



THE CENTER FOR ARTS EDUCATION

For Immediate Release

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**Mayoral Candidates Debate Arts Education in First Ever Arts Ed Questionnaire
*Thompson Levels Harsh Criticism of Bloomberg Education Policy;
Bloomberg Emphasizes Progress and “A Lot of Work to Do”***

NEW YORK, NY – October 29, 2009 --The Center for Arts Education today released the responses of mayoral candidates Bill Thompson and Michael Bloomberg to the first-ever NYC mayoral arts education questionnaire.

Mayor Bloomberg’s responses emphasized the Department of Education’s progress in installing measurement and training tools to help guide the city’s efforts to ensure all students receive a quality arts education, while saying there was still “a lot of work to do” on that front.

Thompson leveled harsh criticism on Mayor Bloomberg’s education policies. Vowing to “reverse Mike Bloomberg’s misguided policies with a renewed commitment to providing quality arts programs to all our children,” Thompson derided “Mayor Bloomberg and the DOE’s failure to make arts education a priority” and called the City Department of Education’s record on arts education “absolutely shameful.”

“We must fix the curriculum so that we’re not just teaching to the test but teaching the whole child,” wrote Thompson. “With all its focus on improving scores, the DOE has lost sight of the true objective: improving schools by improving learning,” he said.

Richard Kessler, executive director of CAE, said, “it’s heartening to see that these candidates understand the importance of arts education in a child’s learning and development. And it’s vital that Mayoral candidates articulate a vision on issues that are so fundamental to educating the city’s 1.1 million school children.”

Thompson supported the following policy initiatives to address the lack of arts education in many city public schools:

- The restoration of per capita dedicated funding for arts education at all city schools;
- New York City Department of Education led remediation efforts or other interventions for schools found to be out of compliance with state arts education requirements;
- Inclusion of a wider array of factors, such as data from the *Annual Arts in Schools Report*, school compliance with state education requirements, and other in the school *Progress Reports*;
- Creation of a citywide task force to examine access to arts education offerings in city public schools.

(More)

Bloomberg noted several initiatives that have been implemented during his tenure or may be implemented in the future, including:

- The introduction of “Arts Count” – a series of metrics to measure and report on arts education in the public schools;
- The prospect for enabling small schools in the same building to share arts space spaces and teachers;
- Giving principals greater control of the budgets for their own school;
- Providing leadership training in the arts;
- A new Arts Education Reflection Tool to begin reporting on the quality of arts education.

The candidates’ completed questionnaire responses are posted online at:

www.caenyc.org/mayoral-candidate-survey

Doug Israel, Director of Research and Policy for CAE, said, “We need to reinvigorate education with robust course offerings and teaching that grabs students’ attention and makes them sit up in their seats. The arts provide an essential part of the school day and we believe it’s critical to make improving the quality of arts instruction in the New York public schools an even greater priority during the next four years.”

Responses from candidates for the office of New York City Public Advocate are also posted online all.

<http://www.cae-nyc.org/public-advocate-survey>

About The Center for Arts Education

The Center for Arts Education (CAE) is leading the effort to restore quality arts education for each of New York City’s more than one million children in public schools. CAE provides tools and resources to deliver quality arts learning for all children, through innovative teaching and learning programs that help build arts-infused school communities. Advocacy initiatives educate policymakers and the public about the value of arts education as an essential ingredient in a quality education and a fundamental part of children’s overall health and well-being. Visit www.caenyc.org to learn more, contribute and get involved.

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