

Arts are Basic Coalition Speaking Points for Commission Bowen's Listening Tour

March 14, 2011

Information for those speaking in support of arts education:

- Keep your remarks **brief, simple, clear, and positive** (Complaining and negative comments will only hurt arts education in the long run.)
- Choose **1 or 2 points** from those listed below to say. Our message is strongest when consistent, so please choose from these 4 points.
- Do not try to cover all 4 points. We'll have speakers at each session throughout the state, so the points will be covered.
- Please let Carol Trimble, Maine Alliance for Arts Education, ctrimble@maineartsed.org, or the president of your arts teacher professional organization, know if you are planning to attend and speak at one of the Listening Tour sessions. We want to make sure we have every session covered.
- If you have questions, contact Carol Trimble, MAAE (contact info above).
- Please send a follow-up email to Carol Trimble to let her know when/where you spoke and any other information about the session you attended that is of significance to arts education.

Choose 1 or 2 points from these to cover when you speak:

1) Arne Duncan says that the Arts are vital to every student's education. We must ensure that all Maine students have access to high-quality arts education.

2) The on-going work of the Maine's Department of Education's through its Visual and Performing Arts Specialist Argy Nestor deserves our praise. This important work to improve teaching and learning includes:

- communication through her blog;
- frequent visits to those in the field;
- collaborative work with the Maine Alliance for Arts Education and other organizations on the innovative Imagination Intensive Communities project and professional development;
- and the new Arts Assessment Initiative.

Bravo to the Department of Education for this good work!

3) Arts education is a critical part of Maine students' education because the arts provide for learning creative/innovative thinking and performance skills through engaging experiences in a personally encouraging learning atmosphere. According to a number of researchers, Daniel Pink being perhaps the best known, these abilities are essential Maine's and our country's future.

4) Human beings learn and think in multiple and varied ways. Each of these unique types of thought are necessary for us to develop a complete understanding of what it is to be human in the world. We find meaning in science by beginning with the big picture and asking questions that take us to the smallest components that make up a particular phenomenon. In the arts, we piece together individual tones, brush strokes and physical gestures to build artifacts and events. Our understandings of what it means to experience the world through our senses is combined with knowledge about what we see, hear and feel so that we make meaning of the whole as it comes together. These two ways of viewing the world, components to whole and whole to component parts, are both necessary in the education of critical and creative thinkers.

To receive the latest arts education advocacy updates, join Maine's arts education advocacy e-alert list by emailing info@maineartsed.org with your request to be added.