National Arts Education Public Awareness Campaign Survey

Benjamin Davidson, Director of Research, and Lisa Michener, Public Awareness Campaign Director, Americans for the Arts

This summer, Americans for the Arts, in partnership with the Advertising Council and the advertising agency GSDEMG, is launching a multi-year, multimedia national advertising campaign to raise public awareness and positively change the public's attitudes and actions about the value of the arts and arts education in the development of every child. In order to shape this important campaign, Americans for the Arts commissioned a national public opinion survey to determine public attitudes towards the arts and arts education.

In this Monograph, the summary and analysis of a national survey convincingly demonstrate that an overwhelming majority of the American public believes in the value and importance of arts education to a child's development. However, many parents are satisfied with the amount of arts education their children receive at their school or in their community, leading to a sense of complacency about the need to support arts education. Moreover, the survey shows that most respondents do not know how to get involved in advocating for their child's arts education. These findings illustrate a need for a public awareness campaign to raise questions in parents' minds about the extent of their children's arts education and to compel them to take action and affect change in their school and their communities.

Background .............................................................. page 2
Objectives ................................................................. page 2
Executive Summary ................................................. page 3
Methodology ............................................................ page 4
Profile of the Sample ............................................... page 4
Detailed Findings ...................................................... page 5
Conclusion .............................................................. page 10

Monograph is one of the benefits of membership in Americans for the Arts.
Background

In order to define a clear message that will promote the value of the arts to a child’s development, Americans for the Arts had two distinct types of research projects completed for the national arts education public awareness campaign.

Quantitative Research
Within Worldwide was commissioned to include a series of questions focused on arts education in their bi-monthly omnibus study, the National Quorum. The National Quorum is a simple, cost-effective, and timely tool designed to track issues of concern and test the effectiveness of advertising and public relations campaigns.

Qualitative Research
A series of seven focus groups and six personal interviews were conducted in three selected markets (Seattle, Washington; Des Moines, Iowa; and Orlando, Florida) on January 22 through January 29, 2001. The focus groups targeted parents, teachers, and community leaders. The one-on-one interviews targeted administrative decision-makers, primarily school principals. Additionally, telephone interviews were conducted with local arts agency representatives with the goal of gaining an in-depth understanding of local arts and/or arts education programming in the schools and neighborhoods in these three markets.

Objectives

The national arts education opinion survey was designed to meet three objectives.

1. Verify the findings from the qualitative research efforts

2. Benchmark current general attitudes towards the value of arts education prior to the implementation of Americans for the Arts’ national public awareness campaign

3. Benchmark the grassroots actions currently being taken in support of arts education prior to the implementation of Americans for the Arts’ national public awareness campaign

This Monograph presents the detailed findings from the quantitative research efforts.
Executive Summary

There is support for and an excellent understanding of the value that arts education can provide a child. Ninety-five percent of survey respondents believe that the arts enhance learning; instill positive characteristics of creativity, self-expression, motivation, and independence; and are a great way to help children learn how to apply their skills.

When asked to consider the importance of selected activities to a child’s overall education and development on a scale of one to 10 (one means that an activity is not at all important and 10 means the activity is very important), “learning about and experiencing the arts” received the fourth highest average rating (8.1). The highest rated activity is reading for pleasure (9.1), followed by using computers for educational enrichment (8.5), and religious activities such as attending church or synagogue (8.3).

Parents agree that schools are responsible for ensuring that children learn about and experience a variety of art forms; otherwise, there is no guarantee that children will receive any sort of arts education. Eighty-nine percent of survey respondents believe that arts education is important enough that schools should find the money to ensure inclusion in the curriculum.

While more than 76 percent of the respondents somewhat or strongly agree that arts education is important enough to get personally involved, only 35 percent of those who are closely involved in the life of a child have done so. Seventy-one percent of parents/guardians are satisfied with the amount of arts education their child receives in school or in their community. Seventy-one percent of all respondents believe there are other people and organizations in the community who are better suited to take action. More tellingly, 67 percent do not know how to get involved.

These findings demonstrate that while American adults understand its value, they feel that their children already receive a sufficient amount of arts education. Results also indicate the need for a well defined action agenda that parents can adopt to support their beliefs.

Americans for the Arts defines arts education as learning and experiencing a variety of art forms, including music, dance, theater, and visual and literary arts.
Methodology

The quantitative survey results are based on 1,008 telephone interviews conducted with the American general public during the evening hours of February 16 through February 19, 2001. All respondents were 18 years of age or older. The average interview was 20 minutes in length. The interviews were conducted through WithIn Worldwide's 100-station computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) center in Orem, Utah.

