



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Rachel May

Senator Rachel May and Assemblymember Kimberly Jean-Pierre Stand Up for Students with Legislation to Codify Arts and Music Education

DAN MESSINEO March 6, 2024

| ISSUE: **ARTS, MUSIC EDUCATION**



Senator Rachel May Rallies Support for Her Arts and Music Education Bill at New York State Capitol

(Albany, NY) Senator Rachel May (48th District) and Assemblymember Kimberly Jean-Pierre (11th District) highlighted their legislation ([S285/A01502](#)) to include arts and music education in the public school curriculum. This legislation recognizes that arts and music education is not just a form of entertainment, but an essential element of a balanced education for all

public school students in New York State.

The benefits of arts and music education are undeniable, with studies showing that it has a significant positive impact on all students, including those who are traditionally underserved. The [National Institutes of Health](#) cites several studies detailing the benefits, including “prosocial behavior, a shared sense of success, physical coordination,” among others. Participation in the arts and music has also been linked to academic achievement. [US News & World Report](#) points to a 2005 study in Ohio that showed students enrolled in arts classes “scored higher on statewide tests in math, science and citizenship than students from control schools.”

While arts and music classes are proven to be beneficial for students, some school districts don't include them in their curriculum, and budget cuts often target these classes first. This issue is particularly prevalent in underserved communities. [Americans for the Arts](#) report students of color earn 30-25% fewer arts credits compared to their white peers. This legislation aims to ensure that arts and music education become a fundamental part of the public school curriculum, adding these classes to all districts and safeguarding them from the chopping block if budgets tighten.

Senator May and Assemblymember Jean-Pierre were joined by Lori Orestano-James, President of (NYSAAE) New York State Alliance for Arts Education, Edmund Chiarello, President of (NYSSMA) New York State School Music Association, and David Little, President of NY Rural Schools Association to call on the Senate and Assembly to pass this legislation.

Lansingburgh Central School District Band, with student musicians from Knickerbacker Middle School and Rensselaer Park Elementary School, kicked off the event by playing “Trombones in Paradise”. The NYSSMA All-Star Vocal Jazz Ensemble closed the event by

singing the National Anthem.

Senator Rachel May said, “Arts and music education are crucial for students' academic success, as well as their creative and imaginative development. By allowing students to grow their creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, we can prepare them for success in all aspects of their lives. I hope that by ensuring access to arts and music education, New York’s public school students will be equipped with the tools they need to thrive inside and outside the classroom.”

Assemblymember Kimberly Jean-Pierre said, “It is extremely evident that arts and music education helps students with future academic success. It boosts creativity, teaches problem-solving, and increases student engagement. New York State needs to take action to codify arts and music education in our schools by passing our legislation. We need to ensure that students across the state enjoy the benefits of this education. I look forward to working with colleagues in the legislature to ensure the bills passage and make sure arts and music education is in our schools for years to come.”

Lori Orestano-James, President of (NYSAAE) New York State Alliance for Arts Education, said, “Our founding fathers and so many throughout history agree that, in short, the Arts put the Civil into Civilization. But sadly, too often, the value and relevance the Arts bring to ones development of a student to grow into a well-rounded, informed, educated, responsible, and ACTIVE citizen in our society with social and emotional well-being is placed aside in a true understanding of what the success of a high standards based quality, equitable, fair, and appropriate education for ALL regardless of ones zip code should be.”

Edmund Chiarello, President of (NYSSMA) New York State School Music Association, said, “NYSSMA asks that we support and pass bills S285 and A1520. Moving music from *regulatory* to *statutory* represents a **leap** in the right direction for music education. Music demonstrates how communities work: bringing together different instruments, voices, and a plethora of different abilities to speak as one. Music speaks to the hearts and our souls of our youth. It drives our actions and emotions, and its influence on our brains creates a sense of unity that few other art forms can provide. While many of our schools throughout our great state provide excellent, sequential music curriculum; not all schools do. Additionally, each time a financial hardship emerges, which we all recognize is cyclical, music is the first item to be considered for cutting. Please recognize that music represents our world culture bringing hearts, minds, and people together. Please support this critical legislation and pass bills S285 and A1520.”

RELATED LEGISLATION

2023-S285

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Relates to incorporating arts and music education into the public school curriculum

December 30, 2022

In Senate Committee [Education](#)

Sponsored by [Rachel May](#)

Do you support this bill?