



Links & Threads

A Newsletter for Arts Partners Published by the Ohio Arts Council and the Ohio Department of Education **Volume III Issue II**

Links and Threads is an electronic newsletter for district and school leaders, educators and their arts partners. Its purpose is to assist in making arts learning a more integral part of the core curriculum and achieving the greatest advantage possible from the arts for students. The publication builds upon knowledge gained through the 2004 NEA Summer Institute for School Leaders, promotes dialogue about the role of arts learning in school improvement, shares success stories and provides news about arts-related developments and opportunities.

Leadership Voices

Rural Schools Defy Size and Geography

Think “extraordinary arts education partnerships.” Chances are a big city school district will come to mind. After all, big cities and the arts go together. But what about small rural schools situated an hour or more away from the nearest urban center?

After exploring ideas with artists at Ohio’s *Promoting Creativity* conference in October, three Ohio schools are showing that size and location need not limit opportunities for K-12 educators to work with the arts community.

Mississinawa Makes Its Mark

An Arts Partners team from Mississinawa Valley Elementary School (Mississinawa Valley School District) went to the *Promoting Creativity* conference looking for an idea. After talking with percussionist Eric Paton and seeing the Dublin Taiko Student Group demonstrate traditional Japanese taiko drumming, the team began planning a taiko workshop immediately.

The school’s size and rural location played a major role in the decision.

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Percussionist Eric Paton taught students at Mississinawa Valley Elementary School the art of Japanese taiko drumming. Students made the drums before learning the rhythms and techniques.

Partnerships

Today’s arts teaching workforce includes “classroom teachers, arts specialists, teaching artists, higher education faculty and members of arts and cultural institutions who provide arts instruction,” stated the Arts Education Partnership’s Higher Education Task Force. When all work together, diverse and powerful learning opportunities for students result.

This issue highlights partnerships in three West Central Ohio sites participating in Ohio’s Arts Partners Program. These districts and the state’s other eight Arts Partners sites work with artists and arts organizations to improve student learning and teacher professional development in the arts.

The program itself is a partnership: The National Endowment for the Arts, the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Arts Council all provide resources and support.

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“It’s hard to compete with larger school districts in sports and band,” says Principal Lisa Wendel. “We wanted something unique. We also liked the idea of exposing rural kids to another culture.”

Paton, a musician and educator specializing in percussion from around the world, spent two days working at the school with music teachers, a classroom teacher, the principal and a group of 15 fifth- and sixth-graders. Students first stretched rawhide over large drainage tubes to make their own drums while Paton taught them the history of taiko and its role in Japanese culture. Then they began learning the highly disciplined rhythms and positions of taiko.

“We selected students for the group based on their rhythmic abilities rather than on their academic performance,” says Wendel. “With this experience, students practiced twice a week and became more motivated and disciplined.” She noted that one boy who was always an uninterested student assumed a leading role in the group and even started teaching himself Japanese.

Mississinawa Valley Elementary has been recommended for funding for a two-week residency with Eric Paton through the OAC Artist in Residence Program for 2007-2008. Wendel says lessons will include some more advanced taiko rhythms, as well as physical education components to address the muscle coordination required in taiko stances.

Miami View Adds Jazz to Learning

In a small community that has lost music teachers due to budget cuts, Miami View Elementary School (Southeastern Local School District) used an arts partnership to keep high-quality music experiences a part of students’ lives. Dr. Sara Suver, the school’s principal, worked with Judy Shafer, director of education for the Jazz Arts Group of Columbus, to plan a two-month artist residency project with jazz artists from the Greater Columbus Arts Council (GCAC). She says the Arts Partners grant, combined with support from the GCAC, enabled Miami View to create a sustained, high-quality arts learning experience.

Two groups of teaching artists—American Jazz Experience and Jazz for Kids—performed at school assemblies, conducted classroom workshops for preK through grade 8 and provided a professional development session for the entire faculty. The teaching artists worked with the district’s middle school band, culminating in an evening performance for families that featured both students and professional artists. Also, teachers took 180 fourth- through sixth-graders to the Southern Theatre in Columbus to see a performance by the Columbus Jazz Orchestra.

“The teaching artists were phenomenal,” says Suver. “They taught students about the history of jazz and explained its structure and components. It was interesting to see how they made the same concepts discussed in the teacher professional development session understandable for the preK and kindergarten students. And the kids were like sponges. When the artists returned for the second workshop, the kids remembered what they had learned in the previous session.”

