

SupportMusic.com Coalition Webcast  
Wednesday, February 24, 2010

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NEXT CONFERENCE CALL: Tuesday, March 23, 2010 at 9 AM PST

SUMMARY

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**Welcome New Affiliates**

*(Charese Wolfe)*

SOUTH CAROLINA	The James Brown Family Foundation, Deanna Brown-Thomas
TENNESSEE	Marching.com, Ken Martinson
TENNESSEE	Naxos of America, Inc., Randall Foster
CALIFORNIA	The Les Paul Foundation, Jeff Salmon
CALIFORNIA	The Kanye West Foundation, Joseph Collins
CALIFORNIA	Fundamentals of Music and Movement, Aaron Nigel Smith
CALIFORNIA	America Sidco Inc., Dennis Augustine
CALIFORNIA	Living Arts Los Angeles, Dorsay Dujon

**Are We Ready Part Two: What's the Budget Buzz in School Districts?**

*(Sandra Jordan, Dr. John Benham + discussion participants)*

As school boards face difficult decisions about what constitutes a complete curriculum for students in their districts, music education programs are increasingly vulnerable. Dr. John Benham, a well-known advocate and music education consultant, now receives two to three calls each week – and has been contacted by 40-45 school districts in the past six months. He sees things getting worse, with proposed cuts range widely from staffing to programming, and says, "This is the worst year I've seen in 29 years of doing this work."

It's important to maintain a positive focus while acknowledging the realities of the current economic situation. Here are some motivating suggestions:

- encourage people to use the free resources on [www.supportmusic.com](http://www.supportmusic.com)

- many articles in the CounterPoint archives, authored by Benham and other notable advocates, detail how to obtain and use the specific data and financial information that is needed for school board and other stakeholder presentations  
- "Make The Case" is a wealth of information to support advocates (anecdotes, quotes, statistics, research, etc.)

- get students to talk about why music education is important to them
- keep discussions and presentations focused on benefits to children and, when cuts are proposed, emphasize effect on students (not potential loss of staff positions)
  - one-on-one contacts, kind words, larger perspective, solution-oriented discussions, working together – all are extremely important!
  - the beauty of collaboration is that together, we're all a whole lot stronger
  - school boards are looking for action and reaction – be prepared, be positive, be armed with information & facts, and bring young people into the meetings to speak and/or perform
  - NEVER give up, advocacy never sleeps, jump in and help build momentum for programs. It's not too late.

### **Now is the Time: States on the Move**

*(Sandra Jordan, others as desired)*

**Anne Fennell** provided an update on Vista Unified School District in CA. Though programs may still be cut or lost, the Board's previous commitment to make music and arts part of the Board Goals remains. Discussions about cuts are ongoing, despite an unfortunate incident where a very negative email from a teacher was circulated to the superintendent and school board members. Anne wrote an email to attempt to repair the damage and copied all. Three board members thanked her for maintaining a positive attitude; the superintendent asked, 'what can we do?' Children spoke at the next board meeting, as did one positive teacher, and the issue was re-agendized for March.

Statewide, with CA facing a \$18 million deficit, districts have learned they are permitted to take Categorical Funds (including the designated monies for music & arts) and place them into the General Fund, it's more important than ever to attend board meetings to track when and where the funds are being moved.

**Madelyn Bonnot** recently visited New Orleans, where people are mobilizing the troops. She witnessed deep collaboration, particularly among those who formerly were competitors for funds; now they're sharing resources, going together to the state capitol to march, and collaborating in many other ways.

**Dr. John Benham** reinforced the above comments and added that non-tenured teachers, who have a wait-and-see attitude and are afraid they'll lose their jobs if they speak up, may lose them anyway. Empowering the public is the key – they have a right and a responsibility to influence how their district should look and what their kids' education should be.

An update on the situation in Fairfax County, VA: This is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest school district in the US. A proposal to eliminate 116.8 teachers would result in 25,000 students not participating in music. The FACE Coalition has been very active, and the situation looks good now. Decisions will be evident by the end of March. The Governor has eliminated \$600+ million from the State budget.

