1st annual Oregon ARTS EDUCATION Congress

A REPORT ON THE 1ST ANNUAL OREGON ARTS EDUCATION CONGRESS, NOVEMBER 17, 2008
The arts can and do transform learning for Oregon’s children.

Support and advocacy for arts education has been a critical part of our work since 1967, when the Arts Commission was established. For many years the Commission focused its support for arts learning on artist residencies in schools throughout the state, understanding the unique experiences teaching artists offer students. And in 1997, the Commission recognized best practices in arts education in Oregon’s schools and communities by providing grant funds in support of their practices and programs.

Annual Grants for Arts Learning are the foundation of the Commission’s support for arts education work that occurs both in and in partnership with Oregon schools. To expand those efforts, the Arts Commission convened the First Annual Arts Education Congress to begin to explore a new initiative to improve the quality of arts education in Oregon by 2012.

Working with the Portland-based Canoe Group, the First Annual Oregon Arts Education Congress, the first major convening of community leaders, foundation funders, teaching artists, educators and elected officials, was held on November 17, 2008. The meeting was designed to provide the starting point for a strategic, statewide arts education movement, and its primary goal was to bring together key arts education leadership voices to identify and build on common values that would serve as a platform for advocacy and ongoing program development.

The Congress discussions built on previous statewide and regional convenings, but benefited from additional resources made possible through the Commission’s Creative Oregon initiative, funded by the Governor and the 2007 Legislature. The additional resources allowed for more focused pre-planning leading to the Congress, participation by larger numbers of arts learning advocates and practitioners than have been involved in the past and new online communication tools to seek involvement and disseminate information statewide with partners unable to attend the event.

There is significant opportunity to improve arts learning for Oregon students. Even in these uncertain times, we can develop a more precise definition of goals for arts education and marshal our existing resources. The commitment of a growing network of arts education stakeholders is building momentum. Join us!

— Christine D’Arcy
Executive Director

To become part of the growing statewide network, sign up at the congress website: www.oregonartseducationcongress.org
The Congress Design Process

1. A Congress website summarizing goals and potential outcomes for the event was launched in October 2008 to invite participation and seek input for the Congress discussions.

2. Prior to the Congress, an online survey posed five questions to Oregonians inviting reflections about their meaningful childhood arts education experiences; the connection of childhood arts education to one’s adult professional life; a rating and ranking of themes describing why arts education is important; and advice to leadership about the challenge of moving an arts education agenda forward.

3. More than 210 prospective delegates were invited to participate in the one day convening, anticipating a total of 100 delegates.

4. Ten moderators facilitated caucus discussions at the Congress. An additional ten graduate students from the University of Oregon Arts Administration program documented table discussions.

5. Portland Community Media videotaped the Congress and interviewed selected participants regarding their personal visions for arts education in Oregon.

6. One goal of the Congress was the development of a draft Oregon “Bill of Creative Rights,” a platform to consolidate thinking around the core reasons that arts education is critical to a child’s whole education.

7. Fifth to twelfth grade Oregon school classrooms were invited to participate in The Preamble Project, in which students drafted 60-word Preambles, offering their thoughts on what a Bill of Creative Rights might mean to them.

8. “Self evident truths” were developed, acknowledging and outlining why the current economic and political environment offers opportunity for progress.

9. Key speakers, including a global creative director, a statewide education advocate, a state representative, a young adult graduate of Oregon K-12 education, the Oregon Labor Commissioner, and a rural school district superintendent, delivered short remarks throughout the Congress.

10. An eight-person, representative leadership group was identified to to sustain the discussion and momentum from the Congress.

Clockwise from top left: Ingrid Lustig of Arts Central and Jane Howell of Arts East join in a table discussion; John Frohnmayer, former director of the National Endowment for the Arts, speaks with Rachael Carnes of Sparkplug Dance; Neil DePonte, executive director of Metro Arts, Inc., teaches Jean Boyer-Cowling of the Oregon Arts Commission proper gong technique to ring the Congress into session with an arts education lesson.
Survey Results

“As an adult, do you use skills in your day-to-day professional life that you developed through arts education as a student?” 90% answered “yes.”

Oregon citizens responded to a fall 2008 online survey. Over 500 individuals from more than 50 communities contributed comments, offering advice and sharing stories. Their responses helped identify the ten key themes to be addressed during the Congress. Based on survey results, the themes on the following page were selected for discussion at the Congress.
Core Discussion Themes

**THEME ONE**
Arts education allows for expression and creativity.

“Art is about … portraying ‘the truth’ of something. Honest communication is a skill sadly lacking in much of contemporary society.”

