

EXHIBIT NO. 4  
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BILL NO. 5B-152 Continued

# The Value of an Arts Education



**A**t a time when state and local education budgets are facing severe cutbacks, school arts programs are often the first to suffer. A further strain on the arts in the standards-based curriculum is the need to create greater preparation time for high-stakes testing in the core subjects.

But the arts—visual, music, dance, and theatre—have a rightful and important place in every child's education. The knowledge developed in the arts is directly transferable to the cognitive skills crucial to other academic subjects. Furthermore, the arts can stimulate a child's self-esteem, creative thinking, and sense of accomplishment. Ultimately, the arts contribute significantly to the development of a range of abilities that are essential to a child's success in school and beyond.

Recent research demonstrates how exposure to the arts benefits all children. In 1999, the Arts Education Partnership, which includes NAESP, collaborated on a report, *Champions of Change: The Impact of Arts on Learning*. The report confirmed a strong link between arts education and enhanced learning and achievement. According to its findings, students actively engaged in the arts outperformed "arts-poor" students on nearly every measure. The report also found that the arts steer children toward positive behaviors in both academic and non-academic environments.

The arts connect children from different cultures and backgrounds, and they can reach students in danger of failure by engaging them in ways that match their individual learning styles. A new compendium, *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Achievement and Social Development*, released earlier this year by the Arts Education Partnership, provides further documentation of how the arts contribute positively to the development of academic and social skills in children. (See "Don't Axe the Arts!" in this issue.)

As educators, it is imperative that we take the initiative to deliver a strong message about the value of arts education. The new No Child Left Behind federal education law properly recognizes the arts as a core academic subject. We should ensure

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that an education in the arts is comprehensive, sequential, based on well-developed standards, taught by qualified teachers, and properly assessed. To enhance the teaching of the arts, schools should seek out partnerships with community resources, such as artists, musicians, orchestras, and dance companies.

At Wolcott Elementary School in West Hartford, Connecticut, learning in, about, and through the arts has helped students develop higher-order thinking skills. During his 14 years at Wolcott, Principal Plato Karafelis has used an arts-infused curriculum to achieve a two-fold mission: to celebrate each child's unique voice and to ensure that all children meet high academic standards. The school also uses the arts to build community by celebrating student accomplishments at weekly public assemblies.

## Web Resources

NAESP's Arts & Learning Network includes links to arts-centered Web sites, such as ARTSEdge. Established by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, ARTSEdge supports placing arts education at the center of the curriculum. Go to [www.naesp.org/infocus](http://www.naesp.org/infocus).

## NAESP IN FOCUS

Sharing New Visions of Leadership for Our Children—Our Schools—Ourselves

**Focus on**  
**What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do**  
Six Standards for Principals

**Web-related Resources:**

**Leading Learning Communities Online**  
Interested in connecting with other school leaders for support and advice regarding the *Leading Learning Communities* standards? "Leaders Reflect" is a new NAESP e-mail listserv connecting principals and developing an online learning community to help you do just that. In September the discussion focuses on the principal's role in ensuring high-quality content and instruction for every child. To join this unique online learning community, send an e-mail message to [Majorlomo@SFT-tech.com](mailto:Majorlomo@SFT-tech.com). In the body of the message, type: "subscribe principalsstandards" followed by your e-mail address. Archives of the listserv discussion are available at [www.naesp.org/llc/](http://www.naesp.org/llc/).

**New at NAESP**

Register Today for the NAEF "Leading Learning Communities Catch the Wave of the Future" the theme for NAESP's Annual Convention and Exhibition in Anaheim, California, April 11-2005. The conference session and speakers will address topics that revolve around the six standards of instructional leadership, vision, student data & decision-making, and engagement. U.S. Air Force American hero Scott O'Grady Gladwell are featured speakers to Disneyland and without a family fun capitals of the world information and to register at [www.naesp.org/convention](http://www.naesp.org/convention) 986-2377.

On NAESP's Web site you'll also find articles from previous issues of *Principal* that have explored the topics of art, music, and physical education. Articles include "Model Approaches to Arts Education," "Instruments for Everyone," and "Physical Education: Should It Be in the Core Curriculum?" Go to [www.naesp.org/infocus](http://www.naesp.org/infocus).

Share your thoughts related to the importance of the arts, music, and physical education with other principals in the Principal Online Open Forum at [www.naesp.org/infocus](http://www.naesp.org/infocus).

Our message as educators should be simple and clear. The arts belong in every child's basic education. As we know from the research and from real-life examples at schools like Wolcott, the arts can contribute significantly to our common goal of helping every child meet high standards. □