



August 2006

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August 16, 2006

How the West Was Won - A Look at the California Budget Victory

The unimaginable became the unthinkable. The unthinkable became the unlikely. The unlikely became the uncertain. The uncertain became the possible. The possible has become reality.

Twenty months after the first report documented the significant decline of music education in California schools, and following an intensive and well coordinated advocacy campaign by music and arts supporters, the state has enacted into law the single largest investment in music and arts education programs in the history of our nation. More than \$500 million targeted to reinvigorate K-music and arts education programs. And it does not come a moment too soon. A new report being prepared by the Music for All Foundation shows that student participation in music programs in California has declined by over 600,000 students (56%) in the last 6 years.

This funding marks the turning point to reverse this trend and build back these programs.

First, the facts. Then we will look at the lessons learned and how these may apply to your own efforts in your state or community

The Facts:

On June 30, 2006, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law the FY2006-07 budget for the state. The budget included the largest investment in music and arts education in our nation's history through two major allocations:

ARTS AND MUSIC BLOCK GRANT - The 2006-07 Budget includes \$105 million in the Proposition 98 General Fund for an annual Arts and Music Block Grant program. Prop 98 is the education funding guidelines for the state. This is annually reoccurring funding. These funds will be distributed to school districts, charter schools and county offices of education to support standards aligned instruction in kindergarten through grade twelve. The funds will be available for hiring additional staff, staff development, purchasing materials, books, supplies and equipment. The funding will be allocated at an equal amount per pupil, with a minimum of \$2,500 for school sites with twenty or fewer students and a minimum of \$4,000 per site with more than twenty students.

ARTS, MUSIC AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION ONE-TIME EQUIPMENT GRANTS - The Budget also includes \$500 million Proposition 98 General Fund on a one-time basis for the purchase of arts, music and/or physical education supplies and equipment. With these resources, schools will be able to make significant investments in items such as musical instruments, kilns, photographic equipment and multi-media design equipment. Further, this significant investment of resources will allow schools to make meaningful investments in order to improve and expand the infrastructure of physical education programs to help address the rising incidence of obesity. Grants will be allocated to school districts, charter schools and county offices of education on an equal amount per pupil, based on the number of pupils in kindergarten and grades one through twelve, with a minimum funding level of \$2,500 for small schools.

While the ink is drying on the bill, and as the California Department of Education develops the regulations guiding the use of these funds, let's take a first look at the key lessons we have learned.

What Did We Learn?

1. Data Makes the Difference

"Without data... your just another person with an opinion." This often repeated quote is absolutely true when it comes to making the case for music and arts education. With data, you have a powerful tool to take the emotion and false statements out of an argument. This was a critical key in California. The Sound of Silence: The Unprecedented Decline of Music Education in California Public Schools (Music for All Foundation, 2004) was the first report to document the decline of music education programs in California and then put this decline in the context of the overall education environment making a powerful case, through the use of data, that arts programs, and specifically music, had been disproportionately reduced at a rate greater than any other subject.

Many people have pointed to this report as one of the catalysts for the push to invest in arts programs. The reality is – this was just a report. What made it a catalyst was the fact that advocates in the state effectively used the report to make their case. The media reported on the findings. The State PTA and California Teachers Association quoted from it. The California Alliance for Arts Education (CAAE) built upon the Sound of Silence with their 2005 report Quality Equity and Access. These two reports formed the bedrock of information used in the effort to make the effective case that music and arts education programs had been neglected and needed dedicated funding to turn back the negative trend of declining programs.

2. No One Can Do It Alone

It takes a community to create change. This is true in advocacy efforts big and small. In California, a working group was quickly pulled together once the Governor had announced his proposed funding in January. It would be this key working group, with the support of dozens of organizations that would oversee the efforts to bring this proposal to reality.

The group was made up of Carol Kocivar of The California State PTA, Mary Luehrsen of NAMM: The International Music Products Association, Lizzy Moore of The Recording Academy, Mark Slavkin of the Music Center: Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County, Laurie Schell and members of the CA Alliance for Arts Education Board of Directors and yours truly of the Music for All Foundation. This group met regularly via conference call to: review the status of the advocacy effort, create plans, brain storm, and develop "calls to action" for other supporters. This core group worked with many other like-minded organizations who provided important input, outreach and support. The California Arts Council, California Arts Advocates, The California Arts Project, Alameda County Office of Education, Bands of America, Americans for the Arts, MENC: The National Association of Music Education, Save the Music, The California Music Project, Yamaha Corporation, M – Audio and countless others provided invaluable support.


3. Play to Your Strength

Another key to success was that all of the groups worked together and played to their own individual strengths. No group tried to over reach and take on something they would not be comfortable with. Everyone reached to their own organizations and membership to help galvanize grassroots activity. NAMM provided critically important media support by coordinating meetings with editorial boards at major papers across the state and public relations while also galvanizing industry leaders. The Recording Academy used their high profile executives and members in the entertainment industry to make targeted strategic calls and appearances. The Music Center hosted a major press event to attract the media to raise public awareness and networked their various contacts. The Music for All Foundation provided research and helped coordinate the involvement of other national education organizations to cajole reluctant state level groups. The California PTA coordinated and made the effective case to the other major state level education organizations that this was a priority for parents. Their influence with all the states major educational group as well as the members of the legislature had a MAJOR impact. CAAE engaged all their members and constituents while coordinating everyone's involvement

No one tried to become something they were not. Everyone worked within their own organizational competency to help make a difference. Playing to your own strengths is an important key to any advocacy effort.

