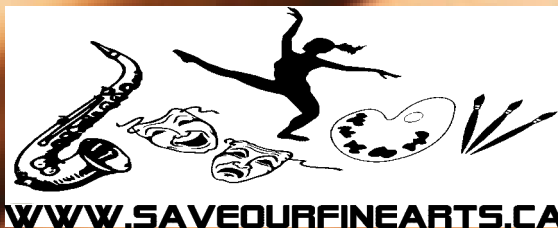


SOFA

Meeting with Alberta Education

February 1st, 2010
7:30 PM – 9:30 PM

Government of Alberta ■
Education



SOFA
Save Our Fine Arts



Welcome

Bill Campbell
SOFA Co-chair

Agenda

- **Welcome** Bill Campbell
- **Update on SOFA**
 - Who is SOFA
 - Purpose / Goals
 - Website metrics
 - SOFA Concerns
- **Presentation by Alberta Education**
- **Question Period:** Lyle Bennett
 - submitted via website
 - from audience members (1 minute time limit to ask question)
- **Closing Comments** Lyle Bennett

Who is SOFA?

Save Our Fine Arts

- Formed in October 2009 in response to Alberta Education's proposed fine arts education framework
- SOFA Organizing Committee is a group of approximately 20 volunteer parents, students, educators, and fine arts industry officials from the Calgary area who are passionate about fine arts education in Alberta and supporting the direction it will take in the future.

Purpose / Goals of SOFA

- **Obtain more information** on how the proposed fine arts education framework proposed by Alberta Education will impact current programs.
- **Create an awareness** with fine arts parents and students across Alberta of proposed changes to the arts education curriculum
- **Implement a “call to action” strategy** to bring our concerns to the attention of the Alberta Government, Alberta Education, and School Boards
- **Encourage Alberta Education to include current fine arts educators and parents** with updating curriculum
- **Ensure fine arts education remains an integral part of Kindergarten – grade 12 education in Alberta**

SOFA Call to Action Strategy

- Includes:
 - Website to keep everyone informed
 - Letter writing campaign to key officials with Alberta Government, Alberta Education, School Boards
 - Media awareness

Save Our Fine Arts Website

SOFA

Save Our Fine Arts

[about us](#) [chat](#) [forum](#) [fact sheet](#) [search](#) [skip to content ↓](#)

total visits: 33747

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[Call to Action Strategy](#)

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Important Public Meeting with Alberta Education – February 1st

by [SofaDude](#) on Jan.22, 2010, under [Updates](#)

Don't miss this meeting _

Joan Engel (Curriculum Director, Arts, Communications and Citizenship) with *Alberta Education* in Edmonton has agreed to attend a SOFA meeting in Calgary to discuss proposed changes to fine arts education, why the changes are proposed, and answer any questions. Christine Bouchard and Shelley Wells from *Alberta Education* will also be attending with Joan.

The meeting will be held at the *Lutheran Church of our Saviour* (8831 Fairmount Drive Southeast) in Calgary on Monday, February 1st, 2010 from 7:30 p.m. to approximately 9:00 p.m.

If you want to learn more about the proposed changes to fine arts education and how they could affect students in kindergarten to high school classes in Public, Catholic, and Charter schools, don't miss this meeting. Parents, students, educators, entertainers, fine arts industry

Howdy. Welcome to SOFA!

Thanks for dropping by! Feel free to join the discussion by leaving comments, and stay updated by subscribing to the [RSS feed](#). See ya around!

Please register using our online [survey](#) to become more informed.

