

Briefing Paper

Policy-Making, the Arts, and School Change

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COUNCIL OF ARTS ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS

National Association of Schools of Art and Design

National Association of Schools of Dance

National Association of Schools of Music

National Association of Schools of Theatre

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PREFACE

The Council of Arts Accrediting Associations is a joint, *ad hoc* effort of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the National Association of Schools of Dance, the National Association of Schools of Music, and the National Association of Schools of Theatre. The Council works with matters of general concern to the arts community in higher education, with particular focus on the issues and policies affecting instructional quality and accreditation.

The term “unit” as used in this document indicates an entire art/design, dance, music, or theatre educational program of an institution. Thus, in specific cases, “unit” refers to free-standing institutions; in other cases, it refers to departments or schools that are part of larger institutions.

Please note: The purpose of this paper is to organize ideas and encourage thought, not to establish accreditation standards or inflexible positions. The ideas and suggestions presented herein represent the best information and analysis available at the time of completion. Recommendations should be used as the basis for planning only after careful consideration has been given to current and prospective local conditions.

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INTRODUCTION

School change has become a ubiquitous national policy topic. Anxieties about K–12 education have grown to flood stage, spilling in turn from policy analysts to educators to politicians to business executives. Many motivations are involved in the ping-pong game of blame and credit, but the stakes are regarded by nearly all serious players as “control” of the next set of generic national policies for schools. Although much could be said about the deflections from substance this game produces, it remains possible to distill a number of reasons why school change is important. First, American elementary and secondary education is not as productive as it should be, either from a practical or an intellectual point of view: school policy-making is far more concerned with issues of power than matters of content. Second, schools have been burdened with the notion that every serious problem can be solved by education: prioritization becomes devalued; focus, impossible. In an overall sense, as schools try to become everything in social and political terms, they become virtually nothing in educational terms.

This tragic sequence has not happened everywhere. There are outstanding schools, and perhaps more important, outstanding teachers whose work is centered in content. A powerful rationale for school change is to preserve and expand the best that we have so that more American students gain the basis necessary for personal and professional productivity. School change is important for another reason. Contemporary society is characterized by an information and knowledge explosion. This means that our schools must not only teach students to use their minds, but also to have some introduction to the life of the mind, to ways of working with ideas, knowledge, and information that function after formal schooling is over.

This need brings us to the arts disciplines. Serious work in these disciplines exemplifies the life of the mind. The continuing failure of American elementary and secondary education to provide basic instruction in the various arts emphasizes how much schools must change if the life of the mind is to obtain parity with use of the mind on the education policy agenda. Given that there is a whole range of ideas and motivations for providing school-based arts instruction, three reasons seem to be transcendently perennial: (1) works of art represent some of mankind’s greatest achievements; (2) the methods of art are means both of knowing or “apprehending” the world, and of crafting integrated solutions to specific problems; (3) the arts are means for discourse. Transmission of image-based messages in contemporary society is accomplished more through integrated application of the various arts disciplines than perhaps at any time in history. The verbal and nonverbal arts are used constantly to capture adherents to various ideas, causes, and products. In late 20th-century society, an individual unable to understand the “language, grammar, and structure” of the various arts disciplines is truly “illiterate” and vulnerable to manipulation. The social, political, educational, and intellectual consequences are obvious.

All these ideas and conditions influence local, regional, and national policy for school-based arts education. They often do so with a vengeance. Manipulation often preempts reason. Policy is regarded as end, not means. However, for our purposes, it is more fruitful to consider policy-making as the conscious joining of intellectual technique to decision-making. Thus, policy analysis means organizing a disciplined approach or set of approaches to the study of conditions, and working to locate patterns that can be considered in terms of options. Policy development then means linking policy analysis to choices and priorities on the basis of values. It is here, in the realm of values, that policy-making connects most directly to issues of art and school change. This briefing paper addresses these connections from three perspectives. First, a foundation is laid by presenting several attributes inherent in the natures of policy-making, art, and school change. (It is impossible to discuss every attribute here; those chosen represent a selection made specifically to assist comparison among the three.) Second, a status report synthesizes problems and issues to be faced in developing policy for arts programs in schools. Third, the future is considered with focus on potential evolutions from current conditions. The paper concludes with an overview of current fundamental policy questions.

NATURES

Intellectual Functions. In order to consider the nature of art, it is important to recognize several distinct intellectual functions. For example, some intellectual activities are focused primarily on finding out how existing things work. Others are focused on producing new or unique things. Still others are focused on finding out what happened. Certain intellectual tools and processes are indigenous to each function; creativity enhances effectiveness in all. Each function may be combined with the others in various mixtures and balances.

Functions and Enterprises. Every person needs skill in using each of these three intellectual functions since most decision-making requires their application in varying measures under varying circumstances. To use more familiar names, the science function is centered in discovering how things work; the history function, with what happened; and the art function, with making new things. An important distinction must be made here between functions and enterprises. Obviously, science-based enterprise has interest in what happened and a definite interest in creating new things. But science-based enterprise creates new things by first finding out how the natural world works. Just as obviously, history-based enterprise is concerned about how things work, but based on seeking to understand “what happened” in various human and humanistic dimensions. Arts-based enterprise is also interested in how things work, but based on the development of capabilities to create new things. A medical research lab is a relatively pure example of science-based enterprise; an historical researcher, of history-based enterprise; and a playwright, of arts-based enterprise. But most enterprises represent combinations. For example, technology involves application of the art function to findings of science. Technique is the findings of science and history applied to artistic problems such as the creation of replicable effectiveness. Another example: written history uses the art function to present findings about such matters as the sociological impact of scientific discoveries.

