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**GOVERNOR'S PROMISE TO ARTS EDUCATION PRESERVED
Though California Public School Student's Access to Quality Education Vulnerable**

May 22-Millions of California parents, teachers and arts education advocates were relieved when the Arts and Music Block Grant funding was left off the chopping block in the May 14th revised state budget, but concern regarding the interpretation of categorical funding as well as the gap in the overall education budget, still remains. The budget's impact on preserving equal access to a quality education for all California public school students is still in question.

According to Laurie Schell, the Executive Director for the California Alliance for Arts Education, "Governor Schwarzenegger has again demonstrated his belief that arts education is a crucial component to developing the minds, talents and productivity of every of California student, and that its place in the core curriculum for all levels is non-negotiable. However, long term secured arts funding is far from permanent."

Since the landmark funding in 2006, arts education has been building critical mass across the state. School districts have made marked advancement in securing student success by enhancing academic rigor and fostering student retention through innovative arts programs that tap essential creative and critical thinking skills, regardless of a student's economic, ethnic or social status. "These programs mark a huge step forward in the investment of California's economic future," said Schell. "Cuts to these programs and to education in general will greatly impact our schools' ability to provide quality education for all students which will in turn impact California's future economic viability."

According to The Boeing Company representative Sarah Murr, "The business community is increasingly calling for more creative skills from the emerging workforce."

"In a state where there are literally hundreds of thousands of arts and creative-centered industries – from Hollywood to Silicon Valley, reduced arts education funding and its focused intent would have a significant impact on California's economy," stated Nancy Carr, the sole Visual and Performing Arts Consultant for the State of California Department of Education (CDE).

Historically, access to arts education depended largely on where a student lived, because many programs relied on parent and outside funding sources. Underserved neighborhoods traditionally lacked both the resources and advocacy to secure quality arts programming, which research proves, can facilitate student success by cutting across cultural and language barriers, and reaching those with differing learning styles.

California parent groups such as the PTA have vigorously fought to keep the arts in schools for its academic value and the benefits it brings to families and the community as a whole. According to Carol Kocivar, of the California State PTA, "The right to a quality education for every child in California is absolutely essential and we believe that arts education is at the core of all learning and should be guaranteed and funded from our State budget." She added, "We are heartened

by the Governor's continued support of the Arts and Music Block Grant. However, we are deeply concerned about funding cuts to education, health and social services in the budget that will impede access to a quality of education and life for California's youth."

The May Revise is an important, but not conclusive, step in the budget adoption. As the budget proceeds through California's legislature, it will be debated, leaving arts education funding vulnerable to cuts or reductions.

"In the weeks to come, it is critical that schools, parents, businesses and arts advocates vigilantly make their voice heard in support of arts funding, to ensure that all six million California students receive the quality education they deserve and need to be productive and contributing members to the state's future workforce," Schell concluded.

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The California Alliance for Arts Education (CAAE) works to promote, support, and advocate visual and performing arts education for preschool through post-secondary students in California schools. For more information, visit www.artsed411.org.