Register



SOFA Website Analytics

www.saveourfinearts.ca

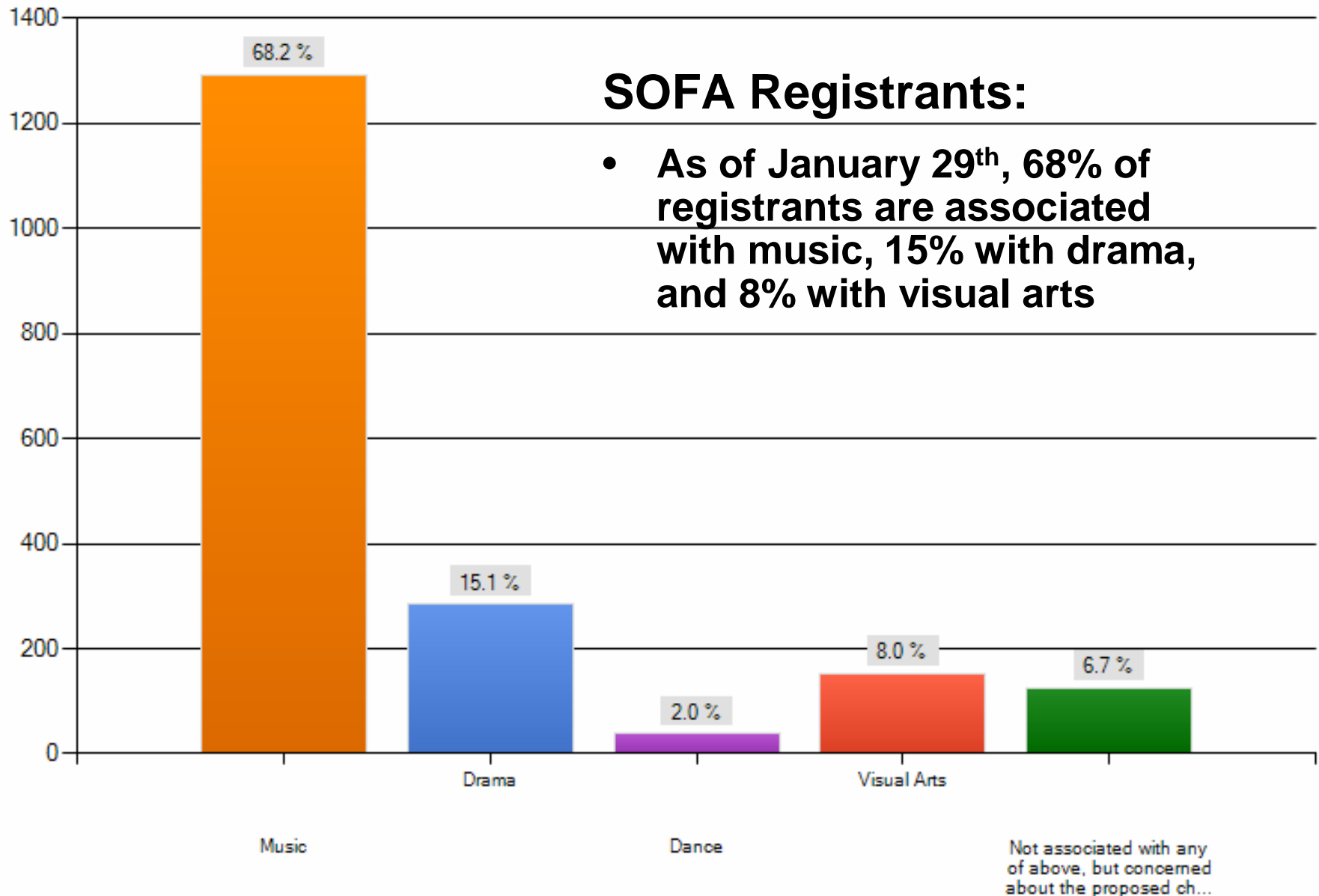
- **35,200+** hits to our website since it was launched in November, 2009
- **On average:**
 - Approximately 77 new visitors to our site daily
 - Approximately 631 returning visitors to our site daily



