Dear Fellow Arts Education Supporters,

Across California and nationally, many school districts are responding positively to research-based evidence demonstrating that arts education strategies transform student outcomes. In these areas, arts education has become a funding priority in addressing student needs and improving school-wide outcomes.

Through the ARTS NOW CALIFORNIA campaign, the California Alliance for Arts Education (Alliance) and our partners will shine a bright light on these districts and the strategic investments they are making to improve the quality of students’ educations. Our goal is to establish the expectation that every district is responsible for providing their students with a high quality, comprehensive education that includes a robust arts program, complete with instruction by credentialed arts teachers as well as arts integration strategies being implemented across the curriculum. Our campaign will celebrate districts taking a leadership role in prioritizing arts education and will encourage other districts to prioritize arts education.

To learn more, please visit our CALIFORNIA ARTS NOW website at www.artsed411.org/artsnow.

Thank you to all the organizers, sponsors, speakers and attendees who helped make this first Arts Education Learning Exchange conference the huge success it is about to be.

Sincerely,

Joe Landon
Executive Director
California Alliance for Arts Education

HIGHLIGHTS:
- Free celebration, awards and student performance reception Thursday evening at the magical San Diego Museum of Art, Balboa Park and Sculpture Gardens.
- Free Museum Explorers Pass that will give each attendee access to each of the 16 museums located at the site of our Thursday evening celebration. Passes can be used after the conference on Thursday and prior to the celebration that evening in Balboa Park.
- Free transportation to/from conference for all hotel guests.
- Breakfast, snack and lunch will be provided to all conference attendees each day. Many excellent dinner options in San Diego’s Little Italy are available a short walk from the hotel.
- Recommended attire is Dressy Casual with comfortable shoes.
- The conference hotel is the Porto Vista Hotel.

TRANSPORTATION & PARKING:
The hotel will have a shuttle from the airport. For hotel guests a conference provided shuttle will depart from the Porto Vista Hotel at 7:15am both days to transport guests to the conference location. Please be downstairs prior to 7:15am to depart on time. Another shuttle will be provided to hotel guests immediately after the conference each day to return attendees to the hotel. During the conference, vans will be provided for transportation to school sites for classroom visits. Details on parking for both days of the conference and the celebration are provided in the agendas on the following pages.

Please post comments and photos from the conference on social media and use the hashtag: #artsedexchange
Get active on social media with #artsedexchange

California Alliance for Arts Education
www.artsed411.org

The mission of California Alliance for Arts Education (Alliance) and our partners will shine a bright light on these districts and the strategic investments they are making to improve the quality of students’ educations. Our goal is to establish the expectation that every district is responsible for providing their students with a high quality, comprehensive education that includes a robust arts program, complete with instruction by credentialed arts teachers as well as arts integration strategies being implemented across the curriculum. Our campaign will celebrate districts taking a leadership role in prioritizing arts education and will encourage other districts to prioritize arts education.

Chula Vista Elementary School District
www.cvesd.org

The Chula Vista Elementary School District serves more than 29,200 students at 45 schools. Students experience a rigorous 21st century learning environment that is rooted in effective teaching practices and high-quality instruction while discovering novel methods of instructional delivery. Students receive an education that nurtures every child’s imagination, intellect, and sense of inquiry. Working together, we will harness the potential of a collective intelligence rich with the imagination and creativity necessary for students to become difference makers in the community.

San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory
www.sdys.org

The San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory (SDYS) is celebrating its 70th anniversary and serves over 600 students annually in twelve ensembles from its home in Balboa Park. Skill levels range from beginner to pre-professional, with participating students ages 8 to 23. Concerts are performed throughout the region including at world-class venues such as Copley Symphony Hall, Jacobs Music Center and California Center for the Arts in Escondido. In addition to its Balboa Park programs, SDYS launched the Community Opus Project in 2010 as a strategy to demonstrate the many benefits of music education, build support for music in the community, and convince school districts to provide music as part of students’ regular curriculum. It was so successful that within only three years, the Chula Vista Elementary School District committed to providing music education in all its 29,000 students.

