

Brief Progress Review

California Digital Arts Studio Partnership Act

Through January 18, 2005

BACKGROUND:

In January, 2003, The Digital Arts Studio Partnership Demonstration Act (DASP) (SB 1937 Costa) was signed into law, as Chapter 980 of the California Government Code. To be administered by the California Arts Council and contingent on federal, local, and private funding, the statute addresses the need for a coherent and effective training commitment to build a digital media arts and communication technology workforce with emphasis on after-school programming. The Act establishes a detailed blueprint for Regional Partnerships among: educators at the high school and post secondary level; relevant entertainment, digital media, and communication technology industry leaders; community-based professionals; and non-profit agencies that will annually train 500 youth, 13-18 years old, and 100 adult mentors, against competitive standards with emerging technology, for the life of the program. Also stated are additional requirements for information gathering and reporting, community development strategies, curriculum development and reform, and career-building experiences.

The program defined in the bill is built upon a decade's worth of work by the California Arts Council and the Joint Legislative Committee on the Arts. In an attempt to broadly define the capacity and needs of the arts and entertainment portions of the digital field in California, the Arts Council held a Governor's conference in 1996, entitled [Governor's Conference on the Arts VII: Arts, Entertainment, and Technology; The Role of the Artist in the Digital Age](#). This conference was attended by top industry representatives. Also in 1996, an important hearing was held in conjunction with the Joint Committee on the Arts and the Assembly Economic Development Committee at which stellar industry leaders, such as John Hughes and Dave Masters, pointed out the need for digital arts education.

Two key issue focusers provide distilled insight into the notion of establishing a "field" and summarizing the scope of youth media arts education and performance understanding. ([Attachment # Basics](#))

During the last decade of the twentieth century and continuing into the twenty-first century, the entertainment industry has outsourced thousands of

high paying jobs to other countries, including Germany, Ireland, China, and India because workers there have the requisite artistic as well as technologic skills. In a 1998 report prepared by the Motion Picture Association of America, the number-one concern of the industry was to increase arts instruction in our schools so that students would become better prepared to deal with the skills required for the digital jobs of the future.

The tasks at hand in implementing the Digital Arts Studio Partnership Act were to:

- Identify and organize the state and regional leadership
- Disseminate a model for statute implementation
- Mount the needed data preparation and gathering
- Establish statewide inter-segmental education system buy-in
- Develop industry/education system relationships
- Launch a statewide “summit” leadership meeting
- Identify needed policy and program legislation for 2005
- Gather essential fiscal and material resources
- Model and support regional youth media showcases

2002 – 2003 ACTIVITIES:

The success of passing the SB 1937 (Costa) legislation grew from extensive organizing and outreach work to the broad network of stakeholders in key areas of the state, aimed at the recruiting interest groups specified in the legislation. Initial organizing meetings were held in **Los Angeles, Fresno, Silicon Valley, the Bay Area,** and the **Sacramento Sierra** regions which generated core leadership to advocate for and implement the law, on a voluntary basis, once it was passed and signed. **Santa Barbara and Sonoma/Santa Rosa** regions were added to the list of regional areas willing to explore establishing partnership models.

At the outset of the 2003 fiscal year, The California Arts Council experienced a devastating budget cut in excess of 90% with consequent paralyzing resource and staff reductions. This eliminated the possibility for direct leadership, or any staff or material support in implementing the program. William Bronston, MD, the key architect for the legislation and CEO of The Tower of Youth, a model youth media and communication arts organization, was formally commissioned by the Director of the CAC to proceed with developing the program and policy structure and to seek initial funding for the DASP as a non-governmental, non profit executive. From the beginning, a volunteer liaison from the CAC, Wayne Cook, attended every strategy planning meeting held in Sacramento. The advent of the gubernatorial appointment of a new CAC Director was anticipated to reassess progress and the substance of the work for year 2005.

2003 – 2004 ACTIVITIES:

Once SB 1937 was signed by the Governor and became Chapter 980 of the CA Government Code, a new round of leadership meetings was held in the Los Angeles Basin, Santa Barbara, Fresno/Central Valley, Bay Area, Wine Country, and Sacramento Sierra regions. The lack of initial funding defined the scope, form, and accomplishments of the nascent project that included the following activities:

- The lead DASP coordinators volunteered in each venue
- A statewide Design Committee was established
- www.caldigarts.org was designed and established
- A model regional development, orientation package, and application form for CAC approval and partnership designation with a formal Member Agreement and Member Role Definitions was established and circulated (See Attachments #1 and SB and CV docs #2 and #3)
- Regional media showcase festivals and creative exhibition events within the partnership areas were recognized and supported with consultant and materials help

