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From Dewey to No Child Left Behind: The Evolution and Devolution of Public Arts Education

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This historical narrative tracks the evolution and devolution of visual arts education from Dewey's progressive era pedagogy and the theory of the arts as experience through the modern accountability movement. Archival material, state curricular documents, and conversations with policymakers show an increasing focus on core subject areas of reading, writing, and mathematics at the expense of arts education. Texas House Bill 3, the third generation of accountability legislation in the Lone Star State, provides a case study of the status of arts education after more than fifteen years of high-stakes testing and accountability. Policy considerations are offered for arts education and its future standing within the public educational curriculum.

Keywords: accountability, arts education, curriculum, education policy, high-stakes testing

> I decided to take a calligraphy class . . . I learned about serif and sans-serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating. None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But ten years later when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me, and we designed it all into the Mac. It was the first computer with beautiful typography.
>
> Steve Jobs, 2005 Stanford University Commencement Speech

Arts education policy is subject to the interplay of many values, definitions, and approaches regarding both the arts and education. Some believe the arts are basic to education; other see them as important, but less than basic; still others see them as a low priority or expendable, given the importance of other core academic subjects such as mathematics and English language arts. Dewey believed that arts education was a foundational part of the curriculum because it developed creativity, self-expression, and an appreciation of the expression of others (Dewey 1919; Dewey 1934). Hope (2006), like many others, posits that art is basic to a comprehensive education. Public and private policy statements support this view. Unfortunately, despite such statements and a long history of success in schools, over the years, the arts have often taken a backseat in educational curricula. Never has that been more the case than in the current era of high-stakes testing and accountability (Berliner 2009). In a period when scores on standardized tests are at the forefront of every educator's mind, certain subjects are being emphasized to the exclusion and detriment of others (Center on Educational Policy 2008).

Since the introduction of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), empirical research has surfaced detailing the impact of the law on arts education. McMurrer (2008) conducted a survey of 349 public school districts and found that 58 percent of districts have increased instructional time for reading and language arts, and that 45 percent have increased instructional time for math, while arts education instructional time has decreased by 16 percent since the inception of NCLB. In lower performing schools, which are usually populated by low-income students and students of color, an even greater amount of time is devoted to test taking strategies (McNeil and Valenzuela 2001; Vasquez Heilig 2010). Murray (2006) describes teachers drilling students daily in reading, writing, and mathematics, essentially teaching only to the tests. The result is what Berliner (2009) calls an "educational apartheid." Certain classes of students are systematically denied exposure to subjects not covered by

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the tests. The loss of art in the current high-stakes testing environment is problematic, because art provides an alternative means to view reality, expands the way students perceive the world, and often has immediately unobservable benefits for workers in a market economy (American Arts Alliance 2006; Berliner 2009).

Through a historical narrative, this article details how arts education has evolved over time in the national discourse.[1] The first section tracks national trends in arts education and parallels them with seminal Texas curricular documents from 1900 through the 1950s. We then delve into the renaissance of arts education that began in the 1960s and segue to the emergence of standards and the testing and accountability movement. This article culminates with a case study of Texas, an early progenitor of accountability, and reviews the implications of the third generation of accountability legislated in House Bill 3 (H.B. 3) for arts education. H.B. 3 (Texas Legislature 2009) is the most recent iteration of the high-stakes testing and accountability movement in Texas—a reform effort that has spanned more than fifteen years. Our analysis of the most recent legislative developments will consider whether value conflicts for arts education policy persist regarding NCLB in the Lone Star State and beyond. The article concludes with policy considerations for preserving arts education's presence in the schools, despite current educational reform agendas that emphasize tested core subjects.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Arts education has a long and complicated past in the United States. Initially introduced as practical training for industrial employment, the arts entered the classroom in the last quarter of the nineteenth century through technical drawing and drafting (Hamblen 1985). As the economy grew, a new middle class emerged that sought access to aesthetic elements of culture. The arts were no longer seen as simply the purview of the wealthy upper class. These changes in the social structure brought with them a different attitude toward teaching the arts (Smith 1996). Beginning in 1900, the postindustrialization era ushered in leisure time, once only a luxury for the rich and idle, for an emerging middle class, and the arts as cultural enrichment became a curriculum goal in schools (Saunders 1971). This change in educational attitude toward the arts in the curriculum is important, as it underlies an evolution within the educational system that has developed for well over a hundred years (Siegesmund 1998).