Functions, Mixtures, Art. Viewed in this light, work in all academic disciplines involves some proportionate mixture of the scientific, historic, and artistic functions. Thus, the art function is no less important than the science or history function. In the K–12 years, serious study of one or more arts disciplines is the best way to begin teaching the art function. Learning to produce work in any arts discipline means learning to solve compilation problems using the media of the art form to create something unique. Performed seriously, this is much more than emotion-based expression. Each work of art, whether created or recreated, is a small universe of interrelationships that translates personal expression to general understanding. Crafting these interrelationships is central to work in the arts. The greater and more universal the translation, the greater the work.

Once one has a work of art to consider, it is possible to ask all sorts of questions about it. One can apply the intellectual function of science and consider how the little universe works. One can apply the intellectual function of history and ask the question, “How did this little universe come into being and what has its impact been?” But these issues and questions, as important as they are, and as art-related as they may be, are not centered on the art function, which involves a fusion of technique, theory, knowledge, vision, and will that results in creating new things out of available materials. This is why the term “art” is associated with far more than work in the fine arts disciplines — the art of government, the art of negotiation, the art of forecasting, the art of investing, etc., and why there is such a strong historic connection between theoretical scientists and the fine arts. Theoretical scientists use the artistic function to create trial solutions in their search for how things work.

Curriculum and Technique. The functions of art, science, and history become doubly interesting when discussed in terms of curricular content. For one thing, much present teaching and learning is focused on the results of scientific, historical, and artistic efforts rather than on the scientific, historical, and artistic modes of inquiry themselves. This emphasis seems particularly appropriate in elementary and secondary education. However, as students move through the educational system, it is not unusual for them to learn means of discovering how things work or what happened. Projects devoted to this objective are common across the

curriculum. When it comes to teaching students how to make things, the technique aspect of the art function is abstracted and emphasized. Instead of helping students develop the capabilities necessary for creating unique things for unique situations, the orientation is toward teaching a variety of techniques under the illusion that all problems can be generalized, that all have generic solutions. Technique-centered orientations are hardly confined to teaching the arts disciplines, but rather pervade all of schooling from organizational structure to delivery of content. Decades of such emphasis have led to current worries about creative thinking and to seemingly intractable problems with the organization and management of schooling.

One now sees a good number of reasons why teaching and learning the art function through arts education is difficult in the schools. The art function—creating new things for unique circumstances—is a critically important skill understood intellectually by only a few educational policy-makers. There is, however, basic understanding of the scientific function, some cognizance of the history function, and fundamental faith in technique—“here is a process that will work everywhere!” This goes some way to explain why contestants in policy debates about arts education most often divide along technical, historical, or scientific lines. The technically oriented favor an emphasis on teaching the production techniques of the various arts disciplines. The historically oriented favor an emphasis on teaching what happened using the arts disciplines as content. The scientifically oriented favor an emphasis on psychological conditioning based on the latest explanations of how the arts work in or on the human psyche. Of these three major approaches, the technically oriented does the most to build a foundation for work with the artistic function. The historically oriented and the scientifically oriented use art as subject matter for conducting science- or history-based enterprises. However, the technical orientation can become a serious detriment to the development of a full range of artistic capabilities if production technique is isolated and considered an end in itself. The person working to create something new for a unique situation cannot begin without technique, but if technique constitutes the sole resource, the uniquely crafted, integrated result that characterizes a successful use of the art function can hardly be expected.

Art-Centered Arts Education. To assert the above is not to suggest that school-based arts education avoid the history and science functions. It is to say, however, that if our primary purpose is to teach the art function, arts education cannot serve merely as an adjunct to the science function, or the history function, or even the technical function. To the contrary, an arts education curriculum centered on the art function evidences aspirations for developing (1) strong technical competence in creating and recreating art based on an understanding of how the arts disciplines work, including what happened and what worked in the past; (2) a thorough understanding of the elements to be employed in the work at hand not only from the perspective of how the elements work and their uses in the past, but also how they might be used in new contexts; and (3) the ability to discern contexts and conditions that will surround the making and reception of a specific work. It is clear that these basic capabilities constitute a set of resources from which the student artist draws as work proceeds to create, recreate, or understand in kinesthetic, musical, verbal, or visual terms.

Viewed in this way, teaching the arts disciplines in the schools becomes a significant intellectual challenge. It is far more than developing the technical skills of students and/or teaching them what happened and/or attempting to relate how art works or can be made to work on the human mind. Clearly, the nature of teaching and learning art as an intellectual function is not necessarily the same as teaching about art or even teaching how to make something using the materials of art. For a useful analogy, consider attempting to write poetry or to conduct diplomacy in another culture. Obviously, it would be necessary to have technical command of the language. It would also be necessary to understand how things work in the new culture, and what has happened there in the past. But just knowing each of these things is not enough to be successful with the arts of literature or negotiation. The art-making function, whether applied to diplomacy or the arts disciplines, becomes possible when one is able to take what one knows and build successfully with it in unique circumstances. Such capabilities take time, dedication, and orientation to the nature of the task.

