



Links & Threads

A Newsletter for Arts Partners Published by the Ohio Arts Council and the Ohio Department of Education **Volume IV Issue 2**

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.

the imagine nation

Arts Education Partnership Calls ODE Committee for Arts and Innovative Thinking “Ground-Breaking”

A growing number of Americans believe that public education focuses too narrowly on the basics while neglecting imagination and innovation, according to a recent poll. Learning in and through the arts, said 88% of respondents, is “essential” in developing the capacities of imagination that lead to innovation in science, technology and business. A majority said the arts should be considered “part of the basics.”

The “imagine nation” is what Lake Research Partners, the firm that conducted the poll, calls this substantial bloc of Americans. The firm estimates that 30% of likely voters share their view, and it predicts that this growing public awareness will have an impact on future education policies.

The Arts Education Partnership (AEP) and a coalition of national education leaders affirmed the findings. AEP Director Richard Deasy announced a plan to work closely with “groundbreaking” initiatives in Ohio, Oklahoma, and Dallas, Texas, to demonstrate “how an education in and through the arts can be a crucial force shaping the imagination and its application to produce the innovative and creative graduates we desperately need to retain America’s leadership role in the world.” *(continued next page)*

Arts and the Innovation Equation

According to the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce the high-wage, high-employment economy that our nation needs in order to maintain a high standard of living requires the U.S. to be “among the top two in every industry in which we hope to be a major player.”

STEM education is the key, but the Commission’s 2007 report [Tough Choices or Tough Times](#) points out that other countries are producing STEM professionals willing to work for wages far below the U.S. standard. America’s only competitive edge, says the report, will come from creativity and innovation—ideas that mean technology breakthroughs and “quantum leaps” in the value of products to the customer.

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“The concept of an ‘imagine nation’ provides a clear mandate for the inclusion of the arts as part of every child’s basic education.”

— Deena Epstein,
Senior Program Officer for the Arts,
The George Gund Foundation

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Thoughts from Ohio STEM Leaders

Fibonacci Numbers and Perceptual Art at Metro High School

Learning Through Dance at After School Discovery and Indianola Informal Alternative

Architecture and Design at Queen of Angels Montessori

Poetry Out Loud Results

Ohio STEM Education Leaders Value Arts Learning

Ohio's leaders are acting to broaden students' access to high-quality education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The state's 2007 budget includes over \$200 million for STEM-related education initiatives within the Department of Education and Board of Regents. A major portion of those funds will be used for grants to regional consortia with plans to create STEM schools and K-8 "programs of excellence."

Requirements for the STEM school grants, which are administered by the Ohio Partnership for Continued Learning (PCL), include roles for the arts and humanities. "Governor Strickland emphasizes that STEM education is for all children and it is for the whole child," says PCL Executive Director Julie Schaid. "So certainly the arts will play an essential role." The PCL is a statewide group of leaders from education, business and industry, economic development, government and local communities. Its focus is creating a seamless education and workforce system and producing the talent base needed for the 21st century economy.

"Business leaders often talk about the need for STEM professionals with creative, innovative, collaborative skills," says Shaun Yoder, executive director of the Ohio Business Alliance for Education and the Economy and a leading

advocate of Ohio's STEM policy initiatives. "I think that suggests a critical role for the arts. Creative, innovative, inventive thinking in the STEM disciplines and in the arts work in much the same way," he says.

The Dayton Regional STEM School (DRSS), one of the first STEM consortia to receive the state grant, will exemplify this emerging intersection of fine arts and STEM disciplines.

"We think the arts absolutely go hand in hand with being a good critical thinker," says Gregory Bernhardt, dean of Wright State University's College of Education and a leader in the DRSS consortia. "We believe art and music are languages for today's young people."

DRSS students will be required to complete at least a year of music and a year of visual arts. Also, the school's eight-member curriculum committee will include a humanities or arts educator. Since all the classes at DRSS will be interdisciplinary and interrelated, Bernhardt also envisions extensive arts integration.

