

SupportMusic.com Coalition Teleconference
Thursday, May 19, 2011

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NEXT CONFERENCE CALL: June 21, 2011 – Please forward any agenda suggestions, particularly “success stories” or issues faced in local districts, to supportmusic@namm.org

SUMMARY

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Welcome and overview

(Mary Luehrsen, NAMM)

The SupportMusic Coalition is dedicated to supporting local communities in their efforts to keep music education strong and taught by high quality teachers, and we welcome your ongoing participation.

National Updates

• **NAMM Advocacy Fly-In**

(Joe Lamond, CEO, NAMM; Mark Despotakis, Progressive Music; Eric Ebel, NAMM; Laurie Lock, VH1; Mary Luehrsen, NAMM)

Joe Lamond: This was my 12th annual NAMM Advocacy Fly-In to Washington, DC to lobby national leaders; and, given this year’s legislative schedule, it felt like this was exactly the right time to be there. We’ve made a lot of progress and there’s real action ahead.

Our elected officials have a clear understanding of our issues. While limited Federal funding comes from the government to the States, when funds are cut, they’re tough to replace. The Federal government has a large impact on local school districts as they look at where their

priorities lie, and particularly as they make decisions regarding arts education program funding. ESEA has had a very heavy impact because of its reliance on the tested subjects and the pushing out of other subjects. It's an interesting lesson in the Law of Incentives: people will do what they're incentivized to do.

Our message to Washington was clear on the role of arts education: we get more by **emphasizing a focus on the whole child**. The arts help create citizens for this 21st century workforce by teaching children about teamwork, creativity and innovation, among other benefits of an arts education. Timing-wise, I believe we will see some action: **This Congress and this President have made it clear that education is a top priority and we do believe that there will be action this year on ESEA.**

NAMM is a 110-year old organization, with membership representing Main Street retailers to large manufacturers. **Over 40 NAMM members were on Capitol Hill** for a dual track of advocacy: arts education and intellectual property issues that affect a number of NAMM members. In small groups of 3-4 people, we undertook a strenuous meeting schedule. Joe Lamond, **Tom Schmidt** (Chairman, NAMM Board of Directors), Former USDOE Secretary **Richard Riley** (who served under President Clinton for eight years), and **Bernie Williams** (former Yankee and recording/touring guitarist) made up one group. A typical meeting with either a Congressperson or staffer went like this: present a quick run down on NAMM and on music, including research about the impact of music and arts education on students from early to teen years. Then, we listened: most representatives wanted to tell personal stories about playing a musical instrument themselves or about their children or grandchildren who play. **They gave our research and statistics about the power of music back to us – and that's how I know the work the SupportMusic Coalition is doing has had an impact on them. Then, we presented our "ask," which was low level (ie, not more money): Reauthorization of the ESEA must keep music and the arts as core curriculum subjects and we want flexibility regarding local decisions about how to use the various Federal Title funds in music and arts programs.**

Key Takeaways: Your elected officials are interested in what you do. When it's time to activate our base, we have a lot of power. **Ten letters or phone calls CAN change a vote or a mind.** Looking ahead to next year's elections, they appreciate that we will be a force. We have so many partners (VH1, Americans for the Arts, MENC, and others were all there with us), and we're all friends in a unified group who work together for unified action. Sometimes I feel like we're in the movie, *Groundhog Day*, but **we have made a significant difference in mindshare.** We just have to continue and we will be there to do it. Keep your eye on the prize. **More kids will have access to arts education if we do this work, and that is our goal: to ensure access to music and arts education for every child.** I always keep that in mind when we're walking into these offices: we're speaking on behalf of these children who aren't able to be there.

Mary Luehrsen: Mark, you've attended Fly-Ins for a couple of years now. How do you relate these visits to your motivation and understanding back home?

Mark Despotakis: I echo what Joe said: this was the right time to be there. I sensed a very different tone with the staffers we spoke with this year compared to last year.

We weren't trying to 'sell' the information to them: this year, there was more talk of 'yes, the momentum is now there for ESEA Reauthorization and the question is how to make it happen this year.' We met with representatives who are on, and not on, the Education Committee. We discussed the politics of the situation; they gave us insights, expressed their belief that they think it will happen, and then drilled down to the details about what we can do to help get it passed.