Policy Purposes. Let us turn now to policy-making: the obvious purpose is to arrive at a decision about what will be done. But the world of policy involves much more, for example: influencing outcomes over which one has no direct control; or understanding the ramifications of actions in terms of economic benefit or loss, constituency reactions, short-term versus long-term effects, and credit or discredit to proponents or opponents of a specific policy.

The basic elements of policy work tend to be gathering information and ideas, multiple analyses of the information and ideas, determination of a course of action, and evaluation of the course of action against expectations. Typical expositions about policy place these elements in a loop indicating that the process has self-contained energy, and that one can begin at any point on the loop. For each of these elements and for the policy process as a whole, there are many techniques. Debate rages over the validity of techniques for information-gathering, analysis, action, and evaluation and, of course, over techniques for trying to make policy decisions look as good as possible. Policy-making is also influenced by values. This makes it possible to identify policies by their various orientations. Values and their attendant philosophies have significant influence on views about and uses of policy elements and techniques. These combine to produce philosophies about policy.

Policy Contexts. Policy work, and any given policy process operating in the real world, is subject to constant contextual changes. Time alters conditions, often so rapidly that a slow policy development process creates decisions for a time that is past. The passage of time also tends to demonstrate the extent to which a given policy has worked. When a widely-held policy or set of policies is rendered useless by the march of events, new policy is developed in the middle of what is often called a paradigm shift. Relationships among purposes, elements, techniques, philosophies, and influences come into bolder relief than usual. No one knows what profiles of new relationships will look like. We are now in such a time with respect to K–12 education in the United States.

Policy Approaches. Given all the aforementioned attributes, what then is the nature of policy work? Policy obviously is concerned with how things work; it must also consider what has happened, often in great detail. Policy is interested in finding technical solutions — patterns that have broad application, large decisions that govern small decisions. None of these approaches alone, however, does justice to the nature of policy work, for policy-making in the broadest sense is more centered in the art function than in either the history or science functions. This connection between policy and the art function is not well understood. Policy-making is widely considered a technical enterprise. Proponents of the technical approach believe that detailed policies can always be constructed to address prospective conditions in advance, that what works in one place will work in another, that everything works in replicable scientific terms. The only problem is to find out how things work in general. Proponents of the artistic approach believe that there is no automatic link between the presence of similar goals and the presence of similar conditions for fulfilling goals. Although real-life decision-making mixes technical and artistic approaches, most policy development for education in the last fifty years has favored technique. The choice of proportion in the mix is critical, for it determines orientations concerning the nature of decision-making, including purposes, uses of policy elements and techniques, powers to reinforce or erode philosophical positions, and capabilities for understanding reactions to influences. In terms of personal responsibility, the technical approach to policy tends to consolidate decision-making power while the artistic approach tends to defuse it. The technical approach risks all on good decisions at the top, while the artistic approach demands high capability throughout the system.

Two Grand Policies. Interweaving the nature of the art function and the nature of policy leads naturally to the nature of schools and school change. Two extant grand policies illustrate basic American values about education. The first: it is more important to focus on opportunity than uniformly high quality; we are always ready to sacrifice specific quality for general opportunity. The second: education is to produce productive adults with productivity defined fundamentally in technical and economic terms; we are always ready to

sacrifice the spiritual for the practical. The result: an emphasis on technique over science, science over history, and history over art—how to do it over why things work, why things work over what happened, and what happened over how to create new things, especially new things for unique situations. This is our overall objective irrespective of whether the subject matter is science, history, art, mathematics, sociology, anthropology, etc., and irrespective of whether the format is liberal education, vocational education, or professional education. This is not what we say we do, but it *is* what we do in practice.

Lessons. These conditions create one basis for making both connections and distinctions among school experiences, formal schooling, and learning. Since experience teaches, the experience of being in school teaches what a society thinks is important. When most community concern is focused on the record of school athletic teams, a powerful lesson is taught about education-related priorities. When some subjects are taught daily while others such as the arts are taught every two weeks, at random, or not at all, experience teaches another lesson about priorities. But there is also learning that is acquired by individual application to disciplinary subject matter. Knowledge, skills, and understandings grow and develop based on individual attitude, aptitude, will, and self-discipline. The relationship between schooling and learning can be close or separate, and the relationship can vary from individual to individual in the same school environment. Most educators would agree that the best schooling is conducive to the greatest amount of individual learning, but as we have already seen, the vagaries of contemporary policy development and the environment it creates often interfere with the attainment of this substantive objective.

There are also interesting connections between specific and cumulative lessons. This is similar to lessons about priorities, except that it is applied here to lessons in a discipline. Work in any subject consists of a series of specific lessons. Each specific lesson teaches something about the subject, but the aggregate effect of specific lessons produces a cumulative lesson. In the arts disciplines, for example, if all specific lessons focus only on technique, there is a tendency for a cumulative lesson to be that real achievement is possible only for those who have natural technical ability. While this lesson is true on a case-specific basis—i.e., musical talent is important for high achievement in music—it is not true either about learning the basics of an arts discipline or about learning the art function through the study of an arts discipline. If, on the other hand, arts teaching is structured so that each specific lesson is focused on the fusion of science and history functions designated “the humanities,” the cumulative lesson is that art does not exist as a separate intellectual function. There are millions of highly educated individuals in the United States who have learned this particular cumulative lesson all too well.

