



## California Arts Advocacy Toolkit LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The arts are an integral part of education.

Most students, however, don't receive enough education in the arts, and in fact, don't even meet state requirements.

The state of California education code defines the arts as a core subject, and outlines standards within four disciplines: music, dance, theater and visual arts. The state even lays out what each student should know and practice at each grade level.

Yet most schools are falling short of standards. A recent SRI International study called "An Unfinished Canvas" reported that fully 89 percent of K-12 schools fail to offer a standards-based course of study in the four arts disciplines. The report identifies common causes of the problem: lack of funding, lack of teacher training and inadequate facilities.

California's policy makers have set the standard for arts instruction. It's up to each district to follow through. We, as administrators, owe it to our children to make sure that all schools develop, implement and sustain lively arts programs for all students.

The arts are part of a complete education. We can do better.

*-California School Administrator*

The arts in education are important because they benefit our children, our schools and our communities. The arts fuel a child's imagination and creativity, exposes children to a variety of cultures, and teaches them how to be empathetic, tolerant and collaborative. Arts in education helps better prepare our children for college and the workforce by giving them the necessary skills—innovation, creativity and imagination to be successful and competitive in today's global market. A comprehensive arts curriculum nurtures a collaborative school culture, building a sense of community within a school, and creates ties to surrounding communities.

The state of California mandates that all children receive an education in the arts as part of their complete curriculum, yet according to a recent SRI International study called "An Unfinished Canvas" California schools are failing our children. The study reports that elementary students who receive arts education in California typically have a limited, less substantial experience than their peers across the country. Our state sets the standard for arts instruction. Yet our schools aren't following through. We as parents need to demand that all of our children receive the well-rounded education they deserve.

*-California Parent*

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