

From Dr. Grant Holcomb, Director of the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester:

On behalf of the Board and staff of the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester and the many constituents we serve, we would like to offer comments regarding the initiative to provide funding for museums and cultural organizations under the Cultural and Museum Education Act proposed by the New York State Board of Regents in the 2008 budget.

- Founded in 1912, the Memorial Art Gallery has had an established school program for more than 40 years. Each year, we serve more than 18,000 P-16 school children and 400+ teachers from more than 80 school districts in west/central New York State. Our offerings include guided tours, lesson plans and other classroom materials, and a wide range of pre-and in-service professional development programs.
- With a permanent collection of more than 10,000 objects that span 5,000 years of history and represent nearly every world culture, the Memorial Art Gallery is a unique educational resource for the Greater Rochester community and beyond. Our collection and special exhibitions form the foundation of educational programs that expand classroom lessons and supplement literacy programs.
- The Gallery's educational programs are directly coordinated with NYS Standards and extend to all areas of the curriculum, as we support both art education and the integration of art-in-education. Museum staff members work collaboratively with area educators to ensure compliance with these standards in all our programs, with the goal of improving student knowledge and performance.
- The Gallery maintains a Teacher Resource Center (established with a grant from the State Education Department secured by Senator Jim Alesi) that provides a variety of resource materials that support the integration of art into classroom settings. These materials are available free of charge to all area teachers.
- We actively partner with a variety of community cultural and social service organizations to bring educational resources and programs to the community, serving as a critical resource to students, teachers and life-long learners.
- Funding through the Cultural and Museum Education Act will allow the Memorial Art Gallery to continue these important programs, as well as develop additional resources such as new virtual learning resources/experiences for classroom use and enhanced professional development programs for teachers.
- By supporting collaborations among formal education institutions, cultural organizations and other community partners, the Cultural and Museum Education Act will allow the Gallery to enhance our community partnerships and strengthen our ability to actively support education in New York State.

The Memorial Art Gallery enthusiastically supports the Board of Regents' proposal to fund the Cultural and Museum Education Act.

Sincerely,

Dr. Grant Holcomb
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