The Life of the Mind. This leads to an important connection between schooling and the life of the mind. The life of the mind begins before schooling and continues after it. Schooling represents an obvious opportunity to build the basis for individuals to continue enriching the lives of their own minds long after formal schooling is over. This, however, is not one of the basic American goals for K–12 education. Although much rhetoric is delivered about this ideal, operational policies most often work against achieving it. It is not that the schooling-life of the mind connection is unimportant, but rather that it is not most important, or even fundamentally important. This is consistent with and reinforcing of another American notion: culture is something that we have rather than something that we build.

School Change. Interesting considerations about the nature of school change can be made by considering American opportunity-based/preparation-for-work ideals against connections between schooling and learning, specific and cumulative lessons, and the life of the mind. It has already been suggested that we are in a transition fueled in part by general recognition that some of our current educational policies are no longer viable or were never good to start with. As the transition continues with the search for new policies, debates intensify concerning relationships among opportunity, various preparatory purposes of education, relative emphases on learning by experience and through study, and the kind of intellectual capabilities we think we need in order to be productive and exert leadership.

School change is also influenced by means chosen for pursuing the ideas and information gathering, analysis, action planning, and evaluation elements of the policy process. Common recognition of the importance of these means creates considerable wars among proponents of various techniques and methods. Often, these wars are fought on ideological grounds. In addition, the changing demographic, political, and economic situation is bringing new levels of competition to American business, deepening concern over the loss of a common core of cultural information, provoking near panic over the potential loss of superiority in developing and marketing technology, and creating new levels of social polarization. And yet, one of the largest potential influences on both policy and the policy context is the massive failure of large-scale technical approaches to social and educational planning. Failures of Communist regimes abroad and an overbureaucratized educational system at home are creating pressures for decentralization. The primary battle here is between those devoted to preservation of technical approaches (one general solution) and those devoted to more artistic approaches (many unique solutions). In terms of school change, the first relies on greater standardization and enforcement, while the latter relies more on individual capability and will to succeed. Both approaches will be present whatever the outcome. The debate is over the proportion of each in the mix. A central question here is the kind of teacher we want to have. To what extent is the teacher the deliverer of technique created by others, and to what extent is the teacher able to create unique teaching for a unique time for each unique group of students? Viewed in this light, the technical/artistic dichotomy is one of the great policy questions regarding school change. It is centered in basic disagreement about the natures of things and about the ideas and values derived from contrary conceptions. These are not ivory tower battles. The choice of balance between technical and artistic approaches to teaching will determine such things as the balance of our relative emphases on efficiency versus sustained ability. This balance has portentous cultural, social, economic, and political ramifications. How schools change is a critical cultural matter.

CURRENT STATUS

Education Reform. A vast enterprise called education reform is under way. This enterprise contains many branch industries, some focused on searching for new techniques in education and educational management, others on developing solutions for difficult, chronic problems. Most visible of all, however, are hucksters for the outcomes-hype industry, the standardized testing-hype industry, the social guilt-hype industry, etc. But each branch industry, no matter what its motives, hopes that a new status quo will favor its long-term interests. The result: policy is the servant of well-crafted advocacy for hegemony rather than advocacy being the servant of well-crafted policy. This is not to deny that education reform is needed or that good policies can be developed. But as usual, good educational policies will result from the work of capable individuals with objectives centered in teaching and learning, not from contrived advocacy or political posturing.

Basic Values, Basic Purposes. This harsh analysis is based on the fact that conflicts regarding purposes and priorities are regularly debated in noneducational terms. The education reform debate often considers education in utilitarian fashion, as though education had little meaning in and of itself. Instead of concentrating on content, much energy is expended on crafting buzz concepts that carry images of improvement: outcomes, creative thinking, and empowerment are examples. Each of these concepts is important; each worked in-depth can be productive. But no real change in favor of any of them can be produced by incantation alone. Our society has become so adept at creating images that many leaders act as though bad conditions are simply bad images that can be erased by good images. For example, while goals to raise standardized test scores are laudable, such scores do not indicate whether students can work using the intellectual functions of science, history, or art. Working with these functions and their interrelationships as appropriate to various tasks constitutes the basis of productivity, intellectual advancement, and all the political, economic, and social benefits so avidly sought from such positive conditions. It is entirely possible to use methods of public relations, including mathematically-based techniques such as standardized testing and polling, to prove to ourselves that educational results are improving when, in fact, they are improving only in terms of the techniques we have chosen to address the elements of the policy process—idea and

information gathering, analysis, action, and evaluation. The appearance of success can mask failure, often for a considerable time. This prospect brings us full circle to basic values and ideas about the nature of what we are trying to accomplish in education, and about the role of teaching and learning the arts disciplines in the schools.

Arts Education. It is no secret that arts education has a checkered record. In some locales, there are strong programs in one or more of the arts disciplines. In other locales, programs are weak or marginally effective. And in still other locales, there is no real arts education to speak of. It is possible to overlay this range of achievement with information about the number of students served in each circumstance. Too often, excellent arts programs serve a relatively small number of students in a particular school. For most students, there is just enough presence for the arts in schools to teach the cumulative lesson that the arts disciplines are not as important as other subjects. Specific lessons are based primarily either in the acquisition of technical skill or the application of psychological technique in the hope that being around art will induce creativity, good feelings, or even future patronage. In-school conditions also may involve exposure to professionally produced art and to artists. These experiences, if combined with curriculum-based instruction, can serve an important field trip function: curriculum and experience reinforce each other. If, however, arts experiences are the only in-school involvement with art, the cumulative lesson is that art is no more than entertainment.

