



California Alliance for Arts Education Statements of Belief

The Board of Directors and membership of the California Alliance for Arts Education (CAAE) agree that arts education (in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts), taught by qualified arts teachers and grounded by a standards-based curriculum, contributes to the development of a creative, caring, discerning, knowledgeable, self-disciplined, inquiring, and motivated individual. California is a state with great population diversity, and individual attributes such as those developed through arts education can promote appreciation and understanding of each other and of other cultures. Arts education also contributes to the economy as high school and college graduates find employment in California's vast arts and entertainment industries and/or add to their enjoyment of life through attendance at performances and exhibits.

To these ends CAAE invites all Californians—educators, parents, elected and appointed officials, community members, business and industry—to join us in support of the following beliefs.

First, every preschool through post-secondary student in the state should have an education in the arts.

This is a comprehensive, balanced, sequential, in-school program in the arts; taught by credentialed teachers, and designed to meet the Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools. The curriculum must address all five strands of the California Standards for the visual and performing arts courses as well as connections to the humanities and integration with other subject areas.

Second, to ensure a basic education in the arts for all students, the arts must be included as serious, core academic subjects. A core discipline requires sequential curricula throughout the grades, regular time-on-task, qualified teachers, appropriate arts facilities, and high

quality instructional materials. Particularly in the elementary and middle school grades, all students should have instruction in all the arts. At the middle school and high school grades, a student should be able to specialize in one art form, both practicum and theory. Arts instruction throughout the grades should include the same academic rigor and high expectations as other core subjects.

Third, education policy makers should incorporate the multiple lessons of recent research concerning the value and impact of arts education.

The arts have a unique ability to communicate the ideas and emotions of the human spirit and connect us to our history, democratic traditions, heritage and culture. Recent research has substantiated these benefits of arts education. Further, CAAE believes that continuing research regarding arts education is essential and should be supported by colleges and universities, foundations, and individual endeavors. Topics can include the value and impact of arts education on achievement in other core disciplines, the positive impact of arts education on student attendance and behavior, the impact of arts education as tools for learning and self-expression, and the impact of arts education on understanding, lifelong learning and worthy use of leisure time.

Fourth, qualified arts teachers at all grade levels are essential for quality instruction in arts education. Teachers of the arts should have knowledge and experience with the arts and humanities appropriate to the grade level and arts discipline(s) they will teach. This implies the need for in-depth teacher preparation in colleges and universities (teaching methods classes and rigorous art studies) from faculty who themselves are knowledgeable and experienced in the arts discipline and have experience with students in Pre K-12 education. Such instruction should also address diverse learning styles of all students, inclusive of race, culture, religion, socio-economic factors and disability. This also implies the importance of an understanding of the content and methodologies of arts education in the training of school and district administrators. To ensure the maintenance of quality arts education, there must be ongoing professional development for teachers and administrators.

Fifth, arts education programs, grounded in rigorous instruction and taught during the regular school day, should include assessment of student academic progress and performance.

Such assessment is related to the Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools. Assessment includes clear tasks with clear criteria for creative expression, knowledge and understanding.

Sixth, an alliance of diverse stakeholders is the most effective means for advancing the arts in education.

Alliances include schools and districts with artists and community resources, parents and parent organizations with educators, school and district partnerships with business and industry, and school and district partnerships with arts providers.

Seventh, arts education must be adequately funded at the district and state levels.

Policy makers should fund the arts (dance, music, theatre, visual arts) in public schools from public funds with similar consideration and priority as the other core subjects.

In conclusion the Board and members of the California Alliance for Arts Education —on behalf of the students of California that we teach, administer, nurture—ask all Californians who care deeply about making the whole spectrum of cultural and cognitive development available to students, to join us in protecting and advancing opportunities for all students to receive an education in the arts.

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