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California Arts Council Invests In Student Voices

Student Voices Campaign will develop resources for classroom engagement, student leadership training and a digital empowerment forum and screening

SACRAMENTO - Just weeks after the State Board of Education approved new regulations that give students a formal role in school district planning, funding from the California Arts Council (CAC) will support the expansion of the Student Voices Campaign. Launched in 2012 by the California Alliance for Arts Education, the campaign provides a platform for students to share their creativity and passion for the arts with their elected officials. New funding from the Arts Council will support the development of resources for classroom engagement, student leadership training and a digital empowerment forum and screening.

“Visual storytelling is the new universal language, particularly amongst young people,” says film and television director, Christopher Coppola, who is founder of Project Accessible Hollywood (PAH), head of the Film program at the San Francisco Art Institute and a member for the California Arts Council, “The Student Voices Campaign offers them a chance to hone their leadership and digital storytelling skills to be more effective advocates.”

California’s new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) eliminated categorical funding, including funds earmarked for arts education, in favor of giving local school districts the authority to set locally driven goals, strategies and budget allocations. Districts are required to provide opportunities for community input on goals through public hearings, written comments, surveys and or standing parent committees. New regulations passed in the last few weeks give students a definite role in that process.

“We believe students have a unique role to play in the local advocacy opportunities created by LCFF,” says Sibyl O'Malley, Director of Communications and Community Engagement for the California Alliance. “Young people can offer powerful evidence of the ways that arts education equips them for a successful future. Seeing a video created by a student in his or her district is pretty compelling to elected officials.”

The Student Voices Campaign invites students to create videos of up to two minutes responding to prompts such as “What Does Your Creativity Look Like?” or “Why Do the Arts Matter?” Videos are uploaded to the campaign website where they can be sent directly to their elected officials.

The Alliance has worked with a network of partners around the state, including teachers, schools, arts organization and artists, to nurture participation in the campaign and encourage learning about video making and civic engagement. Partners have included: Berkeley Rep Teen Council, Big New Ideas, CalArts Community Arts Partnership, California State Summer School for the Arts Foundation, Center Theater Group, Inner-City Arts, Inspire School of Arts and Sciences, Shine Global’s Academy Award-nominated documentary, Inocente, Spotlight of the Music Center / Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County, Streetside Stories and Venice Arts. The campaign has been generously supported by Adobe and Sony Pictures Entertainment.

Support from the California Arts Council is subject to approval by state control agencies. If approved, it will allow the Alliance to strengthen and expand the existing campaign to include new resources for classroom engagement, student leadership training and a digital empowerment forum and screening. New classroom materials that align with Visual and Performing Arts and National Core Arts Standards will bolster students’ digital storytelling skills, and introduce students to effective models of community engagement.

*The mission of **California Alliance for Arts Education** is to promote, support and advocate for visual and performing arts education for preschool through post-secondary students in California schools.*

The California Alliance is in its fifth decade of working to build a brighter future for our state by making the arts a core part of every child’s education. A statewide leader and convener, the Alliance galvanizes California’s educators and other experts in arts and culture to advocate for quality arts education for all students. www.artsed411.org