He is excited about the arts as a way to engage and motivate students in math and science, but the intrinsic value of the arts also figures largely in the school's vision: "Whatever path students end up choosing," he says, "we want to make sure that they will be ready to participate fully in the human conversation."

Learning Links

Click on each link below to access more information on the Web.

[Imagine Nation](#)

[Arts Education Partnership](#)

[Ohio Department of Education](#)

(Summary of Economic-Education Summit and Imagine Nation session)

[Committee on Arts and Innovative Thinking](#)

[Partnership for Continued Learning](#)

[Ohio STEM](#)

For additional arts education-related sites, go to the [Links & Threads](#) hot list.

Imagine Nation *continued from Page 1*

Ohio Arts Educators Envision Role of Arts in Broader Initiatives

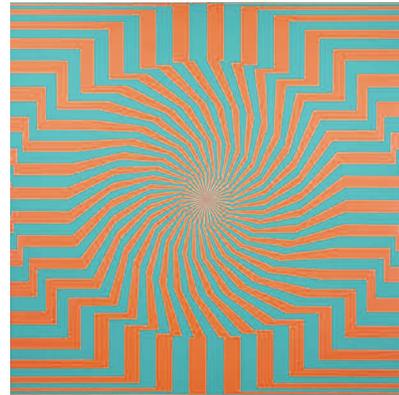
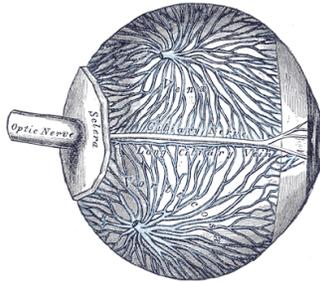
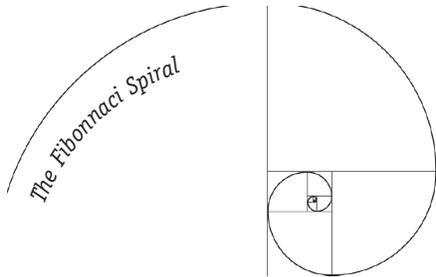
An emphasis on fostering imagination and innovation across all disciplines by connecting initiatives in the arts to Ohio's science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) initiatives is what makes Ohio's approach unique. Leading the effort is Ohio's Committee for the Arts and Innovative Thinking (CAIT), a statewide advisory group formed in 2007 by Ohio Department of Education (ODE) superintendent of public instruction, Susan Tave Zelman.

The 38 members, selected through open nominations, represent a range of constituencies and regions and over 30 education, community and cultural organizations. The Committee will promote the arts in Ohio schools by recommending strategic actions, communications and policies. According to Nancy Pistone, ODE arts consultant and committee coordinator, "Early policy recommendations include reinforcing integration in curriculum design through collaboration among arts and STEM teachers and increasing the alignment of arts education to State Board priorities, such as higher student achievement, educator quality and education for a global economy."

CAIT members are talking with their constituencies about the *Imagine Nation* data. They also participated in a presentation at the state's 2008 Economic-Education Summit.

A Spiraling Vision of Learning

Arts Woven into All Disciplines at Columbus Metro High School



Turbo 1 by Edna Andrade (b. 1917),
Columbus Museum of Art

Metro High School students deepened their math and science understanding and applied their technology skills with help from the Columbus Museum of Art.

It began as a math unit on Fibonacci numbers, but soon the investigation spiraled outward—through learning experiences in science, technology, English and finally into an art history and service learning project with the Columbus Museum of Art. Such interdisciplinary experiences are common at the [Metro High School](#) in Columbus. The public STEM high school, which chooses students through a lottery, was established by Battelle, the Ohio State University and 16 Columbus area school districts. Faculty often integrate arts learning with a rigorous, accelerated STEM curriculum.

Columbus Museum of Art Adds Depth

The Fibonacci project culminated with an exploration of *Optic Nerve: Perceptual Art of the 1960s*, an exhibit featuring visual artists who use precise, mathematically-based composition to produce optical illusions of pulsating movement. The inquiry not only deepened math and science understanding but also sharpened students' communication and collaboration skills.

