

State Arts Advocacy in 2012

Tuesday, April 10, 2012

Web Seminar

Abridged Transcript



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Jonathan Katz, CEO, NASAA

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Pat Boyd, Executive Director, South Dakotans for the Arts

Mike Latvis, Director of Public Policy, ArtServe Michigan

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Introduction

Jonathan Katz: Hello, everyone. On behalf of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, it's my pleasure to welcome you to our web seminar. Our topic today is advocacy. NASAA connects to advocacy on two levels: federal and state. *Federal* advocacy is one of NASAA's main responsibilities. Our job—on your behalf—here in Washington, D.C., is to promote the value of state arts agencies to Congress and to secure funding and relationships that are beneficial to you in the states.

But an equally important role for NASAA is to support your *state-level* advocacy efforts. We do this in many different ways, by supplying accurate data, modeling case statements, providing "how-to" advice, and promoting successful strategies.

Sharing good state-level advocacy practices will be the focus of today's session. When I look around the nation at state arts agencies who have managed to sustain resources for the arts during really tough times, one of the common denominators I observe is the presence of a well-organized advocacy network. So we've invited representatives from citizen advocacy groups in three different states—South Carolina, South Dakota and Michigan—to join us today to talk about the kinds of advocacy approaches that are working best for them.

NASAA is pleased to make this session available not only to state arts agencies but also to arts advocacy organizations and other colleagues from around the country. Welcome to all of you. Now I'll hand things over to NASAA's chief program and planning officer, Kelly Barsdate, who's hosting the session.

Kelly: Thank you, Jonathan, and thanks to all of you who have tuned in to this afternoon's session—it's great to have you on the line with us. Advocacy can be hard work at any time, but today's climate presents extra challenges for our field. It's a time of austerity budgets—and a time of political turmoil, too. So advocating for public arts support has become even more important. Our troops need to be really well organized, and our public value case needs to be crystal clear. Each state approaches those goals a little differently, depending on their unique circumstances. So, as Jonathan mentioned a moment ago, we've put together a panel of three different citizen advocacy group leaders to lend us their perspectives. Our roundtable experts, working from west to east, are Pat Boyd, Mike Latvis and Betty Plumb.

Today's Format

I. Roundtable Discussion

		
Pat Boyd South Dakotans for the Arts	Mike Latvis ArtServe Michigan	Betty Plumb South Carolina Arts Alliance

II. Your Questions and Comments

Pat Boyd is the executive director of South Dakotans for the Arts. She's been a community arts leader in South Dakota since 1978, working for several groups: as a program director, creative movement teacher, gallery director and council member of the state's Community Arts Network. She's been the executive director of South Dakotans for the arts since 2001.

Mike Latvis is the Director of Public Policy at ArtServe Michigan, which he joined in 2007. Prior to joining ArtServe, Mike worked at the Benenson Strategy Group in New York. He also has worked as the Senior Legislative Assistant for Michigan State Senator Buzz Thomas.

Betty Plumb is the executive director of the South Carolina Arts Alliance, which she's led since 1994. She's been recognized for her advocacy leadership with a long list of awards, including a South Carolina Governors' Arts Award, the Alene Valkanas award from

Americans for the Arts and a Winthrop University Medal of Honor in the Arts. She also got a "top 25 most influential people" nod from Barry's Blog last year.

State Arts Advocacy

Today's format is going to be a modified roundtable discussion with Pat and Betty and Mike. Let's kick off our discussion by getting a quick update from each of our guests about what your advocacy priorities are this year and how that's going for you so far. So, Betty, why don't you start us off? What are you working on in South Carolina?

Betty: We have a real aggressive agenda this year. I would say that we have two tracks that we are following to increase funding for the South Carolina Arts Commission (SCAC) this year. The first track is to support their request to increase their state budget by \$1.6 million for grant making. This would bring their grant fund back to their fiscal year 2008 level; currently it is at \$1.9 million. This would be a nice increase, but you have to remember that they have been cut over 55% since 2008.

