

## **THE ARTS AS A CORE SUBJECT**

What does this mean in terms of the arts in education?

Well, I'm so glad you asked. The key ingredient in this whole process, at least for those of us who know how effective arts integration can be in teaching and learning, is that the arts have been designated a "core subject" in the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

***"CORE ACADEMIC SUBJECTS—The term 'core academic subjects' means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography." (No Child Left Behind Act, Title IS, Part A, Section 9101 (1)(D)(11))***

This means the arts carry the same weight as 'reading, writing and 'rithmetic," not to mention social studies, science and foreign languages. This also means that any federal funding for school improvement—whether it's slotted for preschool, before-school, during school or after school—can be used for arts integration programs. You don't even have to be a school to apply. You could be a non-profit arts organization, for instance. Think artist residencies, staff development, curriculum design, school reform. Think big.

If you want a really comprehensive look at learning in the arts, go to *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development* (2002). *Critical Links* gives the best information available on why the arts are proven to work in improving education. Lots of research-based studies (62 as a matter of fact). If you ever want to convince anyone that the arts are effective in learning (or still need a little convincing yourself!) click on the link below and start reading.

You can also order your very own copy of *Critical Links* from the Arts Education Partnership web site. This site even has a Toolkit for *Critical Links* that will provide you with a fact sheet; highlights of the report; supplemental materials with charts and indexes on the findings; the researchers' biographies; and an article on "Critical Links to Student Success."

The bad news is that the "arts as a core subject" area is an unfunded mandate. The good news is that the North Carolina Arts Council is prepared to help you, as are many other organizations and funding sources, including the National Endowment for the Arts that has an online resource of Federal funding available for arts initiatives through national, regional, state and local funding programs.

To read *Critical Links*, visit the Arts Education Partnership web site, <http://aep-arts.org/CLTemphome.html>.

See Arts Learning Funding and other *Cultural Funding: Federal Opportunities* on the National Endowment for the Arts web site, [www.nea.gov](http://www.nea.gov).