

**SupportMusic.com Coalition Webcast
LIVE FROM THE 2011 NAMM SHOW
& the Arts Schools Network annual conference
ANAHEIM CA
Thursday, January 13, 2011**

**Are you on Facebook?
[Become a Fan of the SupportMusic Coalition](#) & invite your constituents to join too!
Then, please post items of interest to music education advocates
on our [discussion page](#).**

PARTICIPANT LIST (see end of report) – Please send email to supportmusic@namm.org to record your attendance or to correct/amend. Minutes and MP3 files of teleconferences are archived on www.supportmusic.com.

NEXT CONFERENCE CALL: February 24, 2011

“Building and Engaging Support for Music and Arts Education”

Guest moderator:

Mike Blakeslee, Sr. Deputy Executive Director & COO, MENC

Panelists:

- **Ralph S. Opacic, Ed.D.**, President and Executive Director, Orange County High School of the Arts □
- **Robert Bryant**, Executive Director of Fine, Arts, Katy I.S.D. □
- **Karen Childress-Evans**, Visual & Performing Arts Director, San Diego Unified School District □
- **Graham Welch**, President, International Society for Music Education (ISME)

Overview & Background: On January 11, 2011, US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, quoted in an interview for *Education Week*, described poor academic times as likely to become “the new normal” for states and schools over the next few years. “We don’t believe that the conversation is about what to cut,” says an advisory panel for the *Quality Counts* campaign, “but rather the conversation is about what we want to do.” Examples cited included cuts to travel, delaying equipment upgrades, extracurricular activities and art and music programs. Since all advocacy is local, and each of us faces different community and organizational contexts, well-informed advocates must provide information to decision makers within a multitude of different contexts. (*Editor’s Note: Learn more about Secretary Duncan’s remarks at <<*

<http://www.ed.gov/blog/2011/01/new-normal-is-harsh-reality-duncan-tells-principals/>
>>

This accomplished panel of music educators represents the multi-faceted perspectives and common threads inherent in effective advocacy. To learn more about the panelists and the programs they represent, please visit:

Orange County High School of the Arts (OCHSA) << www.ocsarts.net >>
Katy I.S.D. << www.katyisd.org >>
San Diego Unified School District << www.sandi.net >>
International Society for Music Education << www.isme.org >>

Question: *Every advocate works in a local community, as well as within a national and state context. There are 15,800 school districts in the US plus the international perspective. What unique or specific realities in your community or organization have required unique advocacy approaches?*

Graham Welch: Economic circumstances are challenging, and within that context (as well as the prevalent emphasis on STEM - science, technology, engineering and mathematics), an argument must be made for the importance of music education. There is a great necessity to provide audiences with different kinds of evidence; for example, those working in the treasury and budget areas require financially based arguments. ISME is able to bring evidence from different countries and regions to suggest that an investment in music produces multiple benefits. In the UK, the Government's own evidence from the Department of Education reveals that the creative industries add \$60 billion to UK economy. Research conducted in Israel, Northern Ireland and Italy shows that engagement in music is likely to promote social cohesion, to bring a community together, to foster a positive self-concept, and that it offers a greater sense of belonging, particularly if people make music together. Other research shows that engagement in music promotes literacy. Since music is multi-sided neurologically, it not only promotes greater understanding but also contributes to the whole development of a person and a community.

Ralph Opacic: As a public charter school, we are a 'one-off,' so to speak. When you speak about advocacy, there's power in numbers and in capacity. As a single school, we've been challenged to build our community: are 1500 families powerful enough to invoke political change? Our biggest challenge is the sense of isolation, which is not uncommon among smaller arts organizations. In Orange County, we've addressed that by redefining what our local community is, and have actually built regional coalitions. We've built our capacity and voice by adding our voices to a larger message about the importance of music. We act together with a strong coalition across an entire county that speaks up for a music program when cuts are proposed.