Our second track is looking at something different. We are supporting SCAC in getting a dedicated portion of state emissions tax revenue appropriated to the Arts Commission. Ken May, the executive director of SCAC, has done a lot of research related to this and has found that a third of the emissions tax revenue each year is generated by arts related activity—concerts, dances, live entertainment, etc. So we are trying to get a portion of those taxes dedicated to the arts.

Seventy-five percent of the state arts funds from SCAC are spent on grants, so I think that advocates see that if they want to get more grant funds it is important that they advocate for this. There is precedence for making this logical connection and getting money based on this type of tax revenue, so we are giving it a chance. There was actually scheduled to be a debate on the state senate floor today on this emissions tax, but it was carried over until tomorrow, so stay tuned.

Kelly: Betty, just to clarify, the emissions tax revenue that you are seeking to carry over to SCAC: would that be in addition to or instead of a general fund allocation?

Betty: It would actually be instead of. We are going to work the budget through the budget process to see how far we get on that, and at the same time we are working on this legislation to see if we can get the emissions tax money, which would end up being significantly higher than the \$1.6 million. We would really rather go that way, but it is definitely the bigger challenge. You know how it is, if you have never done it before and they've never heard it before, then they are more likely to be dubious. But we think we have some good talking points and some good leaders in the house and the senate who believe in us, so we'll see how it goes.

Kelly: Well that would be a first-of-its-kind model for state arts agencies, so you have a lot of eyes watching what you are up to in South Carolina. Let's go to Michigan. Mike, what are your priorities for this year?

Mike: Our two priorities are centered on the state arts agency's budget here in Michigan as well as arts education. The Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs in 2002 had a budget of \$26 million, and that has dwindled down over time. In 2009 our governor had recommended eliminating the state arts council altogether, and we were able to save \$2.6

Roundtable Discussion

What are your current policy goals?

 <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ SAA budget▪ Dedicated revenue from admissions tax▪ Preparing for likely budget veto	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ SAA budget▪ Arts education funding and implementation	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ SAA budget▪ Renewal of tourism tax▪ Including the arts in education reform
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million from there and have stayed at that level for the last few years. We have been working very hard over that time period and just this year we received in our new governor's budget recommendation: about a \$3.6 million increase. Our budget combines both our state allocation and the federal funding we receive from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Going back to last year, we actually received only \$1.4 million in state allocation; this increase therefore nearly quadruples the state's investment in the state arts agency, and we are thrilled. It is nice to start off in a positive spot for the first time in a really long time. It is actually the first time that a governor recommended an increase here in about eight years.

This is something that we are frankly not too familiar with, and related to that, we are experiencing a very quick budget process as well this year. Our house subcommittee and senate subcommittee met at the same time, and we just heard last week or the week before that both adopted the governor's recommendation to appropriate \$6,150,000 for the state arts agency. Right now we are not out of the woods, but we are definitely far from where we were in years past—fighting all the way up to September.

The second part I mentioned was arts education. This will be a major part of our work going forward, and that will be driven to a large extent by a new series of data that we just got in. For a long time we have known that schools in Michigan have been cutting arts education in all disciplines, but the state has not collected data in terms of arts education. We haven't been able to say, here is what you are cutting, how much you are cutting it by and how many students don't have access to arts education. Without that information, we were unable to develop policies that would attack the specific areas that were needed. A couple of weeks ago we finally did get this information back, and it is a little scary. We found that 120,000 students are without access to arts education in Michigan. And in elementary schools we are spending less than a penny a day in arts education. That's outside of what we spend on teachers' salaries. And now that the budget is looking more positive, this is the area that is really going to get ramped up in Michigan.

Kelly: We know from other studies that regardless of people's political persuasions, arts education is often a consensus point, so good for you guys on getting access gaps on the radar screen. Let's move to South Dakota. Pat, what do you have on tap?

