

SupportMusic.com Coalition Webcast
Tuesday, April 20, 2010

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PARTICIPANT LIST (see end of report)
NEXT CONFERENCE CALL: Wednesday, May 26, 2010 at 9 AM PST

SUMMARY

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Welcome New Affiliates
(Sandra Jordan)

NEW YORK Crane School of Music, SUNY-Potsdam, Carol Britt

National String Project Consortium (NSPC): Recent Advocacy Findings & White Paper Release
(Dr. Robert Jesselson, University of South Carolina & Executive Director, NSPC; Dr. Bret Smith, Central Washington University; Dr. Michael Alexander, Baylor University)

Dr. Jesselson: A severe shortage of string teachers has been apparent, anecdotally, since the 1950s-60s. In 2002 and again in 2009, ASTA and NSPC conducted studies and produced white papers identifying needs for string teachers and the percentage of US schools that offered string programs.

In recent years, ASTA and NSPC have established partnerships with those who create string products, particularly within the music industry, NAMM, D'Addario Foundation and *Strings* magazine. NSPC has raised \$2.9 million and established 36 new string projects at universities around the US. Their goal is have at least one string project in every state to help produce string teachers who are ready to teach in schools.

The 2009 study surveyed 9,000 string and orchestra teachers in over 4,000 school districts. School districts are still facing shortages, but the study identified significant increases and decreases in the past several years:

- The number of school districts offering string instruction has **increased** from 18% (1997) to 29% (2009).

- The estimated national shortage of string teachers has **decreased** from 5,000 (2002 study) to 3,000 in 2010-2013 (2009 study).

Dr. Alexander: Longitudinal data from the last 20 years, including the 2002 study and three prior studies (2000, 1997, 1991) was compiled to create a fact sheet. Some highlights:

- In 2007-2008, 90% of available string teaching positions were filled but 18% were filled by teachers whose primary instrument was not a stringed instrument.

- Average length of teaching experience increased from 10+ years (1998) to 19 years (2009). This aging teacher population will impact the projection for a shortage of 3,000 teaching positions by 2013.

- 39% of current string teachers anticipated new positions between 2010-2013.

- Between 2003 & 2008, financial support from school districts decreased in 66% of string programs. School districts in general are two years behind the financial rise and fall of the US economy. Forecast: it will be 2-3 years before schools are recovering.

- In 2009, an average of 35% of students are non-white:

56.6%	White
13.3%	Hispanic
10.6%	Black
9.8%	Asian
1.3%	American Indian

The largest group increase was in the Hispanic student population, paralleling the growth trend of the US population.

- In 2009, 64% of string teachers were female, 92% were white and 71% played a stringed instrument as their primary instrument.

Dr. Smith: Some suggestions on how to use data in advocacy work:

- Schools K-12 should be proud of efforts to create and sustain the idea that string education is not "extra," but rather it is part of a well-rounded orchestra component. The best approach is to keep the momentum going and, in both local and statewide efforts, to keep the focus on standards based curriculum in line with each state's trends (for example there should be a yearly assessment of string education).

- Need for teachers: at the college and university level, universities have risen well to that challenge and many have created dedicated string pedagogy positions in music departments. More attention needs to be addressed within string major programs. In many methods classes, students are primarily non-majors. There is a need to go much deeper into detailed teaching strategies and plans regarding how to create a string major teaching track.

- Students K-12 need to see string education as a viable and rewarding career option. NSPC projects are very important in this effort. On the collegiate level, efforts need to be made to increase diversity in both ethnic composition and gender, and new thinking is needed about how to appeal to and attract more diversity and representation.

- It's important to keep developing a common agenda and strong partnerships among representatives from universities, K-12, private organizations, instructors, youth orchestras, industry (retail, publishers, string shops, repair) and others.
- The study confirms that demand is continuing and, in looking at supply/demand character, we shouldn't focus only on supply and watch the demand side wither.
- The goal is that all children will have the opportunity to play an instrument. 71% of school districts still don't offer comprehensive music education programs, ie, not just band and choir, but also orchestra.

Discussion

[Sphinx Organization](#) is dedicated to building diversity in classical music; Aaron Dworkin is founder and president.

University of Massachusetts at Lowell, the Detroit Symphony and the University of South Carolina all have programs to encourage changing demographics in classic music. Going forward, it's important to track numbers of minority students who are taking teaching positions.

What regions of the country are increasing string education programs, particularly in light of the current budget challenges?

Las Vegas, NV; Valdosta, GA (one school district there is starting a new string program next year); and Columbia SC (all five districts have elementary, middle and high school programs with a total enrollment of close to 4,000 students) are all areas experiencing growth. Columbia had no history of string playing and now has become a real center for string education and teacher training.

