

March 8, 2021

Dear NYS Arts Education Community,

As we honor Arts In Our Schools Month, a time during which we promote, celebrate, advocate for and show off the wonderful contributions arts education makes to the lives of our students and communities, we wanted to take the opportunity to reach out with our support. This year has presented a set of challenges that none of us ever thought we would have to face, and yet arts education teachers all over the state and country have created meaningful, robust artistic experiences for our students! Teachers continue to innovate, collaborate, and create despite distancing guidelines, remote learning difficulties, and programming reductions. We, the leadership of NYSSMA, NYSATA, NYSDEA and NYSTEA, want to take this opportunity to applaud you, your efforts, and your perseverance in the face of real adversity.



The leadership teams of our organizations have collaborated on a document that might help you advocate for your programs, for your students, and for future opportunities. Last spring, when teachers expressed a need for resources to advocate for arts education, the COVID-19 Collaborative Brief was created to outline a variety of tools, talking points, and research as a starting point for that advocacy work. Now, as district budgets are developed and we begin Arts In Our Schools Month, we re-release this document with a few updates, including a link to the new “Arts ARE Education” initiative. Please use these tools and resources as jumping off points for conversations that you have with administrators, parents, board of education members, and your local legislators.

On January 12th, Governor Cuomo announced his “Arts Revival Initiative” stating, “We must bring culture and arts back to life.” That is true. New York State’s tradition of robust artistic communities is in danger and must be revitalized. This revival, however, is not sustainable without support for fully funded arts education programming delivered by highly qualified arts educators in all of our schools. Together we must raise our voices in our communities to advocate for these opportunities for all of our students in New York State.

We wish you all the best as we continue to navigate the 2020-21 school year together, and wish you a very exciting Arts in Our Schools Month! As always, please feel free to reach out to us if we can be of service to you in any way.

Warmest Regards,

Barry Blumenfeld
NYSDEA President

David Brown
NYSSMA President

Adam Shatraw
NYSTEA President

Valerie Savage
NYSATA President