Robert Bryant: We have approximately 60,000 students and are considered a fast growth district. Despite a drop this year from 7% to 3.5% growth, we're still growing. Katy ISD is a very high academic performing district, and families move here because of it. We have found out from the Chamber of Commerce and the Katy Economic Development Council that people come to Katy not just for our academic prowess but also for the arts and other activities we provide on top of that. Students come from all over the world (30-40 different languages are spoken in district homes) and they come to school with very different levels of preparation. Our challenge is how to engage students and keep the quality high; the challenge for teachers is to meet students where they are. Our focus is on student engagement, on quality teaching every day and on the advocacy that must take place. The first, and perhaps most important, part of advocacy is taking care of the students, every day, by providing quality programs. If

students are excited about programs and about what takes place in school every day, they will go home and talk about their music education programs with their parents. Let's put some power in STEM by adding the arts to it to create STEAM, and turn STEM, an innate object, into STEAM, which is energy.

Karen Childress-Evans: San Diego has a very rich and vibrant music department, and is one of the few remaining departments with a director, a music program director and four arts resource teachers (one for each discipline, music, dance, theater and visual art). There are 36 F/T and P/T music teachers at over 200 school sites in the district: we are serving 100% of elementary schools and trying to help seed programs in the secondary schools. There is music in all elementary schools and in all but two secondary schools. SDUSD received the "Best Communities for Music Education" award from The NAMM Foundation, and there are six magnet art schools, one of which is attending today (San Diego Creative and Performing Arts School). In the last five years, the district has lost ¼ of its funding or \$400 million, for education. Every year, Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) department gets cut back 20-30%. Our department has survived because we are doing more with less. We are artists. We are creative. We are creative problem solvers. Our challenges are to continue to educate and to schmooze. Our advocacy groups are very strong, and our challenge is to keep all the plates in the air, despite the cuts. We are fortunate that the SDUSD board of education understands and "gets" it.

Mike Blakeslee: To summarize, in order to focus not on what to cut but rather on what do we want to do, we must establish priorities and organize resources in the best way, including:

- collect and promote the proper evidence for each target population
- recognize there's power in numbers
- publicize the fact that people move into communities because of quality arts programs
- provide the best education to kids and to help parents to create and strengthen an advocacy base
- do more with less, problem solve, educate, schmooze

Question: *How do you know who the targets are? To whom do you speak? How do you figure it out?*

Karen Childress-Evans: This is my 7th year at SDUSD. When I arrived, I had a lot to learn and I had a lot of helpers. You cannot do it alone. Strength lies in getting together with like minds and in educating them. I had to find out who the district decision makers were, and then help them to understand what the arts are – for instance, coloring turkeys at Thanksgiving time is neither art nor social studies. We had to educate our advocates and our decision makers. We had to let them know there is a standards-based curriculum that is age appropriate and grade specific, and that it is easy to integrate it into other subject matter to get it into the schools. Parents and kids are a slam-dunk for us; we worked on building relationships with principals, community supporters, superintendents and school board members. The power brokers don't necessarily have a title or wear a suit.

Robert Bryant: I wish I could say parents and kids were a slam-dunk. Now, many parents get their information from neighbors and place more emphasis on encouraging their children to be more academically advanced, sometimes at the expense of arts. We don't take student involvement in arts education for granted. We try to educate every day at every level, targeting five groups – students, parents, co-workers on campus (math and science department chairs, as well as those in other academic areas), campus administration (using, for example, the advocacy materials and data driven research on the SupportMusic site), and our community at large (economic development council, business and church leaders, infrastructure of community, outside funding sources). We accept invitations for our jazz band to perform at the Home Depot grand opening, for example: performing for multiple audiences builds relationships and allows principals and their schools to look good in the community.

Mike Blakeslee: At all levels, even despite well-received community education efforts and a groundswell of support, the “new reality” means communities are facing severe problems, a brick wall or “the cliff.” The Federal recovery act money is going away, and the prediction is that funding will be cut back to 2008 levels. So, how do you make the pitch for music education programs? And how do you identify the key decision makers to approach to say, ‘we need your firm commitment.’ How do you go about it?

Karen Childress-Evans: You need to have the strong hand, and use it not in a negative way, but instead, to apply positive pressure. The obvious – thanking people for even the little things they've done – gives a big bang for buck. In San Diego, we continuously go out and talk to people. We have over 50 active partnerships, we have donors, and we have a clearinghouse of all arts organizations in San Diego. Ron Jessee, a strong leader at the county level, has put together the San Diego Arts Network (SDAN), which is comprised of arts education leaders who teach organizations about the arts standards. We have arts partners who are individual artists, a radio station, businesses and universities (including Lesley University); all are focused with us on infiltrating (which is another word for schmoozing).

