NEW EDUCATION LEGISLATION EMPHASIZES "BLOCK" FEDERAL GRANTS, LOCAL AND STATE INITIATIVES FOR STRENGTHENING PROGRAMS

Title V of the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981, signed into law by the President just before Congress began an end-of-summer recess, covers education programs. According to a memorandum from Bud Arberg, director of the Arts and Humanities Staff of the U.S. Department of Education and long-time member of MENC, the new Act affects the Arts in Education Program, previously authorized under Title III, Part C of the Education Amendments of 1978, in two important ways: 1) Discretionary awards to the field for state, urban and rural projects will no longer be made, and 2) awards to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (our national cultural center) and to the National Committee/Arts for the Handicapped are authorized at their FY 81 levels through FY 84, under the discretionary authority granted the Secretary of Education under the Act. Specifically, 14 Arts in Education Projects slated for continuation with federal assistance will receive FY 81 funds to help carry the projects through the 1981-82 school year. The 10 projects among these 14 scheduled for a third year of direct federal assistance will not receive direct federal grants.

Indeed, the new legislation represents a giant step away from direct funding and emphasizes consolidated or "block" federal grants to states for elementary and secondary education.

"Among the programs and projects authorized are special projects (as may be determined to be desirable by the state and local educational agencies) which placed emphasis on the arts as an integral part of the curriculum. The important point to note...is that each state will determine its own priorities for use of available funds to supplement state and local funds," Arberg writes.

"Depending upon state and local initiatives, there could be quite conceivably an increase in the actual or proportional amount of federal funds going into arts in education in any given state!" Arberg continues. (See Legislation, page 10)

WHITE HOUSE TASK FORCE TOILS PAST LABOR DAY DEADLINE ON "FINAL" REPORT

After months of concentrated study and discussion which began in June, the White House Task Force on the Arts & Humanities struggled to reach "concensus" on a wide range of major and subsidiary issues in preparation for the submission of a "final" report to the President by mid-September. The group will submit a draft report, allow time for the arts and humanities constituents to respond to it, and then make final recommendations.

A variety of intriguing and complex options have been presented to the Task Force. The notion of modifying or restructuring the National Endowments along corporate lines, for example, has come up several times. Concerns related to establishing a national arts policy as well as suggestions for inspiring corporations to greater giving to the arts and humanities, in addition to a myriad of other issues, could appear in the "final" report.

With great interest, we look forward to results of months of work and examination of issues critical to the future of arts education.
Arberg's memo goes on to point out other provisions under the new Act that would be of interest to music educators, such as the use of public education facilities as community centers...to provide educational,...cultural, and other...services, and special programs for children with "high performance capability" in such areas as the arts.

The new education legislation presents challenges and opportunities to everyone concerned with strengthening arts in education. It also leaves many questions unanswered.

In an exclusive interview with MENC Executive Director Don Dillon, Bud Arberg responded to the following questions. His answers and the interview will appear in next month's Journal.

The questions:

- The new education legislation focuses on funding and program decisions that will be made by the "state." Exactly, who is "state?" The state legislature? The state department of education? Local educational agencies?

- Who determines "priorities for use of available funds?" The legislatures? Departments of education? Local educational agencies?

- Our members have raised questions concerning who would have authority over the funds that are distributed to local educational agencies. Does the state department of education distribute funds in a flow-through situation with no authority over those funds? Will local school boards and superintendents become the policy/decision making body in the area of arts education programs?

- For the music educators, can you explain how the block grant programs will work? What can they do to increase funds for music in their state?

- As a long-time member of MENC, working in a federal position, what do you see as a plan of action for music educators in light of not only the cuts in monies for education but also in light of propositions 2-1/2, 13 and other tax-cutting initiatives cropping up across the nation?

- If there are further budget cuts in the area of education, what effect will this have on the arts education programs, block grants, and education in general?

- In your many years working with the state department of education, what advantages do you see for teachers who belong to professional educational associations, such as MENC, the National Art Education Association, and others?

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TEXAS SEARCHES NATIONWIDE FOR TEACHERS

The booming Texas economy is contributing to teacher shortages in school districts across the Lone Star State. In order to meet demands created by a state population increase over the past 10 years of more than 3 million people and teachers moving to higher-paying jobs, many districts have conducted recruiting drives outside of Texas. Budget cuts and tax revolt movements in many northern industrial states like Michigan, Massachusetts and New York have helped Texas fill hundreds of positions.

The Texas State Teachers Association says their state ranks 33rd in teacher salaries. However, according to a recent survey conducted by the National Education Association, 19 states reported the chances for teachers' finding jobs are poor and 17 other states reported conditions as terrible. If you are looking for a teaching position in those 36 other states Texas can look terrific.
"MUST" READING FOR FALL

Prepared as a special report to the White House Task Force on the Arts and Humanities, "Public Arts Agencies: Toward National Public Policy," is a powerful paper. This report is the product of a meeting of the 16-member Policy Study Group (PSG) of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) on July 11-12.

James Backas, consultant to the PSG and author of the report writes, "The underlying premise of this report is that a comprehensive national public policy for the support of the arts is essential to the continued development of private support at all levels, and that the active and purposeful development of such a policy should be carried out through joint planning between a strong federal arts agency and its affiliated state, regional and local arts agencies."

