



November 12, 2009

Dear arts education advocate,

The Michigan Youth Arts Leadership Roundtable has come together during some of the most difficult times in recent history for education in our state. In August of this year, we convened several statewide arts education organizations at our Policy Forum to begin speaking with a unified voice across the arts disciplines. This unity has also opened up channels for action in arts education advocacy to preserve, retain and grow arts education in Michigan.

As you know, the economic challenges facing our state are daunting. Michigan's schools are facing significant budget cuts in the current fiscal year with districts looking at a decrease of at least \$292 in per pupil funding. In the coming months, districts will be forced to make challenging decisions based on reduced budget figures.

As leaders in the arts, the Michigan Youth Arts Leadership Roundtable leveraged our combined resources to provide advocacy assistance for arts education programs statewide. We know that it is important for advocates of arts education to stay in close communication with their local district superintendents, schools boards and principals to ensure that arts education not only survives, but thrives with a foundation of innovation and creativity.

Given the immediate threat schools are facing due to the per pupil cuts, we have identified a few important steps for every arts education advocate to take:

1. Sign up for ArtServe Michigan's Public Policy E-Alerts to participate in the **Local Arts Action Network**. This service is aimed at connecting YOU with other arts and culture supporters in your community and will serve as the primary communication tool to inform advocates as issues arise.
2. Become familiar with Michigan's **Arts Education 2010 Policy Agenda**. The Michigan Youth Arts Leadership Roundtable is working on a common agenda to advance arts education for all Michigan students. For more information on joining in this effort, please contact Kim Dabbs at director@michiganyoutharts.org.
3. **Keep Us Informed**. In order to best position our advocacy efforts and messaging we need to know what is going on in your district. Send a brief or detailed email to mike@artservemichigan.org.
4. Download ArtServe Michigan's **Arts Education Action Toolkit**. This kit includes tools that will aid in your efforts to preempt funding cuts to arts education as well as provide reactionary assistance when cuts are being considered in your district.

On behalf of the Michigan Youth Arts Leadership Roundtable, we thank you for your dedication and commitment to the education of our students.

Sincerely,

Kim Dabbs
Executive Director
Michigan Youth Arts

Drew Buchholz
Advocacy Chair, Michigan Youth Arts
Director of External Relations, Interlochen Center for the Arts.

Mike Latvis
Director of Public Policy
ArtServe Michigan

If the hyperlinks above are missing, please visit:
<http://michiganyoutharts.org/pdf/policyagenda.pdf>
for the 2010 Policy Agenda

http://www.artservemichigan.org/sites/default/files/asm_artsed_action_toolkit.pdf
for the 2009 Arts Education Action Toolkit

<http://capwiz.com/artsusa/mi/mlm/signup>
for the Local Arts Action Network

Partner Organizations

American String Teachers Association

Digital Arts, Film & Television

Interlochen Center for the Arts

K/RESA Education for the Arts

Michigan Art Education Association

Michigan Council of Teachers of English

Michigan Dance Council

Michigan Educational Theatre Association

Michigan Humanities Council

Michigan Music Educators Association

Michigan Music Teachers Association

Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association

Michigan School Vocal Music Association

VSA Arts of Michigan

Western Michigan University