



Missouri Alliance
for Arts Education

Member of the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education

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September 12, 2011

Dr. Chris Nicastro
Commissioner of Education
P.O. Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480

Dear Commissioner Nicastro:

I am pleased to inform you that at a recent meeting of the Board of Directors of the Missouri Alliance for Arts Education the board voted to support the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's *Top 10 by 20* initiative.

We believe that an important element in the success of this effort will be the revision of the *MSIP-5 Process Standards and Indicators* to be more rigorous and to include accountability of the fine arts as a basic part of the education of all students. We also believe that this accountability should include statewide standardized assessment tools to be utilized in guiding instructional and curricular decisions, in order to improve student learning.

We feel strongly that in order to realize the benefits from study in and through the arts, as outlined in the recent landmark study *Arts Education in Missouri Makes a Difference in Missouri Schools*, that every child in grades K-8 must receive sufficient instruction in the arts, as taught by certified specialists in the appropriate disciplines.

Thank you so much for your efforts to provide each and every Missouri student with the best educational experience and preparation possible. The Missouri Alliance for Arts Education looks forward to working together with the Department to reach the goals of *Top 10 by 20*.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Gifford, D.M.A.
Chair, Missouri Alliance for Arts Education

Cc: Michele Clark
Mallory Mcgowin
Mr. Peter Herschend
Rev. Stan Archie

Missouri Art Education Association, Missouri Choral Directors Association, Missouri Bandmasters Association, Speech & Theatre Association of Missouri, Missouri Thespians, Missouri Dance Organization, Missouri Association of Jazz Education, Missouri Arts Council, Missouri Citizens for the Arts, Missouri School Boards' Association, Missouri Association of Community Arts Agencies, VSA Missouri, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Missouri Fine Arts Academy, Gifted Association of Missouri, Missouri Arts Education Collaborative, Interchange



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RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT

for

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education *Top 10 by 20 Initiative*

Whereas, the foundation of an effective and thriving American democracy is a collection of well-educated and motivated citizens; and

Whereas, changes to the economy and society now require all students to graduate high school better prepared to enter postsecondary education or an increasingly competitive workforce; and

Whereas, without a well-trained workforce, Missouri faces a future of high unemployment, low-paying jobs and economic failure; and

Whereas, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has established an Education Reform Plan with an overarching goal of having the state's public education system rank in the top 10 on national and international measures of performance; and

Whereas, Missouri currently ranks in the middle of the 50 states in terms of educational performance; and the state needs to have higher expectations to ensure a bright future for its children; and

Whereas, the recent landmark research study report *Arts Education Makes a Difference in Missouri Schools* confirms the positive relationship between student participation in fine arts courses and: school attendance, graduation rates, fewer disciplinary infractions, as well as scores on statewide tests in language arts and mathematics;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that this organization offers its support to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in the department's efforts to provide a solid, actionable plan for educating the whole child, based upon current national and statewide research, and with the goal of improving the education provided to all students in Missouri's public schools; and

Be It Further Resolved, that this organization agrees with the department that uniting around a common purpose and vision for improving public education will benefit both schools and businesses throughout Missouri.

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
September 10, 2011