- The initial Statewide Policy Board and Advisory Committee members were recruited as were the volunteer operational leadership groups in each prospective region (See Stationary and Web site www.caldigarts.org)
- Data sources from the CA Department of Education began to assess the status of youth training and resources in California's high school system, while the definitive economic and workforce experience in California's entertainment media industry were obtained from the Entertainment Economy Institute study (see references)
- Presentations at the statewide CDE-sponsored conference of Academy and Special School Programs were made to identify and expand existing media arts programs at the secondary level. 150 such programs currently exist. A request was made to obtain program and follow-up data (See Attachment # 4)
- The Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce and the Sacramento Area Regional Technology Association issued a model resolution of support, calling for participation from among their business members (See Attachment # 5 & 6)

2004 - 2005 ACTIVITIES

The gravity of the budget crisis continued at the State level continuing to inhibit the CAC from playing an active role in the DASP implementation. Nevertheless, the gradual mobilization of interest and pioneering educators and community based media arts program leaders created the conditions to mount a critical statewide gathering, the "Strategy & Organizing Digital Arts Studio Partnership Act Summit". Urgent requests were made from each regional leadership group to fund a part time executive staff person to facilitate the inter-organizational networking which, without such support, made the task immensely fragile and slow. Yet both subjective and objective progress occurred throughout the ensuing year at all levels.

- Introduction of the statutory program—its philosophy and programmatic substance—was made to 40 top California digital media, internet, entertainment, manufacturing, and service industry leaders to begin seeking their interest and participating support. From this initial contact and dialogue, a much-improved

market-framing was developed and the first executive level support was gathered (See two sample letters – Attachments #7 and #8)

- An on-line Model Digital Media Arts Field Survey was completed and tested (See Survey and Report Attachment #9 and #10)

- A major “Strategy and Organizing DASP Summit Meeting” to launch statewide and regional implementation of DASPA was planned and held Sept 30, 2004 (See Summit Program and Summary Report “The Essences and Action Recommendations” Attachment #11). 87 individuals from the inter-segmental post secondary education system, local high schools, the community, corporations, and government administration and legislative departments attended in Sacramento (see Roster Attachment #12). Program and policy issues were framed to shape the statutory operation.

- CAC provided a small operations grant to support the 2004 Summit Conference with additional funding derived from corporate and registrant sources

- *The Tower of Youth 8th Annual Teen Digital Reel Showcase*, a Sacramento Sierra regional short computer movie competition, was held and \$100,000 of state-of-the-art software prizes was distributed to the youth and mentor producers. (See Program Attachment #13)

- The Tower of Youth hosted its 1000 youth attended event, *The 8th Annual North American All Youth Film & Education Day* was held October 1, 2004, showcasing 32 of the best teen-made movies (selected from over 200 US and Canadian short movie submissions) Presentation was made by Frank Gladstone, the Animation Arts Director of Dreamworks Studios. Representatives from twelve post-secondary, private, and public California school exhibited their programs. (See Program Attachment #14) Smaller region-wide youth media festivals (hosting 500 youth) were similarly held in Fresno and Santa Barbara, modeled on the Sacramento event as magnets to demonstrate the artistry and youths’ messages in these generational exhibitions

- Policy level legislative issues were identified for action in the 2005 legislative session (See Attachment #15)

- An Invitational Digital Arts Studio Partnership Conference is planned for March 10-12, 2005, to expand participation, define resource needs and their recruitment, and establish collaborative working protocols for data gathering, curriculum and field development work, and to begin coordinated project work at the state and regional levels. (See Attachment #16 and click on 2005 Conference at the www.caldigarts.org Web site)

2005 DASP TASKS AND NEEDS REVIEW

1. Formalize voluntary regional partnership membership and CAC designation in six California Regions.
2. Establish and implement voluntary working committees at the Regional Partnership level to initiate planning, data gathering, related training requirements, and exhibition events.
3. Expand lead industry partnerships and support.
4. Seek Governor's Office and Agency Secretary alignment.
5. Complete designation of statewide DASP policy and advisory oversight bodies, and initiate strategic planning.
6. Identify and secure allowed funding for statewide and regional implementation (\$2 million).
7. Propose and support strategic 2005 policy and program legislation at the state and federal levels.
8. Identify key issues for possible legislative hearings.
9. Implement March 10-12, 2005, Invitational Digital Arts Studio Partnership Conference including a five-year extension of the sunset date through 2011.
10. Structure a statewide regional youth media festival constellation.
11. Develop the regional volunteer service panels of youth media artists and technicians to support the non profit agency sector public education and outreach needs.