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THE CENTER FOR ARTS EDUCATION

August 22, 2008

Joel I. Klein

Chancellor, New York City Department of Education

52 Chambers Street

New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Klein:

We hope this letter finds you well and enjoying the remainder of the summer. As the New York City Department of Education tackles overcrowding issues in public schools and the School Construction Authority develops its next five year plan for new school construction, it is critical that attention be paid to the maintenance, expansion and reclamation of spaces dedicated to the arts.

According to the Department of Education's 2006-2007 "Annual Arts in Schools Report" the lack of available in-school arts space was one of the top three challenges to implementing arts education reported by all schools. Regrettably, there is evidence that this lack of dedicated space is growing. According to a recent survey conducted by Class Size Matters, 25% of principals responding reported losing their art, music, dance, drama, or foreign language spaces to general education classrooms during their tenure.

To ensure that New York City public schools are appropriately equipped with dedicated spaces for arts, and that all of New York City's 1.1 million students receive the well-rounded education they deserve, we call on the Department of Education and the School Construction Authority to:

- Ensure that arts spaces are incorporated in the design and construction of all new school facilities;
- Create a citywide plan to inventory and then reclaim lost arts spaces in public schools;
- Ensure that the formula used to determine capacity at the school level reflects the loss of arts and other cluster spaces and the need to improve access of students to these and other common areas, such as auditoriums and gymnasiums.

Without question easing overcrowding and providing adequate classroom space for our students should be a top priority of the city. However, this should not be done at the expense of providing students with the facilities necessary to support learning in the arts and other subject areas that require specialized facilities, such as science and physical education. These needs should be addressed in a coordinated fashion.

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Joel I. Klein
Chancellor, Department of Education

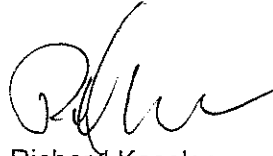
Kate D. Levin
*Commissioner, Department of
Cultural Affairs*

We ask for your consideration of the above recommendations and a response from your office with regard to our concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance in helping to ensure that New York City's 1.1 million schoolchildren are receiving a well-rounded education that includes the arts. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Jill Braufman
Chairman of the Board



Richard Kessler
Executive Director

Cc: Sharon Greenberger, President, School Construction Authority
Kathleen Grimm, Deputy Chancellor Finance and Administration
Robert Jackson, Chair, Committee on Education, New York City Council
Paul King, Interim Executive Director, Office of Arts and Special Projects
Catherine Nolan, Chair, Committee on Education, New York State Assembly
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