Profile of the Sample

The typical respondent is an employed, middle-aged Caucasian with children. Specifically:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>INCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>Household income &gt; or = $30,000 48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>INCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 35</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 54</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 and Older</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILDREN</th>
<th>INCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No children</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least three children</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>INCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMPLOYMENT</th>
<th>INCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Employed</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemaker</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE</th>
<th>INCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLITICS</th>
<th>INCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered to vote</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEOGRAPHY</th>
<th>INCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Detailed Findings

The results of Americans for the Arts’ national opinion survey are clear. Among adults, there is tremendous support for arts and arts education. There is also a broad understanding of the value that arts education provides to children—the arts enhance learning; instill the positive characteristics of creativity, self-expression, motivation, and independence; and teach children how to apply their skills.

Unfortunately, while adults understand the important role that the arts can play in every child’s education, this does not translate into active steps such as organizing a community group, contacting an elected official, or otherwise mobilizing arts support in the community.

Survey results are categorized here into groups addressing four characteristics.

1. The importance of arts education
2. The value of arts education
3. The level of satisfaction with current arts education programs and resources
4. The actions taken by respondents to support arts education

The Importance of an Arts Education

According to the survey, American adults believe that the arts are a critical component of school curriculum. Seventy-three percent consider arts education to be very important to a child’s development (eight to 10 on a scale of 10). Only 13 percent of respondents rate the overall importance of arts education in a child’s development to be five or less out of 10.

The arts do more than rank well against other activities. American adults believe that the arts are an imperative component of school curriculum, and therefore schools must earmark appropriate funding for arts education programs.

![Graph showing importance of activities to a child's development]

**Importance of Activities to a Child’s Development**

- Reading for pleasure: 9.1
- Using computers for educational enrichment: 8.5
- Religious activities like attending church or synagogue: 8.3
- Learning about and experiencing the arts: 8.1
- Joining peer groups such as the boy or girl scouts: 7.7
- Participating in competitive sports: 7.6
- Participating in individual hobbies such as stamp collecting: 6.9
- Surfing the Internet for fun: 4.6

*Average scores based on a scale of one to 10

---

1 Respondents were asked if they are primarily involved in the life of a child under 18 years of age and, if so, to identify their role in that child’s life. Results: parent/guardian (33 percent), grandparent (58 percent), caretaker (20 percent), and close relative (51 percent).
The Value of Arts Education

American adults cite many reasons for the importance of arts education in a child's development, including the belief that the arts teach children creativity, individualism, and communication skills. Americans also believe that the arts encourage improvement in children's attitudes toward school and help children appreciate cultural and ethnic diversity—topics of heightened importance in the wake of recent instances of violence in our nation's schools.
Americans also agree that children are personally and positively affected by the arts.

![Chart showing percentages of agreement for various statements about arts education.]

Additionally, respondents involved in children’s lives were asked to consider the impact that arts education has on a child’s development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILDREN*</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better realize their talents</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better know how to think creatively</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become more open-minded</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain a greater sense of accomplishment</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy the learning process much more</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a greater sense of self-esteem</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a certain wisdom and understanding about life</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply their learning later in life</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be better equipped for success in the future</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Average scores based on a scale of one to 10
Satisfaction with Current Arts Education Programs

Respondents involved with children under 18 years of age are fairly equally satisfied with the amount of arts education—including dance, music, visual arts, theatre and literary arts—that their children receive at both their local school and through community arts organizations. Only 25 percent noted they were either somewhat or very dissatisfied with the programs.

Again, differences exist among the respondent subgroups:

Those respondents who are most satisfied with the arts education program at their local school tend to be college graduates who reside in the Midwest and who have two or more children.

Those respondents who are the most dissatisfied tend to be middle-aged African-American and Caucasian adults with some college experience.

School administrators and school board members (100 percent and 97 percent, respectively) are more satisfied than teachers and PTA officers (52 percent and 67 percent, respectively) with the amount of arts education children receive at their local school.

Seventy-one percent of parents/guardians are satisfied with the amount of arts education children are receiving at their local school, as compared to grandparents (69 percent), relatives (69 percent), and caretakers (68 percent).

“Cooperative and collaborative learning are natural products of arts in education. Peer relationships and student-teacher relationships positively develop in this environment. . . . In a school that provides an arts education curriculum, students demonstrate an increase in motivation and effort in their academic endeavors. This leads to increases in critical thinking, including analysis, synthesis, and problem-solving. . . . Attendance improves and discipline referrals decline where students experience the arts.”

