



April 1, 2008

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the National PTA, the nation's oldest and largest child advocacy organization, representing millions of parents, teachers, students, and other child advocates, I am writing to urge you to support efforts to secure adequate funding for the Arts in Education programs (AIE) in this year's Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. To this end, PTA has joined more than 85 national arts, humanities, educational and civic organizations as a National Co-Sponsor of Arts Advocacy Day 2008, imploring the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress to support legislation that promotes the arts.

As you are probably aware, children are natural artists. Creativity is a very important part of their self-expression, and actually helps children succeed in many subject areas. Studies have shown that students who study the arts develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving techniques, and a drive for excellence. This is why the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) lists the arts among the "core academic subjects," requiring schools to enable all students to achieve in the arts and to reap the full benefits of a comprehensive arts education.

In spite of this federal direction, access to arts education in our schools is eroding. A report from the Center for Education Policy concludes that, since the enactment of NCLB, instructional time for art and music has been reduced by more than 20 percent. As Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings previously stated "Many educators across the country have shown that a focus in NCLB on reading and math is not mutually exclusive of the arts and music. In fact, we all know that a well-rounded curriculum that includes the arts and music contributes to higher academic achievement."

PTA applauds Congress for giving a tangible boost to arts education for all children through its yearly appropriation for the Arts in Education programs. We call on you to support an appropriation of \$53 million for these programs in the fiscal year 2009 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. With increased funding, the Arts in Education programs will support newly emerging initiatives that improve arts learning, and findings from model projects may be more widely disseminated. Federal leadership impacts schools and communities nationwide. Please help to ensure that all of our nation's students reap the benefits of a full, comprehensive education in the arts.

If National PTA can provide you with any further information or assistance, please contact Todd Haiken, Acting Manager of Public Policy, at 202-289-6790.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jan Harp Domene". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jan Harp Domene  
PTA National President

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