**THEME SIX**
Arts education heightens self-concept and self-esteem.

“I learned to choose work that brings me enjoyment and serves others.”

**THEME TWO**
Arts education addresses multiple learning styles which may be missing in other academic areas.

“… I could not easily articulate in words. The ability to draw gave me confidence in my ability to communicate.”

**THEME SEVEN**
Arts education develops self-discipline and responsibility.

“I have achieved financial success and I believe it is from the manner of problem solving, sophisticated thinking, solutions orientation, and dealing with deadlines and discipline.”

**THEME THREE**
Arts education develops critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.

“I engage daily in conceptual leap-frogging, connecting what may appear to be weak-links based on hunches, scenarios, and improvisational instincts.”

**THEME EIGHT**
Arts education teaches the value of sustained effort to achieve excellence.

“I learned that patience and practice make you better and you need to work hard to get what you want.”

**THEME FOUR**
Arts education develops conceptual and analytical skills that are essential in the 21st century workforce.

“Brainstorming, idea-webs, and improvisation are powerful tools whose conceptual frames extend to programming and partnership building.”

**THEME NINE**
Arts education improves academic achievement.

“I learned to understand that you must learn things, that skills and knowledge are not inherent but learned.”

**THEME FIVE**
Arts education nurtures intellectual and imaginative growth.

“Art promotes abstract and metaphoric thinking therefore being a primary tool in problem-solving.”

**THEME TEN**
Arts education develops ability to work cooperatively with others.

“(I learned) tolerance for ambiguity and responsibility to teams and deadlines.”

PREAMBLE PROJECT: IN THE WORDS OF OREGON STUDENTS

“We the artists of the world, in order to form a more unique piece, establish our place in the art community, provide others with our work, promote the freedom of the brush or pen or hand, to secure arts place in the society, have established our own bill of rights.”

– Suzan, Oregon City High School
“We Hold These Truths To Be Self-Evident…”

Why now?

This Arts Education Congress was convened

because facts suggested opportunity to take action

at a time of significant change.

1. Following the November 2008 election, President-elect Obama articulated a priority to improve K-12 education, focused on developing 21st century skills.
2. In his 2009 – 11 budget for the State of Oregon, Governor Ted Kulongoski articulated a priority to improve K-12 education, focused on workforce development.
3. The world economy is entering a major adjustment and is expected to remain unpredictable in the near future.
4. No Child Left Behind will come up for reauthorization when the 111th Congress convenes in Washington, D.C., in January 2009.
5. Arts education standards in Oregon will reviewed and updated in 2011, the first opportunity for re-examination in over a decade.
6. The Oregon legislature has thirteen new Representatives and five new Senators.
7. Arts education is not funded as a priority in Oregon’s schools and little data has been collected to accurately paint the picture of the state-of-the-state.
8. Several promising regional initiatives are making strides toward improving and enhancing the arts in K-12 education.
9. The Oregon Alliance for Arts Education is in a time of re-formation.
10. America’s Teacher of the Year is a science teacher from Oregon who is speaking passionately across the world, advocating for arts education and the development of students’ capacities for innovation as essential skills.
11. Across the country, new research reports indicate a growing number of business leaders and voters consider arts education an essential tool to build imaginative capacities.

“A STATEMENT TO THE DELEGATES FROM
OREGON SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS SUSAN CASTILLO

“The Oregon Department of Education is committed to partnerships that pursue sustainable strategies to improve arts education for all of Oregon’s pre-K – 12 students. We know the arts can play a key role in creating high levels of achievement for every child. All students deserve the opportunity to connect with their innate creative and innovative talents, fully preparing them for life in the 21st century. Thank you for your commitment to these efforts.”
Congress Agenda

8:30 AM
Coffee & Networking

9:30 AM
Welcome & Convening
  Ron Paul, chair, Oregon Arts Commission
  Jean Boyer Cowling, vice chair, Oregon Arts Commission
  Michael Kosmala, principal, The Canoe Group
  Christine D’Arcy, executive director, Oregon Arts Commission

9:50 AM
Morning Session Opening Remarks:
  John Jay, Creative Director, Weiden + Kennedy

10:10 AM
Small Group: Moderated Introductions & Storytelling

10:35 AM
Context Comments:
  Charlie Walker, board member, The Chalkboard Project

