



**The Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network  
Names the Recipients of**

**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts  
*National Schools of Distinction in Arts Education Award*  
For the 2010-2011 School Year**

**Forest Heights Academy of Excellence – Baton Rouge, LA  
Mountain Pointe High School – Phoenix, AZ  
Power Academic and Performing Arts Complex – Jackson, MS  
Tacoma School of the Arts – Tacoma, WA**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts today announced the recipients of its national awards program honoring outstanding school arts programs. Four schools were chosen as *John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts National Schools of Distinction in Arts Education* for their work during the 2010-2011 school year. The award recognizes schools that have made the arts an essential part of their students' education. Each school will receive a two thousand dollar award to support their arts education program.

The winners of the award were selected from the schools nominated by their State Alliance for Arts Education, including Louisiana Partnership for the Arts, Arizona Alliance for Arts Education, Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education, and ArtsEd Washington/Washington Alliance for Arts Education. All schools provide instruction in visual arts, music, dance, and theater, and they integrate the arts into other subject areas. Selection criteria at the national level includes a review of the ways in which arts education is an essential component of the school curriculum; how the program creates and uses imaginative learning environments for teaching and learning in, through and about the arts; how the arts program provides opportunities for parental involvement in education; how the program provides opportunities for learning about other cultures through the arts; and how the program links arts education to community cultural resources.

This awards program is one of two offered by the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network (KCAEN), a coalition of thirty-four statewide, not-for-profit organizations that work with the Kennedy Center to improve access to and quality in arts education for all children. The second award is the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education and National School Boards Association Award, which is conferred upon one school board annually for support of arts education in its district.

***The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts  
National Schools of Distinction in Arts Education Award Winners***

**Forest Heights Academy of Excellence; Grades Pre-K-5; Baton Rouge, LA**

Serving the North Baton Rouge community since its creation in 2004, Forest Heights Academy of Excellence provides predominately low income students with high quality, innovative instruction. A dedicated academic and arts magnet, Forest Heights' teachers and arts faculty collaborate regularly, developing ways of using arts integration to enhance student performance at every level, in every lesson. Forest Heights' campus includes an arts complex; dance, choral, instrumental music and visual art studios; and a Black Box theater classroom, in addition to its main building classrooms and performing arts auditorium. All students in Pre-K through Fifth grade receive weekly arts instruction from certified arts specialists in studio settings that reinforce classroom curriculum while developing students' understanding of the various art forms. Classroom teachers continue students' instruction in the different arts disciplines, using studio techniques to engage students and enhance core curriculum comprehension. The U.S. and Louisiana Departments of Education; the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism; and the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge are among the agencies that have recognized Forest Heights as a leader in successful academic-based arts integration. They have been awarded repeated National Blue Ribbon Awards, designated as a High Performance-High Poverty School for three consecutive years, and named one of the top five performing schools in the parish. Forest Heights is one of eight schools selected to participate in Louisiana's ICI Initiative, a four-year arts integrated pilot program that supports schools with a mission of nurturing creativity in every learner through an integrated arts education. This program has provided Forest Heights with full-faculty professional development, strategic planning focused on arts integration, and an artist residency focused on integrating theater with English language arts.

**Mountain Pointe High School; Grades 9-12; Phoenix, AZ**

Since opening its doors in 1991, Mountain Pointe High School (MPHS) has dedicated itself to being a world-class school. By design, MPHS has been driven by three guiding principles presented in the school's vision: *Establishing Purpose*, *Instilling Pride* and *Empowering Performance, One Person at a Time*. These principles are consistently evident in the areas of academics, arts, athletics, activities and attitudes. *Establishing Purpose* is clearly articulated in their continual academic success, receiving an Excelling label from the state each year since 2004-2005. *Instilling Pride* begins with a campus where students are given multiple opportunities to flourish and get involved. A comprehensive visual and performing arts program is one facet of the school, where students can find their path towards success in a variety of ways. Senior Jessica Plate sums up her theater experience by stating, "Theater is a place where everyone is welcome. You can have fun and be whoever you want!" By *Empowering Performance* students are encouraged to become high performers who both respect and desire quality. This dedication can be found within MPHS arts programs. The Lionheart Marching band brings home caption awards and continual high marks in state band competitions. The music programs have traveled to Boston (2007), San Francisco (2004) and to Hollywood for the 1997 Christmas Parade. Dance students are invited to perform and teach around the community and have traveled to New York City for master classes. The Jazz Choir, Theater One Act and Wind Ensemble have earned Superior and Excellent ratings in recent state competitions. The Visual Art students have earned National Scholastic Art Awards, numerous local art ribbons and scholarships and cash prizes in commercial art competitions. In 2009-2010 MPHS became an A+ School of Excellence in Arizona and was the recipient of the Phoenix Mayor's Excellence in Arts Education Award. Arts are a vital part of the success of Mountain Pointe and that is why they maintain their commitment to quality arts experiences for every student.