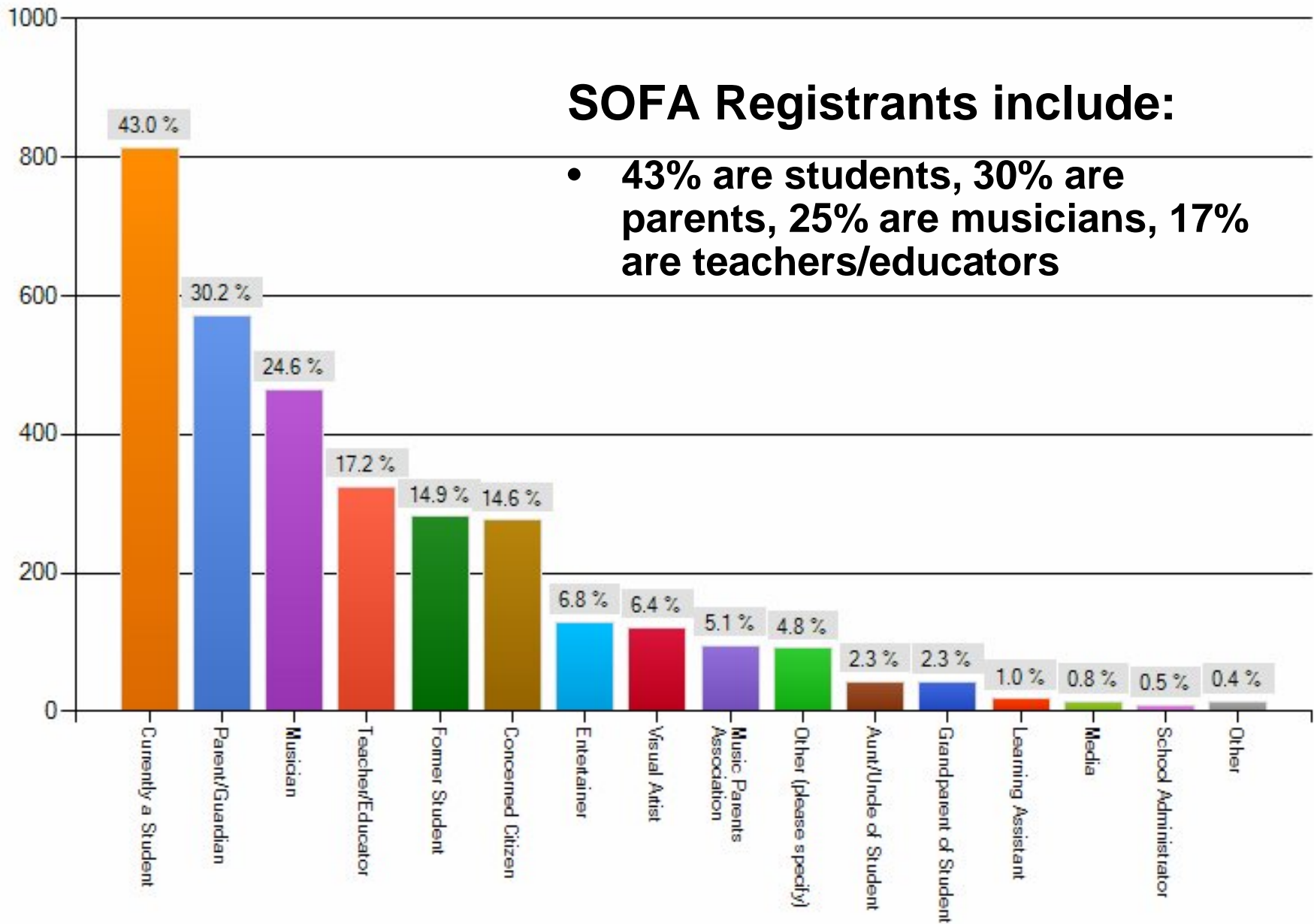
SOFA Registrant Demographics

(of those who registered on our site)

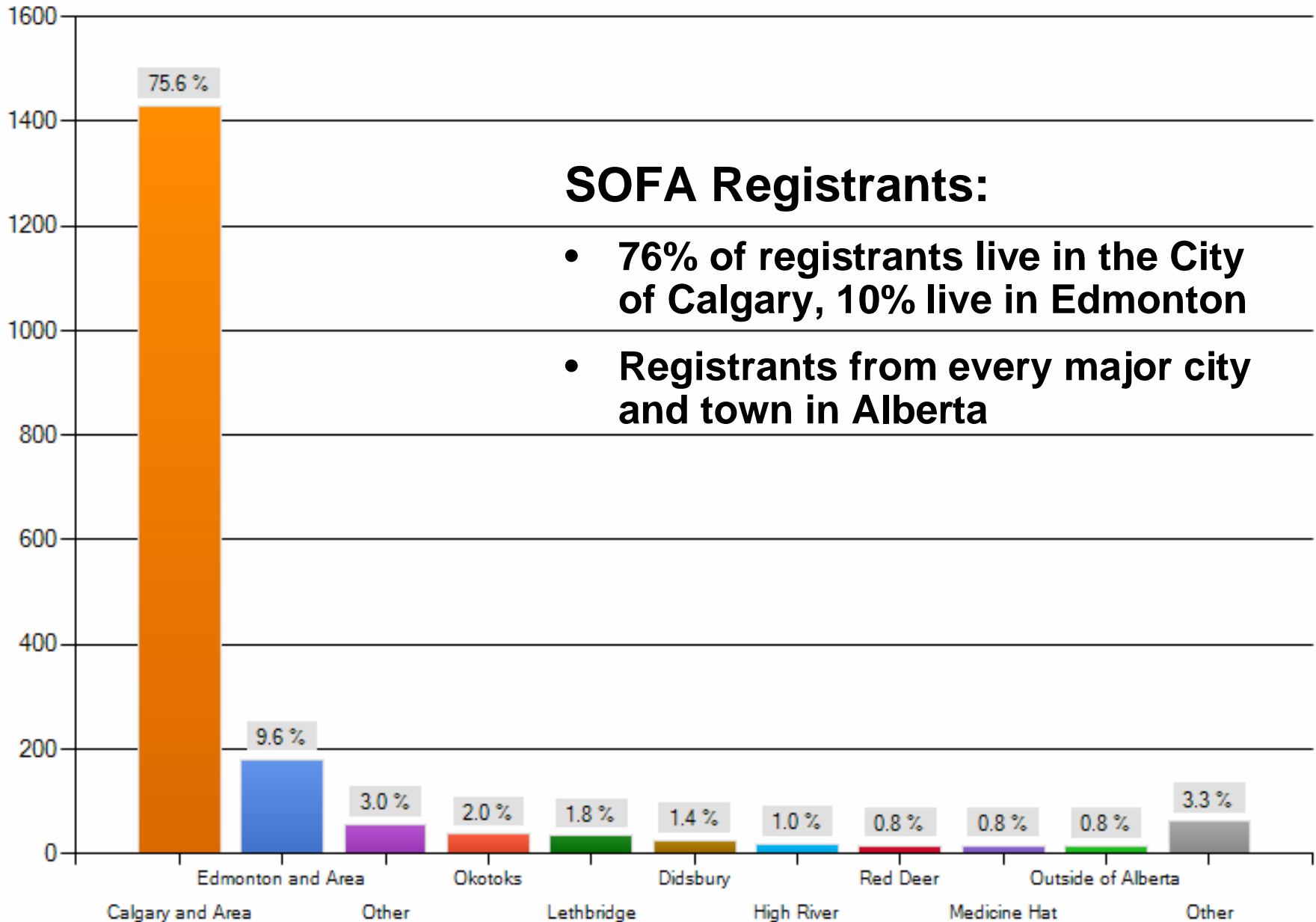
Please let us know whether you are primarily associated with music, drama, dance, or visual arts:



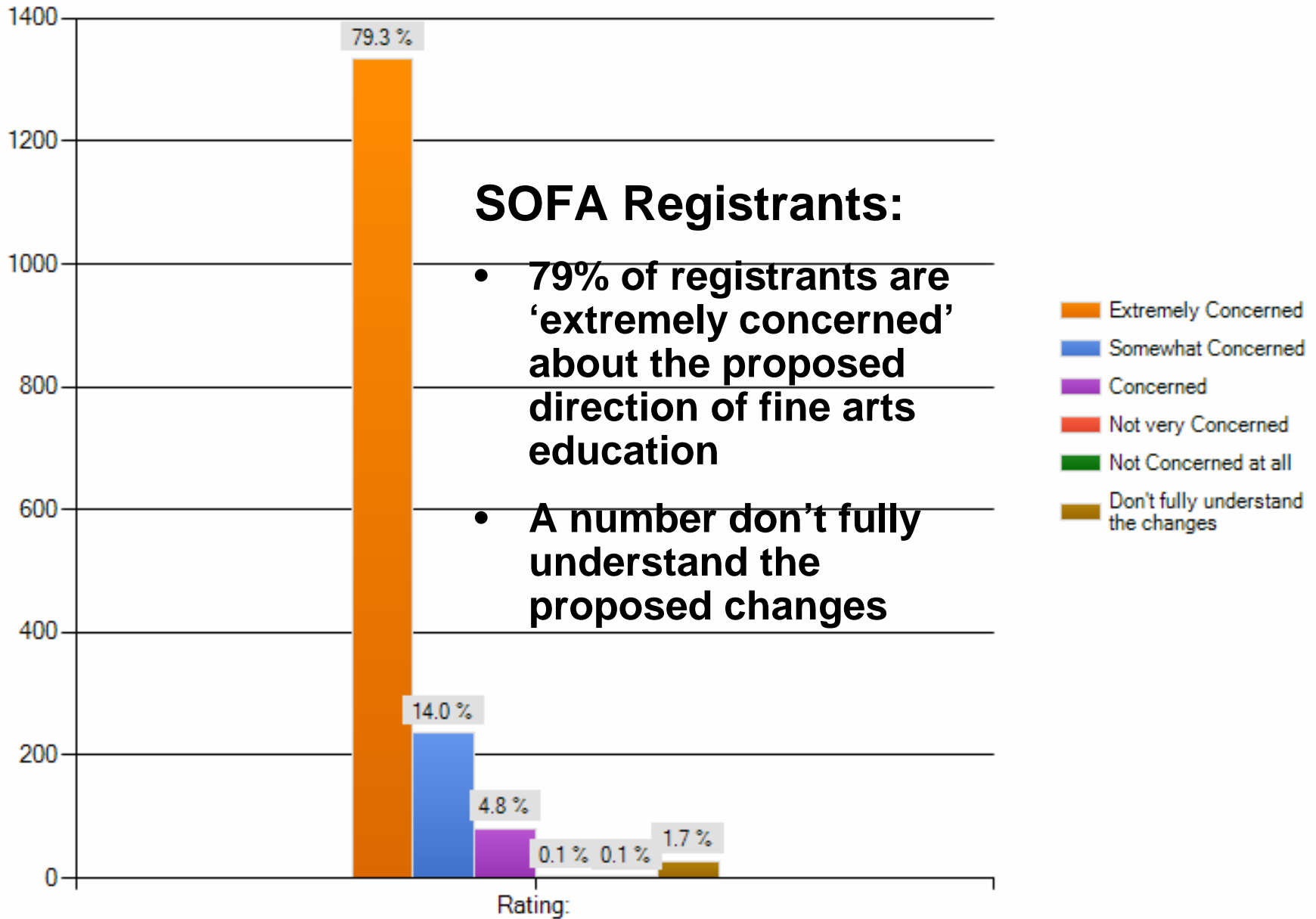
Please select what your association is with Arts Education from the list below:



What City/Town do you live in?