Pat: The South Dakota Arts Council is situated in the Department of Tourism and in the Mt. Rushmore state that is a very comfortable place to be, especially under a secretary of tourism who fully understands and the supports the arts and cultural tourism as well as being involved in his own right in the arts. So the South Dakota Arts Council budget consists of the NEA grant and state funds provided, in our case through an additional half-penny tourism tax that passed in 2009. That tax was intended to and did, in part, save the agency from proposed cuts that would have eventually led to its elimination. That special tourism tax has to be renewed in our next legislative session, and we are going to work hard to make that permanent if we can, so that we don't have to continue trying to get the sunset lifted every two years. We don't anticipate a major struggle in that the governor actually initiated the legislation that would have made it permanent this year, but they put it off until next. As far as the state arts agency budget is concerned, although it is small it is not in danger.

Our primary focus, given what I have just said about the budget, is that South Dakotans for the Arts is also our state's Alliance for Arts Education Network member for the Kennedy Center and its community arts network. We are dedicating all of our efforts as these various entities to making sure that the arts are included in the educational reform that is under way in our state, which is still in a very nebulous and controversial place. We are currently living with severe across-the-board budget cuts in effect, and they are taking a hefty toll, particularly at the elementary and middle school levels. School districts were left to scramble on their own, and each took a different approach to handling those budget cuts at the state level. It is a pretty accurate generalization to say that the status of arts education is dire, particularly in our smaller and rural school districts. Even in our larger districts the situation is unacceptable. Some funding is being restored to education in the next budget,

but it is in the form of a bushel-basket type of education reform bill that just passed. It is really a controversial issue and may find itself as a ballot issue, which can happen in South Dakota.

A part of that reform includes an emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and there is a heavy tone to the bill that makes education almost simplistically a matter of job creation. So what we have done—which seems to be happening everywhere that is adopting a STEM approach—we have joined the STEAM movement to inject the arts back into that program and reconnect the arts and sciences as they have always historically been. Putting the arts back into the public and professional educational framework is critical, or we will lose more ground than we have already. This entails considerable civic engagement and leadership through local arts agencies and outreach by our state's arts institutions and universities. Everyone needs to work together to get this done. Public access to arts education is central and we need to make sure that people understand creative industries and how important it is that the arts and sciences remain connected.

Kelly: So your strategy is really to make sure that the arts are embedded in those local level dialogues that will inform the larger educational reform agenda. All of you are talking about resource allocation and policies in a climate that is challenging for the arts and other areas of state budgets. We are living in a time where antigovernment sentiment has reached all-time highs and a lot of people are calling for government downsizing or even stripping government back to essential services only. Sometimes the arts get painted as part of that nonessential mix. How do you, as advocates, respond to that? How have you adjusted either your messages or tactics to this era of small government? Mike, let's start with you.



Mike: When dealing with individuals that hold that line of thinking we have found that they tend to fall into two categories: those who have not understood and those who do not want to listen at all. For us it is about sticking to a consistent message about spending state dollars equitably. With our current \$2.6 million, we talk a lot about what the state is actually investing in. When we talk to them we try and put the spending for the arts in context; with regards to the state discretionary budget, which is about \$8 billion in Michigan, we are spending about 3 cents for every \$10,000 the state spends in discretionary funding. It is really about equitable funding throughout state government. We ask what kind of communities we want to have in Michigan. Everyone wants to live in a good community with good schools, police and fire. In other words, they want a safe, walkable community with access to transportation and arts and culture, which is what we talk about. A big thing in Michigan is this idea of economic gardening. That is how we talk about it to the people who don't think of it as an essential service.

Kelly: So you are emphasizing equity of access to the good life and the modest size of the investment.

Mike: Absolutely. And the other side is talking about the impact the arts have in the community and economy, [that the arts are] just as important as any other industry in this state. With our new Cultural Data Project we have the numbers to back that up. We talk about the impact we had on the economy in terms of what our organization spent. It is kind of a combination of those two.