The knowledge base gain I acquire from being in DC helps me in local advocacy, and allows me to come back and feel a little hopeful, that there is some good news. In Pennsylvania, there's a lot of talk about budget shortfalls and music programs that facing cuts. Just before I left for DC, I heard of three potential major program cuts; thankfully, two have not been cut so far. The information I gathered in DC was valuable to bring to local teachers, and it helps on Federal, state and local levels. Our elected officials see the impact. NAMM has made their presence known on The Hill; legislators know NAMM, they know what our message is and the staffers believe in the message. They're very engaged in the conversation with us.

Key Takeaways: As private citizens, our elected officials are telling us that it's important to keep the messages out there. **Put a spotlight on the good things that are happening in schools.** Feel free to send your community news to your elected officials. Send them clippings from your local newspapers, include links to your school district websites. **Keep them informed about what's happening in your district.**

Eric Ebel: "Strumming and Drumming for Music Education" event was staged in the Plaza in front of the USDOE building. There were 75 ukuleles and a similar number of drums and wonderful facilitators (two-time GRAMMY-Award winners for children's music, **Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer**). DOE representatives included Assistant Secretary of Communications and Outreach, **Peter Cunningham** (a great uke player!) and **Jim Shelton**, Assistant Deputy Secretary of Innovation and Improvement. Secretary Riley, Bernie Williams and Joe Lamond (who held down the drum groove) all participated, as well as 50 middle school students from Maryland. After Joe Lamond gave Peter Cunningham a commemorative red, white and blue ukulele, Peter tuned it up and led the drum and ukulele circle in a rendition of "This Land is Your Land."

For Fly-In webcast, please visit <http://www.namm.org/public-affairs/articles/save-date-namm-virtual-advocacy-fly-webcast>

Laurie Lock: We were thrilled and very fortunate to have a super VIP, AAAA-line celebrity with us as well: Mr. **Tony Bennett** was with us on Capitol Hill last week, along with **Gavin McGraw**, an up-and-comer. Bennett is the evergreen celebrity artist who really brings out members of Congress, and he spoke very eloquently about the impact of the arts on his life.

Mary Luehrsen: The Congressional Reception with Tony Bennett also included **Nancy Pelosi**, Bernie Williams, **Congressman Sarbanes (D-MD)** and about 15 members of Congress. Sarbanes' son, who is an aspiring singer, was there with his dad to meet Tony Bennett.

- **Summer NAMM 2011**
(Eric Ebel, NAMM)

NAMM is currently reaching out to about 170 arts advocacy organizations to invite them to attend the **Summer NAMM Show (July 21-23, Thursday through Saturday, in Nashville)**. Saturday will be open to the public. **All SupportMusic Coalition affiliates and their members are invited to attend.** The Show features hundreds of exhibitors showing off all the latest and greatest music products and, in the NAMM Foundation Lounge, there will be acoustic performances and informal networking gatherings. A Drum and Ukulele circle will be held on Saturday.

June 22 is the deadline to register. Please RSVP to <http://www.namm.org/summer/2011> or send an email to Charesew@namm.org.

- **Best Communities for Music Education (BCME)**

(Sharon Bryant, NAMM)

The 12th annual BCME awards were announced on May 4. **179 communities** out of 279 that submitted surveys were recognized, including 172 school districts and, for the first time, seven individual schools. The awards were based upon a number of relevant factors, including funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and more. **Those who have received the BCME awards in the past have indicated it helps them increase funding for programs, helps prevent program and staffing cuts, raises public perception about the value of music education.** In Massachusetts, one program just hired 15 people, one of many such examples. A large percentage of recognized schools have been in New York, year-to-year, an indicator of the state's strong peer-to-peer network. Some of the BCME awardees will participate in a future SupportMusic teleconference; a media release will be sent to members of Congress.

If any SupportMusic affiliates want contact information to network directly with schools in their communities or constituent areas, please contact Sharonb@namm.org.