After an intensive museum experience and meetings with curators, students chose topic areas, such as the science of how the eye reacts to optical illusions and the cultural influences that may have shaped the work of 1960s perceptual artists. They presented their ideas to a board selected by the museum and used the board's feedback in the creative, collaborative process of developing podcasts about the exhibit, suitable for use with museum tours.

Arts Learning Links to Scientific Thinking

Cindy Meyers Foley, director of education for the museum, says projects linking the visual arts to learning in the STEM disciplines will continue. "Engaging with the arts is an opportunity for students to experience open-ended experimentation and unbridled imagination," she says.

Metro's principal, Marcy Raymond, agrees. "The arts and humanities require the higher order thinking skills of analysis, evaluation and synthesis," she says. She also believes the arts help students develop skills and viewpoints they will need in STEM professions. "Science doesn't happen in isolation," she says. "Students must prepare to view their work within the culture and to see the connections."

Interweaving Arts and Other Disciplines

The project is just one example of how Metro creates opportunities to weave the arts through the curriculum. Recently, a social studies project included student films based on the idea of *Baraka*, a film that used only images to show the best and worst of nature and human life.

The school also creates extracurricular opportunities for artistic expression, such as art exhibits, "open mic" events, a cultural dance club, a jazz band and a guitar club.

The school's faculty plans more projects with the Columbus Museum of Art and will involve language arts classes in the Wexner Center's *Pages* program, which combines visual arts, film/video and performing arts with projects that encourage writing and literacy.

The Dance of Learning and Growing

Artist Residencies with Inlet Dance Theatre Captivate, Inspire and Teach

Inlet Dance Theatre in Cleveland Heights is a professional contemporary dance company that celebrates the combined athleticism, beauty and expressive power of dance. The company's performances, which range from humor and whimsy to profound encounters with essential human questions, have helped change many people's perceptions about dance.

But enlarging the dance audience is not what drives Bill Wade, Jr., founder and artistic director of the company. "It's not about furthering the art of dance through people," he says. "It's about furthering people through dance."

Recently, [Inlet Dance Theatre](#) carried out that mission through two artist residencies funded by [Ohio Arts Council Artist in Residence](#) grants.

Residencies Geared to Varying Goals

The two groups and their goals for the residencies differed substantially.

A four-week residency at [Indianola Informal Alternative School](#) in the Columbus City School District, served students who already had a foundation in dance. The arts are integrated throughout the school's K-5 curriculum and students receive regular instruction from dance teacher Marlene Robbins.

Working with Inlet was an opportunity to learn some more challenging dance techniques while also exploring themes in greater depth through movement. Indianola's dance program, says Robbins, is not technique-based. "Students learn basic movement, but classes are more about broad compositional ideas."

[After School Discovery](#) (ASD) is a community organization that works with school districts in Ashtabula County to enrich the curriculum through experiences in the arts, environmental science and other areas. Pat Seymour, the program's executive director, says that since most ASD students have not had regular dance instruction, the purpose of the five-week residency was broad. "We wanted to give students a whole vision of dance, open their eyes to a different part of their world and help them see dance as a bridge to other learning," she says.

Learning In Dance

Both residencies began with captivating performances by Inlet dancers. (PTA fundraising helped with the expense of transporting the whole company.) Then Wade worked with teachers to select core groups for the most intensive instruction and performance in dance. The selection process includes a dance assessment

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Students at Indianola Informal Alternative School in Columbus learned dance techniques and developed self-expression skills with artists in residence from Inlet Dance Theatre.

Center photo of Inlet dancer Joshua Brown by: Jim Ruthrauff, InMotion-Photo.com





Students at After School Discovery joined Inlet dancers in a performance.

that identifies raw talent, musicality and skills in improvising and collaborating, along with a requirement that students write paragraphs explaining why they want to join the core group.

While all students were exposed to dance and participated in residency activities, the core groups met every day for at least an hour. In addition to learning new dance techniques, they learned choreography skills, had responsibility for coaching secondary groups and played key roles in the culminating performance with Inlet dancers.

