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## **California Alliance Offers Online Help for Arts Education Advocacy**

### *Webinar Reaches Communities with Immediate Strategies and Information*

Pasadena, CA – The California Alliance for Arts Education will host a free online event on Tuesday March 2<sup>nd</sup> to provide parents, teachers and community leaders with the strategy and information they need to act quickly to protect arts education funding in their school district.

With California's economic woes mounting, last year the state legislature gave local districts the 'flexibility' to spend the Arts and Music Block grant funds on whatever programs they consider essential. Now, as federal stimulus dollars run out, California faces a shortfall that means K-12 education will take a \$1.5 million hit in the 2011 budget. Local school boards must decide how to make these reductions and arts and music programs are often among the first casualties.

With the fight for art education programs now spread among California's more than 1000 school districts, the Alliance is hosting an online event that reaches people up and down the state with the support they need for immediate advocacy efforts.

"These decisions are happening quickly and we wanted to find a way to respond to the urgency of the moment," says Laurie Schell, Executive Director for the Alliance. "We have parents and teachers and community members from San Francisco to San Diego participating."

The online seminar will help participants build an action plan for their community, focusing on three key elements: assembling a team, getting the facts, and finding the right leverage points for effective advocacy. Speakers will include: Alliance Policy Director, Joe Landon, and Local Arts Advocacy Leaders, Karin Demarest, Victoria Plettner Saunders and Patricia Wayne. This

event is made possible by generous funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

“With schools statewide suffering severe cutbacks, visual and performing arts programs are at risk. The need for strong voices at the local level has never been more apparent,” says Schell, “Our webinar responds to the crisis by providing immediate, accessible support to advocates in communities throughout the state.”

**About the California Alliance for Arts Education:** *The Alliance is the only statewide organization that brings together all primary constituencies for arts education, including arts organizations, K-12 teachers, professional teacher associations, state and local education departments, professional development providers, parents, PTAs and community leaders. Our shared mission is to promote, support and advocate visual and performing arts education for preschool through post-secondary students in California schools. For specific information on our programs, visit our website: <http://www.artsed411.org/participate/programs.aspx>.*

Press interested in participating in the online event should contact: Sibyl O'Malley at [sibyl@artsed411.org](mailto:sibyl@artsed411.org).