts call attention to what human beings around the globe share in common, and for advancing the College Board’s commitment to equity and access. Such a statement would position the College Board in the forefront of the Arts at the Core movement.

On-going research on the arts and cognition demonstrates a correlation between training in the arts and improved academic performance, which emphasizes the importance of the arts as core disciplines and provides solid reasons for the College Board to become a strong advocate for the arts becoming an integral part of the core curriculum.

Arts at the Core should be supported by the College Board through its national and regional council structures, and the NTFAE urges the creation of a Web page that can serve as a place to call attention to the statement mentioned above, to promote College Board arts educational activities, to provide links to other arts organizations and, in general, to promote the NTFAE’s findings and recommendations.

**The College Board can strengthen education by promoting creativity, by recognizing achievement in the arts and by raising the visibility of the arts throughout its programs.** By recognizing and rewarding achievement in the arts at its national and regional forums, the College Board can provide incentives for students, teachers, schools and districts to raise their levels of performance in the arts. Presenting these awards at forums and conferences would demonstrate the College Board’s support for the arts and enhance the quality of these events. The awardees could be invited to speak on their involvement with the arts, exhibit their artworks, or perform their music or dance compositions. Students paired with their teachers often make for compelling stories. To set the bar high for the student artists, professional artists should also be invited to be sponsors or guest artists.

The College Board has invested much into the arts, primarily through its AP® arts programs (Studio Art: Drawing, 2-D Design and 3-D Design; Art History; and Music Theory), and most recently (2007), through the appointment and funding of the National Task Force on the Arts in Education, whose mission is to “re-envision education in the United States with the arts at its core.” However, this investment has low visibility and little presence in College Board publications and events. If the College Board wishes to endorse reform of our national education curriculum through placing the arts at its very core, then their support for and commitment to the arts must have a greater visibility and presence throughout all of its public events and publications. We recommend that the organization include images of the arts in its pamphlets and brochures, and ask speakers who represent the arts and performers in dance, music and theater to participate in all College Board forums and conferences.

**The NTFAE further believes the College Board must integrate the arts into its programs and services, recognizing that infusing arts across the curriculum is an invaluable learning tool.** Creativity and imagination — typically associated with the arts and which the arts encourage — are critical to so many aspects of life, in and out of school. Study in the arts affects the way we learn and develops skills that will last a lifetime. The arts themselves can teach thinking methods that result in more than one correct answer, and they offer development of skills in perception, hand-eye coordination, decision making, risk taking and innovative thinking. They provide a cultural context that lends meaning to the study of other subjects. For instance, one can hardly study history, geography and social studies without also studying the arts and cultures within the region of study. By integrating the arts throughout other subject areas, students can learn how music from an earlier era might have affected the social atmosphere and attitudes of the people who lived at that time. Students studying history can learn a lot from the arts. Using words alone is akin to presenting material in only two dimensions, whereas the same words accompanied by paintings and music, with students describing and analyzing what they are viewing, transform the presentation into three dimensions.



**The NTFAE would like to see a more global perspective in both arts and non-arts programming within the College Board.** The rapidly changing demographic makeup of the United States and the advent of technologies that make it possible to communicate information over vast distances compel us to reassess our participation in a global society. During these opening years of the 21st century, mass media and the global span of technology allow us to sit in our homes and schools and easily observe and communicate with people in distant parts of the world. Arts that derive from other world regions, including folk, traditional, non-Western or ethnographic art, are often neglected or presented from a Western perspective that might not be true to its origin. We feel that an authentic and enhanced global view of the arts would enrich students' lives and promote global literacy. The AP programs in Art History and Studio Art already embrace a more inclusive global perspective within their literature but more could be done to reinforce this outlook. Other, non-arts subjects could benefit by adopting a similarly global perspective on learning. Additionally, the College Board Schools could launch pilot programs that integrate global arts into non-arts courses, thus serving as models for other programs.

In September 2007, at the inaugural NTFAE meeting, the members of the steering committee stated that part of our mission would be to empower and educate arts teachers, and to **“promote the engagement of professional artists and scholars in the fields of dance, music, theater and the visual arts in K–16 education.”** Many students are deprived of a quality arts education because schools cannot afford to (or will not) fund arts programming or hire teachers for the arts. Often, the arts are taught by classroom teachers whose expertise is in other subjects, which is an unfair solution for both the students and the teacher. Many factors contribute to the lack of arts programming in schools across our nation. However, asking non-arts teachers to teach the arts, without providing them with the necessary professional development and education, should not be the solution. Instead, arts education should be strengthened by requiring teachers to participate in the practice of their art, and by providing them with practice-based professional development opportunities. In addition, professional artists should be given increased access to classrooms, both through teaching artist programs and by loosening the constraints of teacher certification.

*You will never recapture  
what the Persian*

*Said in his language woven  
with birds and roses,  
When, in the sunset,  
before the light disperses,  
You wish to give words to  
unforgettable things.*

— Jorge Luis Borges, “Limits”

The NTFAE understands that the College Board does not make the rules regarding state certification of teachers. However, those who run the school systems do look to the College Board for guidance. The NTFAE would like to see stronger criteria developed and published by the College Board that could guide high school programs on best practices focusing on professional development in specific arts disciplines, and to provide model program curricula and effective methods for utilizing artists in the classroom. This last item would include models of collaborative structures for artists to work with certified teachers. Successful arts-based programs already exist in various parts of the country, and the College Board should be a leader in this effort.

The College Board has grown a loyal membership through its effective programs and its leadership on national issues in education. **The NTFAE recommends that the College Board 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.** Teachers, administrators and school superintendents look to the College Board for exemplary programming in most subject areas and for reliable, effective tools for assessment, teaching and professional development. From this unique position it has the potential to send a strong message on how to improve education and enrich the lives of all students at all levels.

This message would signal to everyone that the College Board believes in the effectiveness of arts education, and that it supports and promotes the necessity of placing arts programming at the core of curricula throughout all levels of the educational system. The College Board can ensure the hope of a better education through the arts by making a strong position statement, and by using its esteemed reputation to promote model curricula, programs and best professional practices. Through the College Board's regional structure, colleges and universities should be encouraged to (a) include arts courses in college admission requirements and (b) include arts courses in GPA calculations. By establishing criteria and identifying programs that can serve as models for curricula and methodology, the College Board can steer this new paradigm for education into a new direction, which is required of the 21st-century student.

The College Board is one of many national, state and local organizations that recognize the need for educational reform in the United States. The NTFAE believes that the arts can play a central role in building a stronger, reformed system, and



over the course of our work, we have begun to build relationships with many of our nation's similar-minded arts and education organizations. Many of these organizations are already actively promoting the place of the arts in our nation's educational system. We encourage the College Board to lend its significant national reputation and political influence to this effort, and to use these other organizations as resources for improving the arts programming of the College Board. Therefore, **the NTFAE recommends that the College Board initiate and sustain alliances with arts and education organizations to develop collaborations that support the arts in K–16 education.**

Through its membership, the College Board also has access to a large and diverse array of communities and campuses, and we encourage the use of this network to promote the benefits of arts education, as well as to locate and share information on community resources, global artists and schools engaging in successful arts programming. The need for educational reform in the United States is critical, and no one organization can do it alone; by working with similar-minded organizations toward a mutual cause, the College Board would be taking a significant step toward making educational reform a reality.

*Our doubts are traitors,  
and make us lose the good  
we oft might win,  
by fearing to attempt.*

— Shakespeare,  
*Measure for Measure*

Additionally, the College Board can provide national leadership by explaining and demonstrating to school superintendents, principals, state legislators and teachers, as well as colleges and universities, how to build a road to success by including the arts in curricular planning from elementary level through the college level. Toward this end, the NTFAE believes that the College Board could update its programs, publications and website with inclusive language and useful information about the arts' effect on learning. Supportive research data could be presented; and examples of model programs that are already finding success through the arts, as well as videos that demonstrate effective arts teaching and interdisciplinary approaches that include the arts, could be provided. These videos could present more effective arts-centered curricula as an alternative approach to the training that focuses on math and science, which, within our current educational system (according to various research studies) has failed our nation's children.

We also believe the College Board can recommend up-to-date research findings by major thinkers in this field, including Daniel H. Pink's *A Whole New Mind*, Howard Gardner's *Multiple Intelligences*, Oliver Sacks's *Musicophilia*, Michael Gazzaniga's *Human: The Science Behind What Makes Us Unique* and Sir Ken Robinson's *Out of Our Minds: Learning to Be Creative*. We recommend that practical information be made available online in a user-friendly website that would serve as the central resource hub for instruction and information on field research. The website should include:

- Available field research data about the impact of the arts on learning, college readiness, and access and equity
- A data bank and resource guide that can be used to show teachers, administrators and legislators the effectiveness and value of an arts education
- Videos of teachers who are using innovative teaching methods across disciplines to engage students
- Links to websites of organizational partners
- Examples of model arts-centered curricula, model programs, lesson plans, etc.
- "Chat rooms" where students can connect with one another
- "Seminar rooms" where teachers can connect with one another

The United States has lost its leadership position in the field of education in the industrialized world. In science and mathematics, and in graduation rates, we have moved — all in the span of three decades — from the top of the list to somewhere near the middle with regard to providing more education for more of its young people as compared to all other developed nations, and there does not appear to be a clear plan in place to offset this deterioration. These recommendations of the National Task Force on the Arts in Education, through the pervasive influence of the College Board, can and must play a key role in the future of our youth and thereby in our country.



