

February 10, 2010

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 HART
SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein,

We are writing to urge you to continue your support for arts education by looking closely at the President's new "Effective Teaching and Learning for Well-Rounded Education" program at the Department of Education.

Under the President's proposed budget, the Arts in Education (AIE) program will be rolled into a new category called 'Effective Teaching and Learning for Well-Rounded Education.' At present, the Arts in Education (AIE) program is the only identified arts-specific education program at the Department of Education. While we firmly believe that the arts are a proven integral part of every child's development, there is no way to know if the arts will be given equal weight with other subjects within the 'Effective Teaching' category. Despite the Obama Administration's previously strong vocal support of the arts, we are concerned by this move at a time when arts education cuts are happening across the country. Rolling the arts in with other, traditionally more fully funded subjects has the potential to minimize focus and funding for arts education.

Performing Arts Workshop believes that the arts are an intrinsic part of a successful education. Through the arts youth learn critical thinking, creative expression, and the skills necessary to become well-rounded contributing citizens. Previously, funding through the Arts in Education (AIE) program contributed directly to organizations like the Workshop, which supply youth with the necessary tools for achievement in today's dynamic society.

Please take this opportunity to show your support for the education youth need and deserve, by preserving funding for arts education within the "Effective Teaching and Learning for Well-Rounded Education." Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tom DeCaigny
Executive Director

Jessica Mele
Deputy Director