Education reform has brought additional pressures on arts education. Worries about the so-called basic disciplines have produced new emphases on technical skills, particularly in language and mathematics. This is done in the hope that technical competence will provide the basis for expertise that generates lucrative new technology. Such an agenda has little room for teaching art or history as intellectual functions—the scientific base of technology is crystal clear while the role of the art and history functions in creating technology is obscure. Art and history subject matters—in contrast to art and history as intellectual functions—are receiving some emphasis because of another concern: the search for common values and understandings needed as the basis for a democratic society. But this impetus comes more from a desire to have common understanding about what has happened rather than improved general competence in the creation of unique things.

Cultural Forces. Triumphs and tragedies resulting from in-school conditions pale in comparison to the cultural forces that face American elementary and secondary school students outside of school. All arts media are employed in the creation of popular culture. The musical and visual image form our culture more powerfully than reasoned discourse through words. From television news to education reform rhetoric, words are often an accompaniment to images created to bypass reason and appeal directly to the emotions. In one of the great educational policy contradictions, elementary and secondary students are having their cultural values formed primarily through languages they cannot read. The musical, the visual, the theatrical, and the kinesthetic are all given to youth in a pre-packaged *mélange*. There is no need for effort on their part. Their culture is made for them. The result is association of the artistic media with environments and lifestyles rather than with the life of the mind—a cumulative lesson with disastrous long-term ramifications.

Art-As-Center, Art-As-Means. Given these in-school/out-of-school conditions, it is natural that many philosophical positions contend over the content and process of arts education. As we have already seen, some of these positions can be identified by their relationships with science, history, art, and technology, either as intellectual functions or as enterprises. Another type of analysis can be made by determining the mixture between art-as-center and art-as-means values. An art-as-center position holds that the primary reason for studying one or more of the arts disciplines is to learn as much as possible about that discipline on its own terms. The primary reason for studying music, for example, is to learn how music works, the basic methods for making music work, what has happened in music, and eventually, how to think *in* music. The art-as-means position sees the arts disciplines *primarily* as means to other ends—improving test scores in other subjects, creating a cultural tone for the economic benefit of the community, entertainment after real

work is done, supporting public relations and marketing, facilitating social engineering and psychological action, working with the learning-impaired, creating lifestyle environments, etc. Since conditions involve a mixture of art-as-center and art-as-means values, the question is not the presence of one position or the other, but the relative weight of each in a given mixture. In schools, it is not unusual to have art-as-center operations conducted for the interested and the talented in order to produce product that can be used in art-as-means operations for general school and community populations.

Art-as-center and art-as-means distinctions reveal much about policy ideas for combinations of the science, history, technology, and art functions. In an art-as-center approach, history is concerned with finding out what happened in order to build competence for thinking in the arts discipline. To one art-as-means point of view, the issue is how past work in an arts discipline relates to or can be used to teach general history. Regarding technique, the art-as-center position focuses on the acquisition of basic operational skills in a discipline while art-as-means proponents are interested in how the arts discipline relates to or can be used to accomplish other agendas. Obviously, both art-as-center and art-as-means approaches can be used wisely or unwisely. But in taking positions on arts education in the schools, the question remains the extent to which the goal is to teach the intellectual function of art, or to use art to support teaching other subjects and other intellectual functions, or to use art to support non- or even anti-intellectual goals. Clearly, such interacting but distinctly different ideas and agendas have the power to produce tremendous conflicts regarding purposes and priorities. Prospects for conflict are compounded to the extent that rational discourse is eclipsed by collisions of fundamentalisms. Each faction believes that power to minimize other points of view can be obtained if only the proper images promoting its cause can be crafted and widely distributed. Development and protection of images take priority over core work in the arts disciplines. Personalities, conflicting methodologies, funding, and institutional prerogatives dominate discussions about what is to be done. In such conditions, works of art and work in art become secondary.

The National Discussion. All this produces an interesting pattern of influences on policy-making. For example, national policy development for arts education operates in a more compartmentalized fashion than is widely supposed. An illusion is created by the disparate amounts of media coverage given to various individuals and groups involved. The National Endowment for the Arts, the American Council on the Arts, the Kennedy Center, and the state and local arts agencies receive far more coverage in the prestige press than teachers' organizations, universities and colleges, and independent intellectuals. However, the record will show that the under-reported individuals and groups have far more influence and make a far greater contribution to arts education. Relationships among wealth, image, and public approbation produce a national policy forum on arts education that is more a place for the exchange of propagandas than for negotiating cooperative solutions. Groups become wary about giving credit to others lest their own image suffer. The arts education policy forum is also characterized by vigorous advocacy for different techniques. There is little common ground beyond agreement that arts education, in some form, is important. The result: various groups and individuals that influence arts education policy become enclaved according to their ideas, interests, and traditional responsibilities. In national terms, for example, the academic community in higher education essentially controls the content of teacher preparation programs and research. School boards, both state and local, have control over the extent to which arts education is a priority in specific schools. Specialist teachers control what students learn. The arts council system controls artist-in-school-type programs, and the National Endowment for the Arts, along with like-minded advocates and philanthropists, essentially dominates discussion of arts and arts education policy in the prestige media and in the "best" social circles. Examples could continue for quite some time, but the fact is that these policy-influencing entities do not have deep respect for one another; cooperation is minimal, patience short, and umbrage common. At the local level, policy development is focused on either the emplacement or protection of delivery systems for arts education. Conditions rarely allow professional arts teachers to move comfortably into policy issues centered in content. Evolving history continues to teach fear of loss. Local arts teachers are all but consumed with the problem of continuous justification.