### Summary of Recommendations

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 important, 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:

Promote Arts for Underserved Students	Place Arts at the Core of Education	Encourage Student Creativity	Integrate Arts Across the Curriculum
<p><b>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.</b></p> <p>a. Develop curriculum modules with the arts at the core to promote equity, access and excellence in all schools, and implement these modules in College Board Schools.</p> <p>b. Create professional development opportunities in the arts, especially for teachers in low-income and rural areas with populations of underserved students.</p> <p>c. Research inequities in arts programming among underserved populations, including a study on why participation in AP arts programs is chronically low among underrepresented minorities.</p>	<p><b>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.</b></p> <p>a. Publish a College Board statement that endorses the importance of the arts for all students in pre-K–16.</p> <p>b. Advocate for the arts as core disciplines in the curriculum. The foundation established for student appreciation and understanding of the arts in K–16 education not only leads to their future participation as audiences and consumers of the arts, it also sets the course for those who excel and become the standard-bearers in dance, music, theater and the visual arts.</p> <p>c. Support arts at the core of the curriculum through the College Board’s national and regional council structures, including forums, regional activities and other conferences; and create a Web page that provides information to member institutions on arts education programs and activities.</p>	<p><b>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.</b></p> <p>a. Establish a national award that demonstrates the critically important role of the arts in K–12 education and that celebrates achievement in the arts.</p> <p>b. Integrate arts programming as well as the use of the arts across the curriculum into regional and national forums and conferences. Suggestions include exhibiting student artworks, inviting award recipients to present their work, soliciting teachers from their region to come together for sessions that display and promote best practices, adding professional (or student and teacher) performances to forum and conference programming, and coordinating with other arts organizations to honor their award winners.</p> <p>c. Solicit a series of instructional modules in dance, music, theater and the visual arts from membership institutions and teachers. These modules will be designed to stimulate students’ cognitive development and advance their intellectual and cultural understanding of the arts. (The Arts Academic Advisory Committee would review the submissions and determine those that would be published or featured on the Web page.)</p>	<p><b>4. Integrate the arts into its programs and services, recognizing that infusing arts across the curriculum is an invaluable learning tool.</b></p> <p>a. Update AP Vertical Teams® guides, beginning with those under development and then proceeding to those in the arts and other subjects, and make them available to all schools. Using the Arts Academic Advisory Committee as a resource, update the guides to be more inclusive of nontraditional modes of learning and to show the interrelationship between the arts and other disciplines.</p> <p>b. Infuse the arts into existing College Board curriculum development and professional development programs, including College Board Schools, CollegeEd®/MyRoad™, SpringBoard® and AP non-arts subjects, and in national and regional forum activities. Using the Arts Academic Advisory Committee as a resource, develop an arts curriculum for the College Board Schools that uses standards as a foundation and would serve as a model for a sound arts curriculum.</p> <p>c. Encourage AP, SAT®, PSAT/NMSQT®, Readiness™, SpringBoard and CLEP® test developers to create questions and prompts that reference the arts. Establish a multidisciplinary College Board committee, composed of the Arts Academic Advisory Committee chairs, to examine the policies and the practices of these programs in order to explore and encourage ways in which non-arts subjects and exams might develop items that reference or include the arts.</p>



### Summary of Recommendations

Establish a Global Arts Perspective	Support Professional Artists	Affect Policy	Build Partnerships
<p><b>5. Ensure that the global arts, which include folk, traditional and indigenous classical arts, are integrated into its programs and services.</b></p> <p>a. Launch a pilot program in College Board Schools to integrate global arts into both arts and non-arts courses.</p> <p>b. Advocate for the infusion of global arts into all arts course offerings using existing College Board professional development workshops and seminars for teachers.</p> <p>c. Establish a Web-based network for student-to-student and artist-to-teacher “virtual” exchanges to promote cross-cultural education and artistic inspiration in dance, music, theater and the visual arts of diverse cultures around the globe.</p>	<p><b>6. Promote the engagement of professional artists and scholars in the fields of dance, music, theater and the visual arts in K–16 education.</b></p> <p>a. Encourage states to adopt alternative certification processes that enable arts professionals to teach in K–12 classrooms.</p> <p>b. Endorse instructional models that employ practicing artists in collaboration with certified teachers.</p> <p>c. Develop a set of best practices for professional artists regarding instructional approaches and strategies for teaching and learning in today’s classrooms.</p>	<p><b>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.</b></p> <p>a. Use the College Board’s advocacy resources to help shape reauthorization of ESEA as it pertains to learning outcomes in the arts, such as curriculum, assessment, teacher professional development and funding for the arts in education.</p> <p>b. Provide leadership on arts requirements for high school core curricula, high school graduation requirements, and college and university admission requirements in the arts (including arts courses in GPA calculations), working with regional accrediting agencies. Wherever possible, the arts should include the four major disciplines: dance, music, theater and the visual arts.</p> <p>c. Advocate for the inclusion of the arts in major external and internal policy-making initiatives affecting K–16 education.</p>	<p><b>8. Initiate and sustain alliances with arts and education organizations to develop collaborations that support the arts in K–16 education.</b></p> <p>a. Provide information to its member institutions in order to promote partnerships with community organizations that provide arts experiences and education to underserved populations.</p> <p>b. Initiate and sustain alliances with arts and education organizations in order to share resources, research results and policy goals on arts education.</p> <p>c. Promote opportunities for global artists who reside in our communities to participate in arts education programs and activities.</p>



### I. Arts and Underserved Students

*When we think of American arts we may think of Duke Ellington's "Mood Indigo"; Jacob Lawrence's "The Migration of the Negro"; Yo-Yo Ma, the world-class cellist who has a strong commitment not only to his music but to educational programs; Gloria Estefan, the founder of the Miami Sound Machine or Carlos Santana's "Supernatural." The arts have a long history of being an important part of the lives of underserved and multicultural students. The history and performance of the arts have created educational opportunities for underserved students for decades.*

— Bernard Young, Member, NTFAE, and Professor,  
School of Art, Arizona State University

One of the greatest challenges for this nation is to ensure that achievement gaps in all areas of education among racial and ethnic minorities are eliminated. This includes the improvement of the high school educational experience, preparation and admission to colleges, and graduation rates of students from low-income backgrounds. The National Task Force on the Arts in Education believes that greater access to arts education can serve as an effective tool in closing the achievement gap, increasing the number of underserved students that achieve at the highest levels in education.<sup>4</sup>

Learning through the arts provides an alternative for talented students who have difficulty assimilating information presented through more traditional academic modes (verbal and mathematical). Studies have indicated that students who have opportunities to participate and succeed in arts courses throughout elementary and middle school will be better prepared for advanced arts course work in high school. This can result in increased enrollment in advanced course work across subject areas and, by extension, enable more students to attend college.

The arts benefit students in numerous ways, including the development of decision-making skills and the ability to think creatively and innovatively. An article published by the DANA foundation in May 2009 puts forth evidence that arts education promotes better overall academic achievement by increasing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The article cites Michael Posner's research, which concludes that "if we are able to engage children in an art form for which their brain is prepared, and they have an openness and creativity, we can train them in this and see improvement in attention, as well as intelligence and cognition in general." Elizabeth Spelke, a psychology professor at Harvard University, also offers evidence that transfer occurs between arts learning and other subjects; she found that children with moderate or intense music training showed small but reliable increases on abilities revolving around geometry.<sup>5</sup>

#### Providing Equity, Access and Excellence Through the Arts

Opportunities in the arts are not equally available to all. Numeric and anecdotal data suggest that underserved students often have fewer opportunities to participate in consistent, high-quality arts course work in middle school than their counterparts who attend schools with greater access to resources. Reasons for this disparity include the fact that schools and districts with limited financial resources are often unwilling or unable to fund art programs at the middle school level. In addition, when arts courses are considered electives, students who are identified as needing academic remediation will often have no time in their middle school schedule for arts course work because their elective class time is consumed by remedial courses.

During these lean economic times the arts curriculum is cut or reduced more often than not. This only increases the achievement gap for underserved students. The economy should not dictate who receives the many benefits that the arts can provide. In order for the United States to be a competitive nation that reaches its full potential it must not permit financial or other barriers to prevent low-income students from reaching their full potential. When higher education is an achievable goal for all students regardless of income level, our nation as a whole will benefit.

4. The NTFAE is interested in serving low-income students as described by the CollegeKeys™ report but has expanded its concept of this population by including minority students and using the term "underserved students in the arts" to represent this group. The College Board considers the following students to be low income:

- Students enrolled in schools with large numbers of students from low-income backgrounds or enrolled in schools with low college-going or high dropout rates. This group would also include students whose families are eligible to receive economic subsidies targeted to low-income families, including students who are:
  - Eligible for free or reduced-price lunch programs
  - Part of a family receiving public assistance
  - Residents of federally subsidized housing

It would further include students who are homeless, in foster care or deemed to be wards of the court. Also included are students who will be first-generation college attendees (neither parent has a college degree) and require some or all of the services needed by the students identified in the first three categories (The CollegeKeys Compact™, 2007).

5. Aalok Mehta, "Attention May Link Arts and Intelligence." Available at <http://www.dana.org/news/features/detail.aspx?id=21738>.



The NTFAE believes that we can utilize the arts to address disparities in academic achievement among underserved groups. Research has shown that participation in the arts can lead to increased attendance and decreased dropout rates among middle and high school students. Studying diverse art forms and multicultural artists would increase equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, gender, religious, social class and cultural groups, and potentially increase academic engagement among these groups. In their *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, James Banks and Cherry McGee Banks assert that these activities encourage students to acquire knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society and to interact, negotiate and communicate with people from diverse groups.<sup>6</sup> According to Jerome Kagan, art and music require the use of both schematic and procedural knowledge and, therefore, amplify a child's understanding of self and the world.<sup>7</sup>

The NTFAE believes that the College Board is in a unique position to lead the way in providing access to a quality arts education for underserved students by integrating the arts into the curriculum at College Board Schools. These schools can serve not only as testing grounds for arts-centered programming but also as model programs. If the College Board truly believes in the arts as part of the core curriculum, its own schools should be following this model. By studying and participating in diverse arts activities, students will gain a much-needed global literacy. Such integration is particularly beneficial to student learning in literature, history and language.

### Maintaining Quality Instruction in Underserved Areas

In the United States there are major funding and resource gaps between low-income and high-income school districts. In low-income and poverty areas, districts may not have the resources or the capacity to recruit or keep highly qualified teachers. When teachers are underpaid or not given the resources they need to do their jobs well, the burnout rate is understandably higher, and these districts lose many of their best teachers to districts which can offer them an environment that helps them excel at their jobs. This generally applies across the board in all academic subjects and it most certainly applies in the arts. Unfortunately, students in low-income schools are among the students most in need of arts programs, as access to the arts continually correlates with higher high school graduation rates among disadvantaged populations. To help close the resource gap, and maintain the best teachers in low-income and rural areas, professional development opportunities in the arts should be established for teachers in these areas. Teachers of underserved students should be provided educational resources that enrich, engage and support diverse learners, as well as professional development programming that will help the teachers find resources and encourage them to continue their invaluable work in disadvantaged schools. By targeting low-income and rural areas, the College Board's Professional Development Office can immediately affect the quality of teaching. The Professional Development Office could utilize the Arts Academic Advisory Committee and the Test Development Committees for AP subjects in the arts as collaborators in identifying and developing programs for this purpose.

6. James Banks and Cherry McGee Banks, eds. *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004).

7. "Jerome Kagan on Why the Arts Matter: Six Good Reasons for Advocating the Importance of Arts in Schools." Available at <http://www.dana.org/news/features/detail.aspx?id=21740>.