Learning Through Dance

In both settings, students connected dance to themes from the curriculum. Robbins says incorporating dance makes a tangible difference: “When dance is part of learning, the level of inquiry rises, students seem to understand content better and their writing becomes more detailed.”

Seymour says the focus and engagement she saw as students with learning and behavioral difficulties experienced dance was amazing.

Learning the Dance of Life

Wade says dance experiences can be an epiphany for students who have not had the opportunity before. “They learn that their bodies are powerful instruments they can use for expression,” he says, “and they recognize that they were born with a gift. When they take their bow at the performance, they stand a lot taller.”

He, Robbins and Seymour all believe that choreographing, rehearsing and performing dance is a way to activate the kind of skills students need to recognize as important for success in life—from critical thinking and creative problem solving to meeting deadlines to focusing intensely to giving and receiving feedback to working with and respecting others.

Seymour saw many examples of students gaining new insights about themselves through dance: “Many of them realized that by making some little changes they could be part of something bigger than themselves.”

Newsbreaks

NASAA Publishes New Research-Based Arts Advocacy Tool Kit

The National Association of State Arts Administrators now offers a research-based Tool Kit to help arts advocates confirm, explain and clarify the role of arts education in three significant policy contexts. A working committee of State Arts Agency Arts Education Managers that included OAC Deputy Director Mary Campbell-Zopf and Arts Learning Director Jeff Hooper reviewed the research and provided sample materials that arts advocates can adapt to their contexts and needs. [Link to Tool Kit.](#)

School Administrators Association Places Arts Learning Center Stage

The American Association of School Administrators and Americans for the Arts have formed a partnership to place the arts at the center of discussions about building a 21st century workforce. They will issue a report this spring. The March issue of the AASA's *School Administrator* features articles on the value of arts learning. [Link to AASA articles.](#)

Neuroscientists Seek Causal Links Between Arts and Cognition

Cognitive neuroscientists from seven universities, organized by the Dana Foundation, just released a report of their deliberations on possible causal relationships between arts training and the ability of the brain to learn in other cognitive domains. *Learning, Arts and the Brain* reports several studies that lay the groundwork for establishing causal relationships between arts learning and development of skills in math, reading, and other areas. [Link to the report.](#)

Interested in exploring additional information about arts education research and practice?

[Go to the Links & Threads hot list.](#)

Industrial Design *Where Fine Arts and Engineering Meet*

According to *Time* magazine, one of the 15 hottest professions in terms of job growth and compensation is industrial design—a field responsible for turning knowledge and ideas into products for the mass market. The Industrial Designers Society of America says the design process combines knowledge of engineering and technology with skills in the visual arts and an understanding of people.

Patrick Walker, an industrial designer with Priority Designs in Columbus and an Ohio Arts Council Artist in Residence, recently shared his thoughts on the value of arts learning in preparing students for design careers.

The Art and Science of Design Thinking

“The goal in designing any object is to give users the most beneficial, simple, enjoyable experience possible with that object,” says Walker. “In pursuing that goal, designers often draw inspiration from the fine arts and use thought processes similar to those used in making art.”

He describes the typical design team as a mix of talents: “Creative free thinkers are essential,” he says. “They put wild, creative ideas out there, and often the engineers—who know the

nuts and bolts—will say ‘That’s cool. I want to find a way to make it work.’”

Walker often plays another important role in team projects—the generalist who connects the aesthetics and human factors of a product to the realities of materials, manufacturing and costs and to the concepts involved in a client’s business model and brand.

His talent began developing around fourth grade with his interest in taking toys apart to see how they worked and his love of drawing aircraft and Transformer robots. In high school, he benefited from advanced courses in math and science, as well as visual arts, drafting and design classes. Student work that required “looking at problems from different angles and thinking in different ways” was most helpful, he says.

Design in the Classroom

Walker enjoys sharing his design skills in K-12 classrooms. After completing his degree at the University of Cincinnati College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning, he made a practice of visiting his aunt’s elementary school art classroom once a week to sketch with students during lunch period. He would give

[\(continued next page\)](#)



Students at Queen of Angels Montessori in Cincinnati experienced the mathematical and human challenges of architecture and design during a residency with OAC artists Janet Cotner and Patrick Walker. The challenge: Design a space for your favorite activity. Photos by Janet Cotner and Patrick Walker.