Arts Education and School Change. Current conditions regarding policy development and arts education relate specifically to current conditions regarding schools and school change. A common lament is that lack of unity prevents massive political action on behalf of arts education. There are two basic problems with this point of view. First, in a democracy, there is little unity at the detailed level about anything that is important: the existence of various points of view is a sign of health rather than of disease. Second, it seems foolish to develop unity in order to take political action for the sake of political action. Too often, the call for unity reflects a focus on *how* (political action) rather than *what* (content). It is not lack of unity, but rather the preponderance of superficiality that produces so little impact for much policy-oriented work on arts education. So often, pragmatic and promotional interests present rationales for arts in the schools solely on art-as-means grounds. No matter how sensible these arguments seem, the cumulative lesson being taught is that art on its own terms has no parity as a basic component of education.

Out-of-School Influences. These educational issues are overshadowed, however, by the power of out-of-school conditions in cultural formation. As schools at their most serious have become more and more oriented to the teaching of technique rather than pursuing individual and aggregate goals for cultural formation, and as cultural formation has become confused with cultural imposition, cultural policy development is influenced disproportionately by popular culture, or, more specifically, by the purveyors of popular culture. This creates a corrosive situation with respect to public understanding of the possible connections between art and schooling. It also sheds new light on tensions in the arts education policy arena. For example, the status of public understanding about the nature of art, the nature of schooling, and the relationship between the two is reflected in public policy based on confusions between art and entertainment. Polling allied to public relations technique enters the picture. Polls show how those polled feel, rather than whether those feelings are the basis for good policy. Massive reliance on polling has confused distinctions between off-the-cuff feelings and thorough policy analysis. In such a climate, in-depth policy discussion is all but impossible. Options and alternatives are viewed as public relations attacks. The mandarins of popular culture cry “censorship” when anything they promote is questioned. As for students, a relatively small number find personal fulfillment in real work involving one or more of the arts disciplines. Most are left with little opportunity to understand the possibility of a distinction between art and entertainment, much less to receive an introduction to art as an intellectual function. By refusing to work seriously and comprehensively with art, the schools essentially have abandoned any hope of a significant role in cultural formation beyond that which magnifies the parade of fads and orthodoxies that constitute popular culture or beyond that which reinforces the technique-centered approach to economic and social organization. The spiritual world is essentially ignored. As a result, culture-based problems multiply.

FUTURES

Opportunities. Despite all current difficulties, the future seems replete with opportunities for school-based arts education. No one knows the extent to which any of these opportunities will be seized. As previously noted, evolving geopolitical conditions are calling into question massive state planning and hierarchical bureaucracies as the most productive means for economic, social, and cultural development. There is also growing understanding of problems caused by absolute faith in technology and technique. In the current transition period, new balances between individual freedom and social responsibility are being sought. This situation will not last forever. In time, the transition will complete itself and new orthodoxies will emerge. These may survive and war with each other for many years.

Basic Choices. Periods of transition make policy analysis particularly worthwhile because transition conditions create the potential for change on many fronts at once. But wise utilization of this fact depends on views about purposes. To the extent that policy work is viewed primarily as the development of strategies and tactics to promote and protect past, present, or projected positions and conditions, to that same extent policy-making is based on technique. To the extent that policy work is considered a search for viable alternatives, an operation to build capabilities that can be used as needed, to that same extent policy-making

becomes artistic — technique is present as means, not as end. Simply put, a basic distinction is the extent to which policy work is viewed as a means for producing belief or compliance, or as a means for facilitating judgment. Other distinctions ought to be considered: planning versus strategic policy-making, for example. So often, planning is done solely in terms of tangible resources such as funding. Strategic policy-making considers the relationship between tangibles and intangibles such as the fit between ideas and conditions, the internal integrity of various elements in a given plan, the will and commitment of responsible individuals. Another set of distinctions evolves from short- and long-term perspectives on policy development.

Purposes and Choices. Numerous factors influence choices made about mixtures and balances of these ideas in actual decision-making circumstances. One of the most important is the constantly evolving public view of the purposes of art and the relationship of this view to the development of public policies concerning arts education. If, for example, the mix of public opinion is shifted so that art-as-propaganda erodes the regnant position of art-as-entertainment in the public mind, what impact can be expected on arts education in the schools? It is possible that such a shift could change overall public opinion from “art-is-ornamental” to “art-is-dangerous,” or more probably, to “art, like religion, is a private matter,” no longer a responsibility to be covered by tax-based revenues.

Management Choices. Another factor is the evolution of ideas about the nature of management structures based on growing concern about the effectiveness of large hierarchical bureaucracies. Major questions are being raised throughout the world about the extent to which decentralization is preferable to centralization. The European Commission in Brussels is advancing the concept of *subsidiarity* — taking decisions at the lowest appropriate level. This issue has already reached American elementary and secondary education: numerous experiments with local control are being developed. The outcome of these experiments and the evolution of consensus on this question will produce much of the context for future policy development concerning management structures, content, and accountability. As previously suggested, the maximalist, top-down management structure focuses on competence at the top and compliance down through the various levels of the hierarchy. The gamble is on one right decision, right in the sense that the decision at the top will produce the desired results wherever the decision is employed. Individual competence to deal with content is devalued and its impact minimized. But let us now go further. In maximalist management circumstances, individual competence is seen first in terms of ability to deliver the assignment one is given. Later, as boredom sets in and the bureaucratic power game reveals itself, competence becomes defined as the ability to manipulate at increasingly higher levels in the hierarchy. Politics replaces content at the center of the enterprise. Minimalist management takes an opposite view and focuses on results rather than on compliance; it is comfortable with maximum variation as long as basic content goals are being achieved; its objective is a high level of individual competence and good judgment at all levels. It is based more on the intellectual function of art than on the intellectual function of technique.

