



Fight the Elimination of Arts Education

The Philadelphia/Tri-State Artists Equity Association, Inc., a non-profit organization that supports and advocates for the visual arts in the Southeast Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware region, strongly opposes HR 1891. This bill, now before the U.S. House of Representatives, will seriously reduce funding for arts programs in our nation's schools.

Arts education and future supporters and consumers of the arts

Since the majority of students in this country receive their education in the nation's public schools, removing arts programs will deplete future generations' artistic capital just as surely as decreasing academic programs depletes their educational capital. Cutting these programs will seriously impair the ability of schools to introduce students to the arts and make them life-long supporters.

Arts education and academic achievement

Arts education in K-12 schools is important in its own right, regardless of its academic impact on student learning in other disciplines. The Arts should be taught and appreciated for themselves as a way of improving quality of life. However, there is evidence that arts programs in school do correlate with good academic performance even though artistic achievement is less amenable to assessment by standard educational methods.

Arts education and social development

The Arts increase and hone students' creative ability and allow them to better understand the human condition and connect with it, a life skill increasingly important in the modern world. Even students who may not excel academically find that improved self-esteem and sense of accomplishment and achievement can result from participation in arts activities in school. Frequently this spills over into improved social goals and interactions.

Arts education and the local economy

In addition, the Arts (and the local artists who work in these disciplines) can benefit a region economically by boosting existing businesses and attracting new (and often innovative) businesses to struggling inner city or downtown areas. These areas frequently grow into viable 'destinations' through new galleries, restaurants, museums and other cultural attractions, all brought about by initial investments of energy by working artists, *many of whom were first introduced to the arts during their school days.*

Arts Education and the global economy

The Arts are often seen as not 'practical' in these times when the economy is struggling, but innovation is the key to future growth in any economy, and artists are by nature innovators. In a global society connected by the Internet and increasingly reliant on visual stimuli for information and resource development in society, the Arts (and especially the visual arts) may provide key vocational skills and increase future generations' competitiveness in the world economy.

In summary, Artists Equity calls upon members of the House of Representatives to oppose HR 1891 and prevent cuts in federal spending on arts education in our nation's schools. A diverse and stimulating curriculum is in the best interests of the students and the nation.