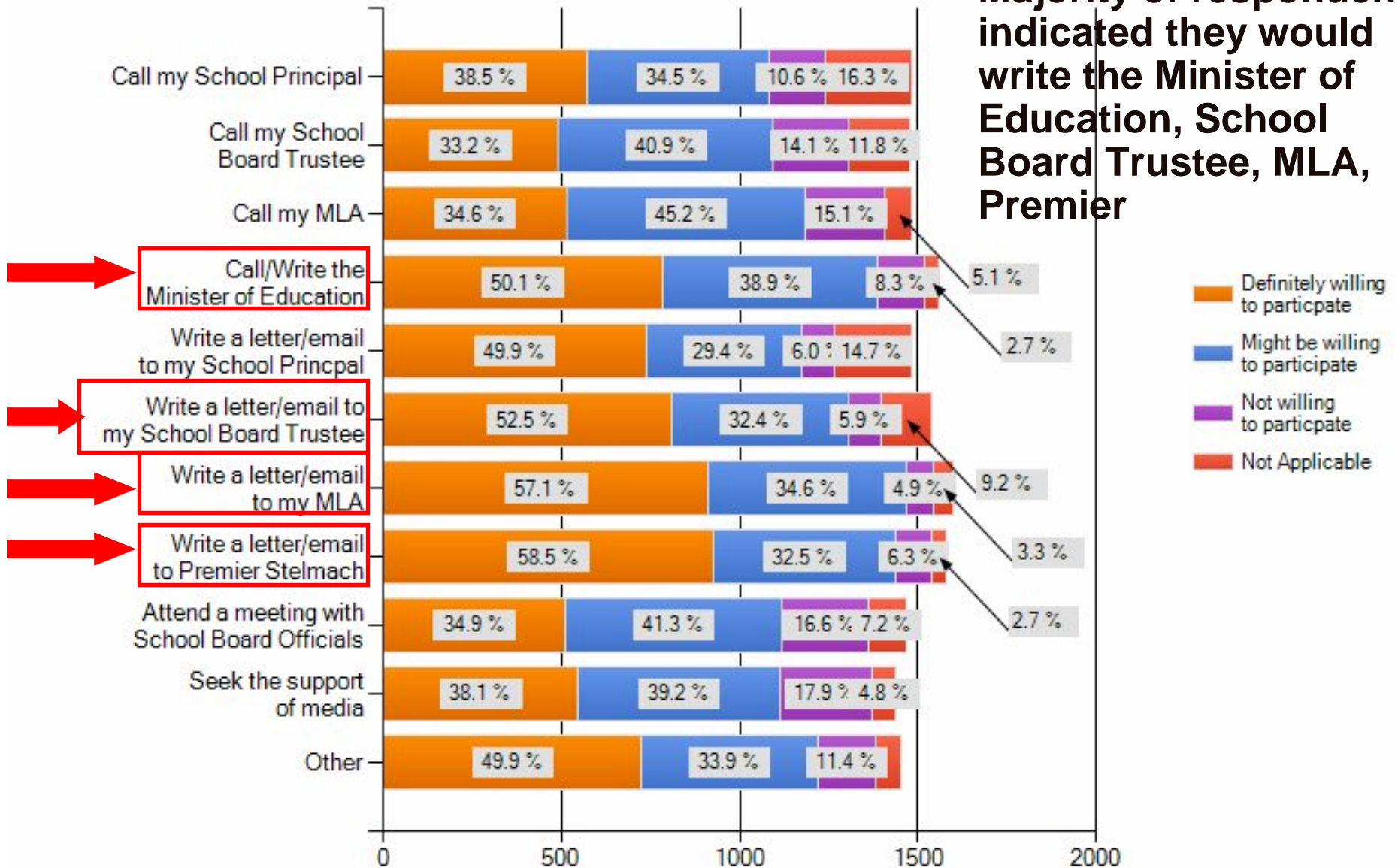


Please advise how concerned you are regarding the proposed changes to the Arts Education (music, drama, dance, visual arts) curriculum.



Please indicate your willingness to participate in the following activities to voice your concern over the proposed changes to Arts Education (music, drama, dance, visual arts):

Majority of respondents indicated they would write the Minister of Education, School Board Trustee, MLA, Premier





Areas of Concern for SOFA

Lyle Bennett

SOFA Co-chair

Areas of Concern for SOFA

- Elementary School focus on “learning through the arts” in an integrated curriculum **“accessible to both the specialist and generalist equally”** implying a watering down of mandatory components.
- Junior High school **addition of an “Arts Exploration” stream** implying project work about the arts rather than active participation in the arts.
- Junior High School Arts Focus stream with **multiple entry points resulting in loss of cohesion, lack of sequential learning and potentially the loss of performance groups.**

Areas of Concern for SOFA

- Senior High School focus on **choice and flexibility at the cost of rigorous spiral learning and skill development** - proposed offering of **25 hour 1-credit** mini-courses with no prerequisites at the 10 level (students would arrive with an unmanageable range of experience and skill).
- **Lack of any reference to sequential learning** from grade to grade or level to level; schools that are not K-6, 7-9 or 10-12; **the fate of current “locally developed courses”** in our schools, which account for much of the current ensemble work; the importance of **Fine Arts specialists**

The background of the slide is a warm, sepia-toned image of a musical score. A pencil is positioned diagonally across the page, pointing towards the bottom right. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, stems, and clefs. Some text from the score is visible, including "A. Sax.", "Cors. / 1", and "Tpts. / 2".

