

SupportMusic.com Coalition Webcast
Wednesday, May 26, 2010

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)

NEXT CONFERENCE CALL: 28 June, 2010 8:30 AM US Pacific – NOTE NEW TIME

SUMMARY

Table of Contents:

• VIP Invitation to Music Education Days @ 2010 Summer NAMM	1
• Quarterly Update: Coalition Steering Committee Mtg.	1-2
• States Rally!	2-3
• Local Advocacy Issues, Strategies and Successes	3-6
• Spring 2010 National Fly-Ins for Music Education	6-7
• Website Upgrades: SupportMusic.com	7
• Participant List	7-8

Come Together: VIP Invitation to Music Education Days @ 2010 Summer NAMM

(Sandra Jordan, Eric Ebel, Craig Woodson)

During the 2010 Summer NAMM Show (June 18-20) in Nashville, the 6th “Music Education Days” will be held. The NAMM Foundation and several of its grantee programs – Guitars in the Classroom, Raising the Blues, New Horizons Music, Little Kids Rock – and partner organization VH1 Save The Music Foundation will host workshops and sessions. Sunday’s sessions will feature a special viewing and teacher materials to accompany the PBS series, “The Music Instinct,” and a presentation by Roots of Rhythm (visit www.rootsofrhythm.net for a free online curriculum and 250-page teachers guide).

On Friday, Saturday & Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:30, The NAMM Foundation will host an informal orientation/reception and acoustic bluegrass performances. Music educators will have opportunities to learn about The NAMM Show and to participate in the 2nd “Best Tools for Schools” recognition program & contest. On Saturday and Sunday, hourly workshops/sessions will start at 10:30AM.

For more info or to register, please visit <http://www.nammfoundation.org/content/scholarships-initiatives-application-deadline>. PLEASE SHARE WITH YOUR CONSITUENTS AND COLLEAGUES & INVITE THEM TO ATTEND.

Quarterly Update: SupportMusic Coalition Steering Committee Meeting

(Sandra Jordan, Scott Shoefel)

The Steering Committee held its 3rd of 4 quarterly meetings. Topics covered broader issues (Capitol Hill efforts by NAMM & MENC), recruiting affiliates in remaining states, Common Core Standards meeting, and ongoing awareness building efforts (including Facebook & Twitter).

There is a Facebook Coalition group – please promote to your constituents – and on Twitter, a university student has started a weekly group. The student will be invited to join us on a future call to explore ways we may work together.

The Steering Committee helps to set agendas and direction for teleconferences. Thanks to all the current Steering Committee members – if anyone would like to join the committee, please send email to sandraj@namm.org

Scott Shoeffel, a member since its inception, sees value in both continuity and new members:

"I see progress being made, lessons learned year after year, It's very useful and productive to have new members, especially those with a wide variety of specific skill sets. Anyone with something innovative to share or special areas of expertise should seriously consider a year's term on the committee. Personally, I think we need a few educators, people on the front lines who are dealing on a daily basis with challenges. And, apart from the professional edification and the satisfaction, you get to meet a lot of nice, fun people!"

States Rally!

(Scott Shuler, Ph.D., Laurie Schell)

- CONNECTICUT
- CALIFORNIA

Scott Shuler: Since the early 1980s, **Connecticut** has had a 'hybrid' high school graduation requirement of one credit in the arts or vocational education. In ongoing efforts to separate the combined credit for arts & vocational education, advocates were able to successfully define the arts as art, dance, theater and music. With a Secondary Reform initiative on the horizon, CMEA hired a lobbyist and mobilized supporters in the field. The CT State Board approved a set of Secondary School Reforms that include one high school credit in arts as well as one elective credit in arts/humanities that can be fulfilled through the arts. Based on the State Board's action, the CT State University system enacted a one-credit arts admission requirement for students entering in 2015.

Both Houses of State Legislature passed this bill. However, CT's lame duck Republican Governor has not yet signed it due to pressure from Republicans and some superintendents because it includes new mandates (including increased graduation requirements in math, science and other subjects). The good news is the bill also includes a number of other changes that are necessary for CT to access Race to the Top (RttT) funds. It is assumed the Governor is weighing the state's odds of getting RttT funding since CT fell from Federal government favor by choosing not to spend their original Federal stimulus funding in an appropriate way, ie, CT cut its State subsidy to local districts and used Federal funds to replace that money. (The intention was to have states spend the additional funding on education in particular and to not use it to replace existing funds, but CT used it to supplant, rather than supplement, education spending.) Advocates are writing to the Governor to discourage a veto; awaiting outcome. There is a time limit for the Governor's decision; otherwise the bill will become law. If enacted in that way, it won't appear as though she supports it.

