Community Arts Partnership Act (1994): Speech 01

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Community Arts Partnership Act - Talking Points

Q. WHY DO WE NEED A NEW CATEGORICAL PROGRAM FOR THE ARTS?

A. Secretary Riley has elevated the arts to be included in the National Education Goals on the same level with mathematics, science, etc. The federal government supports a separate program for math and science. The Chairman supports a separate program for civics education. The arts are equally important.

In fact, national studies have shown that the arts play an invaluable role in educating our children. The arts have been shown to aid in the development of higher-order thinking skills; an increase in multi-cultural understanding; an enhanced learning environment; improved self-esteem and positive emotional responses to learning; and engagement of a variety of learning styles.

School districts facing severe budget constraints frequently eliminate arts programs. We cannot expect our children to meet the arts standards set out in Goals 2,000 without encouragement and help from the federal government.

Q. WHY ISN'T THE COMMUNITY ARTS PARTNERSHIP INCLUDED UNDER THE NATIONAL ENDEAVOR FOR THE ARTS (NEA)?

A. The NEA funds cultural organizations. It does not fund schools. The Community Arts Partnership funds schools to work in a coordinated effort with cultural organization. In addition, the NEA funds planning grants. It does not fund demonstration grants and it does not run programs. Finally, the program funds Title I eligible schools. The Department of Education and its branches compile data on various education statistics, including Title I eligible schools. Therefore it would make sense for the Department of Education to administer the program, as it is an education program for Title I eligible schools.

Q. WHY ISN'T THE COMMUNITY ARTS PARTNERSHIP ACT BEING OFFERED TO TITLE I OF ESEA?

A. In theory, Title I has always permitted the funding of arts programs. However, in practice the emphasis has been, and continues to be, on reading, mathematics, and the language arts. By emphasizing reading, mathematics, and language arts, Title I sends a strong message to state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) that they are not permitted to do anything else. In addition, Title I will not fund partnerships with cultural entities in the community.
Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROGRAM?

A. The Community Arts Partnership Act would provide federal grants to link local community cultural resources with the children and youth who are most at risk of dropping out of society.

Q. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROGRAM?

A. Local education agencies in coordination with cultural entities in the community are eligible. Such entities may include museums, libraries, zoological societies, botanical societies, and postsecondary institutions that specialize in the arts.

Q. WHO IS THE TARGET POPULATION UNDER THIS PROGRAM?

A. Title 1 eligible students and out-of-school at-risk youth.

Q. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED UNDER THIS PROGRAM?

A. Funds may be used to plan, develop, acquire, expand, and improve arts programs for children and youth. Activities may include the integration of the arts throughout the classroom curriculum, arts curriculum development, professional development activities, preschool arts programs, school-to-work/higher education transition programs, the purchase of materials, etc.

Q. WHAT IS THE AUTHORIZED FUNDING AMOUNT FOR THIS PROGRAM?

A. $75 million for the first program year, and "such sums" for the remaining years.