In Texas, the largest demographic increases are in suburban (not rural or urban) areas nationwide; all new suburban schools offer orchestra programs.

It's worth noting that the methods used to gather numbers differed somewhat between earlier studies and the 2009 survey, so the number of school districts offering string instruction in 1997 (18%) may be a low number. Quadrant Arts Research has a very up-to-date list of schools and teacher contacts, which made the 2009 study considerably more accurate.

NSPC's white paper, "WANTED: 3,000 String Teachers! The Status of String and Orchestra Programs in United States Schools," is available as a free download at www.stringprojects.com. Anyone who has additional questions may send an email to rjesselson@mozart.sc.edu

States Rally!

* **Illinois** (*Charles Menghini, VanderCook College of Music; George Quinlan, Quinlan and Fabish*)

George Quinlan has been involved with NAMM's grassroots advocacy work in DC the last couple of years, and realized how valuable and effective grassroots efforts can be – and even more so at the state level. An Illinois MEA official offered a conference presentation in January that was attended by 25-30 people. It was followed by a meeting a week or two later, leading to the creation of the Music Support Network of Illinois. The group is planning a new statewide effort, a "Drive-In" to Springfield, and has developed a two-page fact sheet to prepare for this

grassroots lobbying effort. They set up a Facebook page with a goal of attracting 500 fans by their next meeting; they already have 1,300 members. They identified six leaders of the State Education Committee in the House and the Senate, and broke into work groups to target regional visits at their home offices. The first regional office visits will be held Monday, April 26, in Chicago. Once this effort is evaluated, then the larger group will do Springfield visits.

Charlie Menghini: On Thursday, April 22, three college education majors from the Federation of Independent Colleges and Universities will go to Springfield to lobby for the continuation of MAP grants and talk about the importance of music in the schools. On Tuesday, April 27, he will participate in another lobbying event with legislators. And, a 1 ½ day short course will be conducted with about 20 teachers which will cover how to communicate with their various constituencies. Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser will speak on the topic of communication strategies, engagement, participation and leadership (downplaying an emphasis on use of the word “advocacy”).

• **Wisconsin** (*Anne Katz, Arts Wisconsin; Dr. Mel Pontious, WI Department of Public Instruction*)

Anne Katz: The importance of arts education has received a great deal of visibility in Wisconsin over the past few years since Lt. Gov Barbara Laughton (chair of WI Arts Board) and former State Superintendent Elizabeth Hornmaster joined forces to launch a taskforce on the Arts & Creativity in Education.

Their work began with a survey, and the data helped to direct the activities of the Taskforce. Taskforce members included all sectors – business and community leaders, politicians, arts organizations, education, government – and they met for a year to develop a set of policy recommendations. The consensus was that creativity (and, by extension, music and the arts) is a major factor in a well-rounded life, regardless of whether someone is going to be a violinist, a plumber or a politician.

The Taskforce ended its work in the beginning of 2009 with a major conference and Sir Ken Robinson gave the keynote address. Since then, seven communities around the state have kept the Taskforce going on a local level, and are planning to train new communities to come into the process. The impact of the arts in education – as well as the personal stories & data – is a major component of advocacy messages being presented to legislators and candidates. This fall, a new Governor will be elected, providing a great opportunity to talk about importance of arts education.

Dr. Pontious: The new superintendent of the DPI is very engaged in this process and is co-chair of this effort. Another important initiative at DPI focuses on the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and the arts are promoted as a major factor in their work.

At DPI, an Action Research Group comprised of music and art teachers was formed in 2001. It focused on better ways to teach and assess students in the arts. In 2009, at the end of the Taskforce, DPI began to address new questions about how to work with students to help them develop creative thinking skills and to enhanced carryover to creativity. They want to move from focusing on helping students to understand not only WHAT they are doing but HOW they are doing it. Advocacy is best done by action; that’s what they’re trying to do in Wisconsin,

Mick Faulhaber: During the closing keynote speech at the April 2010 Retail Music Dealers Association convention in Oklahoma City, Dean Mark Parker (Wanda L. Bass School of Music, Oklahoma City University) spoke about creativity at every level of education. He mentioned the

work being done in WI and the Creative A+ Schools started in NC, a model that is now utilized throughout the entire state of OK. These initiatives are modernizing how we teach music and the arts.

For more information, please visit:

<http://aplusok.org/>

www.stateofcreativity.com

Local Advocacy Issues, Strategies and Successes

- **San Diego, CA** – update on alternative strategies; tabled.