**"My experience has always been that when people fight, they win.  
When they don't fight, they lose."**

**Leni Boorstin** referenced an article that appeared today's *LA Times* about the Arts for LA coalition and its campaign to save arts education in LA Unified School District. High profile community members – philanthropist Eli Broad, Charles Segars (Ovation TV) – are getting involved; Maria Bell (Museum of Contemporary Art, LA) was named honorary chairperson. You can read about it here:

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/culturemonster/2010/02/eli-broad-ovation-tv-charles-segars-lend-a-hand-to-laUSD-arts-education-campaign.html>

### **California: 20 Coalitions, One Webinar and Counting**

*(Laurie Schell)*

CAAE's webinar on March 2 deepens their 1 ½ year focus on activating local efforts and empowering the public to speak up. Participants will learn techniques and tools to mobilize, focus on what it takes to come together and use community, how to be articulate about concerns and more.

When CAAE turned their focus to local coalition building throughout the state, they didn't realize 'preparing for the moment' would evolve into dealing with one of such urgency and crisis. People need to be ready to step up and urge direct action against cuts. Twenty 'Can Do' coalitions have been started with five in San Diego and five in Orange County, all united under a new type of urgency. Some districts are waiting to see how much money the state says they'll have; others are going ahead and proposing cuts now (like LAUSD's proposal to cut 50% of elementary arts teachers in the 2010-11 school year). By June, final budgets will be in place.

### **Iowa: Arts Teachers and the Iowa Core Curriculum**

*(Larry Brandstetter, Leon Kuehner)*

**Larry Brandstetter:** When the Iowa Alliance for Arts Education (IAAE) formed 20 years, it was determined that the best approach would be to focus on building relationships, collaborating, and ensuring consistent engagement with legislators. All the arts disciplines knew they needed to work together with each other or they would die separately.

IAAE set out to engage policy makers at the Iowa DOE in dialogue, at all levels, and also developed relationships with the Governor and Lieut. Governor and told them all 'we want to be involved'. When discussions came up about adopting the Iowa Core Curriculum, math, science, technology, communications and global learning were all included. IAAE held a meeting with Roseanne Malik, arts education at DOE, and asked 'how can the arts become involved?' and her response was 'yes, they should be' because she saw the need.

The importance of building and maintaining a personal and open relationship with the Iowa DOE cannot be overstated: this careful groundwork helped to bring the arts to the Core Curriculum planning table.

**Leon Kuehner:** In 2008, and again in 2009, meetings were held with the K-12 arts education leadership (arts organizations, universities, others) concerning the role of the arts in the Iowa Core Curriculum. The open lines of communication were very important to the Iowa DOE. As a result of these meetings, representatives from the Fine Arts are now writing essential skills and concepts in the areas of music, theater/drama and art. This bottom-up process involves many practicing arts educators statewide.

The Iowa Core Curriculum is a skills-based curriculum, rather than subject-based. It is based on six universal constructs:

- Creativity
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Critical Thinking
- Flexibility & Adaptability
- Productivity & Accountability

Representatives are currently aligning the essential skills and concepts of the Fine Arts under these six constructs, which are the overarching principles for all content areas in the Iowa Core Curriculum. Once this collaborative process is completed, a first draft will be submitted in the spring of 2010.

The IAAE has also collaborated with the Iowa DOE to create professional development classes to be delivered by arts educators on how to implement the Iowa Core Curriculum into their arts classes.

Materials will be made available on the IAAE website: <http://www.iowaalliance4artsed.org/>

### **Discussion**

A suggestion was made to share this information with Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA). He will play an important role in upcoming Federal legislation; it would be good for him to have an awareness of what's happening in his own state.

### **Research Roundup: Report on Student Access to Music Sheds New Light on Oklahoma Arts Education**

*(Bob Morrison)*

A new Quadrant Arts Education Research report, "Scratching the Surface: What We Know – and Don't Know – About Music Education in Oklahoma," was released on January 20, 2010. The report, commissioned by the Kirkpatrick Foundation, studies data on course availability in individual schools and compares schools based on location, size, wealth indicators and region. This preliminary study focuses on access to certain music courses and does not examine participation levels. A more detailed study of arts education in OK will commence in spring 2010.

