



CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

**TOM TORLAKSON**

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

August 19, 2016

The Honorable Carol Liu  
Chair, Senate Education Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2083  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Senate Bill 916 (Allen)  
SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Liu:

As State Superintendent of Public Instruction, I urge you to **“Support”** Senate Bill 916 (Allen) when it comes before the Senate Education Committee. This bill would authorize the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to issue Single Subject Teaching Credentials in dance and theatre.

I believe that a holistic and engaging curricula must include arts education. Research clearly demonstrates that exposure to arts education improves student outcomes, including better grades, increased creativity, higher rates of college enrollment and graduation, as well as higher aspirations and civic engagement. We must ensure that all California students have access to a high quality arts education.

Current California *Education Code* specifies that the adopted course of study in kindergarten through twelfth grade shall include Visual and Performing Arts, including instruction in the subjects of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts, with an emphasis upon development of aesthetic appreciation and the skills of creative expression.

Under current law, single subject credentials are available in only two of the four arts disciplines, namely art and music. Teachers must obtain a credential in Physical Education to teach dance and a credential in English to teach theatre. The preparation programs to earn these two credentials do not fully address the content and pedagogy of the kindergarten through twelfth grade Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools, adopted by the State Board of Education in 2001.

The four arts disciplines of visual art, music, theatre, and dance are core academic subjects. Each contain a distinct body of knowledge and skills. By authorizing single subject credentials in dance and theatre, California would ensure that teachers are adequately prepared to provide standards-aligned instruction in these subjects.

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Teachers currently holding single subject credentials in English or Physical Education would continue to be authorized to teach theatre or dance, respectively, and would not be subject to any additional requirements of the newly adopted theater or dance credentials.

For these reasons, I request your “**Aye**” vote on this measure. If you have any questions regarding this subject, please do not hesitate to contact me, or have your staff contact Debbie Look, Senior Legislative Advisor, Government Affairs Division, by phone at 916-327-4628 or by e-mail at [dlook@cde.ca.gov](mailto:dlook@cde.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Tom Torlakson

TT:dl

cc: Members, Senate Education Committee  
The Honorable Benjamin Allen, California State Senate