At the turn of the century, John Dewey was beginning his research at the University of Chicago, experimenting with a new approach to education that would become known as *progressive education* (Goldblatt 2006). Dewey (1938) theorized that children need education that is authentic and allows them to grow mentally, physically, and socially by providing opportunities to be creative, critical thinkers. Dewey believed that arts are indeed experience, and that access to arts education opens processes of inquiry that expand a child's perception of the world and create venues for understanding and action (Goldblatt 2006). It was during the progressive era that student-centered, studio-based learning was first integrated into U.S. high schools. Major influences on this movement were Dewey's Laboratory School in Chicago and William Wirt's "platoon system" at Horace Mann High School in Gary, Indiana (Hoff 1999).

The period from the turn of the twentieth century to the 1930s was dominated by a more encompassing and less restrictive approach to the arts than had been the norm in the latter part of the nineteenth century (Smith 1996). The child study movement, which explored theories about children's ways of learning, gained popularity (Saunders 1971). This broad-based approach to the arts in the curriculum marked the first time that arts education concepts were advocated for their contributions to other subject areas, a pairing that would continue to inform discussions for decades to come (Berliner 2009). In Texas, curriculum documents of the time reflect the arts' new prominence in education. Visual arts courses were separated from industrial arts courses, with lengthy descriptions provided for both elementary and secondary students (Hall 1923; Texas State Department of Education 1927; Dallas Public Schools 1926–1927). In a 1922–1923 curriculum manual, the Texas State Department of Education emphasized the need for visual arts to be taught in the classroom and "never allowed to become a dead subject" (Texas State Department of Education, 1922–1923, 70).

At the end of the 1920s, educators believed that the arts had been firmly rooted in the curriculum (Efland 1983). Large numbers of local school districts funded arts teaching. The Great Depression changed everything. During this period, thousands of schools closed and teacher pay was cut—but enrollment continued to increase (Tyack 1976). To address needs while simultaneously lowering costs, many districts cut their arts programs (Efland 1983). The war years were no different. When funds were short, supplies were even more limited, and the arts were not designated a priority for students (Saunders 1971). This pattern would be repeated in decades to follow (Mims and Lankford 1995). In Texas, bulletins from the State Department of Education in 1938 and 1939 (Texas State Department of Education 1938–1939; Texas State Department of Education 1939) document an arts program that was based on local, community-owned art pieces, visits to local buildings, and the establishment of arts bulletins and school art galleries. These curricular documents reflect a low-cost, highly decentralized, and local approach to arts education.

In the 1950s, the economy was booming. Education benefited, and dollars that had previously been denied to the system were redirected (Ziegfeld 1951). Local school boards began to increase funding for arts programs, and many specialist teachers were employed. While art education enjoyed some elevation of status during this period, it also suffered one of its greatest blows. When the Soviet Union launched

Sputnik, the government proclaimed an educational crisis, and a new emphasis on science and mathematics pushed arts education into the background (Saunders 1971; Smith 1996). Those responsible for thousands of school-based programs perceived their discipline and their work to be in jeopardy. It is against this backdrop that arts education professionals and advocates began to mobilize and organize their efforts to reposition arts teaching and learning in the educational policy arena. Gravely concerned by what they perceived as a slow edging of the arts outside of the core curriculum, these stakeholders lobbied politicians and benighted educators who took the position that the arts were frivolous (Smith 1996, 206–07).

The efforts of those who envisioned a role for the federal government as a possible positive influence on local decision making gained momentum in the 1960s (Commission on the Humanities 1964). The United States Office of Education (USOE) supported research and curriculum projects in the visual, literary, and performing arts between 1963 and 1968. These projects generated arts education policy concepts and framed the arts as a subject for curriculum-based instruction (Chapman 2000). The U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (1963) published a lengthy report stressing the necessity of arts programs for all schoolchildren and focusing on the importance of designing and allocating art spaces in schools in which such programs could be delivered. In 1965, a new federal agency emerged to represent and promulgate the arts' interests. At times powerful, at other times less so, but always integral to the arts in the modern era, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), especially in its earliest years, became for many the symbolic location for the arts and arts education policymaking in America (Bauerlein 2008; Chapman 2000). Public funding from the newly created NEA and state arts agencies, coupled with continuing financial support from major foundations and individuals accelerated and sustained the growth of arts-producing organizations (Zakaras and Lowell 2008). In arts education, the NEA and the state arts agencies focused on arts-in-school programs rather than established programs led by specialist teachers.