#### Identifying Inequities

To help underserved children learn in the arts it is necessary to understand how and under what circumstances they perform at exceptional levels. Variations do exist in the learning opportunities and learning styles of underserved students, and research is necessary to identify students' learning differences in the arts. Characteristics of optimal learning environments and opportunities should be researched so that clear recommendations can be made toward developing best practices. We know that arts programming consistently correlates with increased academic success among underserved students, and we also know that participation in AP arts programming is chronically low among underrepresented minorities. Because AP arts programming should be equally available to students regardless of race and socioeconomic status, and because AP arts programming could be of the most help to the students who are not enrolling, the NTFAE recommends that the College Board research why this discrepancy consistently exists. Some of this research should be available in the statistical data already collected by the College Board; however, additional, specific data on what works well to close the equity and excellence gaps in the arts for underserved students are necessary.

Part of the College Board's stated mission is to connect all students to college success. The NTFAE supports the College Board in this undertaking, and through the following recommendations encourages the College Board to utilize the arts as a tool in promoting equity and access to education to all students:

#### **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.**

- a. Develop curriculum modules with the arts at the core to promote equity, access and excellence in all schools, and implement these modules in College Board Schools.
- b. Create professional development opportunities in the arts, especially for teachers in low-income and rural areas with populations of underserved students.
- c. Research inequities in arts programming among underserved populations, including a study on why participation in AP arts programs is chronically low among underrepresented minorities.



## II. Arts at the Core of Education

By combining a little imagination and historical and anthropological memory, it would not be difficult to recognize that the arts are fundamental to our humanity. In addition to the unearthed bones of early men and women, there is ample evidence — globally and especially on the walls of caves — that art played an integral part in the lives of those first humans, both as a means of communication and as expression. It follows, therefore, that the arts are intrinsic to humanity and, if they have been and are at the core of civilization, they also need to be at the core of the education we provide our children. As First Lady Michelle Obama has said with respect to the arts in America, “The arts are not just a nice thing to have; they define who we are as a people” (*The New York Times*, May 19, 2009).

### College Board Endorses the Arts

A statement from the College Board endorsing the importance of the arts would have the potential to attract the public’s attention to what we — along with President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan — believe is a necessary component of educational reform in the 21st century.

The statement we would like to see written would connect the arts to the central role they play in creating educated Americans. The arts promote essential skills for the 21st-century world and workplace, including imagination, teamwork and creative problem solving. They also remind us of our humanity and encourage us to appreciate beauty for its own sake and to value the pleasure and inner peace that the arts provide. Equally important, especially from the perspective of the College Board’s mission, is that the statement would call attention to the role the arts have played — and the larger role they should play — in contributing to equity and access.

A statement endorsing the arts in education would position the College Board in the forefront of the movement to reform education for 21st-century learning, and would lend this movement a greater legitimacy and broad public recognition. Further, with such a statement the College Board would function as a hub around which arts organizations, school districts and the creators of curricula would be able to do their work more effectively with respect to moving the arts to their rightful place among other core subjects.

### College Board Advocates Arts as Core Disciplines

In 2004, the Dana Foundation funded a number of studies on arts and cognition in order to investigate correlations between arts training and improved academic performance. Their report, *Learning, Arts and the Brain*, published in 2008, calls attention, for example, to a Stanford University study on training in the arts, reading and brain imaging in children; correlations were found between musical training and reading fluency skills, and between exposure to the visual arts and improved math calculation. A study on arts education, the brain and language, conducted at the University of Toronto, found that college students majoring in the performing arts had increased ability to generate new and novel ideas as compared to their nonperforming arts counterparts. A second study on the same subject at Toronto found that individuals trained in dance were more accurate on additional tasks than non-dancers, and that individuals who received an “early extensive and continued” music education, showed a greater ability to gain fluency in foreign language as adults.

The summary of the report (which includes nine chapters and 31 contributors, all from major research universities) includes the following conclusions:

1. An interest in a performing art leads to a high state of motivation that produces the sustained attention necessary to improve performance and the training attention that leads to improvement in other domains of cognition.
2. Genetic studies have begun to yield candidate genes that may help explain individual difference in interest in the arts.
3. Specific links exist between high levels of music training and the ability to manipulate information in both working and long-term memory; these links extend beyond the domain of music training.
4. In children, there appear to be specific links between the practice of music and skills in geometrical representation [...].
5. Correlations exist between music training and both reading acquisition and sequence learning [...].
6. Training in acting appears to lead to memory improvement through the learning of general skills for manipulating semantic information [...].



7. Adult self-reported interest in aesthetics is related to a temperamental factor of openness, which in turn is influenced by dopamine-related genes.
8. Learning to dance by effective observation is closely related to learning by physical practice [...]. Effective observational learning may transfer to other cognitive skills.<sup>8</sup>

These findings point to the vital importance of the arts as core disciplines of education and to why the NTFAE believes it is imperative that the College Board advocate for the arts to be treated as such. Not only will such advocacy be critical to those who will go on to professional careers in the arts and to our society at large that will forever benefit from our place in the audience, but to all students whose education will surely profit from a new prominence given to the arts. To quote First Lady Michelle Obama again: “I believe strongly that arts education is essential for building innovative thinkers who will be our nation’s leaders of tomorrow.”

### Supporting the Arts Regionally and Nationally

Through its regional structure and extensive membership, the College Board has access to schools and policymakers across the country. The regional offices, as well as regional and national forums, can be utilized to promote the importance of the arts at the core. Regional offices should communicate with their membership schools and institutions about best practices in arts education, and forums should feature sessions and panels promoting the use of the arts in classrooms. The College Board’s scope and influence are unmatched among educational organizations in the United States, and we encourage the College Board to use its breadth of influence to further the important cause of advancing the arts in education. Additional recommendations for the presence of the arts at regional and national forums are included throughout this report.

The College Board can further communicate and publicize its support for the arts via a Web page dedicated to promoting the arts at the core of education. The NTFAE recommends that such a Web page should include: the proposed statement from the College Board endorsing the arts in education, promotion of College Board arts educational programs and activities, links to other arts organizations and their programs and studies, and links to new and relevant publications that relate to the arts in education. In short, the proposed Arts at the Core Web page would serve as a hub to share and promote the task force’s findings and recommendations, communicate with the College Board membership and continue to build alliances with prominent educational and arts organizations and institutions.

Another benefit of this Web page would be to provide school districts with information and examples of current trends in arts education around the country, and to encourage them to promote the arts in their own schools and communities. This might eventually lead to greater consistency in state standards with regard to the arts and to colleges and universities being more receptive to including students’ artwork as an equal part of their admission considerations. The Web page could also be a place where students and teachers could provide input and communicate more directly about the College Board’s arts programming.<sup>9</sup>

We urge the College Board to use its national influence to support the arts as part of a comprehensive 21st-century education, via the following recommendations:

#### **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.**

- a. Publish a College Board statement that endorses the importance of the arts for all students in pre-K–16.
- b. Advocate for the arts as core disciplines in the curriculum. The foundation established for student appreciation and understanding of the arts in K–16 education not only leads to their future participation as audiences and consumers of the arts, it also sets the course for those who excel and become the standard-bearers in dance, music, theater and the visual arts.
- c. Support arts at the core of the curriculum through its national and regional council structures, including forums, regional activities and other conferences; and create a Web page that provides information to member institutions on arts education programs and activities.

8. Carolyn Asbury and Barbara Rich, eds. *Learning, Arts, and the Brain: The Dana Consortium Report on Arts and Cognition* (New York/Washington, D.C.: Dana Press, 2008), v–vi.

9. The conclusion of this report offers further discussion about the development of an Arts at the Core Web page.



### III. Student Creativity

Experiences in the arts have positive effects on students' lives and should be a crucial component of every student's education. One of this task force's primary goals is to recommend ways to integrate the arts into the core of education so that they become a natural part of the academic life of students. The arts can, and should, play a central role in American primary and secondary school education. As stated earlier, the arts promote creativity and innovative thinking, and these skills can result in increased college success and, over time, a more enlightened public with regard to art and culture.

#### Valuing the Arts

For decades, arts programs have been among the first to be cut from school programs when budgets are tight. These programs are often at a disadvantage when decisions are made to determine which programs will stay and which will be cut, for the reasons highlighted throughout this document: State assessment mechanisms do not include the arts, the arts are not required for high school graduation, arts grades are not included in GPA calculations for college entrance, and arts programs can be expensive to operate and require different kinds of classrooms from those used for lectures. Further, for many administrators, teachers and parents the arts were not part of their education and upbringing, so they simply do not understand or value the arts.

The NTFAE believes that broad support for placing the arts at the core of education can be attained through the leadership of the College Board. The organization has demonstrated support for the arts through its AP arts programming and, more recently, by supporting and funding the efforts of this National Task Force on the Arts in Education. To follow up on these efforts, we ask the College Board to continue its commitment to the arts in education by establishing a national award that demonstrates the critically important role of the arts in K–12 education and that recognizes and honors achievements in the arts by students, teachers and schools. The College Board's existing recognition programs for teachers and schools exhibit its priorities and understanding of the value of exceptional teachers and schools. However, to date, these awards have not recognized any arts teachers or arts-focused schools. The NTFAE encourages the College Board to seek out an arts teacher or arts school for its existing awards, and the organization can also demonstrate its commitment to the arts by creating an awards program for achievement in the arts. Awards for students who are interested and accomplished in the arts could motivate students the same way the AP Exam does in other subjects. Furthermore, implementing awards and recognition programs in the arts will increase the visibility of the role of students and teachers in the arts and, simultaneously, emphasize the central place the arts should hold in the academic orbit.

The awards might be as simple as certificates of merit that students earn through a combination of any of the following: teacher recommendations; high-quality achievement in local, regional, state and national events; and test scores. These certificates might be awarded regionally, thereby enabling the College Board to reach more students. The honored students could be invited to talk about their relationship to the arts at a regional conference of College Board members. Students who receive recognition could also exhibit their artwork or perform dances, monologues or music selections. The awards and recognition should be considered in student-teacher pairs, for when students excel, there are always teachers behind them.

The regional vice presidents, with advice from members of the Arts Academic Advisory Committee, could create a plan of action, part of which would be national in scope, and part regional. The leaders should ensure that local interests and strengths are reflected in the plans. Additionally, the NTFAE anticipates that other arts organizations will see the advantages associated with College Board leadership, including high visibility and national exposure. The partnership of other arts organizations will add breadth and depth to our effort to strengthen their experience in the arts for students in the American education system.