Poetry Out Loud 2008: Dayton Student Is State Champion



Poetry Out Loud winner Rachel Chandler (center) with OAC Executive Director Julie Henahan (left) and Ohio's First Lady Frances Strickland (right).

Ohio's third annual *Poetry Out Loud* state competition was held Saturday, March 15 at Ohio Dominican University's Matesich Theatre.

Rachel Chandler, a student from Dayton's Chaminade-Julienne High School, will represent Ohio in the national finals April 29, 2008, in Washington, D.C. She will be competing for a \$20,000 scholarship.

Jasmin Cannon from Purcell Marian High School in Cincinnati placed second. Rebecca Butler from Timken Senior High School in Canton placed third. In all, 23 students from around Ohio participated in the event.

Poetry Out Loud is presented by The National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation in partnership with the Ohio Arts Council.

Poetry Out Loud 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 recent trends in poetry recitation and performance.

Through *Poetry Out Loud*, students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence and learn about their literary heritage.

Go to the [Ohio Arts Council](http://www.ohioarts.org) Web site to view a list of the 23 participants and to find future updates. The national [Poetry Out Loud](http://www.poetryoutloud.org) Web site includes information for teaching poetry recitation and an anthology of poems.

Design—continued from page 6

them challenges like designing toys or shoes. He says children usually find design projects exciting and often generate interesting ideas. "Kids don't have a paradigm of what is and what can be," he says. "They just know what they want to do."

Today, as one of the Ohio Arts Council's artists in residence, he has begun to bring the challenges of design to more Ohio classrooms.

In his first OAC artist residency experience, he assisted architect Janet Cotner at Queen of Angels Montessori School in Cincinnati. Cotner gave students the task of designing a space that was perfectly suited for a favorite activity. Walker helped students design furniture and other items for their environments.

Using sketches and then clay, students ages 9-12 were free to think innovatively, but they had to demonstrate their understanding of scale, as well as other curriculum content.

In May, Walker will lead a residency in the Hamilton City School District with Cotner assuming the support role. Students will work on design concepts for "the classroom of the future."

Go to www.idsa.org and select "About ID" for more information on industrial design.

The Art of Improvement: *Data Matters*

Only 3% of elementary schools, 6% of middle schools, and 14% of high schools in New Jersey offer arts education in all four arts disciplines as required by state standards.

Such statistics from the New Jersey Arts Education Census Project, although disappointing to those who value arts learning, also represent a promise: More states and school districts are taking arts education seriously enough to collect quality data and publish results.

Through a partnership that includes the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the New Jersey State Department of Education and nonprofit organizations, the project has detailed census findings in a report entitled *Within Our*

Power. Report recommendations include increased professional development for administrators that focuses on the importance of the arts, expanded learning opportunities for arts educators and a clearinghouse to help schools locate certified arts specialists.

As the Arts Education Partnership's *imagine nation* initiative illustrates (see page 1), sharing data on current reality helps call attention to needs that may otherwise be overlooked.

Districts interested in collecting data on their own arts education programs may want to review the report and survey instruments, which can be downloaded from the [project Web site](#).

Innovation—continued from page 1

The Commission report endorses a well-rounded curriculum and suggests reconsidering the role of the arts.

Two other leading voices in the dialogue on future workforce skills and economic competitiveness also mention arts education and arts integration as strategies for maintaining America's economic leadership position.

The latest edition of Thomas L. Friedman's book on globalization *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* stresses the importance of the liberal arts in workforce development.

"More than ever," said Friedman, when interviewed for an American Association of School Administrators publication, "our secret sauce comes from our ability to integrate art, science, music and literature with the hard sciences. That's what produces an iPod revolution or a Google."

Daniel H. Pink, author of the widely read *A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brainers Will Rule the Future*, shared similar thoughts when addressing the AASA annual conference: "Infuse arts education throughout the curriculum" was one of his recommendations for producing more innovative thinkers.

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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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