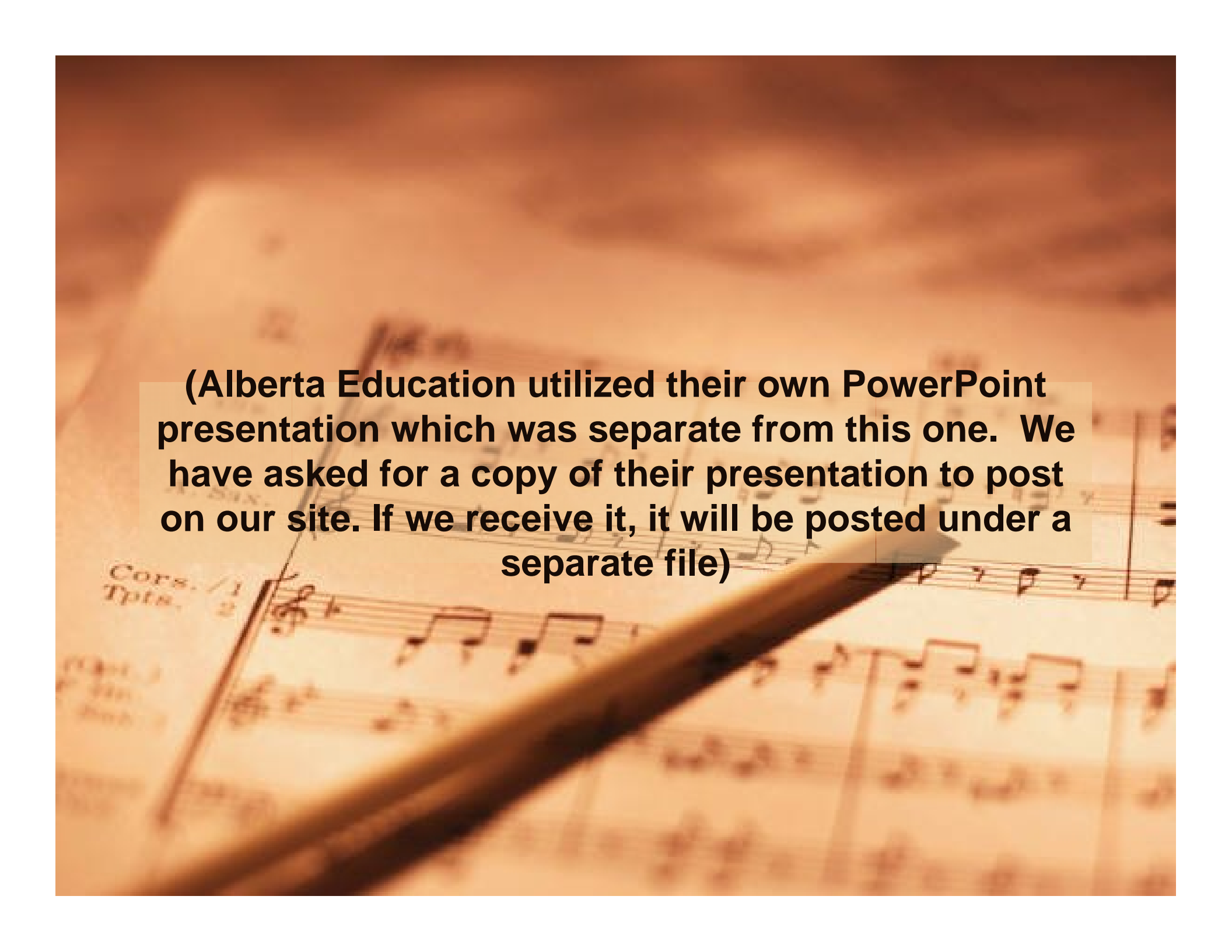
Presentation by Alberta Education

Joan Engel

Curriculum Director, Arts, Communications
and Citizenship

Christine Bouchard – Alberta Education

Shelley Wells – Alberta Education

A close-up, warm-toned photograph of a musical score. A quill pen is resting diagonally across the page. The background is a soft, out-of-focus orange-brown color. The text is centered on the page.

(Alberta Education utilized their own PowerPoint presentation which was separate from this one. We have asked for a copy of their presentation to post on our site. If we receive it, it will be posted under a separate file)

The background of the slide is a warm, sepia-toned photograph of an open music manuscript. A pencil is positioned diagonally across the page, pointing towards the right. The manuscript shows several staves of music with notes and clefs. Some text is visible on the left side, including "A. Sax.", "Cors. / 1", and "Tpts. / 2".

Questions for Alberta Education

Questions submitted via website

Questions from audience members
(1 minute time limit to ask question)

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Lyle B. - Parent

- Motion 505 brought forth by Calgary Edgemont MLA Denis Herard reads: *“Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the Government to consider the benefits of requiring 5 credits in Fine Arts as a condition of high school graduation in the Province of Alberta.”* This motion was passed by a unanimous vote in the Legislature approximately 3 years ago. What is the position of Alberta Education on this motion and will Alberta Ed adopt it soon, or when the new Arts Curriculum is implemented?

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Judy and Jud S. – Parents

- Our daughter wants to be a drama or art teacher. How will any proposed changes in Fine Arts program in the schools affect her future career? Will the schools still require specialists to teach these subjects by the time our daughter graduates in 7 years time?

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Ivea M. - Teacher

- I would like to know, pending proposed changes to the Alberta Curriculum for Arts Education, if specialized programs such as the Performing and Visual Arts Program at Central Memorial High School, will be allowed to continue to operate? Many lives have been dedicated to this fine program over the years, and we want to see it continue for the benefit of our music students, who will not get the same quality experience in performing arts anywhere else in Calgary during their high school years.

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Lyle B. - Parent

- The philosophy that was espoused in the Framework of the K –12 Fine Arts Curriculum Update (the first 10 pages) was excellent and I would assume that you had very little if any criticism of it. If AB Ed truly believes that philosophy and wants Fine Arts to become a more important part of a quality Education in Alberta, I don't see how this can be accomplished when the Fine Arts are considered an option after core subjects, such as Math or Language Arts, and after mandated subjects, such as Phys Ed and a second language, for the limited resources available to school administrators. Is there a possibility of the Fine becoming a mandated or core subject so they can attract a greater priority for timetabling and resources in our provinces schools?

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Tyla V. - Parent

- The closing date for input to your proposed change was Jan. 31, 2010. What further opportunities will there be for input before the changes are implemented?

