

The Honorable
New York State _____
Room ____,
Albany, New York _____

Dear Senator/Assemblyman/woman _____:

At its September 2006 meeting, the Board of Regents' agreed to move forward with legislation (the Museum Education Act) amending the education law and arts and cultural affairs law to provide formula funding to chartered museums and historical societies that offer verifiable standards-based educational programming to school children and teachers in grades kindergarten through twelve.

This legislation would also amend the education law to foster innovation in museum education, and amend the arts and cultural affairs law to establish a grant program for performing arts institutions, other cultural organizations and community organizations that conduct curriculum-based educational programs for students and teachers in grades kindergarten through twelve. An appropriation of \$30 million is sought to fund this program.

The key elements of the Museum Education Act are these:

- the legislation is an extension of the State Education Department's work with the Regents; it supports the new standards
- the legislation is about helping chartered museums and historical societies to be more accountable stewards and educators
- the legislation recognizes for the first time that museums and historical societies are active participants in NYS' community of education
- the legislation is ultimately about improving student performance

New York State is blessed with one of the largest and most diverse museum communities in the country. Museums and historic sites can be found in every region of the state. While many of our museums are world-renowned, all are significant to their local and regional communities. New York State's museums serve as critical resources for students, teachers, and life-long learners. Each year, museums offer more than six million school children opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to participate in the twenty-first century knowledge economy by providing experiential, curriculum-based programs that expand classroom lessons and supplement literacy programs.

(Add your story about your educational programming and what a difference formula funding would make to your institution.)

As part of the Board of Regents' P-16 strategy, collaborations among formal education institutions, libraries, museums, performing arts centers, businesses and social service agencies are envisioned. Together, USNY and its collaborators can improve student performance and close critical achievement gaps. A key element in the success of these collaborations will be the passage of the Museum Education Act.

I am writing on behalf of (name of your institution) to urge your support of formula funding as an important step in helping chartered institutions meet the rigors of the new standards.

Sincerely,