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## The professional association for theatre education

April 1, 2008

Dear Member of Congress:

**The Educational Theatre Association is proud to be a co-sponsor of Arts Advocacy Day 2008.**

EdTA is the professional organization for theatre education, dedicated to promoting and strengthening theatre education as a means of lifelong learning. We represent 4,475 professional members, 90,000 current student members, and almost 2,000,000 student alumni members in the United States.

According to recently conducted research, today the arts are recognized by American voters for the important role they play in the development of our young people. This research shows that “86 percent of voters believe that encouraging children to be creative and develop their imagination is necessary to maintain our competitive edge and ensure we do not fall behind other countries.” (Source: Lake Research Partners, December 2007) Further, “98 percent of Americans believe that imagination, that is, the ability to visualize new possibilities for thought and action, is critical to innovation and an individual’s success in a global knowledge-based economy.” (Source: Partnership for 21st Century Skills National Poll, fall 2007)

On this day of advocating for the arts, we ask members of Congress to consider the research confirming the value of arts education. Your support is needed for legislation that confirms the important role of the arts in our schools and society and their importance in developing creativity and imagination.

We ask you to support the following actions as described in the issue briefs that follow in this handbook:

- Retain the arts in the definition of core academic subjects of learning.
- Require annual state reports on student access to core academic subjects.
- Improve national data collection and research in arts education.
- Reauthorize the Arts in Education programs of the U.S. Department of Education.

On behalf of the thousands of theatre teachers, parents, and students in our nation who believe that a portion of our tax dollars should be directed toward supporting our nation’s cultural and educational initiatives, we encourage you to help establish a lasting legacy of the arts and humanities for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Jerry D. Smith, Jr.  
President

Michael J. Peitz, CAE  
Executive Director