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Christa M. - Parent

- Why are so many of the Fine Arts courses delivered by the Locally Developed Course method rather than being a part of the regular course of study?

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Sandi W. - Parent

- I understand that the process for approval of Locally Developed Courses (LDC) is being re-evaluated. Will some of the current Fine Arts Courses no longer be offered?

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Sam L. – Student

- The Proposed Program Organization of the Curriculum Update states that at junior high school Arts Exploration and Arts Focus will be offered. I am concerned that an administrator who finds it easier to timetable or wishes to cut his budget or is not particularly supportive of the Arts will decide to offer Arts Exploration only at his school. Can the Curriculum be designed in such a way to eliminate this possibility and ensure that all children will have the option to take an Arts Focus stream at Junior High School?

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Calistra S. – Student

1. We already do not have enough Fine Arts specialists particularly at the Elementary level. Your Update appears to have opened the door even further for erosion of specialists at this level. What can your Curriculum do to encourage School Boards to hire specialists wherever possible at all levels of instruction?

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Bill C. - Parent – Budget Cut Backs

- On Alberta Education's website, there is an FAQ that states the following:

Q Is the Fine Arts Curriculum being revised because of funding cutbacks?

A No. Alberta Education began the process 3 years ago. Current programs of study are more than 20 years old. There is a need for updated curriculum, especially in the areas of dance and multi-disciplinary art forms.

Please explain how Alberta Education can make a statement like this when: Alberta Education is looking at cutting \$80 million dollars out of the Education budget with more expected in 2010 and beyond; and there are not enough specialized fine arts educators now to effectively teach in the schools. Currently many fine arts courses are considered Locally Developed Courses (LDC's) and they have to be renegotiate/approved every 2-3 years. What is stopping the CBE or any other school board from to cut these courses from the curriculum (or not applying for the to be re-approved when they expire) as a cost cutting measure and re-directing the funds to other areas?

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Tess M – Parent

- I live in Deer Ridge area. I have 2 girls in the Public Education system currently attending Queensland Downs Elementary and Wilma Hansen Jr. High. I have recently read several articles about Albert Government's proposed plan to make a cut back of 80 million dollars to our schools this year and 300 million dollars in the next few years with the promise that these cutbacks will not affect the quality of education in the classroom. I cannot accept this promise. We have had enough cutbacks to our system. I feel that these proposed cutbacks are unacceptable. I expect world class education for my children regardless of the oil prices. Our children are our hope and our future. Arts education in schools is vital to our identity. The arts help us celebrate all that is beautiful in our world and allow us to express our deepest human needs. Our children need ample opportunity to hone their artistic, expressive skills in our schools. Please help us sustain the quality of children's education. Our future depends upon it.

(Joan , how do you respond to Tess's concerns?)

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Isabelle E

- How can teachers that have no fine arts training possibly be expected to develop proficiency in teaching Fine Arts, especially Math, Science and ELA teachers, given the extreme pressure they are under to raise the literacy and numeracy level of Alberta students?