Botkins Art Students Build Community

An Arts Partners grant enabled Botkins High School (Botkins Local School District) to offer a five-week watercolor workshop with Jane Paul Angelhart, a nationally known portrait artist. Angelhart worked with students on their individual projects, demonstrating her

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Jazz musicians showed Miami View Elementary students the power of their art form.

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techniques for painting realistic watercolor portraits. Visual art teacher Dan Knepper says working with Angelhart motivated students to invest more time and energy in their art. The resulting paintings reflected the extra effort.

Providing such extended opportunities to work with accomplished artists is one aspect of Knepper's larger strategy—exposing students to the world of working artists. He also works with business and community partners to broaden students' experiences in the arts marketplace. Community groups have invited students to paint murals in various locations. One class painted surfboards and later presented them to the Beach Boys. Another group joined students in band, choir and a technology class to create a video for a contest sponsored by Pizza Hut—an experience in the interdisciplinary creative work often demanded in today's job market.

Botkins students who are members of Something Creative, the school's creative arts organization, will soon participate in another real world challenge—helping to host the first annual Botkins Sculpture Invitational, to be held July 28-29. The exhibition will feature over 50 artists from all over the country.



Dan Knepper and his students pose with the Beach Boys after painting surfboards for them.

(See www.botkinssculpture.com.)

Community leaders are excited about the possibilities, says Village Administrator Michael VanBrocklin. "Yes, activities like the sculpture exhibition are a great way to generate commerce and market the community. But that's not the point," he says. "The arts have a benefit beyond the economic value. Rather than viewing the arts as a luxury, we should incorporate them into the fabric of the community."

Artist Residencies: Powerful and Possible

Teaching artists are professional artists who share their skills in a classroom setting. As artists in residence, they work with arts educators and classroom teachers over an extended period, co-developing lessons, demonstrating their craft and sharing teaching duties.

Artist residencies build relationships. They provide opportunities for students not only to see artworks and attend performances but also to learn about the artistic context and process by interacting and working with artists.

The Ohio Arts Council's Artist in Residence program helps schools make the most of this powerful form of arts learning by inviting qualified artists in the areas of creative writing, dance, design, music, theater, traditional arts and visual arts to apply for support. The OAC chooses only artists with a solid record of accomplishment, a plan for sharing their work and teaching about their art form and an eagerness to work with teachers and students.

The annual *Promoting Creativity Conference*, sponsored by the Ohio Arts Council and Ohio Department of Education, provides opportunities for school leaders to explore the power of artist residencies. Watch for updates on the OAC Web site.

Grants and Support

OAC Artist in Residence grants can help schools by funding two-thirds of an artist's fee.

March 1 is the annual deadline for grant applications.

Go to the OAC Web site at www.oac.state.oh.us to view grant guidelines, a searchable directory of Ohio teaching artists and the OAC's *Arts Learning Residency Handbook*.

The handbook provides valuable information about artist residencies, as well as guidelines for planning and proposal development.

Learning Links

Need to learn more? These Web sites are valuable resources:

Arts Education Partnership

www.aep-arts.org

Select "Resources" then "Research" for a list of important arts education research compendia, including *Critical Links* and *Champions of Change*.

American Music Conference

www.amc-music.org

Select "Music Research" to see lists of studies that refer to the value of music learning.

New York Academy of Sciences

www.nyas.org

Select "ebriefings" then "Browse All." One of the most popular briefing papers is "From Mirror Neurons to the Mona Lisa: Visual Art and the Brain."

James Catterall

www.gseis.ucla.edu

Select "Faculty" then Catterall's name to get to some of his recent papers about the cognitive, social and emotional impact of learning in the arts.

Americans for the Arts

www.americansforthearts.org/public_awareness/

Select "The Facts" to access a list of bullet points related to impacts of arts education. The site also includes free pdfs that advocates can use in newsletters, posters and other advocacy campaign activities.

MuSICA Research Notes

www.musica.uci.edu

Readable commentary and analysis on how music impacts learning and behavior. Authored by University of California neurobiologist Norman M. Weinberger.

Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts

www.cedfa.org

Select "Strengthen Fine Arts Programs" then "Program Support" to search for studies suggesting links between arts learning and other achievement areas. You can search by arts disciplines and subject areas.

