



Statement by the Music Education Policy Roundtable On *Strong Start for America's Children Act 2015*

On May 19, 2015, Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate's Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, introduced the "Strong Start for America's Children Act of 2015," legislation that would vastly expand quality early childhood and preschool programs. In conjunction, a sister bill is being introduced in the U.S. House of Representative's Education and the Workforce Committee, led by Ranking Member Bobby Scott (D-VA-03) and Richard Hanna (R-NY-24).

If enacted, this bill develops a 10-year innovative federal-state partnership directing the U.S. Secretary of Education to expand and allot matching grants to states to sub-grant local educational agencies to implement high-quality prekindergarten programs for children from low-income families earning below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). These sub-grants provided for local educational agencies include licensed child care settings and Head Start programs, which must meet the following requirements:

- Teachers with high qualifications who are paid comparably to K-12 teachers;
- Rigorous health and safety standards;
- Small class sizes and low child-to-staff ratios;
- Instruction that is evidence-based and is developmentally appropriate;
- Evidence-based child-staff comprehensive services for children, including strong parent and family engagement, nutritious meals, and health screening and referrals.

Most importantly to the Music Education Policy Roundtable, the bill also addresses access to music and arts education, where states must establish early learning guidelines that include "creative arts expression," as well as demonstrate that they are encouraging eligible local entities to coordinate with community-based resources, such as arts and arts education programs.

The Music Education Policy Roundtable is issuing its formal support for this bill and would like to take this opportunity to commend these Congressional Members for prioritizing the development and implementation of high-quality prekindergarten programs. Millions of young children from low-income families lack access to high-quality and affordable preschool programs. Decades of studies have found that quality preschool leads to a wide range of short and long-term benefits, including better educational outcomes, stronger job earnings, and lower levels of crime and delinquency, especially for children in “at-risk” environments. Furthermore, the inclusion of music education at a prekindergarten level has been shown to improve children’s oral vocabulary and understanding of grammar, as demonstrated by research at the [University at Buffalo](#).

We thank the Congressional Members and the Committees’ consideration for this bill, and look forward to working and furthering the dialogue.

Sincerely,

The Music Education Policy Roundtable

**American String Teachers Association
National Association for Music Education
American Choral Directors Association
American Orff-Schulwerk Association
American School Band Directors Association
Barbershop Harmony Society
Chorus America
College Band Directors National Association
Drum Corps International
Education Through Music
El Sistema USA: A National Alliance of El Sistema
The Gordon Institute for Music Learning
Guitar and Accessories Marketing Association, Inc.
GRAMMY Foundation
iSchoolMusic.org
Jazz at Lincoln Center**

**League of American Orchestras
Little Kids Rock
Music for All
Music Teachers National Association
Music Publishers Association
National Association of Music Merchants
National Association of Music Parents
National Music Council
Organization of American Kodály Educators
Percussive Arts Society
Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia
Quadrant Arts Education Research
The Recording Academy
Strathmore Hall Foundation
VH1 Save The Music Foundation**