

Music Advocacy - Opportunity, Responsibility, Leadership

I am honored to have been asked to be here with you today to talk with you about something that is very important to me: music and children. I have spent the better part of the last decade fighting for this very issue - to ensure that every child would have access to a well-balanced education which includes music. And that is what we are here to talk about today.

Over the years I have made presentations in hundreds of communities as we worked to fight the battles for music education across this country. Then

BY ROBERT MORRISON

there was an air of crisis as we were losing programs and the status of music and its legitimacy as part of a child's education was being challenged. Today I speak to you not about crisis, but of **opportunity** for education - for our community and for you to succeed and grow in your programs. I speak to you not of responding to the actions imposed by others, but of our **responsibility** to proactively decide what we want for the future of our music. I speak to you, not of waiting for someone to show us the way, but of the **leadership** each of us must provide. **Opportunity. Responsibility. Leadership.**

Before I start I must set the record straight. I am not a musician.... I am a drummer. Kinda makes you feel superior to me right off the bat, doesn't it? But it is obvious to me, a drummer, the lowest form of life in our musical universe that - now more than ever, all of us in the entire music education community and indeed the entire music community have more control over the destiny of music in our schools than at any time in our history. This is our opportunity.

To put this into perspective it is important, indeed critical, that we examine the road we have traveled to understand how far we have come to recognize how

far we still must go to reach our ultimate goal of music for every child.

A Brief History

Just a short time ago...

□ National Education Goals Released— In 1989 the six National Education Goals were unveiled. Goal #3 stated "children will demonstrate competency in core subjects English, math, science, history and geography." Something missing? Well this omission of music and the arts from our nation's educational agenda was the straw that brought together the partners of the National Coalition for Music Education which was discussed earlier.

□ In 1991 President George Bush announced America 2000 - and again core subjects were listed as English, math, science, history and geography. Again no music or the arts.

All requests to change Goal #3 were met with blunted replies of "No" from then President Bush to then Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander and head of the Governor's Goals Panel Roy Romer among others.

And then, just three years ago then Secretary Alexander, the highest ranking education official in this country and himself a musician, called music and the other arts... "Extracurricular."

This provided the coalition partners with the proof that was needed to get people moving to fight for our music programs.

For two and a half years we battled for inclusion and recognition as part of education reform and were constantly rebuffed no matter how strong the case or influential the leaders brought out on our behalf.

But, in one 10-day time period this all changed. Mike Greene took the stage at the Grammy Awards on February 25, 1992 and in front of 1.5 BILLION peo-