



NEWS AND INFORMATION

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Governor Huckabee Signs Landmark Legislation Making Arkansas the Nation's Leader in Arts Education

WASHINGTON, D.C. —Yesterday, Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee signed a piece of landmark arts education legislation designed to provide music and art instruction for all Arkansas school children. The legislation, which requires 40 minutes per week of both music and art in grades 1–6, sets standards that make Arkansas the leading state in the nation for required elementary school arts education.

This legislation became a personal crusade for Governor Huckabee, who was honored earlier this year by Americans for the Arts and The United States Conference of Mayors with the 2005 National Award for State Arts Leadership for his work on this legislation. Several organizations supported the Governor's efforts, including the Arkansas Music Educators Association and the Arkansas Arts Council. National organizations including Americans for the Arts, the Music for All Foundation, and a coalition of organizations through SupportMusic.com engaged local supporters as well. Thousands of their supporters sent e-mails urging passage of the legislation.

"We were able to derail attempts to withhold instruction in art and music from some students, and protected the requirement for certified art and music teachers. We agreed to change time requirements to give needed flexibility to schools that use block scheduling or have different course schedules, but we steadfastly resisted all efforts to diminish the education we knew our students needed," said Governor Huckabee. "The assistance we received from music and arts educators across the country, as well as parents and citizens who realize the value of arts in education, was critical. This was truly a bipartisan effort with Republicans and Democrats working with passion to protect art and music courses. It was a great victory for the arts in Arkansas."

"It is very refreshing, in these times of arts and music education cuts, to see Arkansas reaffirm its commitment to arts education," said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "Governor Huckabee and the state of Arkansas have recognized that arts education is important to a child's overall development, leading to higher grades and a lower drop out

rate. Americans for the Arts applauds their efforts in keeping the arts alive for the children of Arkansas.”

“We are grateful to the Governor for his leadership on this legislation which benefits the children of Arkansas and sets the bar for the rest of the nation,” said Bob Morrison, chair of the Music for All Foundation. “We are also very gratified by the way the music and arts community banded together to work for a law that will bring music and arts instruction to more than 350,000 children over the next five years.”

“The legislature and the Governor are to be applauded for fighting for music and arts education for all our children, taught by certified teachers,” said Mike White, manager of the Arkansas Music Educators Association. “Because we have seen great benefits to students in schools that have at least 40 minutes of arts instruction, we are thrilled that this new law requires the kind of meaningful arts education our children deserve. We now look to local arts educators and supporters to help local school districts to build upon this great foundation.”

Americans for the Arts and The United States Conference of Mayors presented Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee with the 2005 National Award for State Arts Leadership on January 18 of this year. The award honors the public official who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the advancement of the arts at the state level. The award was presented as part of the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ 73rd winter meeting in Washington, DC, and is part of a series of Public Leadership in the Arts Awards given annually by Americans for the Arts and The U.S. Conference of Mayors since 1997.

Americans for the Arts is the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education in America. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City, it has a record of more than 50 years of service. Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. Additional information is available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

The **Music for All Foundation** is a national nonprofit organization committed to expanding the role of music and the arts in education, to heightening the public’s appreciation of the value of music and arts education, and to creating a positive environment for the arts through societal change. To learn more go to: www.music-for-all.org.

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