



THE CENTER FOR ARTS EDUCATION

For Immediate Release

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**Middle School Students and Arts Organization Honor Senator Schneiderman
As Arts Education Champion
*'Broadway' Performance Celebrates Power of Arts Education***

New York, NY --May 1, 2009 -- The talented students of Mott Hall II, a NYC public middle school, brought the sights and sounds of Broadway to the Upper West Side of Manhattan today, to honor New York State Senator Eric T. Schneiderman for his work on behalf of arts education. The students celebrated the power of arts in their school with an original multi-media pastiche, blending elements of rock and electronic music with a stunning visual arts display. Following the performance, The Center for Arts Education presented an award to Senator Eric T. Schneiderman as a "Champion of Arts Education," commending him for his dedicated support to preserve and protect arts programming as an essential ingredient in the quality, well-rounded education every child in every New York City public school K– 12 deserves.

"The students' dynamic performance here today is a testament to the power of the arts in schools," said Richard Kessler, executive director, The Center for Arts Education. "Support for arts education by elected officials like Senator Eric Schneiderman is critical to achieve our goal of arts education for every child in every school. We thank him for his ongoing efforts on behalf of the children in his district, and all of the 1.1 million New York City public school students, to realize the unique benefits of learning in and through the arts."

Mott Hall II is an exemplary New York City public school that fosters an arts-friendly environment nurturing each child's uniqueness through its arts-infused teaching and learning practices, as well as through partnerships with cultural organizations including The Center for Arts Education (CAE). For the past two years Mott Hall II partnered with CAE's Parents As Art Partners (PAAP), a unique family arts program that engages parents in hands-on, interactive arts education activities with their children. PAAP fills a distinct gap in NYC public schools, combining arts programs with parent participation.

"As a parent of a NYC public school student, I know that there is nothing more important to our families, our communities and the economic life of our city than our public education system," Senator Schneiderman said. "The degree to which arts learning is infused into the curriculum at Mott Hall II is an inspiration. I applaud the extremely talented students who performed here today, and commend the school's dedicated teachers, principal and staff for their steadfast commitment to providing the quality education our children deserve," he said.

“We are profoundly grateful to Senator Schneiderman, and to The Center for Arts Education for partnering with our school in successful programs that bring students, parents, educators and New York City cultural organizations together,” said Ana De Los Santos, principal, Mott Hall II.

Beyond having great value in and of themselves, the arts promote the health and well-being of children, including academic and personal growth, critical thinking and analytical skills, as well as the motivation to attend classes, stay in school and excel.

Today, the predominant focus on testing and test preparation, as well as incentives -- such as bonuses based on higher test scores -- have marginalized arts education in the city’s public schools. In fact, the majority of NYC public schools are failing to meet the minimum requirements for the arts as required by state law.

According to the New York City Department of Education’s *2007 – 2008 Arts in Schools Report*:

- Nearly 30% of schools have no certified arts teacher on staff;
- Principals allocated a smaller percentage of their budgets to arts education than the previous year—shrinking to less than 2.9% on average;
- Principals spent more than half a million dollars less on services by art and cultural partners—leading to additional cuts in matching private sector dollars;
- There was a 63% decrease in spending on arts supplies and equipment over the previous year—a reduction of nearly \$7 million;
- Only 8% of elementary schools reported offering all four arts forms (music, dance, graphic arts and drama) annually as required by state law;
- Less than half of middle schools are ensuring that all students are gaining access to the arts education required by state law;
- Access to arts education decreases significantly as students get older.

As part of its mission to restore quality arts education for the city’s more than 1.1 million public school students, CAE has provided high-quality professional development for teachers, artists and administrators; created long-term partnerships between schools and cultural institutions; published free resources for educators to support school-wide arts programming, as well as guides for parents to support hands-on arts activities with their children. CAE has also helped open doors for high school students exploring careers in the creative industries through internships and mentoring programs. Currently CAE is spearheading a campaign to restore dedicated per pupil funding for arts education by influencing fiscal policies and mobilizing a powerful coalition of parent advocates.

About The Center for Arts Education

The Center for Arts Education (CAE) is dedicated to ensuring that New York City public school students have quality arts learning as an essential part of their K-12 education. In addition to its capacity-building initiatives, CAE provides information and resources that demonstrate the benefits of and need for arts education as part of a quality, balanced education, and advocates for educational and fiscal policies that will support arts education in all of the city’s public schools. Visit www.caenyc.org to learn more, contribute, become a partner and get involved in the campaign to restore dedicated funding for arts education.

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