

Essential Learning...*In the Arts*

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ARTS EDUCATION
COLLABORATIVE

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Parent's Involvement: A Critical Link

Arts educators are often called upon to be proponents of their disciplines. While individuals outside of the sector may think the arts are important, many feel they lack the level of comfort necessary to clearly articulate the importance of the arts to others in a meaningful way. Of those individuals, many are parents who may not have had experiences that provide them with these insights. The creation of state standards added an additional level of stigma to those trying to maintain appropriate expectations for students in the arts. With an understanding of the predicament of these parents, the Arts Education Collaborative began to look for a way to provide parents with a tool that would better equip them to go into the schools of their children and determine the quality of the education that was offered there.



Combining the efforts of more than 20 arts educators, administrators, and professionals in the region over the course of two-years, the AEC sought to create a product that would provide parents with an introduction to the Pennsylvania Standards for the Arts and Humanities. The resulting Parent Handbook, *High Quality Education in the Arts: A Handbook for Parents*, seeks to serve as a guide to demonstrate how these standards might be implemented in a school's curriculum, and to help them assess the degree to which the school provides opportunities for children to meet the standards. Endorsed by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts; the Pennsylvania PTA; and the Division of Standards and Curriculum, Bureau of Teaching and Learning Support of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the handbook also includes information about how parents can support, improve, and advocate for arts programs in the schools.

The AEC would like to thank the many individuals who put in countless hours of time and effort to bring this project to fruition. We could not have done it without your generous gifts of time and talent. The AEC acknowledges the following contributors and reviewers: Joy Gazi, Bentworth School District; Robert Tupper, Peters Township School District; Jacques Baynes, Cynthia Blackwell, Charmayne Clements, Karin Coyne, Tony Dixon, Joseph Dunnabeck, Linda Ehrlich, Judy Flaherty, Adrienne Kelly, Christine Laitta, Miguel Sague, Ellen Smith, and Judy Verzella, Pittsburgh Public Schools; Helen Croft, North Allegheny School District; Jamie Brush, Shady Side Academy; Linda Turner, West Mifflin Area School District; Pearlann Porter, The Pillow Project; and parents Lori Brenner, Tyra Good, Bob Gorczyca, Carey Harris, Twila Simmons, and Mary Ziegler.

The Parent Handbook will make its debut at Regional Arts Education Day on October 13, 2008, where all participants will receive a copy. To view excerpts from the Parent Handbook, visit <http://www.artsedcollaborative.org/parent.html>. For more information on how to obtain copies for your PTA, PTO, PTG, Booster organization, department, or other group, please contact the AEC at info@artsedcollaborative.org or 412-201-7405.

In The News...

ArtsVote2008, a program of Americans for the Arts Action Fund, recently released a summary of the arts positions of the 2008 Presidential candidates. The goal of **ArtsVote2008** is to educate presidential candidates on issues impacting the arts and arts education with the goal of securing—for the first time ever—formal position statements from the top candidates. Below is a side-by-side chart that **ArtsVote2008** published comparing these positions:

Arts Positions of the 2008 Presidential Candidates

	Sen. Barack Obama Democratic Nominee	Sen. John McCain Republican Nominee
Campaign has met with Americans for the Arts Action Fund to discuss policy issues.	Yes Meeting held 4/1/08	Yes Meeting held 4/1/08
Campaign has published policy proposals on the arts and/or arts education.	Yes Read policy proposal , 2/28/08	No
Candidate has made a statement on federal support of the arts.	Yes View Pennsylvania speech , 4/2/08	No
Candidate has made a statement on federal support of arts education.	Yes View Texas speech , 2/28/08	Yes Read statement , 10/3/08
National party platform includes statement on the arts and/or arts education.	Yes Read platform (p.49) , 8/25/08	No
Candidate has pro-arts Congressional record.	Yes co-sponsored S. 548 , Artist-Museum Partnership Act	No Voted to cut funding or terminate the National Endowment for the Arts (see listing of votes*)

*Roll call votes on 7/12/00, 8/5/99, 9/15/98, 9/18/97, 9/17/97, 7/25/94, 9/15/93, 9/15/93, and 9/14/93

Americans for the Arts Action Fund is the bipartisan advocacy arm of Americans for the Arts, engaging citizens in ensuring that all Americans have the opportunity to appreciate, value, and participate in the arts. For further information, visit www.artsvote.org, or call 202-371-2830.

Source: Americans for the Arts Action Fund as of 10/03/08

Parents As Educational Advocates



by Dr. Sarah Tambucci,
Director, AEC

On Wednesday, October 8, Governor Rendell proclaimed October as Parent Involvement Month. The Pennsylvania General Assembly will introduce resolutions that honor parent and family involvement and on October 13 the Arts Education Collaborative will release *High Quality Education in the Arts: A Handbook for Parents*.