Despite increased federal presence in the 1960s, arts education still remained within the local purview, as required by the U.S. Constitution and other federal education laws. Federal expenditures on arts education have always been extremely small in comparison to the aggregate of local support. The 1960s also saw new commitments of resources by state education agencies, signaling an increasing role for state government. In Texas, curricular documents from the era reflect the influx of state-level resources for arts education. For the first time, the newly established Texas Education Agency (TEA) released a full curriculum guide on arts education, and school districts within the state followed suit (Texas Education Agency [TEA] 1961; Dallas Independent School District 1966). Additionally, TEA began to publish comprehensive guides on *Education through Art* aimed at elementary and secondary school arts education programs (TEA 1969; TEA 1970).

The election of Reagan was viewed as a turning point for the role of government in many arenas. A case in point was the appointment of Frank Hodsoll as head of the NEA in 1981. At that time, the NEA spent a small percentage of its budget on arts education, but, as previously noted, the association had the ear of many. In 1988, Hodsoll's NEA weighed in on the arts education debate in the foreword to *Toward Civilization: A Report on Arts Education*. The report claimed that arts education in America was in "triple jeopardy," because the arts "are not viewed as serious, knowledge itself is not viewed as a prime educational objective, and those who determine school curricula do not agree on what arts education is" (National Endowment for the Arts 1988, 19). Hodsoll questioned the NEA's sole focus on experiences provided by visiting artists and argued, along with many certified arts teachers, for sequential curricula, comprehensive testing, improved data gathering, improved teacher quality, the recruitment of outstanding teachers, and increased educational responsibility. It is no accident that these solutions are eerily similar to the theory of action underlying the current NCLB policy environment. These proposals were consistent with the concepts of education reform presented in *A Nation at Risk,* a Department of Education publication of 1983. Over an eighteen-year period, these concepts evolved into the specific policies of NCLB that hurt the very arts programs Hodsoll was trying to assist.

The political directions of the 1980s set the stage for a stronger federal involvement in education in the 1990s. Arts education was included in this plan largely because national associations of certified arts teachers became active in demanding a place for the arts in federal lists of basic subjects that were being written into legislation. In 1994, the highly influential National Voluntary K–12 Standards for the arts were published. This project was the first and only time that the Department of Education, the NEA, and the National Endowment for the Humanities supported the nation's professional arts teachers in a policy project of national scope. Highly qualified professionals from the National Art Education Association and its counterparts in music, dance, and theater wrote the standards for the various art forms. Therefore, the standards were based in disciplinary content. A national oversight committee composed of arts education professionals and representatives of other interested groups managed the public comment process and approved the final text. This project was executed in parallel with other federally funded projects in other disciplines. For once, the arts had true parity.

Because of the strength of partnering and the power of an organized lobbying effort, the K–12 arts teacher associations and other advocates were ultimately successful when Congress signed the Goals 2000: Educate America Act into law in 1994. Section 102 of the Act states that by the year 2000, all students will "demonstrate competency over

challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography" (Goals 2000: Educate America Act 1994). This legislation was the first time that the arts were identified as a part of core curriculum in federal policy (Arts Education Partnership 2006). A new focus on arts education seemed to be in the offing; however, with the 2000 election, a new paradigm of national educational policy appeared on the horizon.

During the 2000 presidential campaign, George W. Bush, then Governor of Texas, touted the "Texas educational miracle" as a model for the rest of the nation (Dobbs 2003). At the time, the Texas approach to education was demonstrating amazing results as dropout rates plunged and test scores soared (*60 Minutes* 2004). After his election to the presidency, George W. Bush drew his ideas for federal education policy from his home state of Texas, where testing in mathematics and language arts served as the primary mechanisms for measuring student, school, and district success. In 2002, Texas-style high-stakes accountability through testing became the educational policy model for the nation with the bipartisan reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as No Child Left Behind (McNeil 2005).

However, critics decried the impact of ten years of Texas-style accountability on arts education. They argued that the state's focus on high-stakes testing had unintended consequences on arts education in schools. Haney (2000) reported that 85 percent of respondents suggested that the areas not tested directly on high-stakes exams in Texas (e.g., fine arts) were receiving less and less attention in the curriculum. Other empirical work has demonstrated that high-stakes testing has legitimized a culture that sacrifices resources and time for arts education in the name of standards (Cavanagh 2006; Center on Educational Policy 2006; McNeil and Valenzuela 2001).

In response to worries in the public realm about the potential negative impacts of NCLB on arts education, the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) published *Critical Evidence*, a meta-analysis of all prior research conducted by the NEA, the National Assembly of State Art Agencies (NASAA), AEP, and the Department of Education on the benefits of arts education for student achievement. The report argues that "in the federal No Child Left Behind Act . . . the arts share equal billing with reading, math, science and other disciplines as 'core academic subjects,' which can contribute to improved student learning outcomes" (Arts Education Partnership 2006, 1).

