

DRAFT – FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY
Top 2010 Arts, Arts Education, and Cultural Legislative Issues
October 2009

Support the following key legislative issues that impact Florida's arts, arts education, cultural, and humanities resources and the citizens and visitors of our state they help educate, enlighten, and entertain.

- A.** Restore funding to grant line items for the Divisions of Cultural Affairs and Historical Resources (*will add specific data once report is finalized about state and local grant cuts to counties*).
- B.** Maintain all tax-exemptions for not-for-profit organizations to help them sustain much-needed quality services, programs, and jobs for the citizens and visitors of the State.
- C.** Preserve the Art in State Building Program, a well-established program that provides employment for artists and their contracted assistants and helps make our state buildings unique and inspiring places to work and visit.
- D.** Arts Education Issues:
- 1.** Support adding a criterion for school grading that includes the participation rate of all eligible students in the school who are enrolled in fine arts courses, including visual arts, music, dance, and theatre and the growth or decline in the percentage of students who enroll in such courses from year to year.
 - 2.** Support professional development through in-service conferences sponsored by professional education associations which provide professional learning necessary for effective instructional leadership and effective school management, including opportunities for in-service conferences offered by state-recognized professional education associations.
 - 3.** Identify and secure new state revenue sources to help (1) restore education funding lost in the previous and current years; (2) increase the state's financial investment in education; and (3) avoid additional cuts in education funding. A strong, sustained state investment in education is vital to better meet *Florida's Constitutional* obligation to provide a "uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education."
 - 4.** Provide for flexibility and local control of spending for school districts, e.g., allow transfer of capital funds into the general fund; delay implementation of under-funded and unfunded mandates; and keep Class Size Reduction requirements at the current level (school average).
 - 5.** Protect equitable access and time for students to study the performing and visual arts (art, music, theatre, dance). These courses and programs must not receive disproportionate school and district cuts, be severely compromised, or completely eliminated from the curriculum to meet budget shortfalls. Research demonstrates that performing and visual arts education help improve student achievement, test scores, graduation rates, critical thinking skills, crime prevention, and workforce readiness for the new creative economy.
 - 6.** Continue to fund the annual appropriation for Arts for a Complete Education within the Department of Education budget.