- **Fulton County, GA** (*Dr. John Benham, Sandra Jordan*) – Three components mentioned on the last teleconference – strong parent coalition, having the right information, and unity of teaching profession – have all proved to have significance. The decision was made: teachers got RIF letters, and the 4th and 5th grade instrumental programs (band and choir) were eliminated. These cuts will affect 8,000 students. Parents are now coming together to fight, but they got a late start. Two meetings were held (John attended both) but they were attended by few parents (60-70) and less than 1/3 of teachers. In the middle of the process, the school administration (illegally) issued an edict threatening teachers' jobs if they got involved. Four years ago, parents rallied very strongly; this time, the district was better prepared. The specified cuts, elimination of 4th and 5th grade elementary orchestra, also included 'hidden cuts' ie, increasing class sizes. Now, many teachers are receiving notice that their positions are going to be reduced by ½ or more because non-performance classes are being eliminated. Generally, the program is in drastic straits, but information is being given to parents to give to Board and to ask for them to reconsider their decision. The Board needs to make the program financially viable, but there is no systems management in place. (For example, there were full time teachers with less than 50 students, and others with as many as 300, so the numbers were all over the place and it was appropriate to cut the smaller positions.) On the plus side, there was very good media coverage.

Note: Ironically, Fulton County music students performed before 7,000 attendees at the recent National School Board Association convention. Mention was made of the fact that the program was in jeopardy. The superintendent commended the program in a letter, and then cut it.

- **Fairfax County, VA** (*Dr. John Benham*) – 116.8 elementary positions were slated for elimination, a move that would have left 84% of 4-5-6th graders without music education. With four months of lead time, a very well organized community coalition stepped into action. Dr. Benham's 156-page study is a good model of how to look at the district numbers necessary to demonstrate a financial case for music education. All the positions were saved. Teachers in this district were more involved than in Fulton County, but some problems still existed, for example, the choral program teachers don't get involved when threats are made to cut instrumental programs. Send email to ilbenham@gmail.com to request copy of study.

Advocates at Stakeholder Conferences This Spring

- **National School Board Association** (*Sandra Jordan*): Every year, NAMM attends the NSBA conference to work directly with board members to help them to strengthen and sustain their music education programs. NAMM was joined by representatives from VH1 Save The Music Foundation, Remo, West Music, Yamaha and Wenger; Mary Luehrsen and Laurie Schopp offered a very well received presentation entitled, "We Want 'That' Music Program For Our Students! How Quality Arts Programs Innovate to Help Close the Achievement Gap in All

Districts." The session was attended by over 100 board members, and many SupportMusic materials were distributed. About 200 participants enthusiastically took part in the second annual Drum Circle. Wynton Marsalis gave the keynote address on arts, freedom and democracy. If you've never heard Marsalis speak, Americans for the Arts has a similarly powerful speech on their website at

<< http://www.americansforthearts.org/information_services/video_audio/video/003.asp >>.

- **Arts Education Partnership National Forum** (*Mary Luehrsen*): Both the new NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman and US DOE Secretary Arne Duncan spoke, quite a memorable and historic moment. Sandra Ruppert deserves great praise for pulling these two important national leaders together. Read the transcripts of their remarks – and the letter from Arne Duncan – and pull quotes to use at school board meetings. Their speeches contain very positive intentionality, very strong and supportive statements: PLEASE USE THEM!

- The Well-Rounded Curriculum

Secretary Arne Duncan's Remarks at the Arts Education Partnership National Forum
<http://www2.ed.gov/news/speeches/2010/04/04092010.html>

- Rocco Landesman Comments at the Arts Education Partnership's Opening Plenary

<http://www.arts.gov/news/news10/ELI-Rocco.html>

- Secretary Arne Duncan's Letter to School & Education Community Leaders
August 2009

http://www.supportmusic.com/Arts_Education_Letter.pdf

"Celebrate to Advocate" For Music Education Now!

(*Ingrid Whyte, Sandra Jordan*)

Music Monday will be observed on May 3 with participation in Canada, the United States and in many other locations around the world (Nigeria, Sudan, Belgium, Ireland, and others).

In Canada, grassroots, community engagement and media involvement continues to grow. This year, over 2,000 schools are participating (750,000+ students). An outdoor concert in Vancouver will bring together 700+ students, professional musicians (including a 92-year old trumpet player) and a host of VIPs. Timing couldn't be better, due to the continuing afterglow from the Olympics – and the fact that 51 district music programs are slated for program cuts. National Public Broadcasting has once again joined with the Coalition for Music Education in Canada for a week dedicated to music. A brand new sponsor, TicketMaster Canada, is donating ten \$2500 awards to schools. A National online survey, targeted at principals and focused on the status of music in the schools, will be released in Fall 2010: this highlights a significant new partnership between the Coalition and the Canadian Association of Principals (the Coalition is one of only two partners, the other being Concerned Children Advocates).

NAMM kicks off its annual *Wanna Play? Week* on Music Monday, May 3: watch the national media during the entire week as there will be many activities. For more information, visit:

<http://www.wannaplaymusic.com/>

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, May 26, 2010

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