

ARTS EDUCATION

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 6, 1998

Reviewed by Board of Managers March 2009

- WHEREAS,** The California State PTA and the National PTA have a long history of commitment to promotion of cultural arts and have encouraged their constituent organizations to strengthen arts curriculum in the schools; and
- WHEREAS,** Educational research shows that arts education greatly enhances learning and studies have shown that arts improve the academic achievement of high risk students; and
- WHEREAS,** According to the College Entrance Examination Board, students of the arts outperform non-arts educated peers on measures of academic ability (in 1995 SAT scores of students who studied arts for more than four years were 59 points higher on the verbal portion and 44 points higher on the math portion than were the scores of students with no course work or experience in the arts); and
- WHEREAS,** A study conducted by UCLA found higher levels of student involvement and educational achievement among high school students taking advanced arts courses; and
- WHEREAS,** The National Endowment for the Arts 1997 report reveals that serious and systematic arts instruction appears to be the exception rather than the rule for most students, and that arts education appears to be imperiled; and
- WHEREAS,** The 1997 Report of the California State Superintendent’s Task Force on the Visual and Performing Arts finds that throughout California today arts education programs are underfunded, understaffed and undervalued; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts support the goal established by the California State Superintendent’s Task Force on the Visual and Performing Arts that “All students in California public schools have high-quality arts education programs from pre-kindergarten through grade twelve;” and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts support measures that would guarantee funding for high-quality arts education programs from pre-kindergarten through grade twelve and require that such programs be included in the school curriculum; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to promote public understanding of the importance of the study of arts to high academic achievement and to a vibrant, productive society.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

In the 1988 convention resolution “Arts Education,” the California State PTA recognized the importance of the study of art to a vibrant, productive society. Recent educational research documents that arts education greatly enhances learning for all children and leads to higher academic achievement. *(This resolution updates and replaces the 1988 “Arts Education” resolution.)*

The National Endowment for the Arts, The President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, and the California State Superintendent’s Task Force Report on the Visual and Performing Arts all conclude that arts education is underfunded, understaffed and undervalued.

In California, arts education programs are frequently the first items cut out of budgets at times of recession. Even when the recession ends, these programs are not always fully restored.

According to the California State Superintendent’s Task Force Report, “Arts education in California has been in a state of continuing crisis for decades, partly because of funding shortages throughout the State’s education system since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978.”

Even after Proposition 98 (which passed in 1988) guaranteed a minimum level of funding for the schools, the Task Force finds:

- In a majority of school districts, only 10 to 25 per cent of students participate in some form of arts education.
- California ranks 50th among the states in the ratio of music teachers to students.

The report adds that without a broad base of support an educational initiative for the arts is likely to be superseded by other pressing needs.

The California State PTA has always held that Proposition 98 must provide a floor, not a ceiling, for educational funding. In addition to traditional state support out of Proposition 98 funds, innovative options must be created to support arts education. These options might include expanded government funding, designated tax revenue, and grants from foundations, organizations, business/industry and individuals.

It is important for the PTA to publicly recognize the connection between arts education and academic performance and commit the organization to supporting a guarantee for funding.