Furthermore, the Education Commission of the States (2005) found that forty-nine states had established content and/or performance standards for arts education, and that forty-three states required schools or districts to provide arts instruction. These requirements were a direct result of the 1994 standards project and demonstrated a dramatic change in direction from 1980, when only one state—Missouri—had mandated curriculum-based arts education standards for students (Hatfield 1999).

The era of accountability has marked a transition from local control to increased state and federal influence and direction in educational policy (Cohen 1996). Although the accountability era did not halt nationwide arts education in America, it is readily apparent that the focus of NCLB is somewhere other than the arts (Chapman 2007). Although equal billing of arts education with other areas of education appears to pervade the standards, testing, and accountability discourse, this parity certainly does not exist in the underpinning reasoning associated with its stakes. The only subjects for which the federal government holds states accountable (through Adequate Yearly Progress [AYP], the accountability mechanism of NCLB) are reading and mathematics. The accountability era also marks the culmination of a movement from arts education that is driven solely by local pedagogical and curricular discourse to an environment in which educational standards defined at the state and federal levels (linked to dollars originating in legislative halls) influence the prominence and presence of the arts in school curriculum (Berliner 2009).

This article will now turn to a case study that examines the role that arts education has played in recent legislation, and will consider H.B. 3 (2009), the latest incarnation of state-level educational policy reform in Texas. Through an analysis of public documents and input from politicians involved in the legislation, we will consider how Texas policymakers have legislated modifications to the Texas Education Code to allow arts education to counter more than fifteen years of entrenched high-stakes testing and accountability.

TEXAS HOUSE BILL 3: A CASE STUDY

At the beginning of this article, we noted that arts education policy is subject to the interplay of many values, definitions, and approaches. We indicated that some stakeholders believe that the arts are basic to education; others see the arts as important, but less than basic; still others see them as low priority or expendable. We have reviewed a number of state and federal efforts. Readers can connect the influences of these three beliefs on efforts at those levels. But what is the result of all this national advocacy, standards writing, and policy effort in a state's actual arts education policy decisions? To what extent have national efforts made a difference in what is happening in regional or local circumstances? Have these efforts helped to change values that make arts education more secure? Have they helped to sustain existing programs? Exact answers are impossible to obtain, but an examination of recent decades gives some indication of strengths and weaknesses. Let us now consider several policy relationships that have been influenced by the interplay of these three basic beliefs in the state of Texas, with a focus on recent debates in the legislature.

Texas, like the rest of the nation, felt the steady devolution of the preeminence of arts education beginning in the 1980s and culminating with the rise of core standards rhetoric and aligned standardized testing in the 1990s. Over the last two decades, Texas supporters of arts education saw their favored subject matter reduced in significance, both in theory and as a practical matter, as the state led a national movement with a sharp, back-to-basics, small-core approach to public education (McNeil and Valenzuela 2001). Supporters of this back-to-basics movement argued that until children could show proficiency in mathematics and oral and written language, they should not spend time during the academic day on what they perceived to be superfluous subjects (Sudano and Sharpham 1981). Many in the Texas legislature viewed arts education courses as a luxury rather than a necessity (Robert Floyd, Executive Director of the Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education, telephone correspondence, November 17, 2009). Given the more than fifteen-year history of testing and accountability in Texas, current conditions illustrate the erosion of values favoring arts education after an extended period of entrenchment for high-stakes testing and accountability.

Provenance of House Bill 3

In 1995, the Texas legislature undertook the daunting task of rewriting the Texas Education Code (TEC). At the same time, then Governor George W. Bush built upon the accountability reforms begun by Ross Perot a decade earlier by supporting an accountability system with a heavy concentration on English language arts and mathematics. As the new TEC was drafted, the legislature decided to classify Texas' course offerings into one of two categories: foundation subjects and enrichment subjects. At the time, the legislature determined that no standards would be written by the state for enrichment subjects. Although the battle to require arts education courses for middle and high school students was a nonstarter in 1995, supporters of the arts had to work hard to ensure that the state would still require schools to offer the arts as an optional elective (R. Floyd, personal communication, November 17, 2009).

