



California Arts Advocacy Toolkit LETTER TO LAWMAKER

Dear Lawmaker,

There is a proven recognition that the 4th R, the arts, along with reading, writing and arithmetic, teach our children lifelong skills.

Fueling a student's imagination and creativity, the arts enhances a student's problem-solving and critical thinking skills which aids their learning in other subject areas. An education in the arts exposes students to a variety of cultures while enriching their learning experience and teaching them how to be empathetic, tolerant and open to working with others, all necessary skills for success in a multi-cultural society.

California policy makers have recognized the arts as a core-required course, as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 did at the federal level, and they have created content standards in the arts stating what each student should know and be able to do at each grade level in the various art disciplines of music, dance, theater, and visual arts.

Yet though arts education is required and the standards are outlined in the California State Education Code, the code does not require schools to follow these standards and leaves the implementation of arts education at the discretion of each school district.

Therefore, most students do not receive instruction in the arts at the level required by the state's policy. Most schools haven't implemented a comprehensive arts program into their curriculum because other subjects are given higher priority. Also, most arts programs suffer due to a lack of funding, under-prepared teachers, and inadequate facilities.

Recently California's policy-makers signed into law \$105 million in ongoing funds to support instruction and \$500 million in one time funds for equipment, supplies and professional development to restore arts education in all California public schools. This is a giant first step for the arts. In order to fully maximize this funding we need to encourage school districts to strategize their spending to ensure that all students are able to benefit from this funding.

We ask you to support arts in education by encouraging the schools in your district to create an effective plan of implementation that includes:

- Hiring of qualified teachers
- Standards-based professional development for teachers
- A standards-based curriculum
- An ongoing assessment of student learning and evaluation of programs
- Instructional resources to support standards-based arts education

By helping the school districts maximize this funding we can make sure that all students in all schools receive the well-rounded arts education they deserve.

-Supporters of the Arts in Education

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