Ralph Opacic: Be proactive versus reactionary, and express the value of arts education before we reach the edge of the cliff. From a political standpoint, it's imperative that the arts, and a political agenda, are present at every level, from local to regional, state and national. Arts Orange County, our advocacy group, surveys all elected officials during every campaign to determine their positions on arts funding and arts education, and they distribute that data to all of our coalitions. When elected officials have to make budget cuts, they know that those who are passionate and care about the arts are holding them accountable from the time they elect them – and they vote.

Robert Bryant: In Texas, we have both large metropolitan areas and rural areas. In the latter, *the* choir director or *the* band director is responsible for music education from K-12, and must therefore wear many hats. (Bryant, speaking from experience, taught in one such rural school, where in addition to music, he taught 6th grade American history and was a playground monitor at lunch.) Everyone in the community knows you. If you do not have a district level person to help you with advocacy, there are a few key players. One is the secretary for the Superintendent or the principal (who may be the same person in some districts), because they establish the calendar. If you really need

to speak with someone, and you have a good relationship with the secretary, they can offer access to the decision makers. In small districts and small schools, principals and school board members often make decisions by just calling each other up or during informal luncheons and phone meetings.

I represent the smallest district on this panel today, and am excited to see a representative of ISME here: because of the latest buzz - 21st century skills and the global economy, advocates need to be in touch with what's happening worldwide. If we want our graduates to be equally prepared as those in other nations, then what is your district doing to prepare them? When you want to make points to support your argument, you need to reference the larger picture: use Google alerts and other search tools to locate relevant and current information, and then share articles with administrators. As a result, in my district, our decision makers are engaged and now look for the information on their own and share it with me.

Graham Welch: The real challenge for advocacy is trying to understand why people find making the argument for music education difficult. There are two things about the audiences we're trying to work with, and we've discovered this in many different national contexts.

- The first is that many policy makers often had negative experiences with music when they were children, and they inappropriately view people as being either "musical or not musical." They therefore see the role of education as filtering students out of music because we all remember the "stars." Far too many teachers think they're not musical, or they think music is something they're not very good at it. There's a lot of research about how this has created long lasting negative impressions.

- The second is that we need to consider music education policy in terms of asking policy makers to address the questions of 'what are your needs?', 'what are you really concerned about and what are your priorities?' and then, 'how can we help?' 'how do you think music and the arts can help you achieve those things?' Because they can: we have case studies, we can give powerful examples of how the world has changed, for this child, for this individual, for these communities, because of music and arts education.

(If we approach advocacy from these vantage points), we're not working just on a rational level, but on a personal and emotional level with those we want to influence.

Mike Blakeslee: Last week in Washington, DC, there was a meeting of the Committee for Education Funding. A number of people were there from Capitol Hill and they made the same point: you need to have the hard data but you also need the stories. You need to connect with decision makers not only on an abstract level, but also on a personal level.

Question: *We are all used to advocacy campaigns when things are in crisis mode – cuts are proposed to an elementary music program, the community gets together to do a job, they stabilize the program, and then advocates go away. The problem is that we're trying to maintain a system that is designed to*

*educate kids from cradle to career. Once the advocacy troops are in line and working together, how do you **keep** them together?*

Robert Bryant: All advocacy should be looked upon as a lifetime thing, a daily occurrence. How do you keep it alive? You feed it with the newest data and research and you put faces to it. In Texas, in March, during Arts at the Capitol Days, there will be music and dance performances in the Capitol and on the steps, so legislators must look into faces when making decisions. They need to see the impact, to look in eyes, to put faces to the issue. You don't buy a \$300,000 home and stick a baby in it and say 'hope everything turns out well' – the baby must be nurtured, loved, fed, taken care of, form relationships. Do the same thing with your programs and the people advocating for the programs. The arts and music are part of everyone's life. My job is working for Katy; my heart is for every child, everywhere.