Arts education was ignored during the 1999 and 2001 Texas legislative sessions, but in 2003, Florence Shapiro, a Plano Republican who had once been a high school English teacher, assumed the chairmanship of the Senate Education Committee. With the change in leadership, the fine arts lobby, operating under an umbrella organization called the Coalition for Quality Arts Education, lobbied to gain the distinction of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for fine arts courses.[2] A member of the Texas House of Representatives who would later become chairman of the House Public Education Committee, Rob Eissler (R–the Woodlands), and a member of the Senate Education committee, Leticia Van de Putte (D–San Antonio), collaborated on Senate Bill 815, which, nearly a decade after the introduction of accountability in Texas, required the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) to develop TEKS curriculum standards for all enrichment courses for all school districts (R. Floyd, personal communication, November 17, 2009).[3]

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Remediation and Arts Education

Between 2007 and 2009, supporters of fine arts witnessed a new and disturbing trend as middle and elementary school students who had failed the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), the lynchpin of AYP in the state, were pulled out of fine arts classes to participate in TAKS remediation efforts. The situation had become so widespread that a number of middle school bands were unable to participate in the spring 2009 state band competitions (R. Floyd, personal communication, November 17, 2009). Because Texas had seen state test scores improve overall, the fine arts lobby decided that 2009 might be the best time to address the brewing problem of TAKS remediation efforts taking precedence over arts education courses. In response to the fine arts lobby, Senate bill 1364 was designed to limit the amount of time that schools could pull students out of enrichment courses for TAKS remediation to 10 percent of the entire semester (Stutz 2009). The bill was marching toward the governor's desk when it died as the result of last-minute political disagreements between the House and Senate (R. Floyd, personal communication, November 17, 2009).

Legislative Momentum for Arts Education

In early 2009, two important events converged to shift legislators' minds about the importance of arts education in Texas. First, on January 26, 2009, the House and Senate education committee held a rare joint session to discuss the future labor needs of Texas and the nation. Daniel Pink, a *New York Times* reporter, gave a presentation based on his 2008 book, *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*. Pink noted that white-collar jobs were being sent overseas. He warned the audience that employers today seek people who can innovate, communicate, and adapt to change. Pink told the politicians that "those are the sorts of abilities that kids learn in the arts . . .. Schools, by and large, are not fostering those talents" (Shapiro 2009). At nearly the same time as the hearing, TXP, Inc. (2009), published an economic forecast and analysis that had been commissioned by the Texas Cultural Trust. Among its findings were statistics that Texas' creative sector had grown by 20 percent between 2003 and 2008; jobs in Texas' creative sector paid on average 80 percent more than noncreative jobs; and the year 2016 would find one out of every twelve Texas jobs in the creative sector.

Texas legislators began to take notice of Pink's human capital argument as H.B. 3 (2009), a bill overhauling the accountability system, came to the foreground. H.B. 3 is part of the third generation of accountability legislation in Texas and was designed to address the "illusion of progress" in

Texas public schools through incremental modifications to the Texas Education Code (Alexander 2009). Many of these modifications—such as new exam formats and changes to social promotion policies—are outside the purview of this article. However, in several areas, H.B. 3 appears to elevate the statutory treatment of arts education.

Initially, there was opposition to the arts education provisions in H.B. 3. When a version of H.B. 3 requiring middle and high school students to take additional fine arts credits and requiring a fine arts education distinction for schools was first considered on the Senate floor, the proposal failed by one vote. Following the loss, a coordinated effort was made to mobilize fine arts teachers and the two million parents of current fine arts students to contact their state representatives and express their support for the fine arts provisions. The effort paid off; when the accountability bill returned to the Senate floor for a second vote, there was virtually no opposition to the measure. The people who contacted legislators to support fine arts were later described as passionate and convincing (Leticia Van de Putte, Texas State Senator, telephone correspondence, December 4, 2009; Ryan Franklin, Texas Education Agency Policy Advisor, telephone correspondence, December 4, 2009; Robert Floyd, Executive Director of the Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education, telephone correspondence, November 17, 2009; Julie Harker, Governor's Advisor for Public Education, in-person conversation, November 18, 2009).

Arts education was bolstered in H.B. 3 by its inclusion in both middle and high school curricula. The bill codifies the need for arts education by requiring that students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades complete one arts course within those three grade levels. H.B. 3 does not prescribe a comprehensive solution to increase high school students' participation in fine arts, but author Florence Shapiro (R–Plano) included another plan of action. During the Texas Senate Education Committee hearing, Senator Shapiro stated that fine arts could be mastered through electives to ensure that students would "gain either breadth or depth in this discipline" (Texas Senate Education Committee 2009). Elective requirements in Texas are based on the high school curriculum in which a student participates (i.e., minimum, recommended, or advanced), with students in more rigorous plans required to fulfill two and a half credits and less rigorous plans requiring five credits. H.B. 3 specifically modified the recommended diploma to no longer require physical education, health, and technology applications, and replaced those requirements with elective courses that could theoretically include arts education courses. In addition to potential electives, H.B. 3 codifies one arts education course to be completed for all three of the high school diplomas.

