



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Announces**

Austin Independent School District Board of Trustees

Receives \$10,000 KCAAEN and NSBA Award

National Award Recognizes Outstanding School Board Support of the Arts

(WASHINGTON, D.C.)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts today announced the Austin Independent School District Board of Trustees of Austin, Texas will receive the 25th annual Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network (KCAAEN) and National School Boards Association (NSBA) Award. The award, which includes a \$10,000 prize, will be presented today to the Austin Independent School District Board of Trustees at the National School Boards Association’s annual conference in San Diego. Since 1989, this prestigious national award has recognized school boards for their support of arts education.

The Austin district was chosen from nominees around the country for its outstanding support of high-quality arts education. Finalists for the award include: Florida’s School Board of Hillsborough County; Michigan’s Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education; Minnesota’s Minnetonka Public Schools Board of Education; and Virginia’s Roanoke City Public Schools School Board.

“Austin is a well-known as a community rich in the arts,” said Darrell Ayers, Vice President of Education at the Kennedy Center. “We are pleased to recognize a school board and administration that extends that culture to the classroom and provides students with a comprehensive arts education.”

“NSBA is proud to recognize outstanding arts programs that greatly benefit student learning,” said NSBA Executive Director Thomas J. Gentzel. “These programs are achieved only with the full support of the school board and administration.”

Each year, a national review panel selects the first place school district from a pool of nominees selected by State Alliances for Arts Education and State School Boards Associations. School districts selected for this national honor must demonstrate support for all four core disciplines in arts education programs: visual arts, music, theater, and dance. Instruction and programming must be available for all

students throughout the district. The ways in which the school district develops collaborative partnerships with the cultural resources available in the community are also an important consideration in reviewing nominations.

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The award honors the work of the 2012 school board led by President Mark Williams, Vice President Vince Torres, Secretary Lori Moya, Cheryl Bradley, Sam Guzman, Christine Brister, Robert Schneider, Annette LoVoi, and Tamala Barksdale. The school board distinguished itself as a national leader in arts education through thoughtful policy, wise funding decisions and data-driven strategic planning. For example, the district's strategic plan moved the arts from an enrichment discipline to a core academic subject, establishing its goal and measurable benchmarks to increase access and support for high quality fine arts instruction as part of a strong core academic curriculum for all students. Despite a series of significant budget cuts, the board maintained support of the fine arts staffing during two reductions that cut more than 1,500 staff positions. The school district supported the *Any Given Child* process to determine inequities that might exist in the district and make recommendations to remediate them. The district has advanced a programmatic plan to make all schools arts-rich schools by 2023, with an associated bond package to provide appropriate infrastructure support. Actions like these send a clear message that learning in the arts in Austin is not an enrichment activity, but central to the cognitive and social development of young people. The Austin Board of Trustees says it plans to use the award to support professional development opportunities for Austin ISD teachers. Investing in staff will provide assurances the district can sustain the benefits of the arts and creative learning.

ABOUT EDUCATION AT THE KENNEDY CENTER

The Kennedy Center retains its commitment as the nation's cultural center to educating and enlightening children in Washington and around the country. The Center's national education programs include: *Any Given Child*, which is currently working in 11 municipalities and their school districts around the country to develop a long-range strategic plan for arts education; ARTSEdge, a website that offers standards-based teaching materials for use in and out of the classroom, media-rich interactive experiences for teachers and students, professional development resources, and other materials for integrating the arts in the curriculum; Partners in Education, which forges relationships between an arts organization and its neighboring school systems to build effective arts education programs for teachers and teaching artists; and the Kennedy Center Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Awards, which acknowledge teachers of grades K-12 whose efforts have made a significant impact on their students.

Locally, the Kennedy Center's programs include *Changing Education Through the Arts*, a program that works with 16 schools in the area to affect long-term change in school culture through professional learning in arts integration; Professional Development Opportunities for Teachers, which trains Washington-area educators to teach the arts or other subject areas through the arts; and Washington, D.C. Partnership Schools, where the Center provides resources and teaching artist residencies to 27 elementary, junior, and senior high schools in Washington, D.C. The Center also mounts more than 100 performances of theater, music, dance, and opera throughout the season for more than 100,000 local school-aged children.

In addition, the Center offers multiple career development programs for young artists both locally and nationally, including the National Symphony Orchestra's Youth Fellowship Program, Summer Music Institute, and High School Competition; Washington National Opera's Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, Opera Institute, and Kids Create Opera Partnership; the biennial New Visions/New Voices forum for development of new plays for young people; *Exploring Ballet with Suzanne Farrell*; *Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead*; VSA's Playwright Discovery Program, Young Soloists, and

Visual Arts Programs; internships and fellowships; and the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival which impacts hundreds of thousands of college-aged theater students across the country and marked its 45th anniversary in 2013.

A component of the Center's Education Department, the **Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network** (KCAAEN) is a coalition of statewide, non-profit organizations working in partnership with the Kennedy Center to support policies, practices, and partnerships to ensure that the arts are a critical and essential part of American education.

NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) is a not-for-profit organization representing state associations of school boards and their more than 90,000 local school board members throughout the United States. Its mission is "working with and through our state associations, to advocate for equity and excellence in public education through school board leadership." NSBA achieves that mission by representing the school board perspective in working with federal government agencies and national organizations that impact education, and provides vital information and services to state associations of school boards throughout the nation. NSBA advocates local school boards as the ultimate expression of grassroots democracy. NSBA supports the capacity of each school board, acting on behalf of and in close concert with the people of its community, to envision the future of education in its community, to establish a structure and environment that allow all students to reach their maximum potential, to provide accountability to the community on performance in the schools, and to serve as the key community advocate for children and youth and their public schools. Founded in 1940, NSBA represents and serves its state association members and their more than 90,000 local school board members, virtually all of whom are elected. These local officials govern more than 13,600 local school districts serving the nation's 50 million public school students. For more information about NSBA visit their website at <http://www.nsba.org>.

For more information about the Kennedy Center, please visit www.kennedy-center.org.

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