

Lisa Cataldi

From: David Neves <dn8095773@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 13, 2024 1:33 PM
To: Rep. McNamara, Joseph M.; Rep. Noret, Thomas E.; Rep. Kislak, Rebecca M.; Rep. Biah, Nathan W.; Rep. Caldwell, Justine A.; Rep. Casimiro, Julie A.; Rep. Cotter, Megan L.; Rep. Donovan, Susan R; Rep. Giraldo, Joshua J.; Rep. Morales, David; Rep. Perez, Ramon A.; Rep. Phillips, Robert D.; Rep. Rea, Brian J.; Rep. Roberts, Sherry; Rep. Voas, Brandon T.
Cc: Rep. Brien, Jon D.; Sen. Lauria, Pamela J.; Shannon Davis; Pam Lowell; Donald Dupre; Virginia Boyle; Stacey Place; Kristen Bond; Karen Anghinetti; Scott Shuler
Subject: H-7020 - Arts Education Bill-- PLEASE ACT!
Attachments: Editorial for TAAPA .pdf

Dear Representatives McNamara, Noret, Kislak, Biah, Caldwell, Casimiro, Cotter, Donovan, Giraldo, Morales, Perez, Phillips, Rea, Roberts, and Voas,

It has now been more than three months since I and others testified on behalf of **House Bill H-7020: The Transparency In Arts Education Access and Proficiency Act (TAAPA)**. The testimony that day, plus all that was submitted, was overwhelmingly positive. We made note that even the RIDE representative that testified spoke in favor with the only concern being the cost of the Arts Coordinator. All of the comments from your committee during the hearing were overwhelmingly positive speaking to the importance of the arts and benefits for every single child. Our testimony showed how access and involvement in Arts education, not only were required for the arts benefits alone, but also correlated with improved academic success in ELA, Math, Science, etc as well as improved attendance. Another reason that the “arts-rich” schools in RI also have higher test scores and attendance rates.

I also want to remind you that TAAPA does not create any new mandates for local districts and does not add any major costs to the RIDE budget. We've been told the cost of the current part time Arts Coordinator position is only about \$30,000. A figure that, if deemed important, should certainly be able to be continued within the multimillion dollar budgets in RIDE funds via grants and unspent funds.

At the hearing we also highlighted the major inequities in Arts Education in this state, and that the children who are suffering the most are primarily those in our urban centers. Since the hearing a very public event took place that literally showcased evidence of this huge inequity for all to see. I have **attached an editorial just submitted to local media highlighting the huge inequity in Music Education demonstrated at last March's All-State Music Festival. It is damning evidence indeed.** Interestingly enough, two of the districts mentioned in the editorial, Providence and Central Falls, are overseen by RIDE, the organization that is monitoring the Arts proficiency regulation. Reading it, you will see that **students living in Providence are achieving All-State Music honors at a level 84% below where they should based on their population. Central Falls is even worse at 100% below.....literally zero All-State students!**

So I need to ask, why has your committee taken no action? Why has the bill not been moved forward to the House with a recommendation for approval? **Failure to move this bill forward with a recommendation to approve is a vote to approve the status-quo. That it is OK for Rhode Island to be a state of Arts Education “haves” and “have-nots” based on where a child happens to live.**

Unless there is an actual feeling in your committee that the children in Providence, Central Falls, and other arts-poor schools do not deserve the same opportunities in arts education that the children in communities such as Cranston, East Greenwich, West Warwick, Barrington, North Smithfield, North Kingstown and many others are getting, then we need to give RIDE the tools and the motivation to do what it needs to be doing.

I implore you to vote to move H-7020 out of committee and forward to the House with a recommendation for Approval so RIDE can build on the momentum that the current RIDE Arts Curriculum Coordinator has begun this year with the passage of the Arts Curriculum Framework, and begin ensuring ALL of RI's children have access to the Arts Education opportunities they need and deserve.

Sincerely,
David Neves

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“Music is a more potent instrument than any other for education because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul” — Plato

“Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.” — John Wooden