Prior to this legislation, arts education had nominal inclusion and emphasis in the state curriculum. H.B. 3 appears to be a modest step forward and demonstrates recognition by the Texas legislature that arts education is relegated to a secondary status in an educational policy environment that focuses on tested subjects. Despite the passage of this law, the legislature's belief in the value of the arts in the curriculum is somewhat questionable, as evidenced by the most minimal of requirements for students in middle and high school. Unlike mathematics, science, English language arts, and social studies, which are considered to be foundational courses, arts education courses are still considered enrichment courses (TEA 2008). As noted previously, all three core curriculum areas require multiple courses across years, while fine arts education requires far fewer courses. Senator Shapiro presented elective reform as an attempt to bolster the fine arts to broaden the measurability of high school students' knowledge beyond accountability measures. Yet, with only a few elective courses, "mastery" may continue to prove elusive (Gee and Gee 1997; Hatfield 1999).

Despite the defeat of the 2009 Senate Bill 1364 dealing with the overwhelming focus on the core subjects tested on the TAKS, the fine arts lobby was encouraged that by H.B. 3's designation of a new fine arts distinction. During 2008 meetings held throughout the state by the Texas legislature's Interim Committee on Education, many parents requested a statewide rating system that would recognize schools for excellence in the enrichment subjects areas (R. Floyd, personal communication, November 17, 2009). H.B. 3 included language that created an arts education "recognition of distinction" for campuses that met a set of indicators that had yet to be determined at the time of writing. The pros and cons of this system are not yet apparent because of the unknown nature of the formula, but it appears that Texas communities will soon have a mechanism to hold superintendents and school boards accountable if they want the arts education program in their district to be supported in a manner that earns the distinction recognition.

Teacher Quality and Arts Education

The preparation and certification of arts education teachers is important to the discipline (Zimmerman 1994). Unlike the teacher certification for core subjects, such as mathematics and English language arts, which are certified by school level, a fine arts teacher is certified to teach at all school levels in Texas. Whether the certification of fine arts teachers should be considered a lower standard from what is required of other core areas is an open question.

Eisner posits that schools try to have the arts at the elementary school level taught by the classroom teacher, but "we are expecting teachers to teach what they do not know and often do not love" (Seidel et al. 2009, 17). Seidel et al. (2009) argue that classroom teachers are not trained to be arts teachers, and that elementary certification requirements have not included arts education expectations in many states since the 1980s. Many arts educators agree that there is no substitute for qualified specialist arts teachers if the goal is high-quality arts learning (Seidel et al. 2009). Furthermore, arts education specialists are less likely to be found in poorer districts and at

elementary and middle school levels, and many existing arts specialists are underqualified (Carey et al. 2002; Woodworth et al. 2007). Hope (2005) argues that constant professional discussions about methodological philosophies and teacher quality should be standard and important subjects for arts education, no less than they are for other core subjects such as mathematics and English language arts.

Outsourcing Arts Education

Jones notes that "the belief that outsourcing promotes efficiency and cost savings is one that conservative activists and corporate interests have increasingly promoted in Austin over the last decade" (2009, 1). During the conference committee period for H.B. 3, a provision was added to the bill's language that established a pilot program to allow students who attend a school "in a county with a population of more than one million and in which more than 80 percent reside in a single municipality" (essentially only the urban centers of Houston, Dallas, and possibly San Antonio) to satisfy their fine arts requirement through an outside organization or program if it was not provided within their school district. Although this pilot program would only be available in, at most, two or three locales, the program is intended to be studied by the state to ascertain the feasibility of expanding the program statewide.

This "outsourcing" of educational credits offers two possible implications for the future: (1) an expansion of outsourcing fine arts education to include other courses, and (2) increased partnerships with outside organizations and businesses. The expansion of outsourcing could result in a discussion on teacher quality as a way to strengthen internal programs, strengthen specific fine arts programs within schools and within districts, reduce oversight of courses, and reduce in-state and local funding for fine arts through the school. Although fine arts programs and their corresponding districts may be compelled to strengthen their programs, the opportunity to outsource responsibility of the courses may appear to be beneficial to beleaguered districts. But contracting issues and lack of oversight, in particular, may prove to be a barrier to larger implementation. Additionally, outsourced programs could potentially be easier to cut, in comparison to school- or district-run programs, when budgets become tighter.

