

March is Arts Education Month!

10 Important Things to Know About Arts Education in California

1. **There's good news:** Governor Schwarzenegger signed into law in 2006 and again in 2007 the largest investment in music and arts education programs in the history of our country -- currently \$109 million in ongoing funds and \$500 million in one-time funds, shared with physical education. These funds are now being used to plan and implement arts education in schools and districts throughout the state.
2. **Much more support for arts education is needed.** For the past 30 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%. This new funding, though significant, **is only a down payment** on what it will take to restore arts education for California's students.
3. **Extensive research has demonstrated that arts education promotes basic academic skills** and helps develop well-rounded students, who are able to think clearly, express their thoughts and solve complex problems.
4. **Arts education helps prepare our students for the expectations of the 21 century workforce**, which require effective communication skills, adaptability to changing situations, and the ability to work effectively with others.
5. A Harris Poll released in June 2005 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.
6. As schools have felt increasing pressure 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.**
7. **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 require schools to follow these content standards, which leaves implementation of arts education to the discretion of each school district.
8. Due to the efforts of parents who value arts programs, **privately funded high quality programs have been maintained in wealthier school districts.** But childrens access to arts education should not be predicated by where they happen to live.
9. 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.**
10. Your commitment to supporting arts education in our schools will make a difference. ***Find out how the new funding is being spent in your district and raise your voice to help ensure ongoing arts education funding in the coming fiscal year!***

*Information provided by the **California Alliance for Arts Education**
www.artsed411.org/*