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**KANSAS LEADERS SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE
IN PRESTIGIOUS ARTS EDUCATION INSTITUTE**

Topeka, Kan. – Representatives from Kansas were selected to participate in the sixth National Endowment for the Arts Education Leaders Institute. The Institute will convene decision-makers from state education departments, state arts agencies, along with educators, artists, public policy, business and philanthropic leaders to put arts education at the center of discussion on education policy. The event will take place May 11-13, 2011, in Chicago, Ill.

Representatives from Kansas are:

- Christine Downey-Schmidt, Kansas Board of Regents
- Saralyn Reece Hardy, director of the Spencer Museum of Art
- Kathryn Hund, director of workforce training and education services at the Kansas Department of Commerce
- Henry Schwaller, chairman of the Kansas Arts Commission and instructor at Fort Hays State University
- Margaret Weisbrod Morris, arts education program manager, Kansas Arts Commission
- Tom Foster, director of career, standards and assessment services at the Kansas Department of Education

Kansas would not have been able to participate in this prestigious and competitive opportunity without a state arts agency. On March 16, the Kansas Senate voted, 24 to 13, to pass a resolution opposing Governor Sam Brownback's Executive Reorganization Order to eliminate the Kansas Arts Commission.

“Arts education is proven to keep students in school, increase high school graduation rates and prepare students for college and for the careers of the 21st century,” said Henry Schwaller, chairman of the Kansas Arts Commission. “The new economy requires a workforce that will be highly disciplined, innovative, creative and focused.

“These are the traits the arts teach,” said Schwaller. “If Kansas wants to stay competitive in the future job market, the state needs to direct its efforts on strengthening arts education initiatives.”

Funded by the NEA, the Institute allows a forum for discussion on shared arts education challenges, and creates strategies to strengthen states’ arts education policies. Participants will discuss solutions for intractable issues, such as improving networks of educators and arts professionals, fostering innovative approaches to curriculum design and implementation, and sustaining and increasing public arts education at the district, state and national levels.

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector. To join the discussion on how art works, visit the NEA at www.arts.gov.

The Kansas Arts Commission is a state agency, funded by the State of Kansas and the National Endowment for the Arts, dedicated to promoting and supporting the arts in Kansas. Its mission is to provide opportunities for the people of Kansas to experience, celebrate and value the arts throughout their lives. For more information on the Kansas Arts Commission, please visit the KAC website at <http://arts.ks.gov>.

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