Increased partnerships with businesses and nonprofit organizations raises issues of funding and accountability. Such partnerships satisfy education requirements by allowing more funds to be garnered from outside groups. Additionally, having students use their fine arts course material in the real world employs Dewey's principle of utility of education for experience (Callahan 1962; Dewey 1934). One concern is that outsourcing may lead to competition between in-school programs and outside providers. Increased collaboration and communication could preempt such issues from arising and ally the two groups while reducing resentment and fostering cooperation.

Another issue is that there are no set requirements in the bill's language for the certification of outside programs as fulfilling standards. These outsourced programs will need to satisfy state requirements for the discipline and grade level, as well as report information back to the state. How these programs will be evaluated academically is far from clear. Perhaps the bigger and more determinative question about outsourcing is: what kind of precedent does this set? Although business and nonprofit interests have entered Texas education in a variety of ways (e.g., textbooks, testing, legislative commissions), this provision creates the concern that outsourcing courses may lead to a privatization of the public good of education and a loss of oversight of this education mandate. The outsourcing of fine arts also raises the question of whether nonprofits may be more suited than for-profit business interests for administering arts education. Critics of the outsourcing movement in Texas argue that it does not promote efficiency in delivery of service, but rather has primarily benefited monetarily connected contractors and ex-legislators (Jones 2009).

DISCUSSION

Currently, public education is obsessed with accountability. Educational experts believe that they can make decisions at ever-more centralized locations with ever-greater levels of detail while minimizing local decision making (Tyack and Cuban 1995). This narrowing is possible because the human capital narrative has defined the sole or primary purpose of education as economic well-being and growth (Rosen 1977). But English language arts, math, and science are not the only subjects that really matter for economic growth. As Steve Jobs's commencement address at Stanford University suggests, the relationships between education and economic growth are not linear—economic success in the future will likely depend on the interaction of creative, entrepreneurial thinking with mathematic and scientific intellect and literary prowess. The benefits of creative initiative may not be as clear and measureable as core subject test scores, but we should not underestimate the value of arts education for our youth.

The tyranny of readily observable data may actually obscure what may be best for society. Boyle (2001) argues that because it is so hard to measure what is really important, the consequences of pinning down the wrong thing can be severe. The proposed repairs to the accountability system in H.B. 3 demonstrate this paradox. As one of the forbearers of the accountability movement, Texas continues to employ high-stakes testing in core subjects to verify that students have met education standards, and that schools have appropriately educated students (Vasquez Heilig and Darling-Hammond 2008). The arts in general and the visual arts specifically have been nationally recognized as basic subjects since the Goals

2000 Act. However, in policy and practice, arts education is still not differentiated as a core subject in the stakes associated with tests and accountability ratings, which relegates the arts to a secondary status. The arts must maintain their presence in our schools. As the Texas case demonstrates, over the long term, arts education has lost out in the curriculum to the remediation of tested subjects. Double-blocking students in math and English language arts has had long-term unintended consequences for arts education in Texas. Statutes limiting remediation for the benefit of arts education should be a legislative priority.

The evolving rhetoric for the external provision of arts education is problematic. It is unknown whether outsourcing is a compelling alternative. As educators, we believe that the foundation of arts education should be in the schools. We are suspicious of the solution of outsourcing arts education because we strongly support educational reform from within the system. The responsibility must be borne by the people who have the greatest chance of shaping the ways in which our children learn, and who are entrusted with the services offered by our public education system. To test our hypothesis, Texas's experimental use of for-profit arts education in H.B. 3 will provide an interesting foray for future research on the efficacy of outsourcing. Any outsourcing of arts education programs should be scrutinized and measured against the same empirical standards applied to curricula generated and delivered by public schools.

As a society, we also need to inspire and guide our new teachers in the arts while they are enrolled in university training programs, as well as engage our current teachers through arts education in-service training to think about education, not just in simple, compartmentalized ways that reflect high-stakes tested subjects, but as something more comprehensive. We need to ask ourselves what we hope to teach our children and how we can teach them programmatically. We believe that the preparation of our teachers to use arts education to guide students to think for themselves, to be productive and innovative, and, most of all, to enjoy the pursuit of knowledge is a weighty and important task.

