



Main Office: 495 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena CA 91101 P: 626-578-9315 F: 626-578-9894 www.artsed411.org
Sacramento Office: 1121 L Street, Suite 510, Sacramento, CA 95814 P: 916-440-1855 F: 916-448-7801

PRESS RELEASE
January 30, 2009

Contact: Amy Heibel
(415) 359-4851

California Alliance for Arts Education Urges Governor to Stand Strong in Support of Arts Education

The California Alliance for Arts Education issued a letter to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today urging him to continue his strong commitment to arts education in the face of funding cuts for public education and to protect the state's Arts and Music Block Grant.

The Governor's current proposal to reduce 2008-2009 spending on K-14 programs authorizes the transfer of funding for categorical programs, including the Arts and Music Block Grant, to a district or county office of education general fund.

Anticipating major cuts in education funding, many school districts are freezing block grant funds in anticipation of using those funds to fill general fund shortfalls. Richard Burrows, Director of Arts Education at the Los Angeles Unified School District confirms, "*Centrally administered arts funds at LAUSD are frozen due to the state budget crisis and resultant district shortfalls. This has stalled all current arts efforts including arts partner contracts, the hiring of new arts teachers, and arts allocations for supplies, materials, equipment and textbooks. This has seriously impacted the successful 10-Year Arts Education Plan efforts for all students to receive a comprehensive arts education in dance, music, theatre, visual and media arts.*"

The Governor has been a strong advocate for arts education. On January 19, 2009, he received the 2009 Public Leadership in the Arts Award from Americans for the Arts and the US Conference of Mayors. The award commended the governor for sponsoring the 2006 legislation that included \$105 million in on-going funding for arts and music education and a \$500 million block grant for arts education equipment and other supplies.

According to Laurie Schell, Executive Director of The Alliance for Arts Education, which spearheaded the original grassroots effort to pass the block grant legislation: "*Governor Schwarzenegger clearly understands*

the critical importance of arts education in every student's development. The arts speak to the needs of at-risk students and help create pathways to jobs of the future."

In a letter to the Governor, Schell observed: "More than ever, we need to raise our voices to let local officials know the importance of arts education as part of the core curriculum that every child needs and deserves. Whichever path our state takes to remedy its economic woes, it is increasingly clear that there is momentum gathering around the concept that each school district should determine its own educational priorities.

As an organization, we will continue to fight for ongoing state funding and beneficial policies for arts education. Although we recognize the uphill battle we face in such dire economic conditions, we remain committed to providing arts education as part of the education that every student receives."

The Alliance represents more than 100,000 individuals and organizations from the arts, education, public and business sectors, with an interest in visual and performing arts education for preschool through post-secondary students in California. In addition to issuing the letter to Governor Schwarzenegger, the Alliance is urging their broad network of constituents to contact the Governor directly to request his ongoing support for arts education.

More about The California Alliance for Arts Education: CAAE is in its fourth decade of working to build a brighter future for our state by making the arts a core part of every child's quality education. The Alliance galvanizes California's abundance of arts and culture experts to advocate for quality arts education for all students. By collaborating effectively with the state's leading education and parent engagement agencies and providing an anchor for policy expertise at the state and local levels, the Alliance is the leader in promoting the arts in schools and enriching the lives of children, families and communities.

For press-ready photos and more information please contact:

Amy Heibel
Communications Director
California Alliance for Arts Education
Cell: 415.359.4851