Laurie Schell: In **California**, many districts used the original stimulus funding to hold off massive lay-offs, and now those same districts are going over the funding cliff. As a result, CA is also not on the good side re: possibility of receiving RttT funds although they are racing to finish an application now.

Scott Shuler: States have either realized the applications are a huge amount of work and usually require dramatic alterations of legislation re: tenure for teachers, certification of administrators & other functions or they are realizing it's demanding way too much of their limited resources. In CT, the Commissioner opposes NCLB test requirements – which is what originally put them on the bad list under Bush; coupled with the recent problem related to spending choices now, it seems reasonable to assume they are much less likely to get RttT funding.

Mary Luehrsen: What are you hearing about the role of music and arts in the RttT application process? Is anyone pushing into the process, representing the arts as part of application, or is it just too cumbersome?

Scott Shuler: In talking with some of the state arts supervisors, a couple of states may have made room for arts involvement even though guidelines didn't emphasize. On the contrary, the focus is on STEM. States in general have not mentioned the arts significantly in their proposals.

Mary Luehrsen: Yes, this is consistent with what we've heard. It's frustrating: now that there is an opportunity for arts education to be included, there really is no direction or incentive to have those resources come forward.

Bob Morrison: The Federal government has said some nice things about the arts, but the emphasis is really on the STEM side, on the accountability piece, and also on the teacher merit pay and accountability piece – and in many places is explicitly tying teacher performance to student test scores. Even though the Feds say they want a broader range of measures used in how we define school improvement and student performance, most states are weighing at least 50% of that metric on student test score performance.

Laurie Schell: I do think there may be more opportunity in i3 proposals; several consortiums in CA are using the arts as a central component to those proposals.

Local Advocacy Issues, Strategies and Successes

(Mary Wagner and Menzie Pittman, FACE, Fairfax County, VA; Laurie Schell, CAAE; Victoria Saunders, independent arts consultant; Dave Teeple, Port Huron Music Center; Deanna Brown, Brown Family Children Foundation; Tracy Leenman, National Association of School Music Dealers

Mary Wagner: Advocacy efforts have been underway since October until now to fight a proposal to cut funding from Grades 4-6 band & strings, which would have affected 25,500 students. The FACE Coalition has been in place since the 1990s, and the past two years members have been ready to go. As past president of ASTA, my most important advice is to follow the budget. You have to know how the budget works and when it is set for release. The budget process started in January – when it was learned \$87 million was needed to keep band in the budget – and it ended last Thursday night with a favorable vote and the program was saved. The FACE parent group hired Dr. John Benham and his report was very influential. The Coalition was comprised of teachers, industry leaders and parents, all working together; it became a full-time job for Mary (a retired teacher, now working part-time).

Having a Coalition in place is key, as is an understanding of the budget process, accurate enrollment figures, and the number of teachers and how many classes they are teaching. Use the wealth of helpful info on SupportMusic and ASTA sites. They circulated a petition (with close with 12,000 signatures), scheduled speakers at board meetings, were well-organized and there was one article about the proposed cuts in *The Washington Post*, And, media attention came from FOX News once and NBC twice.

Menzie Pittman: A high level of organization and sensitivity created a well-organized harmony of vendors, parents and fine arts directors. It takes a lot of effort and time. You cannot think the process is automatic or that programs are safe; you have to be ready to go, know the right information and be ready to fight.

Mary Wagner: Considering some of the obstacles we faced in Fairfax County, the process went on so long that efforts were used up early; they needed \$88 million and the superintendent knew parents would rally for the program. Funding comes from the Board of Supervisors and then the School Board determines where the pre-determined amounts go. Everyone got tired; few hung in till the end.

Many young teachers didn't do anything – didn't alert parents, etc. There needs to be a class taught on advocacy but university officials say they don't want to offer it; they think it will scare students away from the teaching profession.

Laurie Schell: The latest news from **California** continues to be that there are billions of dollars worth of deficits. There's a bill in the State Legislature that CAAE is following, one representing the opposite problem from CT. We think AB2446 would weaken the existing one credit for visual arts/language arts by adding career technical education to the existing graduation requirements (which allow for one year of visual and performing arts or foreign language). So far, advocates have been successful in holding it off; it is currently in the Appropriations Committee and voting will occur tomorrow. There's a huge pressure from Labor to get AB2446 passed. I think this is a trend you will see in your state if not already; career tech is going like gangbusters. CAAE is producing a white paper about the intersection between career technical education and the visual and performing arts. We need to find ways to more effectively work together: it needs to be Both/And not Either/Or situation. CAAE will make the white paper available when it's ready.

