

Responses from: Mike Latvis, Director of Public Policy for ArtServe Michigan

What role do you see the arts playing in developing Michigan's economy and communities?

I believe that arts and culture has and will continue to play a large role in helping Michigan recover from its current economic state. While it will not be the single most contributing factor it is certainly a vital piece to the puzzle.

Michigan ranks 7th in the country in the number of arts related businesses and 10th in the number of people those businesses employ yet we rank 50th in the country in terms of funding appropriated for arts and cultural grants from the State Legislature. Currently, every dollar granted to arts and cultural organizations generates a return of \$10 and has a ripple effect of \$34 showing that continued increased investment from the state is critical not only to arts and cultural organizations but the state's economy itself. Unfortunately, the Legislature has shown a desire for continued disinvestment in the arts which, if cut any further, could cause thousands of these organizations and businesses to close their doors.

While we are unsure of the entire economic impact arts and culture has on Michigan's economy, we do know that in 2004 the average household expenditure was \$30.72 per month for arts and cultural activities. In our current economy this figure has surely decreased, but we are still left with the fact that arts and culture play a pivotal role in providing the quality of life that people want when considering where to live their lives.

In addition to this, we see that people visiting the state for arts and cultural activities are estimated to spend \$65.7 million dollars annually. Tourism industry studies show that cultural tourists stay longer and spend more than recreational sports tourists. This year the Legislature approved \$60 million in funding to Travel Michigan to be used for marketing. The Legislature and Travel Michigan must recognize that we need to start using some of those marketing dollars to promote cultural tourism in Michigan to help further extend our tourism prowess.

As Michigan continues to diversify its economy and begins its ascent back to prosperity, arts and culture will not only continue to contribute to the state's economy but serve as the added factor as to why Michigan is a great place to live and raise a family.

What sort of funding opportunities are out there for those of us wishing to create non-profit projects to supply art materials and experiences to under-funded schools?

The funding is out there, but there's a catch...you're going to have to do the work to find it. In the past, large advertising agencies have donated excess materials

to schools and organizations to do just this. The funding and collaboration possibilities are out there, you just have to find them.

I do want to stress that we need to focus on supplying these experiences in school. Programs like this are invaluable, but do not build long term sustainability nor afford students with the type of in-class-instruction one should receive.

How do you feel about requiring arts classes at the University level to students whom are not enrolled in the arts school? Do you believe that creative expression courses should have more emphasis placed on them?

I believe that some sort of visual, performing or applied arts courses should be required throughout a student's entire K-16 education. Arts education provides students with the imaginative thinking and creative problem solving skills that today's companies want in an employee.

The problem is figuring out how to achieve this. The universities are not at the mercy of the state Department of Education and any requirement must come from the universities themselves. However, I do think that many universities would at least be open to the idea of introducing such a requirement.

It is said that schools that have music programs have significantly higher graduation rates than do those without programs (90.2% as compared to 72.9%). It is also said that standardized tests scores and enrollment in arts are directly correlated. With these facts, should arts education be absolutely mandatory in schools?

I would like to view the studies that offer these figures. The problem is that much of the information we have is anecdotal and we don't have the rigorous research needed to support these claims in Michigan or anywhere else.

In fact, the research finds that the claims are unfounded. It's true that students involved in the arts do better in school and on their SATs than those who are not involved. However, correlation isn't causation, an analysis did by Harvard Project Zero (Winner, Hetland, Veenema, and Sheridan, 2008) *The Real Benefits of Visual Arts Education*, showed no evidence that arts training actually causes scores to rise. (Winner, et al. 2008)

According to recent research there is a very good reason to teach arts in schools, and it's not the one that arts supporters tend to fall back on. The study (Winner, et al. 2008) found that the arts programs teach a specific set of thinking skills rarely addressed elsewhere in the curriculum-and that far from being irrelevant in a test driven education system, arts education is becoming even more important as standardized tests exert a narrowing influence over what schools teach.

The implications are broad, not just for schools but for society. As schools cut time for the arts, they may be losing their ability to produce not just the artistic creators of the future, but innovative leaders who will improve the world.

It is well established that intelligence and thinking ability are far more complex than what we choose to measure on standardized tests.

