

March 13, 2007

Dear Member of Congress:

MENC: The National Association for Music Education is pleased to be a National Co-Sponsor of Arts Advocacy Day 2007. MENC is the only association that addresses all aspects of music education. More than 130,000 members represent all levels of teaching from preschool to graduate school. Over the past one hundred years, MENC has worked to ensure that every student has access to a well-balanced, comprehensive, and high-quality program of music instruction taught by qualified teachers. MENC's activities and resources have been largely responsible for the establishment of music education as a profession, for the promotion and guidance of music study as an integral part of the school curriculum, and for the development of the National Standards for Arts Education.

We request your support for policies and funding that will strengthen music and the other arts in schools and communities throughout the country, including:

- A recent Harris Poll of principals reports a strong correlation between strong music education programs and increased high school attendance and graduation rates. Therefore, during the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, we ask that the arts, as a core academic subject, be included on state and local report cards.
- As decision-makers continue to rely upon "scientifically-based" education research, the Department of Education should be sure to include the arts and other core academic subjects in federally funded education research. In addition, funding should be allocated to maintain the schedule for a National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) of the arts and a Fast Response Statistical Survey (FRSS) of the arts.
- Arts education funding in the FY08 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Bill should be increased. Without an increase in funding, there will be no new innovative programs. Funded programs should be subject to accountability and reporting requirements.
- Funding for the National Endowment for the Arts should be increased in the FY08 Interior Appropriations Bill, including the continuation and expansion of programs aligned with the National Standards for Arts Education.
- After a poll discovering that two-thirds of Americans do not know the words to the national anthem, MENC initiated a three-year project to correct that frightening statistic while highlighting the importance of music education. Congress should support the legacy piece of the project—a multi-disciplinary national anthem education kit to be distributed nationally.

On behalf of the music teachers, students, and communities who benefit from your ongoing support, we thank you and look forward to your continued support of arts education for all.

Sincerely,


John J. Mahlmann
Executive Director, MENC