An oversight or clearance committee composed of arts educators, educators in non-arts fields, teaching artists and College Board administrators should be established to ensure that all recognition and awards for students, teachers and programs include as their aim the advancement of education through the arts.

The national and regional offices of the College Board, as well as national and regional forums, should all play roles in the development and promotion of a national recognition program in the arts. The NTFAE recognizes the financial implications of such a program and believes that developing regional/national competitions with a partner or donor would decrease costs while increasing visibility for the College Board. The Siemens Westinghouse Competition, which awards student achievement in STEM disciplines, might serve as a model for an arts award for exemplary students. An arts award program will give tremendous visibility, locally and nationally, to the importance of teaching the arts.



#### The Arts at College Board Events

The NTFAE urges the College Board to spread the word that the arts are central to a broad, enriched education. This could be achieved, in part, by encouraging program coordinators for regional and national forums to promote sessions centered on the arts across the curriculum. Such sessions would be beneficial to the College Board's membership while also serving the national interest. Program committees could solicit teachers from their region to attend sessions that display and promote best practices, and that demonstrate the many ways the arts benefit students both academically and personally. The session presenters could share how they use the arts to teach their subjects, including explanations of the advantages of integrating their subjects with the arts.<sup>10</sup> The presence of the arts in all its forms at College Board events would show the level of support for this endeavor. In addition to sessions devoted to the arts in education, members could view displays of artwork outside meeting rooms, and workshops or sessions could begin with short performances by student musicians, actors and dancers. If students, teachers and administrators see that we value their work in the arts, their incentive to create and achieve will increase.

#### Sharing Best Practices

The NTFAE recommends compiling a series of instructional modules across arts disciplines that are designed to stimulate students' cognitive development and advance their intellectual and cultural understanding of the arts. Many teachers and schools are already finding success in their arts programming, and their successful lesson plans and curricular modules should be shared among CB member institutions. Best practices could be collected and disseminated by the College Board; the Arts Academic Advisory Committee could assist in soliciting and reviewing submissions of best practices and curriculum models, and the most successful among these could be published or shared on a College Board Arts Web page. Many success stories and model programs already exist, and it is up to an organization such as the College Board, which has the resources and the ability, to share these pedagogical tools with the larger educational community.

Increasing visibility for successful arts programs as well as recognizing student achievement in the arts would give students and teachers the motivation to continue to pursue work in the arts. In addition, by recognizing students' achievements in the arts the College Board would lend an educational validity to their studies, promoting the idea that the arts should be a core component of education. We ask the College Board to consider the following recommendations for increasing visibility for student achievement in the arts, and for promoting student participation in the 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.**

- a. Establish a national award that demonstrates the critically important role of the arts in K–12 education and that celebrates achievement in the arts.
- b. Integrate arts programming as well as the use of the arts across the curriculum into regional and national forums and conferences. Suggestions include exhibiting student artworks, inviting award recipients to present their work, soliciting teachers from their region to come together for sessions that display and promote best practices, adding professional (or student and teacher) performances to forum and conference programming, and coordinating with other arts organizations to honor their award winners.
- c. Solicit a series of instructional modules in dance, music, theater and the visual arts from membership institutions and teachers. These modules will be designed to stimulate students' cognitive development and advance their intellectual and cultural understanding of the arts. (The Arts Academic Advisory Committee would review the submissions and determine those that would be published or featured on the Web page.)

10. In Appendix B we offer a few examples of how the arts can be used to improve teaching and learning across the curriculum to underline the assertion that the arts should be seen as core subjects. For further examples of how the arts and history are merged successfully in the classroom, see Robert Blackey, "To Illuminate History: Making History Picture-Perfect," *Teaching History: A Journal of Methods* (Fall 2005): 59–71.



#### IV. Arts Across the Curriculum

For decades, academics have tended to treat their respective disciplines as separate entities complete in themselves, disregarding the value that other disciplines might have in improving learning in their own subjects. It is our belief that the encouragement of interdependence among disciplines and subject areas would benefit teachers, students and, ultimately, society at large. We also believe that the arts are especially well suited to interdisciplinary learning, and that the arts have the potential to strengthen learning abilities across subject areas. In fact, there is a growing body of research that suggests that training students in the arts may change the structure of their brains and the way they think.<sup>11</sup> After all, creativity and imagination — typically associated with the arts and which the arts encourage — are critical to many aspects of life, in and out of school.

According to the Conference Board, there is an overwhelming consensus from superintendents (98 percent) and corporate leaders (96 percent) that “[c]reativity is of increasing importance to the U.S. workforce.” Of those corporate respondents looking for creative people, 85 percent said they were having difficulty finding qualified applicants with the creative characteristics they desired. The New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, in its report *Tough Choices or Tough Times* (2006), states that ours “is a world in which comfort with ideas and abstractions is the passport to a good job, in which creativity and innovation are the key to the good life.” A Lake Research poll of 1,000 likely voters revealed that “83 percent of voters believe that a greater focus on the arts — alongside science, technology and math — would better prepare students to address the demands of the 21st century.”

Utilizing the arts as a pedagogical tool to teach other disciplines provides more students with the chance to excel at academics by offering an alternative way for them to learn and process information. We encourage the College Board to recognize the value of the arts as teaching tools for interdisciplinary learning in addition to being distinct subjects in themselves.

##### Vertical Team Revitalization

Vertical teaming helps subject teachers connect across grade levels to ensure that they are providing the fundamental concepts and skills that their students will need to be successful in AP courses. The current AP Vertical Teams guides were produced in 2002, and need to be updated to include an introduction that contextualizes the guides and discusses the importance of the arts in education. Since the most recent publication of the *AP Vertical Teams Guide for Fine Arts*, there have been significant changes in AP Music Theory and AP Studio Art — most notably the creation of a new Course Description, the transition from slide to digital portfolio submissions and revisions to the portfolio scoring guidelines. Additionally, the AP Art History course is not included in the current *AP Vertical Teams Guide for Fine Arts*. An improved, updated version of this guide is needed — one that incorporates all three AP arts course offerings and that contains accurate, current information about the curricula of these AP courses.

Since many middle school arts courses include offerings in theater and dance, it would be valuable to include consideration of these disciplines within a new *AP Vertical Teams Guide for Fine Arts*. Although the AP Program does not currently offer course work in theater and dance, the learning achievement of middle school students within these artistic disciplines can certainly be successfully applied to augment their understanding of music and the visual arts, as there are significant commonalities within these artistic disciplines. An updated *AP Vertical Teams Guide for Fine Arts* that is interdisciplinary across the arts would increase potential benefits of vertical teaming to students and teachers and would help enrich the knowledge base of students who participate in AP arts courses.

Vertical teaming is important in promoting another College Board goal — equity. Updating the existing Vertical Team guide and ensuring that it is distributed to low-income schools could work as an effective strategy toward achieving equity in education. As stated earlier, studies consistently show that underserved students often have fewer opportunities to participate in consistent, high-quality arts course work in middle school than their counterparts who attend schools with more resources. Poor schools and districts may be unwilling to fund art programs at the middle school level; students who are identified as needing academic remediation may have no time in their middle school schedule for arts course work. Wider implementation of the *AP Vertical Teams Guide for Fine Arts* could result in more schools and districts understanding

11. “Getting Scientific About Arts Education,” *Los Angeles Times* (May 24, 2009), A21. One researcher studying students who go to an arts high school found a correlation between those who were trained in music and their ability to do geometry.



that students' success in arts classes, like that of all other academic disciplines, is dependent upon establishing a solid foundation of knowledge. In addition, consistently maintaining quality arts programs at the middle school level is essential in order to provide opportunities for student success in the arts in high school and college. This wider implementation could be accomplished through increased promotion of the Vertical Teams' concept and increased professional development to support Vertical Teams.

Interestingly, the current NAEP Nation's Report Card indicates that disparities in achievement of minority and economically disadvantaged students compared to white and economically advantaged students are significantly less in visual art than in math and reading. An analysis of this data might prove valuable as it pertains to the role the arts might play in providing learning opportunities for underserved students.<sup>12</sup>

### **Integrating the Arts into College Board Curriculum and Professional Development Programs**

The NTFAE recommends that the College Board infuse the arts into its existing curriculum development programs and its college readiness products. By integrating the arts into its programming, the College Board would not only exemplify its commitment to the arts, but would also grant students greater access to an arts education that could positively affect their academic performance across subjects, their college readiness and their options for higher education.

As we have pointed out earlier in this report, the College Board Schools offer the College Board a unique opportunity to lead the way in providing access to a quality arts education for underserved students. In addition to integrating the arts across the College Board Schools curriculum the NTFAE believes that the College Board should take the opportunity to develop and introduce a curriculum for arts education as a distinct subject in College Board Schools. Using the Arts Academic Advisory Committee as a resource, and their standards as its foundation, this curriculum could then serve as a model arts curriculum for College Board member institutions.

In addition, the NTFAE recommends that the arts be made visible in the College Board's college readiness products and educational initiatives. Because the arts are so often cut from a school's programming or made optional in the form of extracurricular classes, students are less likely to view them as serious subjects that can be pursued in higher education or that can lead to a lucrative career.

Including information on the arts in programs such as CollegeEd and MyRoad would help reverse this view of the arts, and expand the body of students who find options and opportunities in the arts. CollegeEd and MyRoad could provide examples of careers in the arts and help students learn how to track an academic course toward achievement in the arts or arts-related fields. Showing students and their families that the arts can be pursued beyond high school could provide an entry point into college for those students who are not as successful in traditional academic modes, but who excel in the arts.

12. Shelley Keiper, Brent Sandene, et al., *The Nation's Report Card* (The National Center for Education Statistics, June 2009). Available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009488>.



#### Integrating the Arts into Existing College Board Assessment Programs

The College Board and the arts are at a crossroads. An opportunity exists for the College Board to make a difference with regard to the arts just as it did with the addition of a writing section to the SAT. The addition of a writing component to college entrance testing has called attention to the need to teach writing at all levels of education. It follows that if the PSAT/NMSQT, AP, CLEP and other College Board assessment programs integrate the arts into the existing guidelines for composing questions, making it clear that there is value to integrating the arts across the curriculum, it would surely have a trickle-down effect on education at the elementary and middle school levels.