For more information and a complete list of the 2011 BCME Award winners, please visit www.nammfoundation.org

- **DCI Presents: "Drum Corp at the Movies**

(Jen Paisley for John DeNovi, DCI)

On **June 20**, a one-night-only event will occur at movie theaters nationwide: the very first weekend of the 2011 Drum Corps International Tour will premiere on the big screen. Viewers will see the SupportMusic logo and get information about advocacy for music education.

For more information (including ticket purchase and a list of participating theaters), please visit http://www.fathomevents.com/sports/event/dci_premiere2011.aspx

Welcome Special Guest: Susan VanHecke, author

"Raggin' Jazzin' Rockin': A History of American Musical Instrument Makers"

Susan VanHecke grew up in a very musical family, where many people played instruments. The iconic companies and brands – Hammond, Steinway, Conn, Zildjian, Ludwig, others – were truly household names. The book, published by an imprint of Highlights for Children magazine, is **targeted at 5th to 8th grade students**, and is filled with fascinating stories and gorgeous photographs.

Research, including interviews with several noted instrument makers and experts, as well as archival offerings from the profiled companies, expanded the book to its final production as an oversized, full color coffee table book. Related sidebars for each instrument include features on the history of American popular music styles and on famous musicians who play the instruments as well as descriptions of the science behind instrument development and manufacture. It took about two years to complete the book and VanHecke is donating half of the book's royalties to the NAMM Foundation, which has designated those funds to the SupportMusic Coalition (today's teleconference was partially supported by the donation).

VanHecke, a self-described 'band geek,' is the mother of two aspiring vocalists. For more information or to purchase the book, please visit www.ragginjazzinrockin.com.

“The State of Music Education Today”

An Open Forum with SupportMusic Coalition Steering Committee Members

- ***From your perspective, how do the current challenges with access to music education differ from the past?***

Chris Clark: I offer two perspectives – my own and that of local Orange County Administrators Association members (whom I polled by email).

In the past, when The SMART Foundation began about 12 years ago, our mission was to respond to needs in the schools. **There were teachers who were providing education, but they needed music stands, instrument repairs and other basic necessities.** After a couple of years, a 4th grade elementary strings program at a large school district was eliminated, and programs were soon being threatened or eliminated all over the place. We saw the **need for advocacy and the need to involve parents**, and started our Champions for Music and Arts Education program, which is now statewide and reaching beyond California.

Currently, the challenge is not only to obtain smaller amounts of funding for stuff needed to run the programs, but to also obtain major dollars necessary to keep the programs. **The biggest challenges we face today are the continuing reductions to state and local budgets.** And, even though the Federal funding is limited, it still has a huge impact on what the schools are able to provide.

Also, in regards to NCLB, the pressures on the schools around standardized testing and assessment processes are a huge challenge. Schools are being funded based on assessments, and since there are no questions on the tests about music and arts education, it makes it very easy for them to eliminate those programs.

- ***What one thing do you see as being the most vital action to be taken towards success for music education?***

Laurie Lock: I couldn't just pick one, so I have a quick three:

- **Advocating for high quality, high profile, inclusive music programs** that serve as many children in the schools as possible so a high concentration of parents will advocate for the music program. High quality programs are the beacons of the community and less apt to be cut.
- **Local grassroots coalition building.** We have such a wealth of advocacy strategies and resources. **Each individual** in the SupportMusic Coalition should use and share them so others know what to do and how to use them. Many of our affiliate organizations have resources, and they link to each other. VH1 has put them all together into a step-by-step advocacy toolkit; download at: <http://vh1savethemusic.com/node/46>
- The ESEA contains a major obstacle in insuring equitable access: Principals cannot focus on long term outcomes and goals because they must focus on the narrow measures in reading and math. They struggle with Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), because students are not being judged on their gains over time but rather must meet overnight success bars. This is an especially unsatisfactory way to measure progress for children coming from non-English speaking countries. As we move forward with ESEA Reauthorization, we need to focus on changes and flexibility, and include a more humane evaluation of student progress measures and more direct language about the role of the arts. **The number one thing to advocate for and let elected officials know about is that it's crucial, to you as a citizen, that ESEA is fixed and reauthorized.**

(NOTE: Our June teleconference call will be devoted to some of the above ideas.)