The Art of Improvement *Why Arts Advocacy?*

The last issue of *Links & Threads* explored the "how" question of arts education advocacy: How can schools communicate the value of arts education? But as school board members, superintendents and principals search for ways to stretch already strained budgets, another question may arise: Why? With so many demands on resources, why are efforts to sustain and strengthen arts education important?

As a committed arts advocate, you regularly highlight the intrinsic value of arts learning—its role in preserving heritage, enriching culture and strengthening the human spirit. But in hard times, short-term thinking often rules.

When decision makers are struggling with the realities of doing more with less, arts education advocates must portray arts learning not only as intrinsically valuable but also as integral to the overall improvement agenda.

Just the Facts

In today's world of testing and accountability, the big question school leaders are asking arts advocates is, "Would time and money spent on high-quality arts programs help improve standardized test results? Can the arts help narrow achievement gaps in reading and math and raise graduation rates?"

Here is some background information for responding:

- 1) Establishing causal links between student outcomes and *any* educational practice or condition is difficult at the programmatic or curricular level. However, scholars have documented gains in standardized reading and math results among groups of students receiving high-quality arts instruction. A number of the schools studied served economically disadvantaged and academically at-risk students.
- 2) Neuroscience researchers have established that music-making exercises the same neural pathways that govern mathematical reasoning and pattern recognition, resulting in changes to the brain's size and organization. They are actively testing the hypothesis that music learning can enhance cognitive abilities. Moreover, a number of education studies indicate that children provided with music instruction score higher than control groups on the type of spatial-temporal reasoning important in math and science.
- 3) Assessment results from several projects suggest strong correlations between arts learning and math and reading achievement in the early grades. For example, in eight Rhode Island schools, first-graders who had lagged behind in kindergarten were given ongoing music and visual arts training. After seven months, they caught up to their classmates in

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OAC Update *Meet the New Arts Learning Director*

Jeff Hooper of West Liberty, Ohio, joins the Ohio Arts Council as director of Arts Learning. The playwright, teaching artist and seasoned arts manager brings not only a wealth of experience but also a deep appreciation for Ohio's culture and its communities.

Hooper's accomplishments include founding Ohio's only rural professional theater company, the Mad River Theater Works. The company tours the country with original plays about rural community life and works extensively with schools. Hooper served there as producing director and principal playwright, along with leading the company's administrative, marketing and development efforts. (Go to

www.madrivertheater.org for information on the company.)

"My practical experience as a teaching artist and Arts Partnership grantee gives me perspective on how constituents perceive the Ohio Arts Council programs," he says. "My goal is to make the process of applying for a grant straightforward and user-friendly while ensuring that grantees are of the highest quality."

Hooper succeeds Mary Campbell-Zopf, now the agency's deputy director. He draws confidence from the extraordinary work that preceded his tenure.

"Ohio is nationally recognized for leadership in arts education," he says.



Jeff Hooper, Director of Arts Learning, Ohio Arts Council

"We have strong arts partnership and artist in residence grant programs, as well as special projects that promote planning and research. I hope to build on those strengths."

Art of Improvement—continued from page 4

reading and outperformed them in mathematics. After a second year, their performance improved even more.

- 4) Neuroscience research links positive social conditions and emotional states to better cognitive performance. A number of studies suggest strong correlations between arts-rich educational experiences and positive self-image, self-efficacy, engagement and social skills. Many of those studies include students with risk factors in their backgrounds, behavioral disorders or histories of delinquency.
- 5) Finally, the U.S. Department of Education considers the arts core academic subjects, and the State Board of Education has adopted academic standards for the fine arts that all students will meet only if they receive comprehensive arts education. Achievement in the arts, though not tested, is important.

Think About It . . .

Knowledge about the cognitive and academic benefits of arts learning is growing, and scholars suggest more research. Low-performing schools with enhanced arts programs have improved dramatically and outperformed comparison groups. Economic forecasts, cultural trends, the changing Web landscape and the daily challenges of educators are full of clear indications that the 21st century job market's demands for creativity and artistic skills will only increase.

Is a wait and see attitude the best choice? Should schools allow arts programs to waste away until causal links are established?

Schools that view the arts as expendable may have found a short-term solution. But they also may be exchanging one of the few avenues to quantum academic leaps for a long, slow climb toward yesterday's standards of excellence.