It is widely known that the No Child Left Behind legislation has resulted in public schools being pressured to focus on math and reading. As a result, considerably less emphasis is being placed on other subjects and, in many cases, the arts have been eliminated altogether. It has become a necessity, therefore, for the arts to be infused across the curriculum, which may be the only way some children will have access to them. This does not mean that we are advocating the elimination of separate arts courses and programs; on the contrary, we strongly believe stand-alone courses in the arts are vital to a well-rounded education. The recommendations below offer ways in which the College Board can play a role in integrating the arts into non-arts courses:

#### **4. Integrate the arts into its programs and services, recognizing that infusing arts across the curriculum is an invaluable learning tool.**

- a. Update the AP Vertical Teams guides, beginning with those under development and proceeding to those in the arts and other subjects, and make them available to all schools. Using the Arts Academic Advisory Committee as a resource, update the guides to be more inclusive of nontraditional modes of learning and to show the interrelationship between the arts and other disciplines.
- b. Infuse the arts into existing College Board curriculum development and professional development programs, including College Board Schools, CollegeEd/MyRoad, SpringBoard and AP non-arts subjects, and into national and regional forum activities. Using the Arts Academic Advisory Committee as a resource, develop an arts curriculum for the College Board Schools that uses standards as a foundation and would serve as a model for a sound arts curriculum.
- c. Encourage AP, SAT, PSAT/NMSQT, Readiness, SpringBoard and CLEP test developers to create questions and prompts that reference the arts. Establish a multidisciplinary College Board committee, comprised of the Arts Academic Advisory Committee chairs, to examine the policies and the practices of these programs in order to explore and encourage ways in which non-arts areas and exam subjects might develop items that reference or include the arts.



## V. Arts in a Global Perspective

The rapidly changing demographic makeup of the United States and the advent of technologies that make it possible to communicate information over vast distances compel us to reassess our participation in a global society. During these opening years of the 21st century, mass media and the global span of technology allow us to sit in our homes and schools and easily observe and communicate with people in distant parts of the world. In a matter of hours, international travel can place us in the far reaches of the planet. Immigration is bringing new populations into our schools and colleges. The NTFAE believes that, as a nation and as a people, we cannot consider ourselves apart from the incredible explosion of global diversity and the crucial philosophical issues that underlie the current challenges brought about by the transforming measures of globalization.

Within the context of these social, technological, economic and educational changes, we should realize that the arts are now experiencing greater marginalization in American schools than nearly a half century ago. Pre-K–12 educators cite many present-day reasons to account for the arts moving from a curricular core to the periphery, including block scheduling, funding cuts, program reductions, reduction in standards of teacher training, and greater emphasis on writing and the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering and math).

As arts practitioners and scholars, we know that the arts in human culture are as pervasive as language. They are not only a conveyor of human thought and experience; they provide an understanding of human creativity and innovation on a global scale. Issues surrounding aesthetics, diversity, identity, race and ethnicity are at the heart of global arts learning opportunities.

The NTFAE defines global art as the folk, traditional and indigenous classical arts outside of the tradition of Western classical tradition; it is the creative expression by human communities throughout the world that is articulated through many expressive disciplines, including music, the visual arts, dance and drama.

As the United States becomes more diverse and our participation in a global economy becomes a national imperative, the NTFAE encourages schools, colleges and universities to provide the means for students to experience and gain an understanding of, and an appreciation for, the arts on a global scale.

The NTFAE has observed that teaching and learning of the global arts are being further marginalized, if not removed altogether from the core of our educational systems. Our research reveals that in the vast majority of U.S. schools, European-derived arts form the foundation for arts education. We need not be apologetic about the pervasiveness and significance of European-derived arts, nor should we position global arts to be in competition with them. We also should not question the necessity to expand students' knowledge of the STEM disciplines. The NTFAE believes that the future of our nation requires our students to be active participants in a global community, and we should educate them to understand and appreciate the arts in a broader global context.

Unfortunately, global arts are rarely, or are minimally, included in the offerings of existing arts programs. Changing demographics, globalization and the need for global learning would seem to encourage changes in this area. Increasingly, educators espouse the fact that our students will live in an ever more global environment. Therefore, the NTFAE advises the use of every means available to us, including global arts, to expose students to the peoples and cultures of the world.

### Integrating Global Arts

One way to encourage global arts in schools is to ensure that they are seen to be inclusionary, a part of the total learning experience. Therefore, the NTFAE recommends integrating a global arts perspective in its programs and services. The task force recommends that the College Board launch a pilot program in College Board Schools to integrate global arts into both arts and non-arts courses. Such integration would be particularly beneficial to student learning in literature, history and language courses. By studying and participating in global arts activities, students would gain a much-needed global literacy.



#### Global Arts and Professional Development

Additionally, the NTFAE recommends using existing College Board professional development workshops and seminars for teachers to advocate for the infusion of global arts into all arts courses. Many music, art and drama courses in our schools are devoid of any reference to similar genres in world cultures. The College Board should start by encouraging the integration of global arts into existing Advanced Placement® courses, including AP Music Theory and Art Studio. Moreover, we encourage the College Board to take an active role in encouraging schools to integrate global arts into all of its arts courses.

#### Promoting Cross-Cultural Exchanges

Finally, Internet social networking websites, such as Facebook and MySpace, offer free, easy access for students to learn what other students and artists in other parts of the globe are doing. The NTFAE therefore recommends establishing a Web-based network for student and teacher “virtual” exchanges to promote cross-cultural education and artistic inspiration in dance, music, theater and the visual arts of diverse cultures from around the world.

Guided by the College Board’s motto of “inspiring minds™,” the NTFAE believes that we should advocate for the development of programs and services that will allow our students to apply their innovative and analytical thinking skills to comprehend the value of global arts. Therefore, we recommend that the College Board do the following:

**5. Ensure that the global arts, which include folk, traditional and indigenous classical arts, are integrated into its programs and services.**

- a. Launch a pilot program in College Board Schools to integrate global arts into both arts and non-arts courses.
- b. Advocate for the infusion of global arts into all arts course offerings using existing College Board professional development workshops and seminars for teachers.
- c. Establish a Web-based network for student-to-student and artist-to-teacher “virtual” exchanges to promote cross-cultural education and artistic inspiration in dance, music, theater and the visual arts of diverse cultures around the globe.



## VI. Professional Artists

Among the set of goals articulated at the first NTFAE meeting in September 2007 were the objectives of engaging a greater number of professional artists in the field of education in the arts, and empowering and educating our existing arts teachers. Engaging professional artists in the classroom is a way to model the importance of the arts and demonstrate career possibilities in the arts to students. Therefore, one of the aims of the NTFAE is to recommend ways that the College Board can actively involve professional artists in its arts programs, advocate for using teaching artists in classrooms and provide practice-based professional development for arts teachers.

We accept the dual premise that comprehension of the content of the arts and traditional teaching skills are equally necessary for teaching the arts. However, we are concerned that professional development for K–12 arts teachers does not always encourage a proficiency and currency in the specific art being taught. College and university arts teachers believe it is minimally necessary to be proficient in both areas; and they are required to be active exhibitors or, in the case of performing artists, active performers. The NTFAE believes that this emphasis on proficiency and activity in the field is a model that could be useful for K–12 arts educators as well.

### Encourage Alternative Certification Processes

As public education is now generally constituted across the nation, teacher certification policies often preclude professional artists from offering their unique skills, perspectives and insights to public school classrooms. The problem is twofold: often, teachers whose proficiency and expertise lie in other areas are assigned to teach the arts, while artists who have the knowledge and experience necessary to provide students with an exceptional arts education are not permitted to do so because they do not have teacher certification. To further illustrate this disparity, we offer the following excerpt from a speech given by Leonard Lehrer, chair of the NTFAE, when we met with the full task force in September of 2008:

*Suppose Colin Powell tires of giving \$100,000-a-pop speeches and wants to teach high school social studies. Suppose Meryl Streep has a hankering to teach drama. Alas, they would be “unqualified” for a public school. Elite private schools would snap them up, of course, but public schools that are begging for teachers would have to turn them away because they don’t have teacher certification. As The Teaching Commission and the Brookings Institution state: “Confusing and cumbersome procedures discourage many talented would-be teachers from entering the classroom.” And, “[r]ather than dig further down in the pool of those willing to consider teacher certification programs or raise class sizes, we need to expand the pool of those eligible to teach.” Colin Powell, Meryl Streep and many anonymous others would dazzle the surliest student, so why continue to bar them from the schoolhouse door?*

When certification becomes an impediment to the students’ access to a meaningful experience in the arts, solutions must be found to remedy the situation. The solution, like the problem, is twofold: strengthen arts education by requiring better practice and professional development in the subject areas, and loosen the constraints of teacher certification. In addition to teaching the technical processes of the arts, arts education must focus on intent, content and subject. As such, there is a genuine need to provide arts teachers with professional development that emphasizes an understanding of the art in question, and that encourages professional engagement in the content area. Further, alternative certification programs that recognize mastery of an arts discipline as a qualification for teacher certification would be a way to broaden the pool of professional artists in the classroom, thereby providing more students with a quality arts education.

### Endorse Collaborative Instructional Models

Many schools and community organizations currently form partnerships to bring professional artists into classrooms. Teaching artists programs pair professional artists with certified classroom teachers to bring the arts into classrooms, both as distinct subjects and as tools to teach cross-curricular subjects. Many of these programs have proven to be hugely successful in improving attendance rates and academic performance in students. Such programs should be researched and recognized as model programs for the arts in education.

### Develop and Disseminate Best Practices

Best practices in the arts, including those that employ professional artists in the classroom, should be collected and disseminated via the College Board’s *Connection* and its Web page. Publishing examples of best practices can help general education teachers gain the tools and knowledge to use the arts in their teaching as well as empower them to find teaching



artist programs that would supplement their lessons by bringing professional artists into the classroom. In addition, offering these materials online would benefit teachers who do not have the funding from their districts or the time to create their own teaching materials, and these materials would serve as supplements for those teachers who do.

We urge the College Board Trustees, following their discussions of this report, to authorize the creation of a group (to be coordinated with the Arts Academic Advisory Committee) to research and endorse programs that successfully address these issues, and that allow for the pairing of those teaching the arts with professional artists. The College Board can work to bridge the gap between the public education establishment and professional artists so that professional artists are recognized as valuable resources to be utilized for the educational improvement and well-being of all students. Below are recommendations for specific ways in which the College Board can play a significant and influential national role in improving arts education through the engagement of professional artists in the classroom:

**6. Promote the engagement of professional artists and scholars in the fields of dance, music, theater and the visual arts in K–16 education.**

- a. Encourage states to adopt alternative certification processes that enable arts professionals to teach in K–12 classrooms.
- b. Endorse instructional models that employ practicing artists in collaboration with certified teachers.
- c. Develop a set of best practices for professional artists regarding instructional approaches and strategies for teaching and learning in today's classrooms.