4. Someone Has to Lead

Sure it is great to bring a bunch of groups together to fight for a common purpose. But in the end... someone has to lead. Someone has to call the shots. Someone has to provide the command and control over the whole process to ensure that individuals and organizations do not end up unintentionally undermining the process. In California, Laurie Schell and the California Alliance provided the leadership needed to ring this campaign to a successful conclusion. She created an open collaborative environment where all input and ideas could be heard. But at the end of the day, when a decision needs to be made, she made the call. A critical part of being a good leader is surrounding your self with good people to help. The working group we discussed earlier is a



fine example of surrounding your self with good people. But one really important person, arguably the most important person, was Kathy Lynch of Lynch and Associates who is the CAAE's legislative liaison in Sacramento. Kathy "bird-dogged" the legislation from proposal throughout the entire process. She provided the working group with tremendous advice and guidance. Kathy was a tremendous sounding board for all the ideas the group bantered about helping to keep us focused on the activities and investment of time and energy that promised to provide the great return to the effort. Laurie and Kathy led the way. Be sure you have someone to do the same for your own effort.

5. K.I.S.S. and Tell!

The K.I.S.S. principle (Keep It Simple Stupid) is really true. Being clear, direct, concise and simple in your instructions to advocate makes all the difference in the effectiveness of any campaign. One of my mentors always told me "You have to make whatever you want someone to do take no more time than it would to fill out a post card." In an era where everyone is incredibly busy people will be more inclined to engage in advocacy efforts where the call to action is clear, concise, direct, and simple to execute. Even more importantly, they will tend to stay engaged and take multiple actions over the course of a campaign. This is particularly true when you keep your grass roots supporters updated and informed of the process and the progress you may be making (this is the "tell" part). This really paid off in California when, after six months of engaging the grass roots for multiple "calls to action" we needed one final targeted push secured a significant victory. This final push made the difference between \$75 million reoccurring funding and NO one time grant and the final outcome. This was a \$530 million swing. For you it could mean the difference between losing a program and saving it!

6. It Ain't Over till it's Over

As I just mentioned above, many of us were so excited when we learned the conference committee agreed to a \$75 million earmarked funding for arts education, that we thought we would appear greedy or ungrateful to hold out for the full amounts from the Governor's proposal. In this case, the Governor's staff was most helpful in insisting that we do not settle for part of a loaf and encouraged the community to fight for the full amount. People with big hearts in the non-profit sector need to be reminded that the Legislative process is hardball and no one will think less of us if we take a firm position and do not settle until the final moment when the game is truly over.

7. Keep Your Eye on the Prize

Whenever you are engaged in an effort involving organizations of all different kinds, shapes and sizes there are bound to be areas where people do not always agree. This is just par for the course. What is important is that you do not end up focusing on those things that may divide you or where you may not agree and focus on the bigger picture... the ultimate goal. Keeping the end in mind... keeping your eye on the prize and everyone focused on this common goal will help limit areas of disagreement that could undermine the larger goal.

And a final... but arguably the most important lesson

In the end, Governor Schwarzenegger has not only provided great leadership on this issue and created the largest investment in arts education in the history of our country - but he has done the field a huge favor as well. He has shown other decision makers and elected leaders around the country that supporting music and arts education is not only good policy and the right thing to do

It is also good politics!

And for that he has set a very high bar for other states. We can only hope that they follow his lead.

To listen to a podcast of the Governor's announcement (complete with American Idol's Randy Jackson) go to: <http://www.music-for-all.org/FromtheTrenchesPodcast.html>

Statements regarding the impact of the California Arts Education Funding

"This is a groundbreaking, historic moment for music and arts education, and a clear indication of what is possible when we all work together toward a common goal — to fund a complete education that is inclusive of music and the arts for all public school

children. It is our sincere hope that this unprecedented event sets the bar for the rest of the country to follow in ensuring that future generations may access all that music and the arts have to offer."

Neil Portnow – President, The Recording Academy

"Thank you to the Governor for his leadership and to the members of the legislature for making arts education a high priority for the children of the State of California! This is an historic moment. After decades of cuts in visual and performing arts in schools throughout the State, this is the first big infusion of funding at the state level. This is a victory for the children of California. Extensive research confirms the arts improve academic and personal success--particularly for our most needy students. This is an issue of equity for the PTA. We believe all children deserve a quality arts education."

Brenda Davis – President, California PTA

"By this action, it is clear that California believes in the proven educational and developmental benefits of music and the arts," said Joe Lamond, president and CEO, NAMM. "Arts education provides students with a well-rounded education and the critical thinking skills to prepare them for success in life. NAMM-funded research shows that music education can be a gateway to improving students' skills in core subject areas, such as reading and math."

Joe Lamond – President, NAMM

"This is a historic turning point for arts education in California."

Mark Slavkin - Vice President for Education, The Music Center

"We applaud Governor Schwarzenegger and the Legislature for making this funding a reality. And we also need to give credit to the tireless arts education advocates throughout the state who came together to fight for something vitally important for our children."

Laurie Schell – Executive Director, California Alliance for Arts Education

Posted by musicforall at [07:32 AM](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

August 04, 2006

Thanks David!

David Bryan, our long time friend, supporter and board member raised \$100,000 as part of Bon Jovi's recently concluded Have A Nice Day World Tour.

This is the single largest donation we have ever received. There are many things I could say about what David has meant to the success Music for All. The best thing I can say is, if it were his great ideas and generous support we could never do the work we do. His support has helped us expand access to music education for thousands of children. This is the legacy of his generosity.

Thanks David!

[Bon Jovi - official website - www.bonjovi.com](http://www.bonjovi.com)

Posted by musicforall at [07:48 PM](#)