Policy Choices. These now familiar considerations lead us to several basic choices about the future shape of the policy enterprise whether considered comprehensively, or in terms of general education or arts education. Centralization versus decentralization is joined by other distinctions: immediate efficiency contrasted with sustained ability, application of methods contrasted with results, and even the extent to which policy debate itself is conducted in either/or terms, or in terms of mixtures and balances. Other critical choices will be made concerning the orientation of policy work toward image-making as a means of public discourse. All these choices will influence school change even though they will be mixed and matched in an infinite variety of ways given specific educational situations.

Economic Influences. One general influence seems more certain every day. As the world converts to market economies, the United States will be in an economic position quite different from anything experienced by most living Americans. Many individuals already equate real and potential losses of America’s relative economic position with failure. There is not significant understanding of the distinction between loss of relative position and loss of internal position. In any case, economic fears are already at a

significant level, even before large sections of the world have developed market economies to the point where real competition with the United States is possible. If such an evolution occurs, economic anxieties may be raised to fever pitch with draconian consequences for educational policy. Clearly, geoeconomic events and potentialities portend course corrections for American education. For example, it is becoming obvious that the United States needs more capabilities in basic science. However, individuals concerned about basic science are locked in a policy war with a larger group who sees technological exploitation as the primary engine driving economic success. Battles rage over the relative priorities of basic and applied research. Unfortunately, the technological mentality sees little of value except technology and technique—using the minds of a few to provide product for many so that the many can use the product without much thought. Individuals fluent in working intellectually with the science function, the history function, and/or the art function may be partisans for the particular mixture of these approaches they work with, but they do tend to see more broadly because each of these three intellectual functions demands constant searching with the mind.

K–12 Curricular Options. The mixtures and balances chosen for K–12 curricula based on aspirations for developing science, history, art, and technique/technology functions have critical ramifications for the relationship between art and schooling. Decisions based on these aspirations will determine the nature of course corrections and thus, the content of arts activities: the extent to which students become familiar with the intellectual function of art, the fine and performing arts disciplines, the relationships of art to other things, or a mixture of all three of these in some proportion; or the extent to which art is ornamental, entertainment, propaganda, a mixture of all three of these in some proportion; or a mixture of some or all six of the previous in some proportion.

Such decisions constitute fundamental choices about schools and school change. Basic questions center on what we want schools to do, for example, the extent to which school is considered preparation for life in a technological world, or preparation for life in a world that includes technological conditions but also other conditions, modes of inquiry, and means of accomplishment. Little education reform rhetoric seems to address such basic questions. Many assumptions are made about what should happen: better test scores, better achievement for the traditionally underserved, better acquisition of basic technique, and more creative thinking. While all of these are worthy goals, most often they become identifiers for nostrums. The real content of each issue is masked by the generation of multiple images, all implying that the issue is being addressed while, in fact, little of substance is being done to address the issue at all. Rhetoric avowing that education's purpose is to challenge and advance individual capabilities for lifelong learning masks policies oriented to making everyone feel good about themselves as they are, except, of course, in terms of money and power. No one can be told, even subtly, that he or she is culturally impoverished. Culture is considered something individuals are born with, not something attained through lifelong effort. *Self-esteem* is the current code word covering this counterproductive notion.

Making futures choices for schools is not easy because choices must be made in a political environment where those responsible for results are often co-opted by the requirements of image-making. Considerations turn from the long-term to the short-term, and from realistic assessments and actions based on conditions and prospects to the creation of illusions about problems, solutions, and results. Education reform has produced new levels of resolve based on broad understanding that basic technical skills in language and mathematics are essential. A basic futures question is the extent to which the list of essentials is extended to include basic skills for thinking in — not just thinking about — art, science, and history. One related question is the extent to which acquisition of technical skills can be seen as groundwork for the acquisition of abilities to think rather than being isolated as technical goals to be technologically achieved and tested. Another related question is the extent to which work in the arts disciplines will be pursued in terms of the art function, including work with relationships among technique, creativity, productivity, and effectiveness.

Potential Futures for Arts Education. The future of arts education is difficult to predict. The fluctuating influences that affect decision-making are hard to extrapolate with accuracy. Yet, those concerned about arts education need not simply wait to see what happens. In addition to careful consideration about the import of various general mixtures and balances, the field has important choices to make. One of the first of these concerns the art-as-center/art-as-means distinction. Quite different futures result depending on proportions chosen for various periods in the K–12 continuum. For example, without some intensive work with art-as-center approaches, it is hard to understand how the intellectual function of art can ever be learned and thus practiced to any significant degree. Decisions about art-as-means/art-as-center proportions are not easy to make. First, conditions vary greatly from school to school. Second, school time is a finite commodity. Third, the current operational organization of arts education is not oriented to the delivery of art-as-center arts education to the general population. From current pragmatic perspectives there is validity in the argument that what should be done cannot be done. But this validity extends into the future only as long as there is no goal for basic change in the position held by the arts disciplines in elementary and secondary schools. Basic change depends on the extent to which capabilities for work in the artistic mode is regarded as being important for the future well-being of our society. If such capabilities are accorded a high priority, the question then becomes how far schools should be expected to go in teaching the intellectual function of art as we have defined it here, and further, the role of education in the specific fine and performing arts disciplines in contributing to the desired result — as art-as-center focus producing the basis for sophisticated intellectual uses of the methods of art as well as capabilities for work in and with the arts disciplines.