JO ANNE HUGHES
PRINCIPAL, WALNUT HILL ELEMENTARY
DALLAS, TEXAS
Actions Taken to Support Arts Education in Local Communities

While more than 75 percent of American adults somewhat or strongly agree that arts education is important enough to get personally involved in the schools, only a third of those who are regularly involved in the life of a child have taken an action in the past year with regard to arts education. Interestingly, a significant number responded that they were more likely to encourage the child to participate in a school or community activity rather than being proactive by taking a child to an arts program, organizing a community group, or contacting an elected official.

Actions most commonly taken in the past year with regard to arts education of children ranged from one of encouragement to a high degree of involvement.

Caretakers seem to take a more active approach in promoting the arts. Fifty-three percent said they have discussed arts education with other parents and/or concerned individuals in their community, compared to 46 percent of parents/guardians, 37 percent of relatives, and 29 percent of grandparents. Twenty-six percent of caretakers have spoken to a teacher or school principal about scheduling more arts programs at school compared to parents, other relatives, and grandparents (21, 16, and 13 percent, respectively).

Of those respondents who are involved in the life of a child and have taken action, only 16 percent report being much more involved in these activities/actions this past year compared with other years. Nearly 60 percent of all respondents involved with a child say they are too busy or have too many demands on their time to get involved with arts education. However, 59 percent of both parents and caretakers say they are more involved at present in arts education than in past years.

When asked their reasons for not taking more action in regard to arts and education, 71 percent agreed there are other people or organizations in the community who are better suited to take action.
REASONS FOR NOT TAKING ACTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are other people or organizations in the community who are better suited to take action.</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am currently too busy or have too many demands on my time to get involved.</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The arts are important, but not as important as other core subjects.</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do my part by taking my child to arts activities outside of school.</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are other priorities that I feel have more importance than arts education.</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't know how to get involved with arts education.</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't think there is anything I can do to personally affect change.</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't feel that my involvement will result in a serious benefit for the child.</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading arts information clearinghouse, with a 40-year record of objective arts industry research. As the preeminent arts advocacy organization, it is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts.

Conclusion

The most compelling information revealed in Americans for the Arts' national arts education opinion survey is that parents appreciate the importance to a child's development of learning about and experiencing the arts. Parents also believe that the arts are an essential tool for learning; they fulfill an important role in creating well-rounded individuals and establish a greater understanding of our surroundings and ourselves. In short, parents say that no young person should be without the arts.

Further, there is a fear that without the arts children will learn only to obey orders and not function on their own. As the educational system becomes more homogenized and focused on standardized test results, art serves a key role in making up for what parents recognize as shortcomings in education by providing a conceptual understanding of the world to complement a more quantitative education. Finally, having a known plan of action, a supportive community, and tangible "ammunition" is crucial to getting someone to actively support the arts.

Next Steps

Americans for the Arts is developing a national, multi-media public awareness campaign designed to increase the public's active involvement in championing arts education in schools and community programs. Parents already believe in the importance of supporting arts education. However, they do not believe that there is a problem with the amount of education their children currently experience in the arts. Many parents believe that as long as their child has had some art, that's all they need. This campaign will clarify why a fuller arts education should be available to all children and will provide information on how parents and community leaders can advocate for it.
Americans for the Arts

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

William Lehr, Jr.
Governing Board Chairman
Retired, HERSHEY Foods Corporation

Jerry Allen
City of San Jose Office of Cultural Affairs

Dean R. Amhaus
Senior Vice President

Ramona Baker
Arts Council of Indianapolis, Inc.

Buzz Bartlett
Lockheed Martin

Madeleine Berman
President's Committee on the Arts & Humanities

Caroline Bock
BRAVO, Film & Arts Network

Raymond A. Boyce
Retired, Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, Inc.

John Brademas
New York University

Carol Brown
Pittsburgh Cultural Trust

Kathryn Murphy Burke
Milwaukee, WI

Shirley Trusty Corey
Arts Council of New Orleans

Peter F. Donnelly
Corporate Council for the Arts

Ken Ferguson
National Bank of Commerce

Susan S. Goode
Norfolk, VA

Mrs. John R. Hall
Lexington, KY

John Haworth
National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution

Betty Jo Hays
Southwest Arkansas Arts Council

Eleanor Holtzman
New York, NY

Ken Kahn
Greater Hartford Arts Council

Adrian King
The Coca-Cola Foundation

Fred Lazarus IV
The Maryland Institute, College of Art

Nancy Matheny
Binner & Smith, Inc.