## VII. Affecting Policy at the National, State and Local Levels

While Barack Obama was running for president of the United States, an Obama arts policy website was developed to explain his policy platform in support of the arts. He is quoted as saying,

*“I want our students learning art and music and science and poetry ... all the things that make an education worthwhile.”*

— Barack Obama, February 9, 2008

The Obama arts policy platform advocates that as a country we —

*“[r]einvest in arts education. To remain competitive in the global economy, America needs to reinvigorate the kind of creativity and innovation that has made this country great. To do so, we must nourish our children’s creative skills.”*

The College Board website states that “the College Board is actively involved in influencing education policy in nearly all of the 50 states. As a result of relationships with key policymakers in many state capitals, the College Board works to support new state policies and initiatives that connect all students to college success.” The College Board is currently involved in affecting education policy through its office in Washington, D.C., and through a variety of policy initiatives, including an effort to increase the number of Americans receiving a postsecondary degree by 2025 and improving the school-to-college transition.

In efforts to reach these goals the College Board provides technical assistance to the states as they seek to:

- Raise academic standards
- Increase course rigor
- Promote educational equity
- Increase teacher and counselor professional development opportunities
- Promote strong Pre-K–16 alliances

The NTFAE believes that the College Board could further these stated goals by increased engagement with, and support for, the arts. As stated throughout this report, rigorous study of the arts promotes creativity and innovative thinking, helps develop character, and promotes responsibility and leadership — all are qualities that will be needed to meet the demands of a 21st-century education. Learning through the arts can provide an alternative for talented students who underperform in learning environments that emphasize verbal and math skills. Research shows that participation in the arts can improve attendance and reduce dropout rates by engaging students in activities that promote community interaction. The College Board can give voice to the importance of a thorough education that includes the arts by affecting policy, building alliances, and advocating directly at the national, state and local levels.

### Policy Challenges

The arts face many obstacles that not only keep them from serving as effective contributors to our children’s education but also threaten to diminish or eliminate the arts from education altogether. One of these obstacles is the most prominent education policy at the national level: the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), commonly known as No Child Left Behind. This federal legislation affects every public school student in the United States. ESEA Title IX, Part A, Section 9101(1) (D) (11) defines the core academic subjects as: “English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history and geography.” Although the arts are included in the definition of these core academic subject areas, the enormous testing requirements that have been assigned to reading, math and science have left little room for the arts. Because the states have not supported assessment in the arts equal to these other subjects, the arts have actually lost ground in the curriculum. In a 2007 study, the Center for Education Policy found that since the enactment of No Child Left Behind, 30 percent of school districts with at least one school identified as needing improvement have decreased instruction time in the arts. This reduction translates to diminished access to the arts, leaving many students without the full benefits of an arts education.



Given the demonstrated potential for the College Board to inform policy decisions, the NTFAE recommends that the College Board use its voice and political influence to help shape reauthorization of ESEA as it pertains to intended learning outcomes affected by curricula, assessment, funding and teacher professional development in arts education. The College Board's endorsement of the arts as a core component of primary and secondary education would deliver a strong message to administrators and legislators who make budgetary decisions on curriculum and support. No other organization has the far-reaching influence on American education that the College Board enjoys. At this critical time in our nation's history, the arts need this powerful voice if they are to survive the downsizings and bankruptcies of our schools and our culture. More significantly, our children need the arts to obtain a complete education, to succeed in their careers and to experience a rich, meaningful life.

### Identifying and Defeating Impediments

The NTFAE believes that methods for arts-based learning are inconsistent. Impediments that prevent opportunity and access to arts education include: school districts nationwide that do not require arts courses for high school graduation, college admittance processes that include a recalculation of students' GPAs with arts courses omitted and major discrepancies among the states' standards for the arts.

To help defeat these impediments higher education institutions should be encouraged to (a) include arts courses in college admission requirements and (b) include arts courses in GPA calculations. If higher education institutions demonstrate that arts are valued in these ways, high schools across the nation will be motivated to put more emphasis on course work in the arts. The Academic Assembly Council could help launch this move through a series of talking points at the regional forums via specific sessions and at workshops aimed at and attended by administrators and policymakers. The inclusion of arts courses in GPA calculations identifies them as distinct subjects and raises the level of the arts to that of other traditional academic subjects that tend to be given higher priority, especially when it comes to state and national testing.

### Providing Leadership in Policy-Making Initiatives Affecting K–16 Arts Education

Reforming education in and through the arts will require significant advocacy by a broad constituency with maximum credibility. The College Board and its member organizations are positioned to advocate at the policy-making level for placing the arts at the core of education by including the arts in initiatives related to college readiness, teacher professional development and curriculum design.

Additionally, the College Board could brief legislators in regard to the release of the National Task Force on the Arts in Education report to increase awareness of how students benefit from an education with the arts at the core. Key legislators, members of the Congressional Arts Caucus, collaborating organizations and educators could join College Board leaders and members of the task force for the briefing, possibly on a date to coincide with Arts Advocacy Day, which is sponsored by Americans for the Arts.

The College Board should survey its internal and external education advocacy strategies for how they can influence arts education policies and promote the arts in education in the context of the vision set forth in this report. The following recommendations offer specific strategies for how the College Board can move forward in this effort:

#### **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.**

- a. Use the College Board's advocacy resources to help shape reauthorization of ESEA as it pertains to learning outcomes in the arts, such as curriculum, assessment, teacher professional development and funding for the arts in education.
- b. Provide leadership on arts requirements for high school core curricula, high school graduation requirements, and college and university admission requirements in the arts (including arts courses in GPA calculations), working with regional accrediting agencies. Wherever possible, the arts should include the four major disciplines: dance, music, theater and the visual arts.
- c. Advocate for the inclusion of the arts in major external and internal policy-making initiatives affecting K–16 education.



## VIII. Building Partnerships

In fall 2008, the 50 national leaders in the arts and education who make up the NTFAE met in New York City to discuss the state of education and the role the arts can play in building a stronger, reformed system. The NTFAE steering committee also invited more than 24 representatives of national organizations for a follow-up meeting in January 2009 in Charleston, S.C. Some of the represented organizations were: Americans for the Arts, International Council of Fine Arts Deans, National Art Education Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, College Music Society and National Office for Arts Accreditation.

As a result of these and other significant meetings and discussions over the past two years, the NTFAE has made substantial progress in enlisting the cooperation of many leaders of these national and state education and arts organizations who are willing to partner with the College Board on this important mission. In fact, these leaders have already begun activities within their own organizations to further our mutual cause, and they are awaiting reciprocal action from our task force and the College Board. Our hope is that existing College Board offices, committees and programs, including the Office of Academic Initiatives and the Arts Academic Advisory Committee, will adopt policies to expand and solidify connections with these organizations that share our interests and goals so that in the future we can continue to work toward positive collaborative efforts.

On this point we agree: The need for education reform is dire, but the scope is so far reaching that no organization can do the work alone. Many national, state and local organizations have been heavily involved in arts education for decades. The College Board, as a partner in this effort, has the membership and national influence to magnify the effects of this movement.

### Provide Information and Promote Community Partnerships

Because of the growing tension between federal and local governance regarding education reform, it has become increasingly important to facilitate community-based advocacy. Affecting policy decisions related to the underserved populations — wherever they exist — could best be accomplished by working through the College Board's member institutions. Given its vast institutional membership network, which touches nearly every community, the College Board is positioned to share information through this infrastructure to inform arts education advocacy at the community level.

The NTFAE dedicated a significant component of this report to articulating the benefits of providing arts experiences for underserved populations. Member institutions partnering directly with community-based organizations in underserved areas are the most efficient means to promote quality arts education for this constituency. In addition, the College Board should make a special effort to include sessions at its annual and regional meetings that showcase effective member institution/community partnerships. These panels should address issues that pertain to ways of providing arts experiences and arts education to underserved populations.

### Build Partnerships: Share Resources and Change Policy Goals in Arts Education

Substantive education reform will require sustained alliances with a broad constituency. Some states are beginning to study and implement new 21st-century learning goals that span many subject areas in order to prepare students for success in the future. The Arts Education Partnership (AEP) has identified 21 states with 21st-century learning initiatives. These initiatives generally focus on the need for greater emphasis on creativity, innovation, communication, collaboration and technology for a thorough education. Partnering with the AEP would provide an opportunity for the College Board to work with those states interested in developing similar initiatives.

As stated throughout this report, the NTFAE believes that placing the arts at the core of learning is a key component of education reform in the 21st century. A number of credible national organizations have a long history of working to improve the quality of arts education in efforts to move the arts to the core of education. This existing infrastructure, spearheaded by organizations such as the Arts Education Partnership and Americans for the Arts, provides opportunities for the College Board to collaborate. The NTFAE suggests that the policy/advocacy staffs of the College Board, Americans for the Arts and AEP set up meetings to discuss how, through an alliance between these organizations, a shared national agenda could be forged and what vehicles might be created for implementing the task force's recommendations. These organizations, along with other arts education professional organizations, will be stronger if they share resources, research and venues to advocate for quality arts education programs throughout the United States.

Many of the arts and education organizations in the U.S. are represented on the task force and/or have provided significant input in this report. Several task force members currently serve in leadership positions in these organizations and have



found ways to make important connections. These alliances would be strengthened if the College Board used its influence and resources to become a full partner in advocating for all students to have access to high-quality arts programs as part of their K–16 education.

#### Promote Alliances with Global Artists

Earlier in this report we explained the need for the College Board to integrate global arts into arts and non-arts courses, to promote global arts in professional development workshops and seminars, and to develop cross-cultural exchanges via the Internet. However, arts that derive from other world regions, including folk, traditional, non-Western or ethnographic, are often neglected or given short shrift in our schools because it is often assumed that teachers are not trained to provide these specialized studies. However, the NTFAE believes that the resources which are clearly present in our midst are not being fully utilized. For example, global artists who live in our communities are not being called to introduce their many processes of creativity that contribute to the cultural world. The NTFAE believes that an effective way of integrating global arts in 21st-century learning is to incorporate locally based global artists into our schools.

Locally based global artists can provide first-hand experiences on the creative processes from around the world while highlighting the need for preserving world heritages and stimulating cultural vitality and diversity in K–16 education. The concept of visiting artist or artist-in-residence has long been a title of distinction in colleges, universities, conservatories and museums. In these instances, these artists expose students to trends and styles in the arts to which they are only rarely exposed during the normal course of instruction.

