

March XX, 2007

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education,  
And Related Agencies  
B-300 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Walsh  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education,  
And Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Walsh:

We urge you to support \$53 million for the Arts in Education program at the U.S. Department of Education in the Fiscal Year 2008 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Bill. The Arts in Education program at the U.S. Department of Education funds model arts education programs in schools throughout the country, the professional development of arts educators, and other ongoing national arts education initiatives. Years of research demonstrates that a significant link exists between arts education and students' academic performance, as well as their social development, motivations, attitudes, and disposition toward learning.

Though the Department of Education has not requested specific funding for the Arts in Education program, over the past six years Congress has approved incremental funding increases. These have resulted in approximately 160 awards to school districts in 180 Congressional Districts throughout the country.

Programs supported by this funding are showing impressive results. Students who take regular arts courses are shown to have better attendance at school, earn better grades, have lower drop-out rates, perform more community service, watch fewer hours of television, and have higher self-esteem. A 2006 study by the Arts Education Partnership, *Third Space: When Learning Matters*, found that schools with large populations of students in economic poverty can be transformed into vibrant and successful centers of learning and community life when the arts are infused into their culture and curriculum.

Arts education has a role to play in developing our nation's workforce as well. This past December's report from the *New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*, said in its executive summary, "The best employers the world over will be looking for the most competent, most creative, and most innovative people on the face of the earth and will be willing to pay them top dollar for their services." The report includes the arts as an essential skill for the future workforce.

As you know, No Child Left Behind recognizes the arts as a core subject of learning. This year, as the Congress begins consideration of reauthorization of NCLB and states continue to work to implement NCLB, we must provide funding to sustain the national development and dissemination of promising practices through the Arts in Education program.

Our states, schools, and communities are poised to further strengthen arts education, but they need our help. We urge you to support the educational development of our schoolchildren and the professional development of our teachers by including \$53 million in funding for the Arts in Education at the U.S. Department of Education.

Sincerely,