Kelly: Betty, what about South Carolina?

Betty: We live in what is known as a very conservative state, but I often tell constituents that they shouldn't let others define what they want or expect in government services. We all define that in our own way in what we value, and certainly how we spend our money tells a lot. That is one of our best talking points with regard to our work on the emissions tax. If a third of our money generated by that tax is from people attending arts events, it makes sense to reinvest those monies back to generate more arts opportunities. I think what Mike said about access is also one of our strongest selling points. We have kind of been the equalizer. The Arts Commission is the only state-mandated agency that provides the arts, and so it needs to have investment and be there for people.

In addressing the antigovernment climate, it is important for our constituents to have built a relationship with their local legislators so that they know what argument will work best with their individual policymaker. Then they can go to our list of talking points and pick out the statistics and facts that they need. But it is their compelling story as a constituent that really sells it. We have been working on a new project within our arts and basic curriculum project which is our big arts education initiative that the Arts Commission has lead for going on 25 years now to build local arts education advocate networks. We feel that if we are going to do a good job at the state level, we need to have the same type of thing going for arts education at the local level. I think you are right that arts education is the way to get your foot in the door.

Another talking point for us is that we don't come with our hand out, we bring money. We have a big economic impact. The Arts Commission just had a study done that shows that the creative sector brings in \$570 million in tax revenue with \$9.2 billion in overall economic effect and 78,000 jobs. So we're looking for all kinds of stories that resonate. Arts education, economic impact, and the equity and access that we bring to play are worth our policymakers supporting.

Kelly: Part of what I hear you talking about is going with the relationship and using key relationships to get the message across, and then emphasizing what the arts contribute, not just what they need.

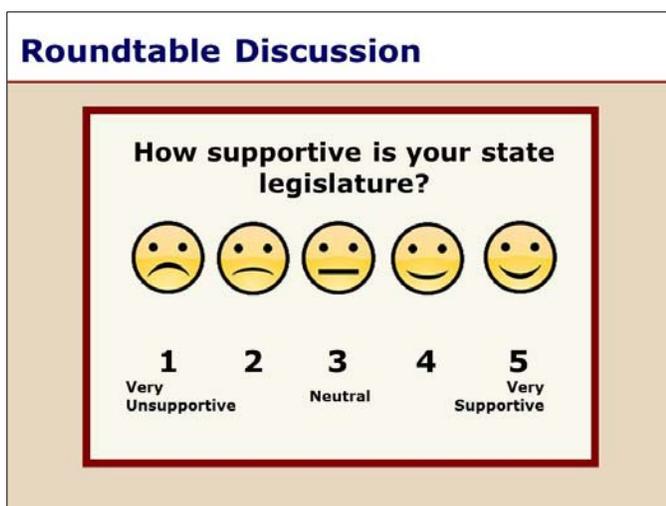
Betty: Yes. I don't know any legislator that doesn't want to think that they represent good service and their constituency by having good schools and thriving communities and an exciting downtown that brings money in and impacts so many other sectors. We just have to be conscious about how we can make legislators look good and feel good about supporting us.

Kelly: Pat, what is your take?

Pat: I think we are all in complete agreement about this. The only difference for us is that we have learned to not engage in philosophical arguments over the value of the arts. To use a metaphor, we have found that that argument is a cul-de-sac not a cloverleaf to get you on the highway. Legislators love to go around with you forever about that, but we really just take on a different approach and use very clear statements: the arts are intrinsic to the well-being of communities; the arts are the cornerstone of education and that equal access to the benefits of the arts is a matter of fairness and civic duty. And the state arts agency not only provides essential services to the public, but it also serves as critical functionary with other agencies, particularly tourism and education, but also including most of the state departments. Its work is done with greater efficiency and efficacy than any of the other departments can muster. South Dakota is a large state geographically and a small state population wise. It is a common assumption and public value here that we will all work hard and do our best, and the South Dakota Arts Council does an exemplary job of that. Our job as advocates is to keep the public aware of the viability of the arts and the way that their public arts funding works. When we do that, we don't accept the argument that it is not critical to the working of government and the benefit of local communities. That is the tack we had to take.