Newsbreaks

Arts Education Partnership to Host Forum in Cleveland

Cleveland will be the site for a national forum on how arts integration has gained momentum as a viable strategy for improving student achievement in schools and communities. Hosted by the Arts Education Partnership, the forum will be held September 27-28, 2007.

Dr. Gail Burnaford will present her recent work conducted for AEP entitled, *Arts Integration Frameworks, Research and Practice: A Literature Review*. Plenary and breakout sessions will explore different facets of arts integration. Projects in urban sites funded by the Ford Foundation also will be featured.

Further details will be posted at the AEP Web site in August (www.aep-arts.org).

Neuroscientists Find Another Music-Language Link

A Northwestern University study published in the April 2007 issue of *Nature Neuroscience* provides concrete evidence that playing a musical instrument significantly enhances the brain stem's sensitivity to speech sounds.

This finding applies to sound encoding skills involved not only in music but also in language.

"Increasing music experience appears to benefit all children—whether musically exceptional or not—in a wide range of learning activities," says Nina Kraus, director of Northwestern's Auditory Neuroscience Lab and senior author of the peer-reviewed article.

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Poetry Out Loud Seven Ohio Students Compete

The second annual *Poetry Out Loud* National Finals were held on May 1, 2007, at the George Washington University Lisner Auditorium in Washington, DC. Amanda Fernandez, a senior at Duke Ellington School of the Arts, earned the title of 2007 *Poetry Out Loud* National Champion and a \$20,000 scholarship prize for her recitation of "Ma Rainey" by Sterling A. Brown.

Tony Jackson represented Ohio. A 2007 graduate of Westland High School in the South-Western City Schools, he plans to major in business and hopes to play college football.

Jackson recited "How I Discovered Poetry" by Marilyn Nelson, the "New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus and "Sympathy" by Paul Laurence Dunbar. He chose the three poems to reflect his personal and family history. For taking first place against six other Ohio students at the Southern Theatre in downtown Columbus, he received a \$300 prize and an all-expense paid trip to the national contest. His school received a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books.

Jamie Brew from Columbus Alternative High School, Columbus City School District, placed second in the state competition. Lesley Fisher from Granville High School, Granville Exempted Village School District, placed third. They also received cash prizes and stipends for their schools. Other contestants were Steven Myers from Amanda-Clearcreek High School in the Amanda-Clearcreek Local School District; Rebecca Beard from FCI Academy and Robert Jones from Eastmoor Academy, both in the Columbus City School District; and Kaitlyn Mundy from Logan Hocking High School in the Logan-Hocking Local School District.

Jackson Hille, the 2006 National Champion from Columbus, Ohio, served as a presiding special guest judge. He shared the honor with Garrison Keillor, host of the radio show "A Prairie Home Companion."

Poetry Out Loud is presented by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation in partnership with the Ohio Arts Council, the Thurber House and Ohioana Library Association. The program encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization, performance and competition. The program seeks to foster the next generation of literary readers by capitalizing on the latest trends in poetry recitation and performance. Through *Poetry Out Loud*, students can master public speaking skills, build self-confidence and learn about their literary heritage.

Go to www.poetryoutloud.org for details about the competition and for teaching ideas, tips for student performers, an online anthology of poems, audio clips and other teacher and student resources. Details about next year's competition will be published in Links & Threads and at www.oac.state.oh.us.

Partnership Conversations

Marsha Dobrzynski, *Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio*
and Karen M. Clark-Keys, Ph.D., *Cleveland Municipal School District*

Cleveland, Ohio's vibrant cultural institutions and diverse array of artists have been sharing their riches with students in the Cleveland Municipal School District (CMSD) for decades. But for Karen M. Clark-Keys, Ph.D., who administers the district's Initiative for Cultural Arts in Education (ICARE), the important question is "How do we use those resources in meaningful, rigorous, well-planned and sustained arts learning?"

That strong focus on student learning characterizes the district's relationships with a variety of arts and cultural partners, most notably Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio (YANEO). The nonprofit arts education organization is known for providing high-quality performances, workshops, artist residencies and professional development through its partnerships with an array of artists. But putting artists into classrooms is not the mission, says YANEO Executive Director Marsha Dobrzynski. "What we're looking for," she says, "is to make an impact on the kids."

ICARE is reaching that goal. With YANEO as manager and fiduciary agent, the CMSD program supports collaborative partnerships between schools and a variety of arts organizations. A 2005 evaluation by Rob Horowitz, Ed.D. of Teachers College at Columbia University found a strong correlation between rising achievement test scores and the length of groups' involvement in ICARE.

Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio offers its services to schools in 18 counties. For details go to www.yaneo.org.

Partnership Basics

Why is the partnership of the Cleveland Schools and Young Audiences successful?

Time. Teams take time to talk and build relationships.

Focus. Teams target specific skills in the arts and other academic areas.

Structure. Teams articulate what they hope to achieve and develop timelines.

Commitment. Principals and district administration are invested and engaged.

Professional Development. Teams learn how to partner.

Community Support. Foundations and other community groups play an active role.

Reputation. The partners strive to do good work and document results.

ODE Update *Ohio Welcomes NEA Arts Education Director*

Dr. Sarah Cunningham, director of Arts Education for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), visited Ohio this spring. Hosted by the Ohio Department of Education's fine arts staff, she visited with Frances Strickland, First Lady of Ohio, met with State Superintendent Susan Tave Zelman and addressed a group of cultural and education leaders and school practitioners. Her timely presentation, "An Arts-Rich Future," complemented the current curricular emphasis on 21st century skills and highlighted technological and global challenges that create new opportunities for the arts in education.

Among her stops was a visit to the Southern Theatre, where she enjoyed a performance by the Jazz Arts Group with fourth- to sixth-graders from Miami View Elementary School.

Cunningham's role is to provide national leadership in arts education. She shared information about new initiatives at the NEA.

One exciting new effort is the *Big Read*, a program to revitalize literary reading in American culture.

The *Big Read* provides teaching guides for lessons that lead young readers through classic novels.

Secondary teachers will appreciate the thematic focus, discussion questions, writing exercises and capstone projects that encourage students to explore each novel's key topics through various content areas, including the fine arts.

To learn more about the Big Read and featured books and to access the teaching guides, visit www.neabigread.org.



Dr. Sarah Cunningham, NEA Director of Arts Education, with Dr. Susan Tave Zelman

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AEP Reports on Professional Development Partnerships

A report from the Higher Education Task Force of the Arts Education Partnership recommends that higher education leaders “take responsibility for the creation of partnerships within the university between education and arts and sciences faculty and outside the university with the larger arts and education community.”

Working Partnerships: Professional Development of the Arts Teaching Workforce identifies promising partnership practices, profiles successful partnerships and presents a list of action steps.

To download the report, go to www.aep-arts.org. Select “Resources” then “Research.” The report is listed with other useful publications.

NEA Study Links Arts with Community

According to a study released by the National Endowment for the Arts in November 2006, *The Arts & Civic Engagement: Involved in Arts, Involved in Life*, lower rates of arts participation by young adults may be linked to lower participation in civic life. Citing the 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, the report suggests links between young people’s declining participation in volunteer work and community-based leisure activities and declines in their literary reading, attendance at performing arts events and selection of classical and jazz radio.

Go to www.arts.gov and select “Research” then “Research Brochures” to download the report.

Arts Cited in Definition of Learning Success

The Commission on the Whole Child, convened by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), has issued *The Learning Compact Redefined*. The work of leading thinkers, researchers and practitioners from a variety of sectors, the report describes a successful learner as “knowledgeable, emotionally and physically healthy, civically inspired, **engaged in the arts**, prepared for work and economic self-sufficiency and ready for the world beyond formal schooling.”

Go to www.wholechildeducation.org to download the report.

Congress Speaks Out for Music Education

On April 26, 2007, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed House Concurrent Resolution 121, recognizing the benefits of school-based music education. The resolution states that “it is the sense of the Congress that music education grounded in rigorous instruction is an important component of a well-rounded academic curriculum and should be available to every student in every school.”

The resolution recognizes that music strengthens a child’s intellectual development, improves the learning environment and enhances skills necessary for the 21st century, including “the ability to analyze, solve problems, communicate and work cooperatively.” Children who do not have music education in their school are, according to the resolution, “at a disadvantage compared to their peers in other communities.”

The Senate voted to agree with the House on May 15.

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ODE Mission

The Ohio Department of Education supports high achievement for all students every year by setting clear and high expectations for all students; by making sure that educators have the skills, knowledge and resources to help students improve; by fostering the ability of families and communities to help students succeed; and by measuring, publicizing and rewarding achievement results.



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OAC Mission

We’re Building Ohio through the Arts. The Ohio Arts Council is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically.



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