



To: Maine School Superintendents, Principals, and School Board Chairs

From: The Arts are Basic Coalition (ABC): Maine Alliance for Arts Education (MAAE), Maine Art Education Association (MAEA), Maine Music Educators Association (MMEA), Maine Educational Theatre Association (MEEdTA) and Maine Dance Educators.

As the leaders of the five Maine organizations that collectively represent the Visual and Performing Arts in Maine schools, we are writing to let you know that in this time of anticipated changes in schools and heightened concern about school funding reductions we are putting our creative and collaborative skills to work to respond to the artistic and social needs of our students and using our advocacy experience to help preserve state funding levels in Maine schools.

Advocacy has long been a strong suit of Maine arts education leadership. For more than 20 years our five statewide professional organizations have been united in the Arts are Basic Coalition (ABC) for federal and statewide advocacy. Led by the Maine Alliance for Arts Education, our coalition's members, from all around the state, go beyond arts educators and include parents, students, community arts organizations and individual arts supporters - all eager to send a message about the importance of arts education and education in general.

Last fall our coalition created a new ABC Student Leadership Group that was inducted at the Blaine House, with the Governor as signatory. This group of 11 exemplary arts students from around the state is eager to add their advocacy voice and to create a wider network of student advocates. The current threat to school funding is putting all of us to the test, and we have already joined with our state partners, the Maine Education Association, to advocate for additional federal aid that will offset anticipated state and local budget reductions.

Maine arts educators are also developing innovative ideas to adjust their work to the new school safety guidelines. These include ideas that draw on the ways that the arts connect to social and emotional learning, such as giving students more opportunities to express the experiences they are living through and to connect meaningfully to others. They also draw on the arts' connection to community economic development, giving arts students the tools to contribute to the creative economy of their communities, and involving them in initiatives that develop the potential of their community's natural resources.

Education is the lifeblood of our young people's and our state's future. We as arts educators are excited about the ways that we can offer our positive energy and creative problem solving to Maine schools in this challenging time, and share ideas that can give us all hope. We look forward to staying in contact with you as we go into the summer months, and to continuing to work with you in the fall. You can reach us by contacting Susan Potters at spotters@maineartsed.org or 207 439-3169. Thank you!

[Susan Potters, MAAE](#) | [Benjamin Potvin, Victoria Cherry, MMEA](#)
[Lisa Ingraham, Theresa Cerceo, MAEA](#) | [Rick Osann, MaineEdTA](#)
[Emma Campbell](#), Maine Dance Educators | Delia Harms, ABC Student Leadership Group