The NTFAE proposes that the College Board apply the same concept on a broader level to take advantage of the rich resources global artists can bring to classrooms and studios. Who are these global artists and where do we find them? Global artists reside in communities throughout the nation; they are dancers, musicians, designers, photographers, singers and painters whose special gifts and talents derive from global cultures. They are often practicing artists who are willing to impart their skills and knowledge to students. They may be the relatives of the students and faculties who make up our schools' diverse classrooms and workplaces. They may be professional artists or highly skilled hobbyists who maintain a particular global artistic tradition. They are found in local communities in ethnic restaurants, folk and art centers, museums, playhouses, churches, synagogues and mosques. These global artists can create the critical context for the presentation and appreciation of the arts from around the world.

The opportunities for such educational and artistic interactions are endless — for example, a Hispanic trumpet player explaining the Mexican mariachi tradition, a *Hardingfele* (fiddle) player demonstrating various styles common to Norwegian folk dances or an African sculptor explaining the ritual significance of a mask. Many other artists can elucidate diverse aspects of global arts.

Model visiting artists and artist-in-residence programs exist throughout the country among College Board member institutions. Sharing these programs through the College Board's vast Web-based communications network will provide an opportunity for member institutions to have easy access to global artists, and provide students and teachers with new cross-cultural experiences as well as the opportunity to peer into the globalized world through the arts.

Through its regional structure the College Board is in a position to mobilize its vast membership, and to use this membership's diverse resources to take action toward promoting the place of the arts in education. In addition, we urge the College Board to continue to build alliances with like-minded arts and education institutions to support the arts in K–16 education as outlined below:

#### **8. Initiate and sustain alliances with arts and education organizations to develop collaborations that support the arts in K–16 education.**

- a. Provide information to its member institutions in order to promote partnerships with community organizations that provide arts experiences and education to underserved populations.
- b. Initiate and sustain alliances with arts and education organizations in order to share resources, research results and policy goals on arts education.
- c. Promote opportunities for global artists who reside in our communities to participate in arts education programs and activities.



## Conclusion

### Centralizing Knowledge and Information

In today's fast paced, highly technological world, the Internet is often the first place that people look for information on organizations. A Web page is an important marketing and communication tool for any organization or initiative. At the present, there is minimal commitment to arts programs at the College Board and those that are offered are embedded in the Web pages of other programs, making it hard for the public to find them. Throughout this report — and embedded within our recommendations — we have suggested that the College Board create an online presence for the arts in the form of a Web page with a proposed title of “Arts at the Core.” The College Board has spent considerable time and effort engaging in a dialogue and soliciting advice from its membership as well as from leaders of high profile arts and education organizations. Establishing an “Arts at the Core” Web page is a cost-effective way of demonstrating the College Board's continued commitment to this valued effort. A Web page would also provide a means to continue the College Board's alignments with these important organizations and to communicate with, and update the College Board membership on, arts programming after the conclusion of the task force's work.

The Web page would serve as a central location to share and promote the task force's findings and recommendations, communicate with the College Board membership about the arts, and continue to build alliances with prominent educational and arts organizations and institutions. In addition, if more arts initiatives are developed as a result of the recommendations in this report, the Web page will serve to bring this new programming, as well as the College Board's current arts offerings, to the fore.

The College Board can become the hub that links the multiple national and regional arts education organizations. As the conduit for promoting and communicating the centrality of the arts in education nationwide, the College Board can help train principals in ways their teachers can use the arts to enrich their curricula through dissemination of personal examples and videos. With the College Board as the hub, consistency among states' standards will develop and attention to the standards will increase, enabling principals who might not approve programs that are otherwise not tied to states standards to become more cognizant of them. Colleges will evaluate applicants' arts experience more critically in their admission processes; and best practices for arts education, developed by members of the multiple arts education organizations, can be shared more readily.

### Connecting Students and Teachers

The NTFAE also believes that this Web page might serve as the best conduit for students' input and participation in the College Board's arts programming. Today's students use multiple electronic devices — to talk to each other, to receive and share information and ideas, to write their musical scores and produce their digital photographs, and even to receive their lesson plans from their teachers. Setting up an “Arts at the Core” Web page would connect students directly to the College Board, to their teachers and to one another.

Teachers could learn from the model programs that would be represented on the website, as well as communicate with one another through the message boards or chat rooms. Short Web clips can allow teachers to see best practices in the classroom and view student work. The Levine Production Group has created an arts education video series, and the NTFAE recommends that the College Board stream these workshops on the College Board Web page. This collaboration has the potential to become the core of a workshop on arts education at a regional or national College Board forum.

The vision of 21st-century learning includes an emphasis on creativity and innovation. A Web page that exhibits the College Board's commitment to arts and creativity would strengthen the College Board's image and relevance as a leading educational organization. This Web page also would strengthen the College Board's image by demonstrating that it is not exclusively a product-driven organization. The College Board is concerned with advancing the educational opportunities of underserved student populations. As stated throughout this report, evidence continually shows that the arts improve success rates of at-risk student populations. Therefore, advocating for and supporting the arts in education is relevant to the College Board's mission to connect *all* students to college success. Establishing an “Arts at the Core” Web page that communicates the College Board's efforts in the arts strengthens the image of the College Board as an organization whose reach expands beyond its products.



## Arts at the Core

### Recommendations for Advancing the State of Arts Education in the 21st Century

In the modern age, we have little choice but to engage in continuous improvement to our educational system to meet the demands of the ever-changing world around us. Throughout this report, the NTFAE advocates for a reassessment of the pedagogies, practices and curricula pathways used in classrooms in order to integrate more effectively the arts into education. The report bears out the NTFAE's basic premise that the arts should serve students' needs and aspirations and that professional development programs for teachers should embrace the arts.

A common set of themes held true during the NTFAE's deliberations: K–16 schools must continue to reassess their educational mission, the priorities they set and their current resource allocations to provide a more substantial basis for the furtherance of the arts in education; and placing the arts at the core of education requires the mobilization of a broad range of stakeholders, both inside and outside of the halls of learning. Implementation and enactment of the task force's eight recommendations require the collective knowledge and experience of key collaborators; these joint efforts will serve to identify the obvious barriers and provide the necessary solutions to the curricular imbalances that exist in our educational systems. Change is difficult, but it is necessary to enhance and improve our students' exposure to and participation in the arts, and to ensure their educational success.

As stated throughout this report, studies by psychologists and neuroscientists have revealed that arts can have a persistent effect on the cognitive development in children. Other research findings acknowledge that the arts contribute to students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which carry over into their performance in other academic areas — namely, the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) disciplines. Therefore, the arts in schools must be a part of strategic plans that seek depth and breadth in the curriculum. Motivated by that fact, the NTFAE took an approach to its work that focuses on the benefits and opportunities the arts contribute to the learning experiences of all students.

There is yet another dimension of arts learning to consider. In the broader scheme of things, our schools must also serve to nurture the talents of those students who excel in the arts, those who show extraordinary creative skills and will use their school arts experiences to launch them into the ranks of professionals. A cursory survey of today's highly acclaimed dancers, musicians, visual artists and theatrical performers will reveal that many became interested in and displayed artistic skills while they were students. Having our schools prepared to serve the aspiration of all students constitutes the major reasons this report focuses on the professional development of teachers, the integration of the arts across the curriculum and, by all means, the interests, creative skills and artistic aspirations of our students.

The NTFAE did not venture deeply into the philosophical and theoretical aspects of the arts in human life. However, it must be stressed that the concepts and aesthetics which are deeply embedded in the arts are essential in students' sense of themselves and of others, and may provide the moral bases for the manner in which they negotiate their paths in this ever-increasingly globalized world. A balanced educational experience, which includes the arts, is one that prepares our students to live as productive members of society.

The content and recommendations contained in this report emerged from the thoughtful and engaging conversations with the dozens of arts and education leaders invited to the task force meetings in 2008 and 2009, and from the NTFAE inquiries and discussions over the past two years. We hope they will provide the Board of Trustees and others with a framework for moving the arts in education agenda forward. The College Board has the ability, the influence and the programmatic structure to carry these messages to a national and international level.



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## Appendix A



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

August 2009

Dear School and Education Community Leaders:

At this time when you are making critical and far-reaching budget and program decisions for the upcoming school year, I write to bring to your attention the importance of the arts as a core academic subject and part of a complete education for all students. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) defines the arts as a core subject, and the arts play a significant role in children's development and learning process.

In June, we received the 2008 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in the Arts results for music and visual arts. I was reminded of the important role that arts education plays in providing American students with a well-rounded education. The arts can help students become tenacious, team-oriented problem solvers who are confident and able to think creatively. These qualities can be especially important in improving learning among students from economically disadvantaged circumstances. However, recent NAEP results found that only 57 percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders attended schools where music instruction was offered at least three or four times a week, and only 47 percent attended schools where visual arts were offered that often.

Under ESEA, states and local school districts have the flexibility to support the arts. Title I, Part A of ESEA funds arts education to improve the achievement of disadvantaged students. Funds under Title II of ESEA can be used for professional development of arts teachers as well as for strategic partnerships with cultural, arts, and other nonprofit organizations. In addition, the Department's Arts in Education program supports grants for model program development and dissemination and for professional development for arts educators. Moreover, local school districts can use funds under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for the arts along with other district expenses.

Because of the importance of the arts in a well-rounded curriculum, the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) plans to undertake a survey to assess the condition of arts education in grades K-12. This fall, elementary and secondary principals will be asked about their schools' offerings in music, dance, theater, and visual arts. Next spring, NCES will survey elementary classroom teachers as well as



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music and visual arts specialists at the elementary and secondary levels about their programs and resources. In early 2011, the Department expects to begin reporting findings from this comprehensive profile, the first since the 1999-2000 school year. This data will help practitioners and policymakers make more informed decisions about arts education.

We encourage you to visit the Department's Web site for arts education at <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/programs.html> to learn more about our grant programs and find resources to meet the challenges ahead. Together, we can and should do better for America's students.

