



Advancing Art Education

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No Child Left Behind: A Study of Its Impact on Art Education

Research Study of Visual Arts Educators Details the Impact of NCLB on Curriculum, Instructional Practice, Assessment, Teacher Workloads, and Resources

RESTON, VA (February 3, 2010) – Results of a nationwide study on the impact of the landmark legislation No Child Left Behind on visual art education have been released by the National Art Education Association and the National Art Education Foundation. F. Robert Sabol, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Art and Design at Purdue University, and President-Elect of the National Art Education Association, initiated and conducted the study in 2009 through a grant from the National Art Education Foundation.

Mac Arthur Goodwin, Chair of the National Art Education Foundation, noted the Foundation's role in funding research in arts education. "It is important that researchers, especially those in higher education, have an opportunity to conduct substantive research regarding arts education policies and practices in our nation's schools. The findings of this study provide a timely opportunity for advancing the conversation about policies that impact full access to quality visual arts education by all students in discussions leading to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act."

Key Findings of the study include:

(1) In the areas of staffing, teaching loads, and enrollments art education programs have experienced limited negative consequences because of No Child Left Behind.

68% of subjects reported that staffing stayed about the same, 65% of subjects reported that teaching loads stayed about the same, 62% of respondents reported that enrollments in their programs had stayed about the same.

(2) No Child Left Behind has created a number of negative affects on art education programs in the areas of scheduling, increased workload, and funding.

67% of subjects reported that art schedules had been affected by NCLB. Although teaching loads (i.e. the number of art classes that art teachers teach) had not been affected, art educators were teaching fewer art classes, because they were required to teach classes in other disciplines, such as language arts and math, provide remediation, or

conduct test preparation in subjects. 58% of respondents reported that their workloads had increased because of NCLB.

While 53% of subjects reported that funding stayed about the same, 43% reported decreases in all areas or in some areas. Funds cut from art programs were redirected toward core classes, for test prep, remediation, and for special needs and low performing students support.

- 63% of respondents reported budget cuts in the funds needed to purchase consumable supplies.
- 34% reported cuts in budgets for instructional resources.
- 4% of subjects reported that all funding for their art education programs had been cut.
- Other funding reductions were experienced in the area of budgets for field trips.
- Those reporting funding cuts reported cuts ranging from 75% (7%) to 5% (7%).
- The average funding cut reported was 30%.

(3) Art educators generally have negative attitudes about the overall impact NCLB has had on art education programming.

The general response participants had about the overall affect of NCLB on their programs was not positive. Art educators in this study, as a group, have negative attitudes about the impact NCLB has had on a number of essential aspects of their programs.

- 67% of subjects felt that NCLB has not helped students in their programs become better learners.
- 75% of subjects felt that the quality of their students work has not improved because of NCLB.
- 89% of subjects felt that NCLB has had a negative impact on faculty morale.
- 61% of subjects felt that NCLB has not made them a better teacher.
- 73% of subjects felt that NCLB has had a negative affect on their attitude about being an art educator.
- 54% of subjects felt that the quality of education in their schools has not improved because of NCLB.
- 71% of subjects felt that NCLB has not had a positive affect on their art education programs.
- 70% felt that the status of art education has not been improved by NCLB.

(4) Some aspects of art education programs have experienced positive affects from NCLB.

Art educators found a number of positive affects from NCLB. As a group art educators feel that NCLB has contributed to making them become more reflective about their programs and their teaching.

Curriculum

68% of subjects reported that their curriculum had been affected by NCLB, including the following areas of both positive and negative impact:

- 60% of subjects reported increased emphasis on national and/or state standards in their curriculum.
- 43% reported spending increased time building or revising their curriculum.
- 38% increased emphasis on higher order thinking in class assignments.
- 65% reported decreased studio time due to increased emphasis on NCLB content in their art classes.
- 36% of subjects reported decreasing art content from their curricula due to increased demands to include language arts and math content in its place in their curricula.

Only 19% reported no changes in their curriculum.