Kelly: It sounds like finding simple ways to convey that has been part of your success. We've been talking about people with one particular viewpoint, but every legislature is a mixture. So I'd like to ask the three of you to step back a minute and generalize. If you had to rate how supportive your state legislature is of the arts, what score would you give them on a scale of 1 to 5?

Betty: if I had to go with the supermajority bipartisan support to override the governor's veto that we had last June, I would say a 5, very supportive. However, we fully expect the governor to veto the Arts Commission again this year. She has certainly not been as vocal as last year, but then again she did not include the Arts Commission in her state budget, either. Looking at things as they are now, in an election year, with all 70 seats up for reelection, I would have to say a 4. Still pretty good, but we don't want to take anything for granted. Legislators that are your friend at one point in the legislative calendar year may not be as strong a supporter and a bit more cautious in an election year. We really count on our constituents to let us know what their legislators are telling them, what positions they are taking and what is resonating.



Kelly: We can average that to a 4.5. Mike, where do you fall?

Mike: I might have to give two numbers as well. Before this year it may have been down around 2. But currently, thanks to the work of our advocates and Michigan's up-ticking economy, I think it is closer to a 4 now. I think we have a lot of legislators now who realize that it is important to Michigan's economic strategy. There was a lot of talk this year in committee that the state of Michigan has funded the arts council for a long time, but I think this is the first year that the arts are included in the state's economic plan. That bodes well in terms of how the legislature sees the arts. I would definitely say around a 4 right now.

Pat: At this point, on this scale I would say a 4. Generally, I think we have a very supportive climate and I don't think that would change, although every once in a while you do discover that you are a poker chip, or as I said a few years ago, a pawn. But right now I'd say a 4. I think we have been pretty successful in presenting arts advocacy as a civil discourse and a good part of a legislator's day. None of them would admit to be anti-arts even if there such a creature, they seem to want to come across as the champions of a good cause, and leadership wise they want to be the problem solvers. Finding a way around a quandary is very engaging for our legislature and that is generally where we are. They want the arts agency to stay and they want it to be strong, so they look for ways to do that.

Kelly: Among the 3 of you we are averaging about a 4, but let's compare our small sample to the rest of the participants. We have launched a poll that they will fill out and we will look at results a little later on. *(Eric launched audience poll and collected responses.)* In the meantime, let's hear some more from our panel about specific tools and tactics are working well in this environment. Mike, why don't you kick us off?

Mike: Let's start with tactics. Typically, the last few years our advocacy has been very vocal and loud. When we were faced with elimination in 2009, we sent off 10,000 e-mails in just 2 weeks to the governor's office, so we have that kind of grass-roots network to get out there fast. In the past year and a half with a new legislature and governor, we have seen new tactics become more relevant. We have been really working behind the scenes here at ArtServe along with the state arts council. Back in August we started these meetings, first

of all with the senate appropriations chair, who connected us with the heads of other agencies and the budget director and so on into the house as well. We used to wait for the governor's budget and then ask people to send e-mail, but we have backed off of that a bit. We are still ready if we need it, but we have found that talking about the data and honing our message in behind-the-scenes work is really the best way to go.

I want to talk a bit about our [Creative State Michigan report](#), which is based on our Cultural Data Project. We developed this near the end of January. The big

number that we like to talk about is that the 211 organizations included in this study generate nearly \$500 million for the state of Michigan. We are also able to show that over \$2 billion is spent in arts and cultural tourism in Michigan. We talk a lot about access in this report as well: over 12.7 million people visited the organizations in this report and, most importantly, 52% of those visits were free. And finally, 1.8 million of those visits were from children. We have taken this research as a stepping stone, and it has only been out for a couple of months. The governor's administration has expressed that they like it and we have heard in committee that it is amazing. They didn't really know about our impact until they could see the numbers. This has become our best tool right now. We will continue to do this research and hope to update it at least twice a year or quarterly.

