April 2022

Dear Arts Advocate,

As president of the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA), I would like to encourage you to join me in advocating for and garnering support from all NYS Arts Educators for the New York State Summer School of the Arts. I implore you to contact your regional representatives, Regents and ultimately the Governor’s office in support of funding for the NYS Summer School of the Arts. Please encourage your elected officials to speak loudly and insist that monies be allocated in support of NYSSSA moving toward the summer of 2023.

Russ Faunce – NYSSMA President

**NYSSMA Call to Action**

**Advocate for NYSSSA**

Calling a legislator is not difficult, nor is it intimidating. The staffers who work in the office are hardworking employees who are used to hearing from constituents. You can simply relay your message to the first person who picks up the phone. Their job is to relay the message to the legislator. Find your NYS Assemblymember [here](https://nyassembly.gov/mem/search/) and find your NYS Senator [here](https://www.nysenate.gov/find-my-senator)

Legislator Phone Call Sample Script:

Hello! My Name is ***[name],*** and I ***[live/teach]*** in your legislative district, and am an active member of NYSSMA, the New York State professional organization for music educators. I am calling regarding the New York State Summer School for the Arts, also known as NYSSSA. For the past 50 years, this summer program has given students around the state opportunities to work with world-class visual, media, and performing artists, regardless of their ability to pay.

I was disappointed to learn that (NYSSSA) has been left out of the budget proposed by Governor Hochul and that there is no plan for continuing to fund the program into the summer of 2023. With a total cost of less than 2 Million Dollars which benefits hundreds of students, there must be a way to continue this program. In this post-pandemic time with such an obvious need for young people to have meaningful experiences that promote personal and social-emotional growth, this program is more vital than ever.

NYSSSA is a function of the department of education, through the Office of Cultural Education. Do you think that this is something that ***[assembly member name/senator name]*** can help with by reaching out to the State Education Department’s office of cultural education and requesting funding be restored?

**Fast Facts**

In the unlikely event that you receive a question from the person on the other line here are some fast facts. If you don’t know the answer, don’t be afraid to say as much, but reiterate your overall support.

* NYSSSA functions within NYSED through the Cultural Education Office.
* The Office of Cultural Education is offering $150,000 for the summer of 2022 as scholarships for which students can apply and use for attendance at any summer program. This falls dramatically short; few summer programs provide the quality of NYSSSA and will serve far fewer students.
* NYSSSA Programs include Ballet, Dance, Orchestra, Choral, Visual Art, Media Arts, and Theater.
* Hosted by different college campuses throughout New York State.

**More Background**

* There is a petition on change.org [here](https://www.change.org/p/tell-new-york-state-to-restore-funding-for-beloved-immersive-summer-arts-program-for-high-school-students?recruiter=1255728503&recruited_by_id=6bcdc4f0-997a-11ec-8023-897227bf5e05&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&utm_campaign=petition_dashboard).
* The press release where it states that NYSSSA is ***in*** the budget for 2022-2023 is [here.](http://www.nysed.gov/news/2021/board-regents-advance-comprehensive-21-billion-state-aid-request-and-budget-and)
* The budget proposal where it states that NYSSSA is ***not in*** the budget for 2022-2023 is [here](http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/2022-23-non-state-aid-budget-and-legislative-priorities.pdf). Page 25 is where you can find the information on NYSSSA. There is a piece of small print information [here](https://www.dropbox.com/s/khk35yqml0073rn/Continuing%20Access%20to%20the%20NYS%20Summer%20School%20of%20the%20Arts.pdf?dl=0).
* NYSSSA website with the contents of the summer school information removed is [here.](http://www.oce.nysed.gov/nysssa/home)
* The original NYSSSA website with the summer school information is [here](https://web.archive.org/web/20220313033616/http%3A/www.oce.nysed.gov/nysssa).
* Here is a set of additional links set up by advocates for NYSSSA <https://linktr.ee/saveNYSSSA>