



California Arts Advocacy Toolkit SPEECH

Welcome!

Today I am here to talk to you about the arts and preparing our students for success in the 21st century.

It is known that the three R's, reading, writing and arithmetic, are the fundamentals of an elementary education and are essential components in a child's development. Yet, there is a much neglected 4th R that is a critical component of education, and brings with it many benefits to our children, our schools, and our community.

That 4th R is Art.

The arts teach our children more than just how to dance, sing, act or paint. The arts facilitate a student's learning in all subject areas and stimulate their imagination and creativity, which enhances their problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

The arts create a fun and creative atmosphere. A comprehensive arts curriculum nurtures a collaborative school culture, which builds a sense of community within a school and creates ties to the community. It has been shown through several studies that a well-rounded arts education program increases students' attendance and behavior, which creates a stronger learning environment for all of our students.

The arts expose students to a variety of cultures, which not only enriches their learning experience but expands their worldview and teaches them how to have empathy, how to be tolerant, and how to be open to working with others. All of these are necessary skills to be successful and to thrive in our multi-cultural society.

The arts prepare our children for their future careers by providing them with skills – such as innovation, creativity and imagination – to be competitive in today's global market.

We believe that the arts are an integral part of a comprehensive, core curriculum. Our state has set the standard for arts instruction by recognizing the arts as a core-required course. The California State Education Code has even 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.

So, there is awareness of the benefits of the 4th R, art—the benefits it brings our students, at many levels—emotionally, academically, and professionally. We know how an arts education benefits our schools, our communities, and all of our futures as we send creative, imaginative, and innovative well-rounded students out into the working world, prepared to tackle any task. Now, we as parents, as teachers, administrators, lawmakers and community members owe it to our children to stress the importance of a well-rounded education that includes the 4th R, art, for all of our children, in all classrooms, in each and every school across our state.

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