Kelly: You have got to love that 1 to 51 number.

Mike: Yes, but I feel I need to clarify a bit. That is not a direct return on investment; it is simply a comparative statement. For every dollar that the state does invest, our organizations are investing 51 dollars in the state economy.

Kelly: Pat, what approaches are working well in South Dakota?

Pat: Well I want to pick up on a couple of things that Mike said. I think it is critical to work behind the scenes. It is important to connect with the various state departments and agencies and the people involved in making the decisions that will involve the arts or impact the arts. Many of them can be assisted in their own goals and projects by the involvement of the arts, and many of them are becoming more familiar with that. I think that is an important piece of advocacy, not just with the legislature or the electorate, but also the cabinet and the people who are putting the programs and budgets together. That is an important piece of work to do. Although we have and can rally the troops if need be, that is a tool of last resort at this point. What we have tried to do is make sure that the points about the arts are made and heard early on in the process. Another tactic that we use is that we have an ongoing public awareness program that is extremely upbeat. It highlights that it is no accident that arts are having a measurable and noted impact on the communities and the ability of people to live and work, their children can continue to have a quality education, and a growing number of senior citizens can



continue to live a quality life through the arts. That public awareness is highly important, but it is also non-stop. It doesn't just appear when needed, but is a continuous reminder.

What we have on the slide is one of our favorite, most effective and big advocacy events, South Dakota Arts Day at the Legislature. This occurs biennially in the years between the Governor's Awards for the Arts. We have had a student capitol arts show maybe fifteen times now. We recruit through the arts teachers from all over the state, from every legislative district, three pieces of original student art for the legislators. Also the governor and lieutenant governor are seen with students, who come to the capitol with their parents, and each student gets to meet with their legislator. It is very popular, the legislators love it and it really brings the point home to them. It is a really nice positive program that brings the point home.

Kelly: It is a great way to celebrate and say "thank you." Betty, what about South Carolina? You have had to overturn a couple of vetoes now. What's in your secret sauce?

Betty: We try to work several different angles and I definitely agree with Mike and Pat about working behind the scenes. And our state arts agency does a terrific job of that and meets with the leadership of the various committees. We monitor what is going on with meetings and determine whether or not we might need someone there to testify. It is so important to have an established, informed and active e-mail advocacy network in place. Recently we have really started to incorporate social media, and I think that was a huge help for us, especially in the summer when the governor's veto came and I think that more people were able to get involved for us. We use Facebook a lot now and try to keep that in real-time advocacy. And we just started using Twitter. We actually trended number one on Twitter the day of the state override which was quite exciting, considering we have only been doing this a little over a year, having that established network and using social media. The funny thing about social media is that a lot of the legislators have their own pages and can follow you as well, which can lead to some interesting interactions.

