

How to advocate for arts in our schools

Did you know? The funding of the ABC Project Grant is distributed by the SC Arts Commission, but it relies entirely on the state budgeting process. In order to keep arts funding alive in SC, we must all take action to remind our Representatives of the importance and value Arts Education has for our students and families here at HEMMS. February is Arts Advocacy Month – but any time of year is appropriate to contact our state representative, Bill Herbkersman, to let him know how much we value and benefit from these grants. Listed below are all the ways you can reach out to our legislature and let them know how much we care about preserving arts education and keeping that funding available.

William G. "Bill" Herbkersman

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Here is some helpful information and a template “start” to get you on the path of advocating for our school and the students of SC!

Find Your Legislator

Don't know who represents you? It's time to find out! You can visit the Statehouse website (scstatehouse.gov) and search “Find My Legislator”. The results will not only include your Statehouse representatives, but also your US Congressmen.

Follow Them on Social Media

Especially at the local and state level, your elected officials are managing their own social media accounts. You can directly reach them through Twitter or Facebook and start a conversation there. Or at the very least, you'll see what they post and use those as conversation starters when you get the opportunity.

Say Hello!

Whether it's through an email, or at a public event, or at a political rally - go say hello! Make sure your elected official is able to put a face to a name, and also a subject matter to your name. Immediately associate yourself with a particular issue so that they will always remember you as the “arts person”.

Stay In Touch

Follow up your introduction with an email or phone call to their office. Start forming a friendly relationship with your elected official - learn about them just as you would a new friend.

Don't Yell

Most importantly, don't start off your relationship with a negative experience. You can't yell a problem away, so be sure to always be courteous, even if your legislator may disagree with you, or vote against the arts.

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Subject: Constituent - [Issue Name]

Dear Representative / Senator _____:

I am emailing you today to express my support for the arts in our community, and specifically about [fill in with the name of your particular issue].

As your constituent, I want you to know that the arts are vital our own community. However, [the issue] has the potential to impact the arts here at home and I wanted to be sure you knew exactly how.

- Fact #1
- Fact #2
- Fact #3

[Tell a personal story about how this issue will impact your arts experiences, either positively or negatively.]

I hope that you and your colleagues will show your support for our community and the arts that help make it grow and thrive by [request specific action related to your issue]. I look forward to your response and monitoring your support of the arts.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our community. If you have any questions about this issue or the arts in general, please reach out to me and I will do my best to address them.

Sincerely,