A form of educational activism underlies this article. With NCLB under significant review by the federal government, now is the time to engage our communities and our schools in debate about the current accountability scheme. We need to question the ways in which we currently measure our children's learning. To date, the view in many quarters is that the results of high-stakes testing as a yardstick for educational success have been dismal. Yet we seem unable to move beyond standardized tests when discussing the state of American education. Accountability is the hippodrome of the day, and we cannot take our eyes off the winners and losers. This reality is reflected in the third iteration of Texas accountability legislation codified in H.B. 3. Policymakers insisted on solely using quantitative data to frame the educational debate. Is there not a need for a broader discussion of alternative measures based on more than a single indicator of student performance? It seems to us that it would make sense to consider other measures besides a single test score on a single day to understand whether a student has been successful in a particular year, and, for that matter, in their education as a whole. As Darling-Hammond, Rustique-Forrester and Pecheone (2005) suggest, the use of multiple measures to consider student achievement—such as portfolios—is an accountability mechanism that makes sense not just for arts education, but for all education. Unless a broadened understanding of achievement enters the educational policy forum and, in particular, a conception of assessment that is consistent with the natures of heterogeneous disciplines, the idea that passing standardized tests is the purpose of education will continue to rule the day.

Our educational system is founded on notions of equity and opportunity. The arts are a fundamental equalizer, but not when their study is systematically denied. Policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders need to understand the arts' intrinsic value and the way they allow students to view the world in a new way, open up perspectives through alternative means of expression, engage the senses, and, above all else, provide access to knowledge through appreciation of the aesthetic experience. As the Texas case presented here demonstrates, we need a movement to incorporate arts education in all classrooms that draws from all sectors to create a powerful lobby. To fashion a unified national and state attitude, arts teachers, organizations, and activists can, in the spirit of collaboration and shared purpose, provide impetus for arts education by convening high-profile workshops and conferences that seek to produce working groups, agreements, and coalitions to better position arts education in the current educational policy dynamic.

It is important that educators and advocates alike combine their voices in the current accountability debate to press for a more favorable climate. As the reauthorization of NCLB looms, supporters must loudly declare to their local, state, and federal political representatives that arts education should be an enumerated core subject in future legislation. Coalitions such as the Partnership for 21st Century Learning Skills have the potential to position arts education in the policy reform window. The expanding twenty-first-century learning movement is a business-supported educational reform that is strongly focused on creativity and innovation as key components of children's schooling. This movement may well mobilize a greater coalition of supporters, inciting an inattentive public to realize the importance of arts education to the future success of our children in a global economy. Thomas Friedman, bestselling author of *The World is Flat*, puts it best: "more than ever, our secret sauce comes from our ability to integrate art, music and literature with the hard sciences."[4]

In conclusion, we have visited many low-income Texas communities where student murals adorn the walls of the schools, adding color and vitality to facilities that may not be the most modern but still embody esteem and expressiveness

by simply changing the aesthetics. There is tremendous pride generated by creative design, and this is no more visible than in a school's display of student expression that transcends class, race, and gender. Indeed, the arts are a democratizing educational discipline that has evolved and devolved to its present status in the American curriculum. Arts education in the United States began as a study specifically for the wealthy. As the American economy grew and a middle class emerged, schools changed, and arts education entered the curriculum in public education, as well as the general public's consciousness. Over time, arts education transformed to meet the needs and attitudes of schools and society. Deweyesque ideas of creative utility and holistic learning continue to be values and goals for modern education. Yet this current era of accountability has challenged Dewey's student-centered principles by entrenching accountability's arguments of incentives, efficiency, and narrowly defined competency. As a result, arts education is not regarded as possessing the same importance as the foundational core courses being tested in Texas and nationwide (Chapman 2007). Texas's recent modifications to their educational code in H.B. 3 acknowledge many of these challenges and offer remedies: outsourced arts education, codified arts education curriculum inclusion, and a recognition designation for the arts. Despite these dubious repairs to state statutes, the main incentives associated with NCLB's Texas-inspired testing and accountability system continue to surreptitiously legitimize the neglect of arts education.

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NOTES

1. This article focuses primarily on visual arts in terms of tangible curriculum-based coursework and study.
2. Subject areas included within fine arts in Texas are: art (grades K–12), dance (grades 9–12), music (grades K–12), and theater (grades K–12). The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are a set of skills that the state of Texas has determined are essential for each student.
3. Enrichment courses in Texas include foreign language, physical education (PE), and career and technology education (CTE), in addition to fine arts.
4. For more information on twenty-first-century skills, see http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/P21+and+creativity+and+innovation.pdf.

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