Tools & Tactics

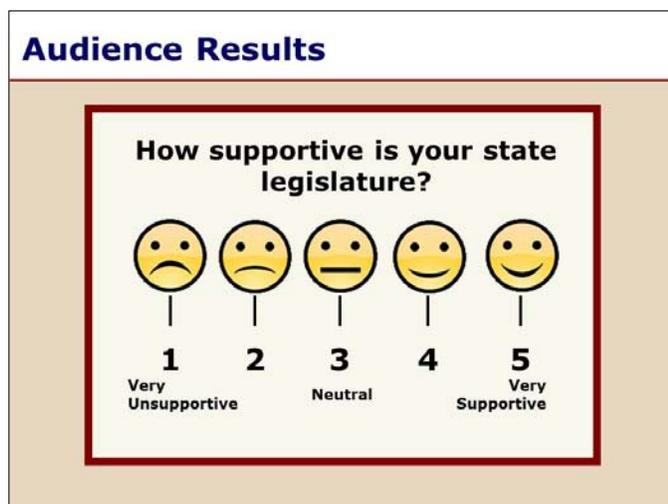


- **Mobilization through social media**
- **Arts caucus**
- **Arts Day**



We also have a legislative arts caucus. This has been extremely helpful. It is made up of 118 members of the 170 in the general assembly, has House and Senate co-chairs, one each Democrat and Republican, and although it doesn't always translate directly into a voting bloc, we continue to work towards that. And when we have our state arts day, the legislators in the arts caucus consider it their annual meeting, so we always get great attendance. Regularly we get a few hundred people to our advocacy day luncheon, and the room is set up so that legislators and constituents from the same region can sit together and talk. There are even talking points on the back of cards to help make everything convenient and comfortable to engage in the issues. We always have a student program and make sure that all legislators that attend get to say something publicly. This past year we had about 40 legislators attend and they were all saying the most passionate, and I think authentic, things about how the arts were important in their communities.

Kelly: I am struck by all three of you talking about the combination of good data, good PR for the elected officials and good relationship management. Let's check back with the legislative support poll and see what everyone's legislative mood rings look like around the country. It looks like those in the audience cluster very similarly to our miniature poll of the presenters. I am interested in how the panelists try and handle legislators at various points on this spectrum. I'm grateful that relatively few are very unsupportive, but Mike how do you deal with legislators down at the low end? Do you tend to leave them alone and concentrate on those that you have a reasonable shot of getting a vote from, or do you keep working them?



Mike: I always try at least once to see where they are. When we get someone like that we try and stick to the data. We have found that they typically don't like the stories that we try and tell, but they want the facts.

Kelly: Pat, you have a relatively supportive legislature there. I am looking at these numbers from neutral to supportive. What do you do to take 3's and turn them into 4's or 5's? What do you do to take someone that is kind of on the fence and make them a fan?

Pat: That is my favorite thing to do. There is a real opportunity there where you aren't preaching to the choir, but there is a real opportunity to gain some new support. I think that the critical thing there is not to go in and talk, but to go in and listen. If they are neutral they probably don't have a serious passion for or against the arts, but I'm sure that they have a passion for something. To find the critical link to what is important to them and how you can help them you need to listen to them. Those kinds of conversations have led to some remarkable programs. We frequently get pretty strong support from those people.

Kelly: Betty, how do you make those folks who are your most ardent supporters contagious?

Betty: I think the arts caucus helps us with that. We like to say that those leaders are real ambassadors for the arts. They are getting information they can use and speak to. I think a lot of legislators would like to speak on something, but often they just don't have the information well in hand so they are nervous about doing so. But if you bring them to something like our luncheon it is a bit more relaxed. We found that they were almost competing to tell the best story there, and it became somewhat contagious even for those who may not have been the most ardent supporters walking in. I also agree with what Pat said, you have to find that connection. For instance, maybe in rural areas it's access. Most legislators are married and have children. You just have to find that place that brings out a memory or an emotion and raise it to another level each time.

Kelly: The arts are experiential and we can use that to our benefit. Let's transition to Q & A.

Q & A

Eric: Let's go ahead and get to some of the questions that have come through. Our first one goes out to Pat. Some arts organizations in my state are reluctant to advocate. They think it is illegal and someone else's job to advocate for a state arts agency. Is there anyway that you can think of to help change those sort of attitudes?

Pat: The most important thing is to define advocacy to them. It is not about lobbying, it is about making your best feelings about something public and providing support.

Eric: Mike, I have had quite a few questions come in for you, so let's start here. Do legislators really believe in economic impact studies? What can you do to give your new data credibility?

