

The Kennedy Center

THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS



Press Release

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THE KENNEDY CENTER ALLIANCE FOR ARTS EDUCATION NETWORK AND NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCE RECIPIENT OF THE 2008 AWARD

Schenectady City School District Board of Education Schenectady, New York

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts today announced that the Schenectady City School District, Schenectady, New York has been chosen to receive the 20th annual Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network (KCAAEN) and National School Boards Association (NSBA) Award. This district was singled out for their outstanding support of high-quality arts education. School boards were nominated by KCAAEN State Alliances for Arts Education and state school board associations.

The award and \$10,000 prize will be presented on March 31, 2008 at the National School Boards Association's annual conference in Orlando, Florida. Since 1989, this prestigious award has nationally recognized 39 school boards in 24 states for their support of arts education.

A national review panel is convened to select the school district that receives the honor each year. School districts selected for this national honor must demonstrate support for all four artistic disciplines in their arts education program including visual arts, music, theater and dance. Instruction and programming must also 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 is also an important consideration in reviewing nominations.

SCHENECTADY CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT, SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK

The Schenectady School Board has always found a way to keep the district's arts programs thriving. Schenectady has a student population of 9,998 in elementary, middle, and high schools. There are arts programs in all schools, with special schools such as the Yates Arts in Education Magnet School for K-6 and the John Sayles School of Fine Arts for high school students.

The Board has also created a subcommittee for the fine arts to work with the community on retaining and expanding arts offerings in the schools.

This is one community that responds to parents' insistence on retaining the arts in schools, despite budget cuts. The Fine Arts budget is more than 5% of the total annual instructional budget—an unusually high number in this country. The arts programs are open to all students and the John Sayles School of Fine Arts attracts tuition-paying students from outside the district. This kind of financial and administrative support is what it takes to produce such positive results.

Students in Schenectady receive classes in visual arts and music beginning in Pre-K. Arts opportunities continue throughout the elementary grades with the addition of beginning strings and band programs. In middle school, students can apply for the arts magnet school or two other magnet schools which have rich arts offerings. For older students there is the high school of Fine Arts and AP and International Baccalaureate courses in the arts. Recent graduates of the Schenectady Schools are being accepted into exceptionally fine college arts programs, including the Berklee School of Music and The Tisch School of the Arts at New York University.

The Schenectady City School District is an urban and diverse area with many of the same challenges that face today's other inner city communities. Despite these challenges, the Board of Education has continued to promote the arts in schools with courses in visual arts, music, theater, and dance. The district offers fee waivers and scholarships for low income students, so that they have equitable access to the arts programs. The Board also supports professional development for teachers; requiring 30 hours to be completed outside the school day. Included in the professional development offerings are courses in the arts for non-arts teachers. This helps support the integration of the arts into other core academic areas.

The Board's commitment to the arts has truly made them a model for arts education in New York and throughout the country.

THE KENNEDY CENTER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Kennedy Center has established one of the most extensive arts education programs in the world—reaching more than 11 million people across the nation each year. Young people, teachers, families, and the general public take part in innovative and effective education programs initiated by the Center, including performances; distance learning and Internet based programs; professional development opportunities; dance, theater and music residencies; courses and classes in the performing arts, and

competitions for young actors and musicians. The Kennedy Center's Education Department is committed to promoting higher standards for national performing arts education programs and policy.

KENNEDY CENTER ALLIANCE FOR ARTS EDUCATION NETWORK

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. The KCAAEN is a component of the Kennedy Center Education Department.

NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1940, the National School Boards Association is a not-for-profit federation of state associations of school boards representing 95,000 local school board members throughout the United States. Its mission is to foster excellence and equity in public elementary and secondary education through local school board leadership. NSBA represents 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.

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