Menzie Pittman: In addition to the how and what that Laurie mentions above, which are absolutely critical, I focused on the why, which is a little more difficult because it's not specific. **We've got to change the understanding and perception of the value of music study.** There are deeply engrained and erroneous beliefs: music is for the talented, you either have it or you don't, it's perceived perhaps as hard, and it's just for the 'gifted.' **Music and arts education and involvement has values and benefits for all.** When programs and budgets are cut because arts education is perceived as expendable, the public has not really correlated that the study of music is a major key to developing the creative process. We have to address this breakdown one event, one conversation, one action, one advocacy, at a time. You've got to use the tools and the message: **Relentless Reiteration, that's the key.**

Debra Bresnan: Writers are often advised to “**Show, not tell.**” I think that the increasing prevalence of videos made by **students, talking in their own words, about how important music education is to them and why the cuts will affect them deeply,** those types of messages are really important to keep putting out there.

I also think it's important to think in terms of both “**consistency**” and “**consistently.**” **The Unified Statement,** developed by the Arts Working Group, is not only a really great tool not only to inform ourselves and get our messages clear, but also to share with our elected officials and use it in our own communities as a **template for talking points.**

- **Advocacy for music education is taking place on many levels – by parents, students and teachers to state educators and music organizations. What is the impact of efforts at these various levels – where is more (or less) needed?**

Narric Rome: We need to focus on what I call the “**vertical**” of arts education, going from the **Federal level to the local to the school itself.** While you might just be worried or working on say a local level, those local folks, as we just heard from Laurie's feedback, will be pointing fingers in different directions. And they need to know, and it helps the advocacy to know, that you're also working towards the state level and with your school board. And, if you're at the state level, then you're also working with advocacy with your Federal delegation as well. Each one of them will be touching different parts of the elephant and saying, 'I think this is the problem.' Having a sense of the Unified Statement, which is the Working Group's attempt to capture everything that's needed on the Federal level on four pages, really applies to the state and local level too. **While working on one level, it's important to have a sense of what's happening on the other levels.**

Heather Noonan: Yes, and it's important to **maintain a bi-partisan approach** right now as we're entering into an election cycle. As for what the impact is, and how we might accentuate which voices are being heard, **policy makers care a lot about what parents say, and motivating parents as advocates should be one of our essential strategies as we move into ESEA reauthorization but also as decisions are made on a local level.** The most frequent question we get from policy makers is 'what does it look like in the schools? Is there more, is there less? Which kids are getting an arts education and who is not?' They need **real and substantiated stories,** and they need **access to data.**

Finally, I'd like to emphasize to everyone that **we have been successful** and there's a real note of encouragement. At the tail end of the very contentious FY11 Federal budget process, at one moment the Arts in Education program fund was completely eliminated from the budget. And, it ended up being the only item of its kind at the DOE to be reinstated at the conclusion of the

funding process. **We should take heart that raising our voices really does have an impact and if we work together, we can really have an influence during the upcoming policy debates.**

- **STEM (Science, Technology, English, Math) is, let's face it, an advocacy effort that continues to gain strength. How can we convert STEM to STEAM (Science, Technology, English, Arts, Math)?**

Dee Jones: I actually just spoke to Rusty Brill speak and he said, nobody has the answers; it's like Sputnik 2. **I think we need to have an aggressive advocacy campaign to raise awareness, that's research-based and that we collaborate with like-minded groups or associations – stress the impact that arts education has on other areas impacting student achievement.** Kids learn differently, and for a lot of kids, the arts education is the way that they learn. Our power is in our strength, and as people contact their elected officials, they need to tell personal stories about how it impacts their children because that's what legislators want to hear. **When we go talk with them, they tell us they're not hearing from their constituents at home.**

So, I can't say it enough: **ADVOCATE. ADVOCATE. ADVOCATE.** That is the answer. And, **the National PTA and the Coalition need to work more closely together:** we keep saying that but we need to make that happen.