10:45 AM
First Caucus Worksession

11:30 AM
Context Comments:
  Joyce White, executive director, Grantmakers of Oregon and SW Washington

11:40 AM
Lunch buffet

12:30 PM
Context Comments:
  Mindy Linder, student, University of Oregon Arts Administration Program

12:40 PM
Afternoon Session Opening Remarks:
  Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian

12:55 PM
Context Comments:
  Rep. Chris Harker, House District 34

1:05 PM
Afternoon Session Introduction:
  Deb Vaughn, arts education coordinator, Oregon Arts Commission

1:15 PM
Second Caucus Worksession

2:15 PM
Where We’ve Been:
  Vickie Fleming, superintendent, Redmond School District

2:35 PM
Where We’re Headed:
  Diane Syrcke, executive director, Portland Youth Philharmonic

2:55 PM
Next Steps Worksession

3:35 PM
Closing Story:
  Will Hornyak, master storyteller

4:00 PM
Recess:
  Post-Congress Gathering, Kennedy School
Ten key themes were identified through a pre-Congress online survey, and each was described in a Theme Worksheet, with selected quotations from survey answers.

Delegates were divided into work groups of ten and assigned one of the themes to discuss in a 65-minute morning caucus. In the afternoon, they reassembled into self-selected groups for a 70-minute discussion of a theme different from the one each worked on in the morning. So, each theme was discussed twice, in two different configurations.

Moderators and recorders, previously trained in facilitation techniques, group leadership and Congress goals, sparked discussion. They facilitated the individual table discussions according to theme, during which participants worked to answer: “In what way is this theme a creative right for K-12 students?” A creative right was defined as: “if public education is considered a ‘right’ in democracy, a creative right would be that part of a student’s public education that develops their creative or innovative capacities.”

Following the afternoon caucus, a member of the new leadership group described the work that would sustain the work of the Congress. The final work session sought further advice, asked for evaluation of the day and invited volunteers to assist with research, information-gathering and regional leadership.

**PREAMBLE PROJECT: IN THE WORDS OF OREGON STUDENTS**

“We, the musicians of the same ‘family,’ in order to form a union or sharing the same passion, establish self-expression, ensure equality among everyone, provide positive feedback and comments, and to provide the world with all genres, do accept all artists, which will allow us to leave behind a legacy of how we felt/feel, which will secure what we did, what we felt was right, and what made us who we are.”

— Jake, Oregon City High School
Advice From Delegates

At the conclusion of the Congress, delegates provided advice to the leadership team. They recommended that continuing efforts work to:

- Require systemic, k-12 arts instruction for all students.
- Target and involve new advocates – grandparents, pre-K parents, business leaders, educators, the design industry and culturally diverse populations.
- Involve and integrate higher education.
- Create artist-driven assessment tools.
- Align advocacy with community problems and activities, spiraling out to connect with broader agendas.
- Brand efforts and involve credible spokespeople and important statewide leaders.
- Invest in aggressive and capable political leadership to build a statewide advocacy effort.
- Begin a thoughtful, organized political campaign to approach the legislature with a clear message.

Delegates surveyed indicated that the Congress was “effective” in accomplishing its goals of developing a first draft Bill of Creative Rights, further aligning thinking and values, empowering a leadership team, clarifying facts, and exploring the benefits of developing a broad coalition to advocate for arts education for all Oregon students. (The average participant rating was 4.03 on a 5-point scale, with 5.0 as “highly effective.”)

Leadership Team Members

This group will volunteer to sustain the discussion and momentum from the Congress, meeting several times during spring 2009:

- Jean Boyer Cowling, vice-chair, Oregon Arts Commission, Medford
- Michael Fridley, arts specialist, Oregon Department of Education, Salem
- Judy Rompa, arts chairperson, Oregon PTA, Portland
- Lori Hager, assistant professor of arts and administration, University of Oregon, Eugene
- Diane Syrcle, executive director, Portland Youth Philharmonic, Portland
- Shannon McBride, past president, Oregon Art Education Association and art teacher at Lakeridge High School, West Linn
- Jeff Aeschliman, public affairs specialist, State Farm Insurance and e3 Board Member, Salem

PREAMBLE PROJECT: IN THE WORDS OF OREGON STUDENTS

“We, the dancers of rhythm, in order to create a more peaceful flow, establish power, make art, provide for the entertainment world, promote all talent, secure individuality to ourselves and others, do ordain and establish this bill of rights.”