Mike: That was one of the big things that we focused on as we prepared the report. In terms of our data, the last data we had was from 2005 and it was shaky. But in terms of making it valid, we had an outside company crunch the numbers for us and sign off on them. We then attached that to our printed reports and we talk about that. I think it is really easy for them when you do everything in house to say that you have it in your best interest to fudge them a bit, and it has helped us to involve an outside agency.

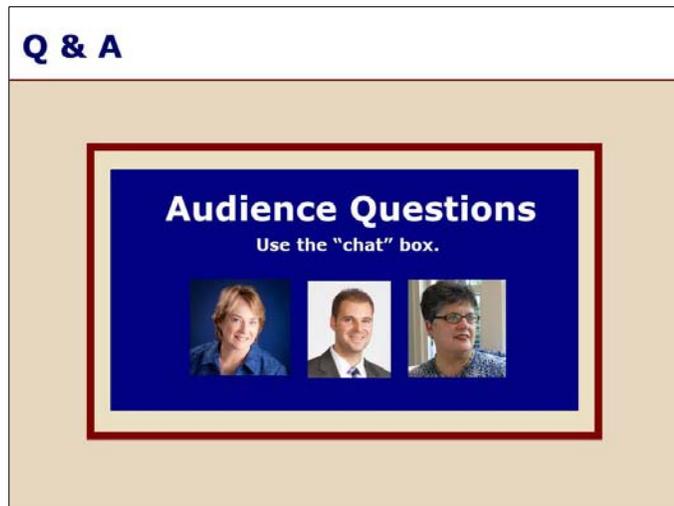
Eric: In a follow-up, where did you get your arts education data, what was your source?

Mike: We actually sent out a survey through Quadrant Research in New Jersey as a Michigan-specific survey that went out through the department of education in partnership with them to every school in the state. We received a 20% return from them. And since Quadrant is in another state, we are able to look at benchmarking ourselves from them as well.

Eric: We have a number of arts education questions and I'd like to throw a tactical one out to all of you. Which do find is more effective in arts education advocacy: advocating with local school boards, state boards of education, state legislatures or state education appropriation committees?

Betty: When it comes to arts education, it is really a public awareness thing locally. We have on our board a representative from the South Carolina School Boards Association and South Carolina Educator's Association. We like to look at the overall picture of education knowing that it is the largest thing that our state budget is spent on. Anything that impacts education is going to impact arts education. Dealing with school boards is very important, and that is why we have started through our arts and basic curriculum project an arts education advocacy initiative. We are working with local groups to form advocacy networks like we have on the state level, and those networks will look different in every community. It is important that they decide what their network should look like, what their targets and goals are. So I think they are going to be different throughout the state, but I think they are going to be effective and hope to see it translate and help statewide with our efforts.

Mike: I would like to add that working directly with the department of education within the state is where we are starting to see the most movement. We are seeing that policy can get done within the department without having to go through both the house and senate. That is one of our major focuses.



Pat: I'd agree with Betty. But it does eventually come back around to the local school districts especially in South Dakota. Those people who are on state boards of education of all kinds do reflect what is going on at home. I think it is really important that a lot of work on arts education happens at the local level.

Eric: And one final question for you all, from Montana, are you still finding that *arts education* as a term is resonating with your legislators in your advocacy efforts, or are you thinking about calling it something else?

Mike: I don't see anyone shying away from that and we are still calling it arts education. They understand what it entails and I don't see a need in Michigan to change that.

Betty: Certainly we hear the terms creativity and innovation, but arts education still is the basis. I think that people are talking a lot about STEM to STEAM. We are actually taking on a task force to work more towards that in our state, and I think you hear that almost everywhere now.

Pat: We would definitely stick to arts education. I think that people would easily see around any attempt to rename it.

Eric: Thanks to all our panelists and to you, our audience, for joining us today.



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Thanks for participating!

Questions or comments about this session? Contact Eric Giles,
Learning Services Manager (eric.giles@nasaa-arts.org).

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