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Austin Update

BY ELIZABETH AMES JONES

Support the Texas Music Project

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Studies have shown that exposing children to music education provides a plethora of positive side effects. To name a few, children receiving music education score better on tests, have a better vocabulary, and when combined with the positive effects of playing in a band or an orchestra, are better able to work as a team. There are also some benefits that cannot be measured. It is hard to measure the longterm quality-of-life enhancements that the love and appreciation of music brings to the human soul.

It was a privilege for me last spring to author HB 2582, which establishes the Texas Music Project. The new law designates funds for music education for Texas school children in a unique and creative way. Senator Wentworth carried the bill in the Senate. The Texas Music Project is a long-term statewide initiative to strengthen and restore music education in schools while raising awareness of the benefits of a music education. In conjunction with the Texas music industry, the State of Texas, the Texas Music Educators Association, the Texas Commission on the Arts and the Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education, the Social Marketing Resource Center, a 501(c)(3) non-profit marketing organization, will lead this project to create meaningful music education programs and to provide funding for public schools that demonstrate both need and a commitment to a rigorous, full-time music education curriculum.

And how will the money be raised? Thanks to the participation of some of Texas' finest musical talent, the first in a series of annual CDs has just hit the shelves, showcasing both recognized and emerging Texas musicians who share the Texas Music Project's goal of strengthening music education in Texas schools. Implementing a public awareness campaign entitled, "Don't Mess with Texas Music," the Texas Music Project will also produce benefit music performances, such as an upcoming performance at Bass Hall in Fort Worth. Monies raised will go into a dedicated fund and the Texas Commission on the Arts will make grants to approved schools. This is truly a public-private partnership working for the betterment of Texas children!

Corporate sponsors include Starbucks, and you can find the CD there and at a variety of other retailers, including food markets, across the state. For more information about this project or to buy one or 100 CDs to give or to sell as a fundraiser item, please visit www.texasmusicproject.org. As always, please contact my office to assist you in any way.

State Rep. Elizabeth Ames Jones, who represents District 121, can be reached at her Capitol office, 512-463-0686.