– Chelsea, Oregon City High School
Next Steps

• The leadership team will “plan the planning” for development of a statewide arts education agenda, targeted to create systemic improvements to K-12 arts education in Oregon by 2012. Their work will include recommendations for initial organization, structures, communications strategies and systems to move the effort forward.

• A public engagement process will be used to affirm the Oregon Bill of Creative Rights, moving the platform from the Congress first drafts through an adoption process. Planning for this process will be lead by the leadership team. The statewide activity will identify and join arts education advocates from the grassroots up.

• The Congress survey and website will be the starting point for a statewide, online arts education network that will connect arts education practitioners and advocates.

• A long-term working group, consisting of a broad representation of arts disciplines, geographic areas and interest, will be formed to implement the plan developed by the leadership team.

• The Oregon Arts Commission, in a convening and leadership role, will strengthen its working partnership with the Department of Education and with other organizations and interests statewide.

• Delegate comments about the draft Bill of Creative Rights will be returned to the leadership team for review.

Clockwise from top left: Cheryl Snow, executive director of Clackamas County Arts Alliance, leads a discussion; Greg Gurley, a teaching artist for Arts Work for Education, helps delegates work in small groups; Georgia Harker, artist and teacher at Portland’s Northwest Academy, gets creative in her use of space.

PREAMBLE PROJECT: IN THE WORDS OF OREGON STUDENTS

“We, the students of the Oregon schools, in order to expand our minds to another form of education, we must participate in the Arts. The Arts will ensure creativity and open our minds to the world that we live in. The Arts will expose young minds to innovative and inspirational hands on experience. The Arts lets our mind have freedom.”

— Harley, Gabe, Walker, Tristen, Jason & Mark
Mrs. Fasana’s 5th grade, Memorial Elementary, McMinnville
Delegates

Lisa Abia-Smith, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Eugene
Cynthia Addams, Oregon Arts Commission, Keizer
Jessica Baldenhofer, Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland
Douglas Beauchamp, Lane Arts Council, Eugene
Paul Bennett, Teaching Artist, Sisters
Paul Blackburn, Hood River Education Foundation, Hood River
Megan Blankenship, Student, University of Oregon
Kate Bodin, Oregon College of Art and Craft, Portland
Michelle Boss Barba, Ethis Music Center, Portland
Jean Boyer Cowling, Oregon Arts Commission, Medford
Sandy Brooke, OSU Cascades, Bend
Bill Bullick, Creative Planning, Portland
Rachael Carnes, Sparkplug Dance, Eugene
Christine Caton, Young Audiences, Portland
Michael Curry, Sprague High School, Salem
Dee Curwen, Multicultural Literacy Center, Corvallis
Niel DePonte, MetroArts Inc., Portland
Kathleen Dinges, Salem Art Association, Salem
Anne Dosskey, Metropolitan Group, Portland
Sarah Dougher, pear, Portland
Erin Doughton, PICA, Portland
Randi Douglas, NW Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland
Tim DuRoche, Portland Center Stage, Portland
Suzie DuVal, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Ashland
Valerie Egan, Student, University of Oregon
Vickie Fleming, Redmond School District, Redmond
Mary Vinton Folberg, The Northwest Academy, Portland
Sandy Fortier, Student, University of Oregon
Michael Fridley, Oregon Department of Education, Salem
John Frohnmaier, Oregon State University, Corvallis
Leith Gaines, Columbia Gorge Arts in Education, Hood River
Germaine Gambit, Student, University of Oregon
Joelle Graves, Britt Festivals, Medford
Larry Graves, Redmond School District, Redmond
Michael Griggs, Portland Taiko, Portland
Kassandra Gruener, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Portland
Gregory Gurley, Arts Work in Education, Eugene
Lori Hager, University of Oregon, Eugene
Alexis Hamilton, Portland Opera, Portland
Christine Hannegan, McKinley Elementary, Salem
Georgia Harker, The Northwest Academy, Portland
Rep. Chris Harker, Oregon Legislature, House District 34, Portland
Monica Hayes, Oregon Symphony, Portland
Gail Hayes Davis, Young Audiences, Portland
Andrea Heid, Oregon Arts Commission, Eugene
Nancy Helmsworth, Riverdale Grade School, Portland
Susan Henness, May Street Elementary, Hood River
Vicki Henry, Nancy Ryles Elementary, Beaverton
Will Hornyk, Storyteller, Milwaukee
Kimberly Howard, Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, Portland
Jane Howell, Arts East, La Grande
Joyce Iliff, Beverly Cleary School - Fernwood Campus, Portland
Lawson Inada, Oregon Poet Laureate, Medford
Kate Jack, Arts Council of Southern Oregon, Medford
John Jay, Weiden + Kennedy, Portland
Linda K. Johnson, Teaching Artist, Portland
Kirsten Kilchenstein, Caldera, Portland
Kaline Klaas, Let There Be Arts, Lincoln City
Kim Knowles, Architecture Foundation of Oregon, Portland