Karen Childress-Evans: The way to keep arts advocacy going is sustainability, by doing. The most important thing is to plan, but you can get stuck in planning. The first thing to do is to identify what you CAN do. It's like putting plates on a stick: the more plates you get in the air, that's a good thing because it's magic. But, getting that first plate in the air can be tricky. Success feeds and attracts success; you must advertise your program, tell everybody about how cool you are, and it will attract positive attention. The only thing constant in education is change. To keep feeding that, you continue to build relationships. There are enough walls and barriers: go with what you got, start building there and getting that word out, and start getting those plates in the air. Sustainability occurs when everybody has their own plate and you don't have to do it all.

Ralph Opacic: In schools, we have emergency preparedness plans, we have fire drills, earthquake drills, and I think in terms of advocacy, it's the same thing. When the earthquake comes, it's too late. Part of advocacy is continuing to build and develop and refine an emergency preparedness plan for advocacy. And, what's the second piece? It's marketing, marketing, marketing – we need to constantly be celebrating the great things we're doing in arts education. It tends to be 'what have you done for me lately?' and when we get to the edge of the cliff, it's too late to remind them.

Audience Q&A

Dave Yarlborough (*Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Washington DC*): *I hear a lot of conversation about Washington and what they do and say. We talk a lot about the arguments against the arts, but we don't say what those arguments are. What is the argument that supports keeping the arts in the elective status versus in the academic status?*

Karen Childress-Evans: The challenge for all educators is where to find the time, and meaningful arts integration is the way we're doing it. We're working on some very strong integration programs in elementary programs. When I started, I was told principals don't want arts, but it's not true. They want the arts; they don't know how to do it. Kids want the arts, teachers want the arts, but they don't know how to do it. An advocate's job is to help that happen. It's got to be meaningful, and it's got to be learning. The problem is that we get a lot of arts projects that are not learning, that's

where we get the term 'frills.' If they are arts education and standards-based, and very well vetted and thought out, students are learning. And that's what we want to do for kids. So, we need to kind of raise the bar a little bit there.

Ralph Opacic: I see it differently, in a very practical way. Teachers and schools are going to focus on what they're going to be held accountable on, and that which is going to be tested and measured. So the challenge is to get into the system, so that there's some accountability in their evaluations of schools and of the quality of their arts program. Schools are going to put their resources and their time and money into what they're being held accountable to. And, unfortunately, the arts programs aren't it yet.

Robert Bryant: In the state of Texas, we're very fortunate to have the TMEA and the Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education, and they've been actively working with the state legislators who control the graduation and curriculum requirements. Texas students are required to take fine arts in high school for at least one year to graduate. And, they recently added the requirement that every child must take a fine arts course during the grades six through eight. Those are starting points. We're also working on part of the school campus report card, which includes a 'distinction tier' to be built on fine arts taking its place among other tested subjects. The good thing about NCLB is it lists the arts among the required subjects. The College Board also lists the arts as among the best things for academic preparation for college. Sometimes it's the legislators who need to have the information.

Mike Blakeslee: It was a hard fought victory to get the arts listed as a core academic subject in the initial draft of NCLB. Today, as a practical point for advocacy, we rarely hear people say 'I don't want the arts, I don't want music, I just want to get rid of it' – and in the 80's, we did have people saying those things. Now, they're sneakier, they kind of hollow out the program, put roadblocks in the way of scheduling or in the way of what kids can take it or something. So now, as advocates, we have to be ready for that.

Graham Welch: In terms of the accountability issue, I think it's very important and quite possible to demonstrate, to generate, the evidence that the arts in general, and music in particular, will improve the other things that you are being held accountable for.

Mike Blakeslee: There's a lot of that evidence on www.SupportMusic.com, including evidence that music programs are more cost effective.