Questions for Alberta Education

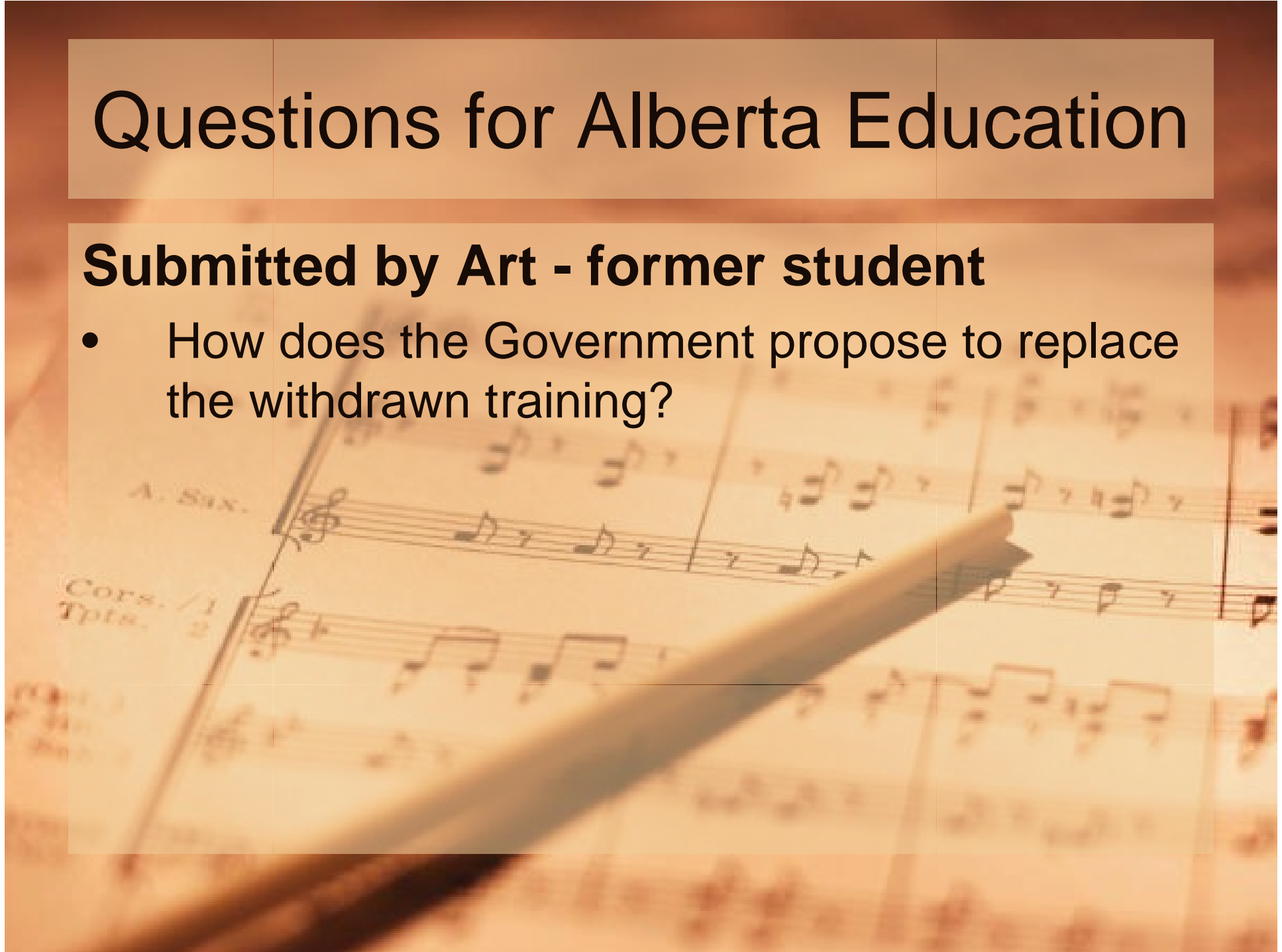
Submitted by Carla - Educator

- If we will retain a comprehensive, separate Arts curriculum for Band, Art and Drama, as the Alberta Education Representative in Edmonton stated Jan. 19th, why is an overview option still included. Why not spend the money revamping the present curricula?

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Art - former student

- How does the Government propose to replace the withdrawn training?



Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Bonnie - Parent

- I would like to know why the sports programs get more attention and support than the fine arts programs. It is just as important for students to develop skills in this area and to have dedicated teachers to provide the level of expertise required. Do they have general education teachers doing the coaching in the hockey and soccer program?

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Robin – Parent

- Can the Alberta Government assure the parents and students, who value all the various forms of Fine Arts in this province, that the present in depth study of the arts (particularly in Jr. and Sr. High school) will not be compromised by the proposed changes to the curriculum? We believe that the mastery of, and success in, these art forms is dependent on each student's ability to go beyond 'dabbling' to a level of true competence and understanding of the art form.

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Katrina – Student

- Why would you decide to change the fine arts program now when students have been enjoying it for years? There haven't been any problems or complaints of how it is being taught as of now, so why decide to change it all of a sudden?

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Ruth - Concerned Citizen

- Given that preparation for public performances is **ESSENTIAL** to band and choir education in high school, **HOW** will one credit modules with no prerequisites in music provide sufficient time and continuity for performance groups to prepare for concerts?

Questions for Alberta Education

Submitted by Jamie - Parent

- As a business owner I greatly appreciate the current economic climate, and the realities of the provincial deficit. During such times, it is all too easy to disproportionately cut the arts as the benefits from such areas appear intangible. Quite frankly – the arts do matter, as they shape who we are as a society. What assurance will there be that any planned program cuts will not be disproportionately born by the arts, and how transparent will the process be?



Questions from the Audience?

(maximum 1 minute time frame to ask your question)



Closing Comments

Lyle Bennett

Co-chair

Next steps for SOFA

- **Continue to build momentum**
 - Continue to build registrants from across Alberta with a focus on drama, visual arts, and dance
 - Fill a number of SOFA Committee positions, including School and Community Liaisons
- **Group of music educators currently developing an alternate curriculum.** This will be given to Alberta Education in early 2010
 - Looking for drama, visual arts, dance educators to work together to propose an alternate curriculum in their area
- **Considering a Fine Arts Showcase** in Calgary within the next 3 – 4 months
- **Look for future opportunities to work with Alberta Education on the revised framework** for fine arts education to ensure it remains an integral part of school curriculum in the future

The background of the slide is a warm, sepia-toned photograph of a music score. A pencil is positioned diagonally across the page, pointing towards the bottom right. The score includes various musical notations such as staves, notes, and clefs. Some text from the score is visible, including "A. Sax." and "Corns. Tpts.". The overall aesthetic is artistic and musical.

Interested in getting involved as a SOFA Committee Member?

**A number of key positions are
available. Check out the signup sheet
in the lobby of this Church for more
details**

The background of the slide is a warm, sepia-toned photograph of a musical score. A pencil is positioned diagonally across the page, pointing towards the bottom right. The score includes various musical notations such as staves, notes, and clefs. Some text from the score is visible, including "A. Sax.", "Cors.", and "Tpts.". The overall aesthetic is artistic and related to music.

Website:
www.saveourfinearts.ca

**If you haven't already, don't forget
to register on our website and check
back regularly for updates**



**Facebook webpage:
Petition Against New Alberta
Fine Arts Curriculum**

Become a 'fan'

**Thank you
for attending!**



WWW.SAVEOURFINEARTS.CA