Arts Education and the Intellectual Function of Art. Since the young are not noted for their philosophical ability, it can be argued with some force that work with one or more arts disciplines can provide the best first introduction to the creation of small universes that speak effectively to or work effectively for more people than just the creator. A major policy choice is the extent to which this agenda is valued in comparison with other agendas that make the art/intellect connection — traditional humanistic scholarship in the arts; traditional science-based theoretical work about the arts and about the nature of perception; traditional analytical and propositional work in aesthetics; the promotion of works of art, artistic personalities, and cultural events; general development of audiences, patronage both public and private, and other resource/support mechanisms; and last but not least, the traditional K–12 agenda; acquiring sufficient technical skill to create or present specific works in the various arts media. All of these functions and their associated enterprises require use of the intellect. Each of these other agendas is credible and honorable as lifetime mission or avocational interest. But each can be pursued at great length without producing or having any aspirations to produce understanding of and competence with the intellectual function of art. We now have before us the most prominent policy alternatives for arts education. The mixtures and balances chosen among these agendas will influence the future, not just that of arts education, but also the cultural development of the nation. Tradition, perspectives on evolving conditions, resources and their deployment, and the nature of aspirations for what arts education can and should be will influence the choice of alternatives.

Positive Potentials. One of the best things to be hoped for is continuing confluence of three conditions that can reinforce one another. One is the potential rejection of massive systematized approaches to curriculum policy. The second is budding realization of the problems generated by total focus on technique. The third is growing understanding of the importance of intangible resources such as initiative, self-discipline, cooperation, genuine respect for differences, interest in the life of the mind, etc., and a concomitant realization that these intangible resources cannot be achieved by law, regulation, or even curricular plans bolstered by standardized testing. These several realizations are pointing once again to the spiritual aspects of human existence and to the role of culture in nurturing important intangible resources. The culture/intangible resources connection works most effectively when the agenda is focused on helping individuals develop the lives of their own individual minds rather than on converting them to ideologies, causes, and spending patterns. The nature of art and arts education is conducive to development of individual capabilities and growth. Unfortunately, too little of the art and arts education

enterprise is so oriented. A major determinant of the future of arts education is the extent to which there are aspirations for change of view and approach, and then the extent to which there is sufficient patience to work incrementally as contextual conditions evolve. Such an enterprise requires many individuals fluent in the intellectual function of art — including its science, history, and technological connections — to formulate and advance policies that foster the learning required if arts education is to fulfill its most important functions for students. Developing such individuals is a primary responsibility of higher education, even though both time and resources are in short supply.

CONCLUSION

The view of intellectual functions and subject matter presented in this briefing paper leads to the conclusion that K–12 educational policy positions on arts education have tremendous potential for influencing positive school change. In fact, results sought by many of the most thoughtful education reformers could be achieved were more individuals graduating from high school prepared to advance their abilities to think in — not just think about — art, science, and history, and oriented toward using these intellectual functions in various combinations. Technology/technique might then find itself taking a more appropriate place: a combination of the science and art functions rather than a function considered in terms that obscure the art, science, and history functions by implying that the mechanics of doing is all that counts. While considering the ramifications of these ideas, fundamental policy questions for arts education remain as the field develops intellectual, operational, and philosophical connections with issues such as (1) the respective roles and interrelationships of cultural exposure, cultural study, and study of specific arts disciplines; (2) implications of various relationships between arts education and various social development initiatives such as psychological well-being, racial and ethnic understanding, and basic literacy/numeracy; and (3) the impact of various economic issues—support for the creation and presentation of art, public values related to continued fiscal support for arts education, and the gold-minting juggernaut of the entertainment industry. In all of these considerations, the arts education community needs and deserves a comprehensive program of policy studies that considers conditions, probabilities, and possibilities with a view to presenting options or the materials for crafting options on a local basis rather than devising, naming, and promoting secular religions in all their acronymic glory. This policy effort needs various kinds of expertise. The field needs to understand more about what happened in the past, it needs to know how things work, it needs to be able to craft unique solutions for unique situations; and along with general education and society as a whole, it needs to learn to use technique wisely rather than becoming a slave to the technical imperative. It needs to recenter itself in content, in the development of knowledge and skills for individual students.

Further, if the arts disciplines are to become basic subjects in elementary and secondary education and thus make their maximum positive impact on school change, there must be a significant increase in public understanding about the art function and its potential role in schools. The challenge to the arts and arts education communities and to all who support their work is to create a sustained effort that changes school policy in favor of the most that the arts can do in the elementary and secondary years. The arts community in higher education must play a leading role in this effort if it is to succeed. New levels of initiative are needed to formulate and promulgate arts education policies that focus first on the arts disciplines themselves. The alternative is to see the future determined by the evolving juxtaposition of events, ideas, and wills associated with various art-as-means agendas. Much more than the future of the arts education professions is riding on the outcome. The culture future of the nation is at stake.

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