Filled with specific recommendations and clear thinking, this paper should top your reading list. The report's concluding comments urge the Task Force, the Administration and Congress to "seize the time" by responding to the current crisis with vision and vigor, so as to replace inertia and despondency with a truly national public arts support policy.

Contact NASAA, 1010 Vermont Ave., N.W., Suite 316, Washington, D.C. 20005 for details on obtaining a copy of this paper.

MUSIC TEACHER COMPETENCIES

The 2,000 members of the Florida Music Educators Association have just completed and endorsed an outstanding list and description of competencies expected of beginning Florida music teachers.

Performance, aural, visual, aural and visual, cognitive and teaching competencies for teachers of general music, vocal/choral, band, string/orchestra and guitar are included in the 16-page booklet.

Contact Dr. Mary Palmer, University of Central Florida, College of Education, Orlando, Florida 32816 for information on ordering copies.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Notice the difference. The promotion materials that came in your mail last month, the program preview and even the name—"TMEA Hosts MENC"—tell you something special is "in the works."

The 1982 conference is like no national in-service meeting before. Not even close. It's bigger and more important. It's a one-of-a-kind, combined effort by TMEA in cooperation with the Texas Music Educators Conference and MENC to produce a memorable, exciting, informative meeting.

And it is important—to you, to your career and to the future of music education—that you plan now to be in San Antonio

Feb. 10-13 for the double-action 1982 Texas Music Educators Association Clinic Convention and 75th Anniversary Celebration of Music Educators National Conference.

This meeting promises to be the largest in music education history. For you that means opportunities to meet with thousands of colleagues from around the country who share your special interests in music and quality education. Also, it means hundreds of music industry representatives will be there to introduce you new services, products and the latest in teaching aids.

A meeting of this calibre and size offers you a chance to get away from your classroom long enough to get a closer look at ways to strengthen music education—across all areas of specialization—as declining enrollments, diminishing tax bases, rising costs and accountability demands continue.

The meaningful programs, the polished performing groups, the gala anniversary celebrations, the trip to the warm southwest in the middle of winter and the personal contact with others who share your problems or can provide solutions—it's all designed to make a positive difference in your professional life.

Come to San Antonio! Notice the difference when you return to your job.

Don Dillon
Executive Director
CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS LEGISLATION

The Charitable Contributions Legislation (CCL) has been included in the $750 billion Economic Recovery & Tax Act of 1981 which Congress passed in final form just before the August recess. In a climax to several years of extremely effective national lobbying directed by the Independent Sector, an umbrella organization representing most of the nation's public service organizations, the House and Senate conference committee approved inclusion of the CCL in the Tax Cut Bill and, in a surprise move, also raised from five to ten per cent the proportion of profits that a business corporation can donate to charity.

Under this provision taxpayers using the short form can take deductions for charitable gifts just as those who itemize already can. Starting in 1982, a person who does not otherwise itemize deductions can deduct up to $25. The same applies in 1983. Up to $75 is deductible in 1984 and in 1985 and 1986 there's no limit. In 1987, the provision faces re-enactment.

Potential gains of up to $5.7 billion annually in additional giving, however, may be offset by other provisions of the Tax Cut Bill—other new deductions for businesses and individuals.

A reappraisal of the new Tax Act reveals that the accelerated cost recovery deduction, also provided for in the Tax Bill, "could so reduce corporate taxable income that many firms that continue to contribute at 1980 levels would not receive a tax deduction," Washington attorney Peter Wiedenbeck writes. In a paper prepared for the Task Force on the Arts & Humanities, "Effect of Proposed Changes in Federal Tax Laws on Private Support for the Arts and Humanities," Wiedenbeck states, "More importantly, an across-the-board reduction in marginal income tax rates seems likely to decrease individuals' incentive to contribute to charity. The fall in contributions should be most pronounced among upper-income taxpayers, who are the principal supporters of cultural organizations."

For corporations and for individuals, less taxable income could well mean that it may be difficult to maintain, much less increase, levels of charitable giving.

California, home of tax-cutting Proposition 13, increased the state arts budget for FY 1981-82 $1.6 million more than last year for a total $12.8 million budget.

The State Arts Council of Oklahoma received an increase of 22 per cent more than the 1981 budget to $1,069,896 for FY 1982.

In North Dakota, the state legislature increased the North Dakota Council on the Arts' budget by 45 per cent for 1981-83 over the prior three-year budget period.

The $25,000 grant from Datapoint Corporation will supplement funds from the city of San Antonio and from the Texas Commission for the Arts that the Arts Council of San Antonio will use to sponsor 50 community-based arts groups.

Bassett, Neb, recently gained national attention via the front page of the Wall Street Journal and an appearance on the "Today" morning show as the community with the highest spending for arts per capita in the U.S.

MENC MEMBERSHIPS, MEETINGS, MISC.

Beginning this month, MENC is delighted to offer another new service—the acceptance of VISA or MasterCard credit cards. Members and others may use either of these methods to pay membership dues, registration fees for MENC meetings, invoices for MENC publications and other accounts payable to MENC. To initiate a credit card transaction, provide to MENC the following: the name of the credit card preferred, your name and account number as it appears on the credit card and the expiration date.

Eventually all MENC forms that could accompany a payment will include special "blank" areas where you can provide credit card information. In the meantime, you can just write on the "remittance-return copy" dues notice, etc., that you wish to charge to your credit card, and provide the account number and signature needed to complete the transaction.