The study found that the arts teach eight habits: development of artistic craft, persistence, expression, making clear connections, observing, envisioning, innovating through exploration, and reflective self-evaluation.

Regardless, YES, I strongly believe that arts education should be mandatory in schools no matter what grade you are in. A recent poll conducted by Harris Interactive reports that 93% of Americans believe the arts is vital to providing a well rounded education. Not only does arts education increase student's self-esteem by encouraging them to take risks and to be different by thinking creatively but it also cultivates the next generation of arts and culture patrons/audiences and employees, which feeds into providing our cities with a greater quality of life.

If so, how many years of arts education should be required and how should it be paid for? What are the trades-offs with adding more arts/music courses?

Arts education should be required at every grade level just as physical education, mathematics, science and social studies is. Arts education classes should be paid for the same as classes in mathematics, science and social studies are...through the per pupil allotment. While all schools could use increased funding they must learn to equally allot the dollars they receive instead of looking to cut vital classes.

The trade-offs may range from allowing students to pick one less elective by requiring a credit in arts education all the way to allocating less money to other subjects by equally allotting funding to all subject areas. There is a trade-off to everything in life, but you also must look at the payoff and understand that in this case "the juice is worth the squeeze".

I am an K-12 art educator. It is my understanding that NCLB has made art education a core academic subject and it is mandated to be taught in all public schools. Is this information that I've been told correct? And if it is, why then, does it seem like our school district is the only district around our area that is being held accountable for the teaching of all Michigan Standards and benchmarks? Is there some type of checks and balances in place that checks and sees whether all public schools are teaching arts education? What are the state's requirements about how many

hours/credits, etc. need to be taught in a student's life?

Yes, NCLB has made arts education a core academic subject but it has not been mandated that it be taught in all public schools. Even if arts education was mandated it would be nearly impossible to regulate given the fact that the Michigan Department of Education lacks the manpower necessary to do so. Just as an example – reading is a mandated subject yet the department cannot even fully enforce it throughout the state. The “watch-dog” mentality of any requirement must come from a combination of self-regulation by the school districts and most importantly the parents.

While the number of required instruction hours varies district to district in K-8, we do know that the Michigan Merit Curriculum requires 1 credit in Visual, Performing and Applied Arts.

Are there any exciting arts-related programs we should be aware of in Michigan as we develop our resolutions?

Out-of-School Time Programs

- Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit (nationally recognized)
- The Sphinx Competition (nationally recognized)
- University Musical Society's Youth Education Program
- Michigan Youth Arts Association
- Chase Your Dream, Bloomfield-Birmingham Art Center
- Middle School Art and Design Discovery Program, College for Creative Studies
- The Power of Dreams: Music Education Fund, Detroit Symphony Orchestra

In-School Programs

- West Michigan Academy of Arts and Academics
- Renaissance High School, Detroit (instrumental and voice music program)
- Troy Public Schools
- Kalamazoo RESA/Education for the Arts

Kennedy Center's Partners-in-Education Teams

- UMS and Ann Arbor Public Schools
- Wharton Center and Lansing Public Schools
- Flint Cultural Center and Flint Public Schools
- Miller Auditorium and Battle Creek Public Schools

Lincoln Center's National Overture for Arts and Education

- Traverse City
- Kalamazoo

I would recommend that you review the work that's been done in California at the statewide level for arts education. California is the poster child for arts education

creating not only a requirement but passing content standards along with a framework to implement those standards. To read more please go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/vp/cf/> . Much of the arts education work that ArtServe is doing is guided by what was done in California because of its level of success.

Politically, is there any chance of arts-related resolutions being given genuine attention in Michigan, especially given the current state of the economy and the political climate? Are we wasting our time pushing for legislation?

Absolutely! Just because the current economy dictates less funding allotted for departments does not mean that there is nothing to be done. We were recently successful in getting two bills passed in the Senate that would place an income tax check-off for taxpayers to contribute part of their return to arts grant funding. There is so much that can be done in terms of public policy that does not relate to money. From conversations with legislators I can guarantee you that there is more interest in working on arts education than there ever has. However, we need to do the work on the ground to figure out recommendations for what best fits Michigan.

You are NEVER wasting time advocating for something you believe in!!!