Veronica Nijoku
Fulton County Arts Council

Margie Reese
City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department

Dr. James M. Rosser
California State University, Los Angeles

Mrs. LeRoy Rubin
Stamford, CT

Harriet Sanford
Arts & Science Council

Janet Sarbaugh
Heinz Endowments

Joan Small
City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs

Steven D. Spiess
Cravath, Swaine & Moore

Michael Spring
Miami-Dade County Cultural Affairs Council

Patricia Hollman Steinhardt
Richfield, Berkshire, England

John Strauss
New York, NY

Michael Verruto
HIP Capital LLC

Shirley Vilhite
Shreveport, LA

Vanessa Elder
Director, Marketing
veder@artsusa.org

Mike Haber
Webmaster/Web Developer
mhaber@artsusa.org

Development

Sonia Tower
Vice President
stower@artsusa.org

Vanessa Novak
Director, Foundation and Corporate Relations
vnovak@artsusa.org

New Faith
Grants Coordinator
afaf@artsusa.org

Marie Braecker
Development Assistant
mbbraecker@artsusa.org

Education
Howard Spector
Vice President
hspeter@artsusa.org

Finance and Administration

R. Brent Stanley
Vice President
bbrent@artsusa.org

Troy Alexander
Senior Accountant
talexander@artsusa.org

Daniel M. Andrejecko
Technology Coordinator
dandrejecko@artsusa.org

Millee Lee
Administrative Assistant
mlee@artsusa.org

Sawain Braddock
New York Office Manager
sbraddock@artsusa.org

Antoinette Smith
Accounting Assistant
asmith@artsusa.org

Programs and Services

Maria Walker
Vice President
mwalker@artsusa.org

Mark Ian Tobias
Director, Meetings and Events
mtobias@artsusa.org

Heather Rowe
Membership/Marketing Coordinator
hrowe@artsusa.org

Katie O'Neill
Database Coordinator
konell@artsusa.org

Tara Lojko
Meeting/Program Assistant
tlojko@artsusa.org

Public and Private Sector Affairs

Nina Ozu
Vice President
novz@artsusa.org

Lisa Marie Miremier
Director, Public Awareness Campaigns
lmiremier@artsusa.org

Lilian von Jagos
Government Affairs Coordinator
lvonjagos@artsusa.org

Research and Information

Randy I. Cohen
Vice President
rcohen@artsusa.org

Lori Robshaw
Director, National Arts Information Clearinghouse
lorobshaw@artsusa.org

Ben Davidson
Director, Research
bdavidson@artsusa.org

Michelle Brown
Research Coordinator
mbrown@artsusa.org

Anne Canzoneri
Communications Coordinator
acanzoneri@artsusa.org

Rebecca Costanzo
Research and Information Assistant
rcostanzo@artsusa.org

Animating Democracy Initiative Contractors

Barbara Schaffer Bacon
Project Director
bsbacon@artsusa.org

Pam Korza
Associate Project Director
pkorza@artsusa.org

Public Art Network Facilitator

Jennifer McGregor
jmcgregor@fic.net

*New York office
The Arts, Religion, and Common Ground  
Jun 01

The 2001 Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy: Frank Rich  
May 01

Public Art Funding: Developing Percent-for-Art Programs  
Dec 00

Adaptive Reuse of Buildings: Historic Structures and Cultural Facilities  
Aug 00

The Survivability Factor: Research on the Closure of Nonprofit Arts Organizations  
May 00

From Stability to Flexibility: Relevance, Excellence & Cultural Participation  
Jun 99

Allies, Arguments and Actions: Making a Case for Arts Education Advocacy  
May 99

Living the Arts Through Language Learning: A Report on Community-Based Youth Organizations  
Nov 98

Arts in Medicine: Linking Culture to Care  
Sept 98

Workplace Giving: Raising Funds for the Arts  
Jul/Aug 98

The 1998 Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy: Billy Taylor  
May 98

Local Arts Agency Facts 1998  
Mar/Apr 98

Involvement in the Arts and Success in Secondary School  
Dec 97/Jan 98

Community Cultural Planning: Development and Design to Meet Local Needs  
Oct 97

The 1997 Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy: Alan Simpson  
Sept 97

Program Planning and Evaluation: Using Logic Models in Arts Programs for At-Risk Youth (Double Issue)  
Jun/Jul 97

The Minnesota Model: Reaching New Audiences with Literature  
May 97

Ratcheting Art: Creating a Vital Arts Presence in Your Community  
Apr 97

United Arts Funds: Meeting the Challenge of Increased Private Sector Support for the Arts  
Mar 97

Making Advocacy a Habit  
Feb 97

Cultural Tourism: Bridging American Through Partnerships in the Arts, Tourism and Economic Development  
Jan 97

The Arts and Older Americans (double issue)  
Nov/Dec 96

For Immediate Release: Strategic Media for Local Arts Agencies  
Oct 96

The Arts, Education and Technology (double issue)  
Jun/Jul 96

Cultural Diversity and the LAA  
Apr 96