This document is an important tool for rallying parental support for a comprehensive education for all students that not only includes the arts but also emphasizes and illustrates the elements of a high quality program in the arts. We are pleased with the endorsement this publication has received from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and the Pennsylvania PTA. All of these partners have demonstrated their support of quality arts education programs by the standards they have adopted, their focus on educational enhancement in the arts, and the initiation of programs that promote public awareness of the arts and arts education.

We salute the teachers, administrators, and parents who have worked to make this publication a reality. Our task now is to engage local PTA/PTO groups, school boards, and community organizations in collaborating to create a powerful constituency that recognizes the vital role the arts play in developing the critical skills as they work to ensure high quality arts education for all children and youth.

"Parents are a child's first teacher, but it takes all educational stakeholders working together for students to achieve and strive for educational excellence," said Caroline Allen, president of the Pennsylvania PTA. Consider these action steps: *find* parents who share your desire to strengthen the arts program in your school; *talk* with the principal and/or teachers to be sure you understand what the school offers; *identify* needs based on the information you have gathered; *define* underlying issues connected to each identified need; *identify* key decision makers for each issue; *look for* allies who can help find solutions and develop a plan; *take* your plan to decision makers and the public to show your support for the school's arts program and get others involved.

Two Way Communication: Defining the AEC Liaison

The AEC strives to offer the highest quality professional development, advocacy, and collaborations across the region. Through feedback from educators, administrators, and a needs assessment, the AEC determined that to offer the highest quality programming it would need to establish a network of individuals to help guide the flow of information. Since 2002, the AEC, superintendents, and cultural organization leaders have collaborated each fall to appoint these individuals, known as AEC Liaisons.

A liaison plays a vital role in fulfilling the mission of the AEC. These important district and cultural organization contacts assist the AEC in gathering and dispersing data that help to inform decision making at the AEC. Throughout the year, liaisons receive important updates on innovations, best practices, and professional development opportunities that apply to all educators. It is imperative that the projects and programs we offer respond to the needs and interest of the field. Without the continuing efforts of these liaisons none of these efforts would be successful.

It is the AEC's objective to offer support to educators by creating a more efficient plan in utilizing these important resources. As a liaison you are considered gatekeepers and catalysts for information sharing that cultivates engagement and creativity for colleagues, students, and parents alike. If you are an individual who benefits from these opportunities, take responsibility by knowing who your liaison is and how they can help you grow professionally as an educator, and as an artist. Together you contribute to our community in advancing arts education in the region.

October is National Arts & Humanities Month!

National Arts & Humanities Month is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the positive impact the arts bring to our communities.

Visit: http://www.artsusa.org/get_involved/advocacy/nahm/default.asp for more information.

Opportunities & Events

Best Buy Teach Awards

What: Technology Assistance

Deadline: October 12, 2008

Best Buy is now accepting applications for their 2008-2009 Best Buy Teach Awards. Educators can apply for \$1000-\$5000 in gift cards from Best Buy to get technology for their classrooms. For full details, visit: http://www.bestbuyinc.com/community_relations/teach_awards.htm.

University of Pittsburgh's Shakespeare-in-the-Schools Program

What: Teacher Workshop: Arts Literacy

Where: Stephen Foster Memorial

Date: October 17, 2008, 8 am - 5 pm

The University of Pittsburgh's Shakespeare-in-the-Schools program will host their 10th annual teacher workshop exploring the *Arts Literacy Project* model of literacy education. This model utilizes creative drama, close reading, improvisation, and analytical and creative writing to delve in to a variety of core curriculum texts. Eight ACT 48 credit hours are available. For more information, visit www.shakespeare.pitt.edu or call 412.624.3459.

August Wilson Center for African American Culture

What: Collecting Fair

Where: Father Ryan Arts Center, 420 Chartiers Ave, McKees Rocks

Date: October 18, 2008, 10 am - 2 pm

This fall the August Wilson Center for African American Culture is scouring Pittsburgh and surrounding communities to collect memories, stories, and photos that may become part of the exhibitions when the new Center opens in the spring of 2009. At the fair, you will have the opportunity to: learn more about collecting oral histories; tell and record your family's story and experiences of growing up, working and living in Western PA; Bring family photos to be scanned into the Center's computer stations; and watch a sneak preview of what there is to see and do at the August Wilson Center before we open our permanent home. For more information, visit www.augustwilsoncenter.org or call 412.258.2700.

