



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 25, 2010:

California Alliance Releases Survey of Candidates for Superintendent of Public Instruction on the Role of Arts Education

PASADENA, CA – With the election a week away, the California Alliance's online survey of candidates for Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) offers voters a way to understand how the candidates might impact arts education in public schools.

"This is a critical time for California schools. The budget crisis has gutted hard-won block grant funding for arts education programs," says Laurie Schell, Executive Director of the California Alliance, "We need new leadership that will embrace the arts as an essential component of the education that every student in California receives."

As the highest elected education official, the Superintendent brings a mandate from the public on education issues. The Superintendent has broad powers to intervene in failing schools, set and enforce curriculum standards and interpret education law. The survey (<http://artsed411.org/educate/guide1.aspx>) asked candidates about a variety of issues related to arts education, including access, assessment and workforce preparation.

"The survey questions articulate the concerns of parents, teachers and community members," according to Joe Landon, the Policy Director for the California Alliance, "It's easy to be enthusiastic about the arts, but this survey asks candidates to go on record with concrete ideas about the role they see for arts education."

According to Assemblymember Tom Torlakson, candidate for SPI, "The most important step the state can take in this area is to adequately and fully fund our schools. Being ranked 47th in the nation in per pupil spending, and dropping, is a disgrace. We cannot accept it. Too many schools have cut arts, music, drama, and other programs. These cuts must stop. They will impact our students for a lifetime. That's why, in addition to the increased revenues, I have also proposed ways to strengthen Proposition 98, foster partnerships among school districts and other government entities, and lower the threshold required to pass a parcel tax."

Larry Aceves, candidate SPI candidate for SPI cites assessment as way to ensure a well-rounded education: "I have advocated for a better assessment system within our school system. The current assessment has led us to a learning environment where we "teach and test, teach and test." These bubble tests are not the answer and don't accurately assess student progress as it is. With an improved assessment system that fully gauges what students know, through their comprehensive answers, we can add

aspects of principals and skills gained through a well-rounded curriculum.”

The Alliance is working with the California State PTA, California Arts Advocates, Arts for LA and 17 other organizations to raise awareness among voters about what is at stake in this often overlooked race. Sponsoring organizations will promote the survey results to an estimated audience of 1.5 million prospective voters throughout the state.

Survey Sponsors include:

California Alliance for Arts Education
California State PTA
California Arts Advocates
California Art Education Association
California Dance Education Association
California Educational Theatre
Association
California Music Education Association
Alameda County Office of Education
Alliance for Arts Learning
Anaheim Alliance for Arts Education
Arts Orange County

Arts for LA
Bakersfield Alliance for Arts Education
Hayward Alliance for Arts Education
Orange County Music and Arts
Administrators
Performing Arts Workshop
San Diego Alliance for Arts Education
San Mateo Alliance for Arts Education
Sonoma County Alliance for Arts
Education
South Bay Alliance for Arts Education
Tuolumne Alliance for Arts Education

The California Alliance for Arts Education 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. A statewide leader and convener, 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. To learn more, visit www.artsed411.org.

Last month, the Alliance and the LA Music Center hosted “Education, Creativity and California’s Future,” an arts education forum featuring the candidates for SPI, and five hundred stakeholders and celebrity panelists Jack Black, Taylor Dayne and Ozomatli’s Wil-Dog Aber. Video highlights of the event can be viewed at:
<http://www.youtube.com/user/artsedcalifornia>

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