



A Step Beyond Service: How the ArtsBridge Model Aligns With National Agendas

In his recent State of the Union address, **President George Bush called on Americans to join together in service of neighbor and nation.** At the same time, the Executive Office pushed for the most ambitious bipartisan educational agenda to date, calling for “no child to be left behind.” These sweeping educational reforms call for **increased flexibility, local control, and an emphasis on teaching methods that work.** Finally, the president and policymakers on both sides of the aisle have taken action in recognition of the fundamental importance of the arts to a general education, **declaring the arts part of the core curriculum.** As a unique service learning partnership between schools and postsecondary institutions, ArtsBridge is well aligned with these national agendas.



- At its root, ArtsBridge is a Community Service Learning project that **engages over 23,000 students in hands-on arts education every year throughout the state of California without cost to schools. Seventy-five percent of the 267 schools served by ArtsBridge have been identified as underperforming** according to state standards and in dire need of supplemental programming in curricular areas that have been unfunded or underfunded.
- Every ArtsBridge project is guided by partnerships between the UC campus and the school, and, perhaps more importantly, between the ArtsBridge scholar and individual teachers. Although common threads are woven across the ArtsBridge program university-wide, **each partnership has sufficient latitude to develop local means to achieve common ends.** In a very real way, **ArtsBridge offers school communities opportunities to control human and fiscal resources,** thereby facilitating flexibility to meet the needs of all students.
- ArtsBridge projects incorporate best practices in delivering K-12 instruction in addition to addressing the expressed needs of classroom teachers. Consonant with the scholarly literature on this topic, **teachers have called for ongoing professional development that allows them to remain in the classroom in a way that the flow of instruction remains uninterrupted and does not incur unnecessary expenses to the school.** ArtsBridge takes these concerns seriously, making it a program requirement that projects be initiated at the request of teachers in support of local needs, that they occur in the classroom during the school day, and that they be without cost to the school.
- Finally, as America faces a national teacher shortage of staggering dimensions (over 2.5 million new teachers will be needed over the next few years), programs like ArtsBridge may hold one of the keys to resolving the crisis. As a result of direct exposure to the teaching profession and working intensively with students, **the majority of ArtsBridge scholars have reported a serious interest in public school teaching and enrollment in teacher education programs.** In addition, scholars report their **new-found commitment to ongoing public service in their communities.**

As ArtsBridge builds on traditions of excellence in K-12 and higher education, it is clear that the program is well aligned with national agendas. As of this writing, ArtsBridge has extended the reach of its programming to include four states beyond California, as a first step toward national expansion.

ArtsBridge Research Notes contain brief summaries of the impact of the ArtsBridge program on participants: university students, faculty, K-12 schoolchildren, and teachers. For others in the series, or for additional information, see our website: www.arts.uci.edu/ucartsbridge/