

**Lisa Cataldi**

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**From:** Karen Anghinetti <anghinettik@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 24, 2024 9:21 AM  
**To:** House Education Committee  
**Subject:** H-7020- Transparency in Arts Education Access & Proficiency Act  
**Attachments:** Bill (H-7020) Transparency in Arts Education Access and Proficiency Act- KJA.pdf

Dear House Education Committee Members,

I am writing to support the Bill (H-7020) Transparency in Arts Education Access and Proficiency Act. My name is Karen Anghinetti. I have taught PK-12 music in the Portsmouth Public Schools since 1996, St. Mary's Academy- Bay View in 1995, and am the President of the Rhode Island Music Education Association.

Being actively engaged in all of these roles, I see and hear from my colleagues about the inequities in Music Education scheduling, curriculum, and funding throughout the state of Rhode Island. This encompasses settings in public, private, Catholic education, and charter school programs; elementary, middle, and high schools; rural, suburban, and urban districts. I often refer to a RI House and Senate resolution proclamation, not long ago, on March 10, 2022 declaring March as "Arts in the Schools Month". In the proclamation it reads:

*"WHEREAS, the arts enhance and enrich the lives of every Rhode Islander; and  
WHEREAS, the state of Rhode Island has clear evidence that the arts contribute significantly to our quality of life, the education of our citizens and the economy of our state; and  
WHEREAS, the arts strengthen the Rhode Island economy by generating approximately \$2 billion in economic activity annually and by supporting nearly 18,000 according to the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis; and  
WHEREAS, arts learning fosters teamwork and collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, public speaking, tolerance, flexibility and attention to detail, all essential skills that employers require in a 21st Century economy; and  
WHEREAS, arts education in the schools provides substantial educational benefits to all elementary, middle and secondary students, helping students to graduate with proficiency, ready to enter the Rhode Island workforce; and..."*

I believe the Rhode Island elected officials understand the value of the Arts to one's humanity and its economic impact on the state. I also believe that they understand the Arts as a viable career pathway. Bill (H-7020) Transparency in Arts Education Access and Proficiency Act is a step to support the equality of the Arts as a core subject in all schools, educating the whole child from district to district, and not just a focus on Math and English Language Arts testing towards a career path. Currently, parents have no means of knowing that their child is not equitably afforded the opportunity to Arts courses as other students in the district next door or a district with similar characteristics. Arts credits are required by the state in the Basic Education Plan. Consider: will the impact to Rhode Island's arts economy diminish along with the quality of the essential skills for a 21st Century if access to an Arts education continues to be overshadowed by individualized priorities, unfair hierarchy of funding allocations, and biases in our schools?

Although Arts proficiency is currently mandated in the Basic Education Plan, there is no definition of what Arts proficiency means. This deficiency has also contributed to the inequities from school to school. A full-time arts content specialist at RIDE would be able to concentrate on the National Core Arts Standards, give districts guidance on PK-12 standards-based curriculum development, ensure that course offerings are legitimately based in the Process Components of the Artistic Processes, and that students have access to Arts certified teachers delivering this instruction.

The 2022 resolution cited above by the House and Senate will not just be posturing for Arts in the Schools, but the passage of Bill H-7020 will support the importance of a PK-12 Arts education for all students in Rhode Island and the future of the Arts contribution to its economy.

Sincerely,

**Karen J. Anghinetti**  
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