Allegheny County Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (ACAHPERD)

What: PE Sharing Conference 2008

Where: Fox Chapel High School

Date: October 31, 2008

Registration Deadline: October 17, 2008

On Friday, October 31st ACAHPERD will host its annual fall conference at the Fox Chapel High School. The morning will consist of presentations regarding Action Based Learning & Adventure Based Curriculums. The afternoon will consist of a lesson sharing session in which we will share YOUR best ideas from around the county. The cost to attend is \$20 and 4 ACT 48 credits are available for registrants. For more information, visit www.acahperd.org or contact Alex Slezak at Alexander.Slezak@fcasd.edu.

Target Field Trip Grants

Deadline: November 1, 2008

Target is offering 5,000 field trip grants of up to \$800 each with no strings attached. Field trips are to occur between February 2009 and the end of the school year to qualify. For more information and to apply, visit <http://sites.target.com/site/en/corporate/page.jsp?contentId=PRD03-002537>.

The Andy Warhol Museum

What: Fall Teacher Workshops

The Andy Warhol Museum is offering a wide range of teacher workshops this fall for ACT 48 credit. Topics include collaborative mural making and studying Warhol's techniques. In addition, the Fall Teacher Open House is scheduled for October 30 from 4-7 pm (cost to attend is \$5.00). For more information related to teacher programs at the Warhol, visit http://www.warhol.org/education/teacher_programs.html.

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

What: PSO Speakers Bureau

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra is please to announce the appointment of a new volunteer group, the PSO Speakers Bureau. The Speakers Bureau is comprised of volunteers who want to share their passion for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra with other volunteer groups, schools, and community organizations.

Any organization interested in arranging for a PSO Speakers Bureau volunteer to speak at a meeting can register on-line through the PSO web site at www.pittsburghsymphony.org and click on the

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Education and Community tab. Each request is matched with a well trained volunteer speaker who will bring to life the inner workings of the PSO and its programs. For questions call 412.392.4839.

Manchester Craftsmen's Guild

What: Adult and Educator Workshops

Date: Fall 2008

Manchester Craftsmen's Guild is offering Fall 2008 courses for adults and educators that include ceramics for all skill levels, figure drawing in our design studio, digital video making, the future of photography using a GigaPan robot, and a special two part short course exploring traditional photo processes! All classes accommodate beginners to advanced students. Class sizes are limited. Advance registration is required. For more information, visit: http://www.manchesterguild.org/va/professional_development.htm or call 412.322.1773 Ext. 302.

Pittsburgh Glass Center

What: Mini Glass Workshops & Hot Glass Demonstrations

Where: Pittsburgh Glass Center

Mini workshops are an educational and exciting hands-on exercise in teamwork, communication and creativity. Great for classes and clubs, participants learn about the science, art, and history of glass. Experienced artists lead the group through a hands-on glass making experience ranging from paperweights to beads. Expect to roll up your sleeves and go right to the torch, furnace, or fusing studio and create your own glass art. Everyone has an opportunity to try glass making. No experience is required. Every mini workshop includes a live hot glass demonstration and tour of PGC's current contemporary glass exhibition. Workshops are suitable for all ages and can be scheduled throughout the year. Visit www.pittsburghglasscenter.org for more information or call Joy at 412-365-2145 ext. 201.

Father Ryan Arts Center

What: Call for Artists

The Father Ryan Arts Center of Focus On Renewal is now accepting inquiries from talented individuals and groups with excellent skills to help expand our curriculum and faculty base. Previous teaching experience is a must, but more important is a passion for your work and for sharing it with others. We are looking for enthusiastic artists with top skills in all areas of the arts education and performance including theater arts, dance, music (vocal and instrumental), visual arts, literary arts and more. Email James Critchfield, program director at jcritchfield@forstorox.org for more information.

Prime Stage Theatre

What: 2008-2009 Season Student Matinees

Where: The New Hazlett Theater

Prime Stage Theatre will once again offer its popular student matinee performances during the 2008-2009 school year. All performances will be held at The New Hazlett Theater on Pittsburgh's North Side (6 Allegheny Square, East, Pittsburgh, 15212) and ticket prices are \$8 each. Each production will have three student matinee performances which will be held on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday at 10:00 a.m. For more information on the matinees, visit www.primestage.com.

Carnegie Museum of Art

What: Online Resources for Teachers

The School and Teacher Programs office at Carnegie Museum of Art is pleased to present new additions to the educator pages of the *Life on Mars* web site as part of the 2008 Carnegie International. Explore the classroom resources added to the website in September by clicking on the link and signing in to (or creating!) your educator account: http://blog.cmoa.org/schools_teachers/. A wide range of resources and materials related to the International are available for those who register including: high quality images and audio/video library, lesson plans and student handouts, ability to create a classroom blog, and interdisciplinary materials. Curious about web projects related to *Life on Mars*? Read more at: <http://blog.cmoa.org/CI08/the-exhibition/mars-on-web.php>.

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