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### **Power Academic and Performing Arts Complex; Grades 4-12; Jackson, MS**

Power Academic and Performing Arts Complex (APAC) is a magnet school located in Jackson, Mississippi. It began as a collaborative effort in 1981 when Jackson Public Schools received one of 24 performing arts grants issued from the federal Emergency School Aid Act, allocating over \$1.2 million over a three-year period. Doors opened to students in January 1982 with Senator Thad Cochran and Mississippi author Eudora Welty included in the historic opening ceremony. Over 16,000 students have been accepted to Power APAC through academic assessment and performing arts auditions. Students in grades 4-12 are provided an academically challenging curriculum and arts instruction in dance, music, theater arts, and visual arts. Over 84% of the students are academically gifted as well as arts talented. Visitors to Power APAC become fully awakened as every sensory receptor is stimulated by the vibrant environment rich with deep, individual interpretations through all visual, theatrical, dance and musical arts. As one parent of students at Power APAC has expressed, “Because of the expert training received at Power APAC, my children are constantly making connections between the arts and their traditional academic subjects. The best way for me to express to you what the arts do for my children and their education is that the arts completely feed their spirits.” Students cherish moments to share their art forms with others. Their arts teachers are active performers in their art areas, and their academic teachers are teacher trainers, presenters, and lecturers. Power APAC is a true cycle of teaching and continual learning experiences. Power APAC, a STAR School of Excellence, continues to empower students to climb from the valley of ordinary to the mountaintops of limitless possibilities through their unique talents.

### **Tacoma School of the Arts; Grades 10-12; Tacoma, WA**

Tacoma School of the Arts (SOTA) is a small school that offers a creative path of learning, which emphasizes human expression through the visual and performing arts as central elements in academic achievement and lifelong endeavors. The school addresses contemporary issues for today’s youth, by fostering relevant education and learning objectives through student-centered learning topics. Curriculum is delivered through project-based experiences that link classroom activities to the world at large. It is located in the city’s urban core amongst its cultural institutions. SOTA is an arts focused high school program that includes a full selection of visual and performing arts as part of the academic day. Students typically take eight classes that include all classes necessary to graduate from high school and begin college. Students enter as sophomores and choose one of nine art majors (dance, theater, vocal music, traditional music, alternative music, audio recording and songwriting, painting and drawing, graphics, photography, and video) around which academic studies focus.

## **THE KENNEDY CENTER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

As the nation’s performing arts center, the Kennedy Center’s impact and responsibility extends far beyond its doors—it reaches across America and into the future. Nowhere is this goal more truly achieved than in the Center’s education programs.

For nearly 40 years, the Kennedy Center Education Department has provided quality arts experiences for students, teachers, families, and the general public throughout the United States. In the past year, the Center’s education programs have directly impacted more than 11 million people. The mission of the Education Department is to foster understanding of and participation in the performing arts through exemplary programs and performances for diverse populations of all ages that represent the unique cultural life and heritage of the United States.

The resources of the Department focus on producing, presenting, and touring performances and educational events for young people and their families; school- and community-based residencies and

other programs that directly impact teachers, students, administrators, and artists through professional development; systemic and school improvement through the arts and arts integrated curricula; partnerships; creating and providing educational materials via print and the Internet; the development of careers in the arts for young people and aspiring professionals; and strengthening the management of arts organizations.

The programs of the Education Department have become models for communities across the country and have unlocked the door to learning for millions of young people. This has been accomplished by fostering creativity, teaching discipline, improving self-esteem, and challenging students to think in new ways, as well as offering them experiences in the pure enjoyment and excitement of the performing arts. For more information, visit the Center's web site at [www.kennedy-center.org/education](http://www.kennedy-center.org/education).

### **KENNEDY CENTER ALLIANCE FOR ARTS EDUCATION NETWORK**

The Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network (KCAAEN) is a coalition of statewide, non-profit organizations working in partnership with the Kennedy Center to support policies, practices, and partnerships to ensure that the arts are a critical and essential part of American education. The KCAAEN is a component of the Kennedy Center's Education Department.

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