

BE AN ARTS EDUCATION ADVOCATE FOR YOUR KIDS!

by Claire Philpott (education coordinator at Classical MPR) and Sheila Smith (arts education lobbyist)

School districts and their arts educators have just begun to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law last year, which has reoriented the country's approach to the centrality of arts education and participation. MNSOTA is proud to be one of many music and arts organizations partnering as Music Makes Us Whole. Together we pledge again to support music in the schools and the profound impact it carries. MNSOTA encourages you and your students' parents to contact school board members, and/or your superintendent or principal to ask:

Is Your School "Arts Legal"?

Who is the most powerful voice in your school?

You are! As a parent and/or local voter, you can change what the school is offering the arts by raising your voice and asking others to raise their voices.

Who are your school's decision makers?

They are the school board members and the superintendent and/or principal.

What do I do next?

Contact them by phone or e-mail and ask: "Can you tell me what arts courses are offered to students in all grade levels during the school day? (Not after school)"

What is the law concerning arts education?

MN Statutes 2014, Section 120B.021, subd. 1

"The following subject areas are required for statewide accountability: ...the arts, for which statewide or locally developed academic standards apply, as determined by the school district.

- Public elementary and middle schools must *offer at least three* and *require at least two* of the following four arts areas: dance; music; theater; and visual arts.
- Public high schools must *offer at least three* and *require at least one* of the following five arts areas: media arts; dance; music; theater; and visual arts."

What do I do if my school is not offering the required subjects?

Contact them again and ask: "How and when will the school district be fixing this inequity?"

- *Equity of opportunity* for all students is

important.

- The *state requires* arts education to be offered as part of the curriculum during the school day.
- The *state requires equal access* for all students to these opportunities.

What do I do if I am not getting adequate responses from the decision makers?

Ask other parents and neighbors to make the same calls. Attend school board meetings with other parent advocates and ask to speak to the board, repeating the above points.

Where can I find more ideas, facts, talking points?

- Music: Check out Music Makes Us Whole <http://www.musicmakesuswhole.org/>
- Visual arts: Check out Arts Educators of MN <http://www.aem-mn.org/>