Instructional Practice

- 51% reported that they are more reflective about the effectiveness of their instructional practices.
- 42% reported using more varied instructional methods for instruction.
- 37% reported that they use technology more frequently for instruction than previously.

Assessment

They reported spending more time revising curriculum and instructional practices and increasing their emphasis on assessment of learning in art. 57% of subjects reported that assessment of learning in their art programs had been affected by NCLB.

- Of those 50% reported increasing emphasis on assessment in their art programs.
- 43% reported using more types of assessments.
- 33% reported conducting more assessments.
- 51% negatively reported that they spent more time grading, creating, or explaining assessments to their students, or managing assessment data.

The 3,412 respondents to the survey of visual arts educators were from elementary schools (34%), middle schools (22%), high schools (32%), higher education (7%), supervision and administration (3%) and museum education (2%). Respondents reflected a highly qualified teaching force with 76% of respondents holding graduate degrees and an average of 16.4 years in the profession. Respondents taught in suburban (35%), urban (25%), rural (21%), and town (19%) settings.

NCLB has caused the American public to focus its attention on the purposes of education in the United States and its expectations for the education systems in the nation. As the era of NCLB comes to a close with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the continued inclusion of the arts as one of the core subjects is more important than ever to have in the legislation as the nation moves forward on a renewed agenda for improving America's schools. While the arts have been included among the core subjects in this important legislation, they have yet to realize parity in the curriculum with other core subjects. It is hoped that the next reauthorization will not only affirm the importance of the arts as a core subject, but will find ways to support the allocation of federal, state, and local resources to fully realize this important vision for all students.

The research study was supported by a grant from the National Art Education Foundation. The full report and executive summary is available online at: <http://www.arteducators.org>

About F. Robert Sabol, Ph.D.

F. Robert Sabol is a Professor of Visual and Performing Arts at Purdue University and Chair of the Department of Art and Design. Currently, he is the National Art Education Association (NAEA) President-Elect. His research interests include assessment, multiculturalism, arts education policy, curriculum development, and professional development of art educators. He has given over 150 presentations of his research at state, national, and international conferences. He has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. Department of Education, the National Art Education Foundation, and other funding sources to support his research. He has published numerous articles in professional journals and is a co-author of *Assessing Expressive Learning* and *Through the Prism: Looking into the Spectrum of Writings by Enid Zimmerman*. He has received numerous awards for his research and teaching including NAEA Distinguished Fellow, NAEA Manual Barkan Memorial Award, NAEA Western Region Higher Education Art Educator of the Year, Art Education Association of Indiana (AEAI) Art Educator of the Year, AEAJ Elementary Art Educator of the Year, AEAJ Education Higher Education Art Educator of the Year, AEAJ Distinguished Fellow, and Purdue University Excellence in Teaching Award twice. He has been President of the NAEA Public Policy and Arts Administration issues group, President of AEAJ, NAEA Western Region Vice President, and a member of the Executive Committee of the NAEA Board of Directors.

About National Art Education Association

Committed to promoting art education through professional development, service, advancement of knowledge, and leadership, the National Art Education Association (www.arteducators.org) is the leading professional organization for art educators in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 as well as college and university professors and researchers, administrators, and museum educators. Serving more than 20,000 active members, NAEA represents educators in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, U.S. Possessions, most Canadian Provinces, U.S. military bases around the world, and 25 foreign countries.

About NAEF: National Art Education Foundation

As an independent, philanthropic organization, the NAEF assists with efforts to represent the teachers of art in America, improve the conditions of teaching art; promote the teaching of art; encourage research and experimentation in art education; sponsor institutes, conferences, and programs on art education; and to publish articles, reports, and surveys about art. The Foundation has supported 236 projects since its inception in 1985. NAEF funding supports a wide variety of professional activities, including research in art education, scholarships for professional development, promotion of art education as an integral part of the curriculum; establishment and/or improvement of art instruction in public and private K-16 schools; promotion of the teaching of art through activities related to the instructional process, curriculum, student learning, student assessment, classroom behavior, management, or discipline; purchase of art equipment and/or instructional resources.

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