Ann Kresge, Teaching Artist, Salem
Josephine Kuever, Student, University of Oregon
Sally Lawrence, PICA Board, Portland
Krina Lemons, Salem Keizer School Board, Salem
Eric Levin, Southern Oregon University, Ashland
Mindy Linder, Student, University of Oregon
Ingrid Lustig, Arts Central, Bend
Leigh Mallonee, Student, University of Oregon
Rebecca Martinez, Artists Repertory Theatre, Portland
Claudia Mason, Buckman Elementary, Portland
Shannon McBride, Oregon Art Education Association, West Linn
Sharon Morgan, Consultant, McMinnville
Royal Nebeke, Oregon Arts Commission, Gearhart
Chris Neely, The Arts Center, Corvallis
Anita Olsen, Oregon PTA, Portland
Annie Painter, Teaching Artist, Sisters
Susan Parker, Oregon Art Education Association, Portland
Ron Paul, Oregon Arts Commission, Portland
Karl Raschkes, Salem Keizer School District, Salem
Mary Rechner, Literary Arts, Portland
Jane Reid, Young Audiences, Portland
Martha Richards, James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation, Portland
Clancy Rone, South Medford High School, Medford
Carin Rosenberg, Young Audiences, Portland
Pattie Rosenthal, Warren Elementary School, Warren
Henry Sayre, Oregon Arts Commission, Bend
Diedre Shueat, Student, University of Oregon
Michael Sikes, Mano e Mente Inc., Portland
Cheryl Snow, Clackamas County Arts Alliance, Oregon City
Marna Stalup, Regional Arts & Culture Council, Portland
Lauren Susenges, Student, University of Oregon
Katie Swaback, Raw Art Works and Art Up, Portland
Diane Syrcle, Portland Youth Philharmonic, Portland
Ann Talbott, Student, University of Oregon
Colesie Tharp, Portland Children’s Museum, Portland
Ellen Thomas, Northwest Film Center, Portland
Brad Tisdale, Sisters Folk Festival, Sisters
Shelley Toon Hight, Columbia Center for the Arts, Hood River
Tina Vellody, Student, University of Oregon
Kate Wagle, University of Oregon, Portland
Charlie Walker, The Chalkboard Project, Neskowin
Rick Williams, Lane Community College, Eugene
Amanda Wold, Student, University of Oregon
Mark Wubbold, Portland State University, Portland

PREAMBLE PROJECT: IN THE WORDS OF OREGON STUDENTS

“We the photographers of our world, in order to capture the lives of our history, and educate our minds, young and old, with pictures yet unseen, do photograph our world with freedom.”

– Alyssa, Oregon City High School
We, the students of Oregon Public Schools
In order to form a creative community for now and for our future
promote understanding
develop empathy
imagine possibilities
explore connections
increase our awareness
inspire each other
open doors to different points of view
and secure the ability to express ourselves and understand the perspectives of
others through the languages of the arts
Do ordain this Bill of Creative Rights for the state of Oregon.

– Susan McKay’s class, ages 9 – 11, Opal School of the Portland Children’s Museum

The Preamble Project
Students were invited to draft a preamble to the Oregon Bill of Creative Rights. Encouraged to be truthful and choose their words with care, they were allowed up to 60 words to express their ideas.

We the students of Arlington Middle School
In order to form a more perfect educational system
Establish a better community
Insure a higher standard of living
Provide for the Creative Arts
Promote the creativity of children and secure the creativity in schools and the key to our future
Do ordain this Bill of Creative Rights for the state of Oregon.

– Jared, Jessica, Eddy, Elivs, Efren, John, Saxon & Drake;
  Mr. Van Gorder’s 6th – 8th grade creative writing class, Arlington School District

We, the students of artistry, desirous of an education integrated with opportunity to achieve depth of character and feeling through a fuller understanding of ourselves and our culture, and expression of our independent thought and individuality, do ordain this Bill of Creative Rights for the state of Oregon.

– La Grande High School Wind Ensemble