



Learning the Arts is Academic

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School districts in North County recently hit a high note when they were recognized by the California Alliance for Arts Education for enhancing student scholastic experience through robust arts education programs. The results were 'music to the ears' of San Marcos, San Pasqual and Vista Unified School Districts when students recently performed at the San Diego Museum of Art during the Alliance's award celebration. The economic recession's impact on school district finances has left arts education programs, including music, drama, dance, and visual arts underfunded. With budgets now stabilized, some school districts have restored their investment in arts education.

Each school district was cited for their work to develop strategic plans that will bring more arts education to their students. Studies have found that integrating the arts with other subjects can help raise achievement levels. They point to students who regularly participate in the arts and note improvement in their overall scores in academic subjects.

On hand to receive awards for their districts were: San Marcos Unified School District Board Member Stacy Carlson; Vista Unified School District Assistant Superintendent Sherry Opacic; and San Pasqual Unified School District Superintendent Shannon

Hargrave. Accolades were also showered on Vista Unified's music educator Ann Fennell. Ann was recently honored as a finalist for the Grammy's 2015 Music Educator Award. Prior to the awards celebration, her student steel-drum ensemble entertained over 400 in the museum's Sculpture Garden.

All award recipients were quick to credit supportive parents, teachers, artists, community organizations, businesses and donors as the collective rock on which their programs are built. I am proud to recognize those in my district whose vision, vocation and talent are dedicated to student learning and inclusive of strong arts programs.

Assemblymember Marie Waldron, R-Escondido, represents the 75th Assembly District in the California Legislature, which includes the communities of Bonsall, Escondido, Fallbrook, Hidden Meadows, Rainbow, San Marcos, Temecula, Valley Center, and Vista.