



# Parent Support Network

## Arts|Learning

**Arts|Learning** is a statewide arts-education advocacy organization that works to promote all domains of the arts in public education—dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and media arts. The mission of **Arts|Learning** is to encourage active engagement of preschool through college students in developing their highest artistic and academic competence. **A|L** does this by advancing policies, practices, programs, and partnerships to achieve a new level of excellence in teaching and curriculum development.

We believe that the strongest grassroots arts advocacy groups in Massachusetts consist of local arts parent organizations. These may be band boosters, music boosters, theatre support groups, etc. Until now, each of these groups has pretty much existed in their own vacuum, with little outside support. Arts|Learning is proposing that we form a statewide network of the arts parent support organizations. The purposes of such a network will be twofold:

1. **Offer training on how to be an effective arts advocate in the local community.**
  - Work with parent support groups on developing a strategic plan by using the A|L Advocacy Toolkit
  - Link groups within close geographic areas together to network and share best practices
  - Provide models of by-laws, how to incorporate as a non-profit organization
  - How to prepare public service announcements and press releases
  - How to approach public officials such as town managers, town councils, mayors, school committee members to advocate for your arts programs,
  - How to access research validating the importance of an arts education.
  - Once-yearly training and networking day for representatives of various parent-support groups to attend.
2. **Network all arts parent-support groups for advocacy alerts.** Often there are important legislative issues happening statewide and nationally; it is important for those supporting arts education in the schools to be aware of these in order to advocate for a pro arts-education position. Numbers are powerful! We would encourage each arts parent group develop their own email list, and when an e-news alert is sent by Arts|Learning, the local contact would forward the alert to his/her community for response and/or action.

**Costs:** There will be no costs for Parent Support Network membership for the first year (2010-2011). Thereafter, we would ask each parent group to become an institutional member of Arts|Learning for \$50 annually or for whatever the group can afford up to \$50. This small amount will help support staffing expenses to administer the support network.

### **What can you do?**

Please forward the name of any arts-support parent group to Arts|Learning at [info@artslearning.org](mailto:info@artslearning.org). Please send the name of one or two top officers of the organization with their email and other contact information, and discuss with them how mutually beneficial this network will be for promoting arts education in their local communities as well as across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## Arts|Learning

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***Learn the Arts. Learn Through the Arts.***