Sincerely,

/s/

Arne Duncan



## Appendix B

### Merging the Arts and History: Sample Lesson Ideas

Below are a few examples of how the arts can be used to improve teaching and learning across the curriculum to underline the assertion that the arts should be seen as core subjects:

- The art of the Dutch masters includes hundreds of scenes of everyday activities that both illustrate and add to our understanding of daily life in the Netherlands in the 17th century. Using words alone is akin to presenting this material in only two dimensions, whereas the same words accompanied by paintings, with students describing and analyzing what they are viewing, gives the presentation a captivating third dimension.
- At the turn of the 18th century, the illustrations and written insights and analyses of Maria Sibylla Merian provided the visual and scientific foundation for what is known about insect metamorphosis.
- The martial music of the Janissary corps of the Ottoman Empire not only introduced to the West the powerful role that music can play in military engagements but also listening to a selection of this music while studying the history of the period brings that history to life inside one's head as nothing else can. Similarly, Krzysztof Penderecki's "Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima" adds a powerful — if screeching — dimension to photographs of what happened to one Japanese city on August 6, 1945.
- Students acting out scenes from Moliere's *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (a comedy-ballet) will learn about the mores and permutations of middle-class life in France's *Ancien régime*, just as those who act out scenes from Karel Capek's *R.U.R.* will discover both the fears their 20th-century ancestors had about automation and whether those fears were justified from our 21st-century perspective.
- And being introduced to dances, music and costumes from around the globe speaks to the universality of artistic expression and to the way culture can serve as a bridge to what otherwise often sets us human beings apart

For further examples of how the arts and history are merged successfully in the classroom, see Robert Blackey, "To Illuminate History: Making History Picture-Perfect," *Teaching History: A Journal of Methods* (Fall 2005): 59–71.



## Appendix C

### DRAFT PROPOSAL: An International Arts Exchange

**The College Board's National Task Force on the Arts in Education proposes the following:**

Given the complexities of our globalized world, a greater understanding between cultures is crucial to a civilized future, everyone's future. The NTFAE proposes a variation on a proven course of action, one that has been utilized several times in our modern era: the use of the arts as a vehicle for bringing cultures together. While this is not a new concept, this proposal differs in this regard — the artists are not professionals, they are secondary school students who would be selected by the College Board from throughout the United States.

Exhibitions by AP art students would travel throughout the world and be accompanied by student spokespersons, an AP teacher and a college-level teacher; music performances, including instrumentalists and vocal groups, would be scheduled in a similar fashion. Programs also would be presented via existing video documents, etc., that would put on display and communicate the length and breadth of the arts in our educational system.

To complement this program, the College Board would arrange to host a variety of equivalent groups from countries throughout the world. In this fashion, the arts, especially at this level, could have a genuine role in shaping the future of international cultural understanding. We also believe this would have an enormous impact on all U.S. students in realizing that what they produce/learn in their arts courses is seen as a vital component of the future of *all* students, and *all* cultures. As a result, the College Board would be seen as a most innovative leader in giving enlightened shape to our future through the spirit of the arts.

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



## Appendix D

**Between September 2007 and August 2009, the steering committee for the National Task Force on the Arts in Education held a total of 10 meetings with the aim of setting strategy and delineating a course of action for the preparation of the NTFAE recommendations to the College Board's Board of Trustees. The following is a summary of the steering committee's strategy meetings:**

September 2007	Initial strategy meeting and formation of steering committee (Chicago)
December 2007	Setting the national agenda for the NTFAE (New York)
January 2008	Formation of national task force members (Tempe, Ariz.)
March 2008	Setting topics for meeting with national task force members (New York)
June 2008	Setting strategy for national task force meeting (Ann Arbor, Mich.)
July 2008	Setting strategy for national task force meeting and forming partnerships with arts organizations (Seattle)
August 2008	Setting strategies for national task force meeting (Chicago)
November 2008	Setting the national agenda, preparing for meeting with organizations (Chicago)
May 2009	Developing NTFAE recommendations (Chicago)
August 2009	Review of NTFAE recommendations and report (Ann Arbor)

### **Meetings of the NTFAE, Arts and Education Organizations, and Small Working Groups**

October 2008	Kick-off meeting of the 50-member NTFAE (New York)
January 2009	Meeting of arts and education organizations (Charleston, S.C.)
February 2009	NTFAE small working groups (Dallas)
March 2009	NTFAE small working groups (New York)

### **NTFAE Panels at College Board Events**

July 2008	AP Annual Conference (Seattle)
November 2008	College Board National Forum (Houston)
February 2009	College Board Midwestern Regional Forum (Chicago)
July 2009	AP Annual Conference (San Antonio)

### **NTFAE Outreach (steering committee members' participation in arts organizations' major conferences)**

May 2008	New World School of the Arts, Miami Dade College (Florida)
March 2009	State of the Arts Conference (Raleigh, N.C.)
May 2009	National Art Education Association (Minneapolis)
June 2009	Americans for the Arts and SCASS (Seattle)
October 2009	Arts Education Partnership Forum (Boston)
December 2009	National Staff Development Council (St. Louis)



## Appendix E

### The National Task Force on the Arts in Education:

#### Steering Committee

**Lester P. Monts**, Chair, NTFAE Steering Committee, and Senior Vice 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**, Goodwin's Art Consulting, Columbia, S.C., and Educational Consultant in the Arts

**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

#### Members

**Walter Askin**, Professor Emeritus, California State University, Los Angeles

**Jane Bonbright**, Executive Director, National Dance Education Organization

**Colleen Callahan-Russell**, Program Director and Dance Instructor, Minneapolis Public Schools

**Gene R. Carter**, Executive Director and CEO, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

**Robert Chambers**, Sculptor

**Laura Chapman**, Art Educator and Writer

**Libby Lai-Bun Chiu**, Senior Advisor for Learning Initiatives, Illinois Arts Council

**Roderick Chu**, Chancellor Emeritus, Ohio Board of Regents

**Elmer Craig**, Sculptor

**Sarah Bainter Cunningham**, Director of Arts Education, National Endowment for the Arts

**Jack Davis**, Director, North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts, University of North Texas

**Richard Deasy**, Past Director, The Arts Education Partnership

**Aaron Dworkin**, President, The Sphinx Organization

**Janeil Englestad**, Curator

**Kathryn Ervin**, Professor of Theater, California State University, San Bernardino

**Linda Essig**, Director, School of Theatre and Film, Herberger College of the Arts

**Andrea Feeser**, Associate Professor of Art History, Clemson University

**James B. Gardner**, Associate Director, Office of Curatorial Affairs, The Smithsonian

**Michael Geisen**, 2008 National Teacher of the Year

**Margot Greenlee**, Dancer and Education Coordinator, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange

**Henry Grillo**, Professor, University of North Carolina School of the Arts

**Doug Herbert**, Special Assistant for Teacher Quality and Arts Education, U.S. Department of Education

**Wade Hobgood**, Dean, Peck School of the Arts, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

**Tom Horne**, Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Arizona

**Bill Jeter**, Studio Art Instructor, Perpich Center for Arts Education

**Jonathan Katz**, CEO, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

**Maghan Keita**, Professor of African, World, Class and Gendered Histories, Villanova University

**Gerald Klickstein**, Professor, North Carolina School of the Arts

**Carolyn Lindley**, Director of Financial Aid, Northwestern University

**Robin Lithgow**, Elementary Arts Coordinator, Los Angeles Unified School District

**John Mahlmann**, Executive Director, Music Educators National Conference

**Luis Martínez-Fernández**, Professor of History, University of Central Florida

**Eileen Mason**, Senior Deputy Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts

**Patty Mitchell**, Founder and Consultant, Passion Works Studio

**Winnie Owens-Hart**, Ceramics Professor, Howard University

**Michael Peitz**, Executive Director, Educational Theatre Association



## Arts at the Core

### Recommendations for Advancing the State of Arts Education in the 21st Century

**Andrea Peterson**, 2007 National Teacher of the Year

**Terry Peterson**, Chair, National Afterschool Alliance

**Betsy Quinn**, President, American Alliance for Theatre and Education

**Deborah Reeve**, Executive Director, National Art Education Association

**Sandra Ruppert**, Director, Arts Education Partnership

**Maitlon T. Russell**, Co-Founder and Principal, The Melior Group

**Mary Sherman**, Founder and Director, TransCultural Exchange

**David Silver**, Chief Accountability Officer, Rochester City School District

**Pat Smith**, Counselor Adviser, Hillsborough County Public Schools, Florida

**John Stollar**, Associate Superintendent of Accountability, State of Arizona Department of Education

**Robert Strickland**, Administrative Director, Office of Professional Development and Educational Services, Miami-Dade County Public Schools

**Allen Turner**, Chairman of the Board, Columbia College Board of Trustees, Chicago

**Chauncey Veatch**, 2002 National Teacher of the Year

**James Whaley**, President, Siemens Foundation

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

**Gene Wilhoit**, Executive Director, Council of Chief State School Officers

**Alex Zukas**, Professor of History, National University, San Diego

#### College Board Staff

**Dorothy Sexton**, Vice President and Secretary of the Corporation

**Nancy Rubino**, Director, Office of Academic Initiatives, College Readiness Products

**Wendy Free**, Associate Director, Content Development Arts, Advanced Placement

**Erica Saleh**, Program Assistant, Office of Academic Initiatives, College Readiness Products

#### Other Participants

**Desdemona Rios**, Doctoral Candidate, Psychology & Women's Studies, University of Michigan

**Jennifer Young Yim**, Director, Global Scholars Pilot Program, Program on Intergroup Relations, University of Michigan



## Appendix F

The NTFAE consulted with the following arts and education organizations:

**Afterschool Alliance**

Terry Peterson, Chairman of the Board

**Americans for the Arts**

Robert Lynch, President and CEO

**American Federation of Teachers**

Dalia Zabala, Senior Associate, Educational Issues

**Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development**

Valerie Truesdale, President

**Association of Teaching Artists**

Dale Davis, Executive Director

**Beaufort County School District**

Margaret Rushton, Fine Arts Coordinator

**College Art Association**

Michael Fahlund, Deputy Director

**The College Music Society**

Maud Hickey, Member, Executive Board

**Council of Chief State School Officers**

Frank Philip, Director

**International Council on Fine Arts Deans**

Peter Alexander, Chair, ICFAD Arts in Education Task Force

**The Kennedy Center**

Amy Duma, Director, Teacher and School Programs

**National Art Education Association**

Deborah Reeve, Executive Director

**National Association of Elementary School Principals**

Gail Connelly, Executive Director

**National Association of Secondary School Principals**

Josephine Franklin, Associate Director, Research and Information Resources

**National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts**

Jonathan Herman, Executive Director

**National Association for Arts Accreditation**

Samuel Hope, Executive Director

**South Carolina Arts Alliance**

Scott Shanklin-Peterson, President

**State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education**

Linda Lovins, Vice President

Ana Cardona, Past President