Mike Blakeslee: I agree with Dee that the **parents** are a big part of that, and this idea shows up in a lot of places, for example in the DOE's current Blueprint for Education Reform. At a recent joint meeting between the DOE and the DOL, during a discussion about education, the Undersecretary of the DOL said, when it comes to education, the only thing that anybody cares about is jobs. And, I've got to say I wonder if she's even been to a school board meeting. **As Americans, we want everything for our kids and we want it now. And I think we need to bring a taste of reality back into this discussion and say, yes, of course, we want jobs for our kids, but we need to give them the kind of education that will prepare them for 21st century jobs.** Taking a look at the **21st Century Skills Map** is very useful. We also have common cause that we can make with others. Just this week, a new Congressional bill was introduced – called the Setting New Priorities in Education Act – and 43 programs, including a bunch of reading programs, are scheduled for cutting. Now, this act isn't going anywhere, but we can make a case with all the folks from civics and foreign languages and other subjects. **We need to keep our eyes on the reality that Americans want more than just STEM for their kids and, if we do the local advocacy that everybody else is mentioning, I think we'll be OK.**

Email message from **Bob Bryant** of Katy Independent School District in Texas: "I am listening to the call. STEAM is the way we need to capture the momentum that is rolling at this time for support of music and arts education -- 21st C. skills, but also because it is important to all children as they develop into adulthood, members and leaders of our communities, states, and nation."

- **How can we individually and collectively convert beliefs that music and arts education is vital for all children into action to assure that every child has the opportunity to learn and grow with music and the arts?**

Scott Schoeffel: Where the action comes from is from the elected officials, and I think the way to get them to take action is to get to the parents. How do you really get to the parents, and how do you let them know, in very concrete ways, just how arts education will help their kids. I agree; Americans want it now. **If you pair music education with something parents can attach a concrete value to, that's motivational for parents – and they translate that into pressure on elected officials.** Two ways are very effective. The first way is to **tie arts education to concrete academic success in other areas**, like admission to prestigious colleges or to better grades

overall. In other words, there's an associational value between these results and music and arts education. **Success in music = overall success.** How could they shut down the strings program in the 4th grade and deprive my child of that opportunity? Parents get upset and that's very motivational for them, as well for elected officials.

The second way is to **find some high profile community civic leaders who have some personal, perhaps professional, sensitivity and empathy with music education** because they're a musician themselves or because they just value music education intrinsically. **And then, get out in front of people consistently and showcase your interest, your passion.** At the Dana Point "State of the City" address that I gave last month, 400+ people were listening. I ended the program by playing my original composition, "Dana's Point," with a jazz quartet that I play with, and I'm still getting emails and correspondence from that one opportunity to link up my professional life as mayor with a positive achievement/success orientation to music and the arts. There was also a fabulous string quartet from the local high school performing. These kids are all 15-17 years old, greeting the people as they walked in: people saw the whole continuum, and were able to really show and touch and feel this at all levels.

A few additional comments

Mary Luehrsen: Yes, and as Debra put it, show not just tell, show the results. People can also feel in themselves the joy of it. We know that there's instrumental value, and there's crossover value to others subjects and all of that. And, we feel a little hokey and sentimental when we talk about **joy and human potential** but, as mayor of your town, you got up in front of your electorate and you played music for them. And you probably transformed a lot of people that day. **We can't forget the power of what we're representing here, not only in the lives of the kids we're working for but in our communities.**

Mark Despotakis: One other action item – **if you're a teacher, talk to other teachers in your school, the ones who are not teaching in music and arts disciplines.** It can't hurt to talk with them; maybe they'll incorporate music and arts into their subject, or they'll at least have a better understanding of their students who are involved in music and the arts. They'll perhaps see a difference in them versus students who are not participating.

Laurie Schell: Many of us live in states that are increasingly focused on local control and local decisionmaking, and it really underscores the point that Laurie (Lock) was making about the **importance of taking advocacy down to the local level and speaking to the local decisionmakers.** In CA, we've spent the last three years learning **how to build local coalitions**, to train and build the capacity of local coalitions to speak up and become knowledgeable and more educated about what the issues are and how they can advocate systematically in their local districts.

Announcement: Ken Martinson of Marching.com urged all affiliates to vote at Chase Community Giving on Facebook. Several Coalition members, including DCI, Music For All and MENC are among those vying for about \$500,000 in financial assistance. Deadline: May 24.

NEXT MEETING: June 21, 2011 – Please forward any agenda suggestions, particularly "success stories" or issues faced in local districts, to supportmusic@namm.org