



10 Important Things to Know About Arts Education in California

California is falling behind. For the past thirty years arts education in California's schools has been disappearing at an alarming rate. Between 1999 and 2004, student enrollment in music education declined by 47%. The state's recent fiscal crisis has resulted in still more dramatic cuts to visual and performing arts education programs.

Extensive research has demonstrated that arts education engages students in learning, contributes to higher test scores and reduces truancy and dropout rates.

Teaching creativity and the arts contributes to higher test scores across the board in every subject area.

Arts education helps prepare our students for the expectations of the twenty-first century workforce, which include the ability to innovate, communicate and collaborate. California industries like film and entertainment, software and design all require workers who are well-educated and creative.

A recent Harris Poll shows that a resounding **93% of Americans consider the arts to be vital to providing a well-rounded education** for children and a critical link to learning and success.

As schools have felt increasing pressure from standardized tests and federal mandates to spend more time on reading and math, school curricula is narrowing in focus, leading to a **22% reduction in the amount of time spent on arts and music instruction.**

Arts education is mandated in our State Education Code for pupils in grades 1-12, in the disciplines of dance, music, theater and visual arts. The code does not mandate schools to follow these content standards, which leaves implementation of arts education to the discretion of each school district.

Due to the efforts of parents who value arts programs, **privately funded high quality programs have been maintained in wealthier school districts.** But a child's access to arts education should not be predicated by where they happen to live.

Until school districts have confidence that new arts education funding is ongoing, they will be reluctant to invest in hiring and training teachers. **We need to secure ongoing funding for sequential, standards-based arts education for all children in grades K-12.**

Your commitment to supporting arts education in our schools will make a difference. ***We ask your support in helping to ensure that arts education becomes part of the core curriculum that every child receives as part of a quality education!***