#### Highlights:

- 51% of schools have some instrumental program
- Nearly every school in the state offers some type of music course
- Elementary band programs are more prevalent in rural communities
- There is no impact on program provision related to community affluence, with the exception of orchestra programs which tend to be present in wealthier or urban communities

Oklahoma is a relatively large state with a relatively small population: 43% of high schools have 200 students or less, and there is generally not a great deal of support for music & art. High schools provide a sense of community. There is resistance to consolidation and a desire to maintain these smaller schools, yet community members want a wider, more diverse offering for students. How do you reconcile the two? How do we deliver high quality standards-based instruction in all of the arts in small rural schools? And, regarding efforts to reinstate elementary instrumental programs, what are the barriers?

### **Discussion**

It will be interesting to see how conversations proceed and how thought leaders use this information. Anytime studies target access and equity, they provide a roadmap for policy makers who desire program changes.

A recent conversation with Lynn Tuttle at the Arizona DOE centered on the idea that there's significantly less opportunity to be involved with the arts in private and charter schools (unless they are specifically designated as arts schools). They lag significantly behind public schools in arts program offerings, within an environment where the Administration is encouraging charter schools. We need to be pro-active, need strategies for charter schools so they do not become a second level of education that does not provide adequate, much less quality, instruction in the arts.

Quadrant has a news service that compiles a daily report of stories about arts education by email or RSS feed. To sign up, go to:

<http://artsedresearch.org/news.shtml>

For the Oklahoma Report, Press Release and Quick Facts go to:

[http://artsedresearch.org/reports/ok-2010\\_press\\_release.shtml](http://artsedresearch.org/reports/ok-2010_press_release.shtml)

### **SupportMusic Coalition Steering Committee Update: More Advocacy News You Can Use**

*(Mark Despotakis)*

A discussion of several state and regional issues led into one focused on 'how can we all be better advocates?' One statistic – since last year at this time, usage of SupportMusic.com has increased 22% - brings up the fact this can be viewed as good or bad. Good, because people find the resources valuable; bad because it's necessary to access them.

Even with all our work on the Federal and State level, all advocacy is local. Technology and social media is a key aspect, using SupportMusic.com as a hub to do outreach individually and organizationally. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn were all discussed. On Twitter, #musiced is a great resource. Individuals are encouraged to put the word out & share information via their own networks, ie, postings about new research, reminders of the importance of music education, etc. to create some chatter. Frame messages in action-oriented ways: 'Today is the day to do something', 'a new report came out today', to convey a sense of more urgency.

Who should we be engaging? There's a need to get more students involved, as well as parents, grandparents, school board members. Reach out. Ask them to share good messages.

Finally, looking at the bigger picture: Sir Ken Robinson, appeared on FOX news this past weekend and spoke about creativity. It would be a good idea to invite him and other thought leaders to join a future teleconference.

If anyone is interested in joining the Steering Committee, please email [sandraj@namm.org](mailto:sandraj@namm.org)

### **Spring Advocacy Events: Celebrate Music Education**

*(Sandra Jordan)*

- Deadline is March 12 for nominations for **Best Communities for Music Education**, NAMM's annual survey now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year. To download district or individual school survey forms, visit <http://www.nammfoundation.org/research/namm-foundation-best-communities-music-education-2010> \*\* Designated schools are far less likely to have programs eliminated. One

district with a music program on the chopping block had been selected as one of the Top 5 BCME in the country: Citing this honor, the school board said 'absolutely no' to programs cuts. \*\*

- March is **Music In Our Schools Month (MIOSM)**. Visit [www.menc.org/events/view/music-in-our-schools-month](http://www.menc.org/events/view/music-in-our-schools-month) for complete information, downloads, activity ideas and schedule of events. The 2010 World's Largest Concert (WLC) sing-along event, hosted by Florence Henderson (*The Brady Bunch*), will be on March 11, 2010 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

- **Music Monday North America** will be held the first Monday in May (May 3). A full day of music making activities will be held to demonstrate the importance of music education programs in Canada, the United States and worldwide. NAMM also kicks off its annual *Wanna Play* week on that date. For more information, please visit <http://www.namm.org/news/press-releases/namm-brings-music-monday-us-third-year-inspire-app>

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