

SMARTS

Bring back the arts! To our schools. To our children.

California State PTA Newsletter

May 2018

SMARTS, Parents for the Arts Network is California State PTA's program to encourage arts education.

Please spread the word about the benefits of arts education for all of California's K-12 students.

Para leer este en español, haga clic [aquí](#).

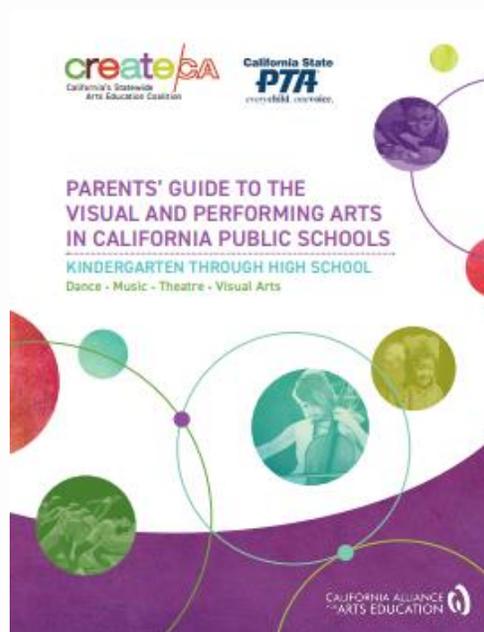
Understanding the Visual and Performing Arts Standards

California State PTA – in partnership with Create CA – is pleased to launch the Parents' Guide to the Visual and Performing Arts in California Public Schools. This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn in the arts disciplines of dance, music, theatre and the visual arts by the end of each grade level.

By asking about the arts program at your child's school, you are showing your interest in all students, not just the "talented," having the opportunity to express their unique individuality through creating and learning in and through the arts.

The guide includes:

- A snapshot of your child as they experience the arts in their classroom at each grade level
- Questions to ask the teacher about your child's progress in arts learning and about the school's arts program
- Ideas for what you can do to help your child learn in the arts at school, at home and in the community
- And much more!



Learn more and download the full guide or download by grade level at www.capta.org/understanding-the-visual-and-performing-arts-standards.

Special Education and the Arts

Integrating the arts into special education classrooms is extremely beneficial for students with special needs. Art helps students with their self-expression, life skills, literacy and coordination. Anne Minnich-Beck, director of education at the Indianapolis Art Center, reports that children with special needs run into more failures and

disappointments in life than other children. But she says art is a great way for kids with special needs to find success in life.

By knowing what some of the benefits of special education and art integration are, parents and educators can find inspiration to introduce art into their school's curriculum. Bringing art into special education classrooms helps children:

- Explore racial and cultural identity
- Improve behavior
- Develop coordination
- Improve social skills
- And much more



Learn more from Classroom, an online education resource, at www.classroom.synonym.com.

Focusing on the Arts at Convention

This April, PTA leaders and members, along with community members and educators from across the state, gathered in Ontario for our annual convention, where the arts were heavily featured. Performance groups from local high schools delighted attendees before three of the general sessions with singing, ballet folklorico dancing and a jazz band. California State PTA President Dianna MacDonald even had dance breaks and AC/DC music playing during her introduction!

One of the workshops focused on eight different subject areas relating to the arts, including special education and the arts, careers in arts, the creative brain, School Smarts and the Arts Education Data Project. Participants were able to rotate through and visit five of the tables to get information to take back to their units. Everyone in attendance learned a great deal from the experts.

The Family Arts Experience at convention modeled an arts night that PTAs could replicate at their schools. Attendees were lucky to have Street Beat, a performance group from the Segerstrom Center, share their unique percussion and dance assembly. Participants were encouraged to dance and chant along, while several people got to join them on stage to play along.



California State PTA always supports the arts in education – in schools and in the community. Special thanks to the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation for their support of these wonderful programs.

Put Your Arts Plan Into Action

Successful arts education programs are responsive to and reflective of their communities, and share these key elements:

- Provide strong leadership and support
- Gather local data
- Set clear goals
- Build capacity with stakeholders
- Expand resources
- Make arts learning visible



The time is NOW to encourage your school district to look at arts education as a significant strategy to address student engagement and achievement in California schools!

Download, print and share this free PTA resource – available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) – with parents, families, administrators and your school community! This is a great conversation starter to take with you to your Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) or Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) meetings.

Jump-Starting Arts Education

Senate Bill 933 (Allen) will award grants to school districts to enhance and jump-start arts education. Arts education is often mistaken as an extra in schools – something that is nice to have but not essential. This unfortunate view has resulted in enormous cuts to the arts in our schools. The California Education Code states that every K-12 student shall receive instruction in and access to arts education. Yet the California Arts Education Data Project finds that only 38 percent of students in California public school have access to the arts, which is significantly lower in low-income and rural schools.

California supports SB 933 to help schools refocus on the importance of arts education. If arts in schools are important to your child's well rounded education, please be sure to contact your local legislators to ask them to vote to support this bill. Stay tuned for further updates!

**Do you have an amazing arts program at your school?
Email arts@capta.org and share your story.**

This message is being sent to the SMARTS Parents for the Arts Network as well as unit, council and district PTA presidents. Please feel free to forward this message to your members and other interested parties.