Carmelo Sgarlato: *Principal, Ruth Asawa School of Arts, San Francisco, CA. In CA and TX, we have a large Latino population, a very diverse community. We have the socio-economic factors, and a lot of immigrants coming into the country. My question is about the cultural context for these community members to say the arts are really important. Within their culture, they may or may not have same mindset as we have here in the United States in terms of appreciating the arts. How do we promote the fact that the arts are important to students' academic studies? Many people will provide lessons but say the arts should be on weekends. They want their children to be in schools where they have the opportunity to take AP Calculus.*

Karen Childress-Evans: We're working with UC Irvine and Learning for the Arts and looking at ways to help English language learners. We just finished a four-year grant where the project worked with 15 elementary schools with kids in grades K-1-2. Preliminary findings showed that the kindergarten kids who got this art infusion, this art integration, made 1.65 and 1.75 growth – almost two years of growth – in only one year because of these arts. Go to the UC Irvine website or the SDUSD website and use these findings, say 'let's try it here'. Our English language learners are at a disadvantage from the very beginning, but you can show them that the integration piece works – and you've got to show them at your site.

Mike Blakeslee: I taught for a few years at a teacher training institution in South America, and there are cultural differences in the way people view the value of music education. But, I think it's universal: parents want the best for their kids, end of story. If you can demonstrate to them that music education is an essential part of their education, that's what they need.

Graham Welch: The musical political agenda in England was changed in 2004-2005 with the establishment of the Music Manifesto. It was initially launched by two different Ministries – Education and Culture – then rapidly became independent and was owned by the arts and arts organizations. And that has led to a major investment in music for children, and it's having an impact on all ethnic groups, irrespective of ethnic background. The music programs are equally effective because they're being built from the ground up, and supported from the top under an umbrella organization. We celebrate diversity and all the different approaches to music. In some cases you're working with communities where music is not traditionally strong – in the UK, these are often Muslim communities, for example – but we've got evidence that the music programs are able to touch all children as long as you believe that it's possible.

(Anonymous) Question: *You talk about the accountability movement, and I agree that we have to speak to people who work in the accountability movement. So, what quantitative studies are you and your organizations going to do with, say, dance educators, drama educators, and visual arts educators to show the quantitative impact on testing, rather than qualitative research? Also, has your organization surveyed leadership to find out how many superintendents and state education chancellors come from the arts?*

Mike Blakeslee: On the first question in finding quantitative data, that's an ongoing thing. It's one of our key 'asks' on a Federal level, because a lot of this quantitative data comes from demographic studies, and the only group can really collect that is the Federal Government. We keep trying to get more of that going. This summer, a new Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) will come out that will include data on the arts. There is also data, from MENC and NAMM, on the SupportMusic website – I wish we had better data.

Follow-up Question: *Are there any linked studies, like the McREL Leadership studies, that show the impact of leadership on schools' deviation points. Is there any movement on that, any funding for that kind of study?*

Mike Blakeslee: There's a lot of desire but there are no resources yet. There is a lot of movement among the arts organizations who are working together, most recently to produce the [21st century arts skills map](#). We're continuing to work together to see if resources may be available to revise the National Arts Standards (written 16 years ago) in light of 21st century skills and newer research.

Robert Bryant: National surveys and data are great, but with technology today, we can take every standardized test that any of our students took last year – by campus, by kid – and plug that against the kids who are enrolled in fine arts. We can show every principal how that gap has closed. And, we can show how the students are not only scoring higher on their standardized tests, but even in all the different sub-populations, we can show breakdowns of how that gap is much narrower than the general trend of those who aren't enrolled. You don't have to wait for FRSS – you can run information from your student information system and run it against your own test scores. We provide principals with color-coded reports showing students who are surpassing state standards to the commended point, and other details such as at-risk or other sub-population data to show the impact of arts education on their own campus.

Mike Blakeslee: To summarize, to be a good advocate:

- you've got to do a good job teaching kids
- you have to plan but don't get stuck planning
- you have to use appropriate evidence and evidence that's appropriate to the audience to which you're speaking
- you have to build coalitions
- you have to educate people, and schmooze them and apply positive pressure on those decision makers.
- and remember **all advocacy is local.**

(Editor's note: This link to Dr. John Benham's website for his new blog and textbook, "Music Advocacy: Moving from Survival to Vision," should have appeared in the December minutes: <http://save-music.org/>)

NEXT MEETING: FEBRUARY 24, 2011

JANUARY 2011 WEBCAST Participants: 102 total viewers, including:

United States:

46 California
9 Nevada
7 Texas
12 Florida
6 New York

Representatives from each of a dozen or so other states

International:

1 Canada,
1 Turkey
1 Romania

01.31.11 DB