Scott Schuler: One of our challenges in trying to separate arts education from the vocational/career/technical education group is that the issue raises separate policy questions. Should students study the arts in preparation for college & careers? Do they need courses specifically oriented to vocation in order to study for such a career? It's a challenge from a funding standpoint because, as long as the Perkins Grant exists, funding goes almost exclusively toward career/technical programs with the arts cut out of much of the technology work that might be possible. There are exceptions when there are partnerships, but that's has been a challenge. Plus, because of their business connections, the career people have the resources to generate high tech glossy materials that look glitzy.

Laurie Schell: In **San Diego County**, CAAE has worked for two years to develop its new Local Advocacy Networks (LAN) Program. Its goal is to preserve and expand arts education in the schools by empowering local networks created from a cross section of interests, including business, community members, education and arts organizations. Members believe that an investment in arts education is also an investment in the well being of the larger community. Phase 2 of a pilot program is complete and LANs have been started in 19 local communities. Victoria Saunders helped in four San Diego County communities. Last year, she single-handedly started one coalition; with CAAE's help, it has been formalized and three additional coalitions have been created.

Victoria Saunders: San Diego County has 42 school districts, including San Diego Unified (the second largest in the state) and several tiny rural communities. It is hoped it will be possible to bring all the smaller districts' efforts together under one big umbrella.

Four successful launch events were held in April & May, and many addressed the systemic issues of elementary and middle school feeder programs. When there are not enough arts programs in the lower grades, students are not well prepared to take arts classes when they're offered in high school. Nine districts were represented through 4 LAN groups – two have already had follow-up; another will follow-up this week. Before and at follow-up meetings, members developed agendas and strategies. There's an interest from the Economic Development Corporation regarding 21st century skills, and recognition that more arts programming makes communities more attractive. Part of the work is to connect with the business community and identify mutual benefits to strengthen and sustain arts education.

This year, the San Diego Unified School Board president spoke at a launch event and the school board member who cast the one dissenting vote last year also attended and spoke highly about the importance of arts education. The visual and performing arts department is now on their list of budget priorities, of things they will not eliminate and will work to maintain. This is a huge change. Facebook was a large part of last year's San Diego LAN development; now, in working to activate LANs in the smaller communities, they'll rely on Facebook among other things that work for each community.

Bilingual communication is an issue and it coincides with identifying the best ways to reach parents. It's difficult to figure out how to penetrate Spanish-speaking communities and bilingual outreach will be a part of the process.

Sandra Jordan: The CA PTA has spearheaded some bilingual communications around the arts in the state that may be helpful.

Victoria Saunders: In Escondido, in the northern part of the county, issues were raised at a launch event: there are two different Escondidos – a middle and an upper class and a strong migrant community, and all are living side-by-side.

Dave Teeple: Regarding earlier comments made about teaching advocacy in education classes, they do teach it at three different universities here in **Michigan**. We want the students to have a sense of reality, and want them to have an awareness that they will have to fight for programs.

A new coalition is forming in Michigan and in Detroit, the Governor appointed a new manager of Detroit Public Schools. This emergency superintendent/manager wanted to make academic changes but his job was defined as having only having the power to make financial decisions. The School Board filed suit. The Appellate Court ruled he may make changes, including making academic decisions.

In going to Washington, DC for NAMM Fly-Ins, I learned the importance of knowing how many enrollment figures, how many music teachers there are, etc. I found out there are 1,600 music teachers registered with the MI State Band & Orchestra and 240,000 students. Figuring 1½ parents (the national average) per student, that's 360,000 people whose children participate in school music programs.

Charles Bullard, Assistant Director of the MI School Band & Orchestra Association (MSBOA), identified 2909 teachers in Michigan, which equates to almost a ½ million parents. At the State level, the MSBOA, asked all of their members to ask 10 active parents to enroll in a coalition and pass info to Senate, House of Reps, Governor's office regarding their involvement and support of music education. We are trying to change what's happening in our state. Michigan leads the nation both in unemployment and in percent of the population (4 ½%) who left the state last

year. We think that having strong school programs will help bring industry back to our state. Paul Lichau, Executive Director of MSBOA, get 10 parents from every music program involved in this so when there's a crisis anywhere across the state, we can mobilize people to respond. Dave and Sandra will invite Paul Lichau to attend a future call; Mary Luehrsen suggested that George Quinlan in Illinois might be a useful resource to the Michigan coalition.

