



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

Serrano to Address Arts Educators, Teaching Artists, and Arts Organizations

JOSÉ M. SERRANO October 26, 2009

| ISSUE: **ARTS AND CULTURE**

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Syracuse, NY- Continuing his efforts to improve access to arts education throughout the state, Senator José M. Serrano (D-Manhattan/Bronx), along with Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida), will be addressing teaching artists and educators for the Creativity and Other Boundless Resources for Recession-Era Education component of the Arts in Education Conference Series. The October 27th conference will focus on how, through the arts, participants can enrich the academic curriculum in all subject areas.

"As a fervent advocate for arts education, it will be an honor to be in the same room with the educators, administrators, and organization leaders who are working daily to advance this cause," said Serrano.

This event comes in conjunction with a resolution passed in June by Senator Serrano that declares October as Arts Education Month in the state of New York. "Arts Education should be celebrated throughout the year, yet the fall is an exciting season to renew our artistic spirit, and to reflect on the fact that arts disciplines sharpen our children's cognitive abilities

and provide them with skill sets that will be beneficial to them not only artistically, but scholastically as well," said Serrano. "It is also a great time in the academic calendar for teachers to begin to infuse arts learning into the curriculum."

The conference also coincides with The Staying in School Report, released by the Center for Arts Education. The report views the correlations between school-based arts education and high school graduation rates in New York City public schools, and shows a significant relationship between a robust arts curriculum and high graduation rates. In addition, the report illustrates that arts instruction varies according to socioeconomic background and race, showing schools with low graduation rates having higher percentages of minority populations.

"Districts like my own, in East Harlem and the Bronx, are particularly affected by the scarcity of arts education, and it is reflected in their high school graduation rates," said Serrano.

"Every statistic we've seen tells us that children who receive arts instruction fare better in subjects such as reading and math. Every student deserves an equal opportunity to excel."

The Staying in School Report comes on the heels of recently released statistics by the New York City Department of Education (DOE) showing that only 8% of elementary schools and less than half of middle schools meet the arts instruction requirements established by the state.

Serrano has introduced a bill (S5878) which calls for the commissioner of education to conduct an audit and report on statewide compliance with state instructional regulations for arts education. He also sponsored a bill (S6105), which passed the Senate, that will create an advisory committee to advise city board members on matters related to the arts in New York City public schools.

"In light of the recent findings on the report released by the Center for Arts Education, and the compliance statistics released by the DOE, we must act swiftly to ensure that the state mandates for arts education are implemented," said Senator Serrano. "Now more than ever, in this increasingly global environment, we must fight so that all of our children receive a well-rounded, quality education- and that includes arts instruction."