Deanna Brown: On May 7, Deanna and her sister and brother attended the ceremony in **Fulton County, Georgia** when the "Best Communities for Music Education" award was bestowed. The event, attended by parents, the entire 7th grade and superintendent, Dr. Cindy Lowe, was held in the auditorium at Web Ridge Middle School, and featured a performance with jazz students.

Sandra Jordan: Even though the timing of the award coincided with looming threats to the elementary music program, it raised awareness and was uplifting, if bittersweet. The final vote will be held June 15 and it's very disconcerting to think that a 60-year old music program may be lost. Hopefully, networking will revitalize the Coalition in Fulton County going into the next school year.

Tracy Leenman: In **Greenville, South Carolina**, by looking at one AMC statistic - 40% of teachers turn over after 3 years in profession – Leeman points out that, in middle school for example, after three years, there's a brand new crop of parents to constantly re-educate.

Each principal in the county was given a specific number of positions to cut. Part of the problem was enrollment, but no one thought to say 'but AP Physics doesn't have numbers either,' indicating the importance of preparation.

Leeman attended a recent country string teachers meeting; two string positions had been cut. She brought packets of info with her and said, 'if you think your position is safe, you don't need to take these materials.' Only four took packets but the rest did after she pointed out: #1 NOBODY'S safe. #2, everybody is just one administrator's signature away from not having a job.

She next spoke at an elementary music teacher's meeting. Their attitude was, 'that's not us, that's the string program,' which begs the question, 'who do you think is next?'

Their current goal is to get 200 parents to the next school board meeting, the second of three readings of the budget. Each teacher was given the task of getting 20 people to attend.

As a pre-emptive strike, they presented a copy of Richard Rejino's new book, *What Music Means To Me* to a principal. This summer, at Band & String camp for future beginning students, they are aiming to encourage future students to help with attrition rate. An article she wrote for *The Greenville News* will appear in *SB&O* in July. Principals say, 'this is the legislators' fault; they don't give us enough money,' and the legislators say 'no, we're giving principals the authority about where to make cuts.'

Questions: how to get parents energized before danger starts, how do we keep them energized when not in danger, and where do we go from here?

They have a Facebook site and a teaching position was restored partly due to a parents' rally. Now, their big thrust is to get three band director positions restored – they are leaving (one is retiring, the other two are going into different professions).

Spring 2010 National Fly-Ins for Music Education
(Mary Luehrsen, Mike Blakeslee)

Mary Luehrsen: NAMM's annual Washington, DC Fly-In during the week of May 10 was attended by 27 NAMM members. On Briefing Day, May 11, an event was held with Secretary Duncan, and there is a 7-minute clip on www.NAMM.org. There is also a web cast of Briefing Day, and the morning session on the history of the ESEA is very good.

NAMM members held about 80 meetings with members of Congress, Talking points centered on ESEA Reauthorization, assuring the arts remain core, and clear direction and flexibility regarding use of stimulus funds for arts education. A great deal of sobering info about the economy was digested. We have to face reality head-on, keep working and stay strong for kids.

Mike Blakeslee: MENC's Music Education Week (June 24-29) will be held in DC, featuring tracks for professional leadership, marching, choral, new teachers, jazz, in-ovations, K-12, collegiate and other academy schedules. On Friday, June 25, there will be a strong advocacy focus with a rally and press opportunities. Students will perform and meet with elected officials; later in the week, a concert at Kennedy Center will offer representatives photo ops with their constituents.

Prior to the events, two webinars are scheduled to train 150 or so MENC leaders on how to make appointments and specific asks (retain music education's core status and alter legal issues to make it real in classroom). In July, another webinar will show people how to take information back to their local state legislators and decisionmakers and make the connection between national and local efforts.

Website Upgrades: SupportMusic.com

(Charese Wolfe)

In 2003, a website was started when the SupportMusic Coalition was reinvigorated. Now, it has a new look and is housed under the NAMM Foundation website (still accessible via the same URL www.supportmusic.com), There is a comments section, and all SM materials have migrated to the new site. Please visit and give feedback to charesew@namm.org. As before, when you click on "Build Your Case," you'll go to the MENC server, where they are continuing to build the database.

NEXT MEETING: 20 JUNE 2010 at 8:30 AM US PACIFIC – NOTE NEW TIME

06.02.10 DB