San Diego Unified School District
www.sandiegounified.org

San Diego Unified serves more than 130,000 students in pre-school through grade 12 and is the second largest district in California. The student population is extremely diverse, representing more than 15 ethnic groups and more than 60 languages and dialects. Since its founding on July 1, 1854, the district has grown from a small, rented school building with one teacher to its current size — more than 226 educational facilities with 13,559 employees. Nearly 6,000 teachers are in classrooms at the district’s various educational facilities, which include 117 traditional elementary schools, 9 K-8 schools, 25 traditional middle schools, 24 high schools, 49 charter schools, and 14 atypical/alternative schools.

Arts for Learning San Diego
www.artsforlearningsd.org

The world desperately needs workers and leaders who are creative, disciplined and visionary. The arts—music, dance, theater and the visual arts—foster those qualities in today’s students and tomorrow’s workforce. For 50 years, Young Audiences of San Diego (YASD) has dedicated itself to integrating the arts into the education and lives of all children of our region through an extraordinary range of high quality performances, residencies and workshops to help our young people identify their cultural roots and discover their creative wings.

ArtsEmpower
www.artsempowersd.org

Arts Empower San Diego is a coalition of arts organizations, school districts, and the San Diego County Office of Education to lead arts education in San Diego schools. It believes that a comprehensive arts education empowers each student to create, think critically, collaborate, and communicate, enabling them to become informed, global citizens. Our vision is that all students in San Diego County will receive a sequential, meaningful standards-based arts education that is rooted in all forms of the visual and performing arts. The purpose of Arts Empower San Diego is to bring together the San Diego community for a common collaborative effort to ensure that every child in San Diego County receives a quality arts education. The goals of the initiative are to support districts in building leadership around arts education, providing professional development for administrators, establishing a system of assessment and evaluation for arts programs, building meaningful partnerships between districts and community art stakeholders and promoting advocacy to strengthen arts education and community.

San Diego County Office of Education
www.sdcoe.net

The San Diego County Office of Education provides a variety of services for the 42 school districts, 119 charter schools, and five community college districts in the county. We support 780 schools and more than 500,000 students, including the nearly 10,000 children we educate each year through our Juvenile Court and Community Schools. Services we provide to school districts range from district and school improvement to budget approval and monitoring.

The mission of the San Diego County Office of Education, as a world-class educational leader and trusted partner, is to transform public education and guarantee high levels of student achievement. In partnership with local school districts and the global learning community, we will research and apply innovative 21st century practices; leverage resources; develop strategic alliances; inspire powerful leadership; and provide exemplary customized services to districts, communities and the students in all County Office-operated programs.
On December 10, 2015, President Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act, reauthorizing the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation’s education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students. The law calls for clear support for a well-rounded education, which is defined to include the arts. The legislation supports the work already underway in school districts across California, which are responding positively to research-based evidence demonstrating that arts education strategies transform student outcomes. In these areas, arts education has become a funding priority in addressing student needs and improving schoolwide outcomes.

Through the ARTS NOW CALIFORNIA campaign, the California Alliance for Arts Education (Alliance) and our partners will shine a bright light on these districts and the strategic investments they are making to improve the quality of students’ educations. Our goal is to establish the expectation that every district is responsible for providing their students with a high quality, comprehensive education that includes a robust arts program, complete with instruction by credentialed arts teachers as well as arts integration strategies being implemented across the curriculum. Our campaign will celebrate districts taking a leadership role in prioritizing arts education and will encourage other districts to prioritize arts education.

Why does arts education matter for every student?
“An Unfinished Canvas,” the SRI study in 2006 of Arts Education Policy and Practice in California, found that, “In California’s more affluent schools, almost twice the percentage of students received instruction in each arts discipline, compared with high-poverty schools.” Where community resources support a complete education, the arts exist; where those resources are lacking due to economic disadvantage, the arts and its many benefits for students are marginalized. These benefits extend from student engagement in school, to improved academic achievement, to developing aspects of creativity and innovation cultivated by the arts, to preparing students with the skills they will need to function successfully in the workforce. Learn more

Why now?
At this moment, California’s education system is undergoing an unprecedented process of re-evaluation and re-investment. California’s Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) requires local school boards to address goals that include student engagement, parental involvement, school climate, student achievement and pupil outcomes. The arts speak directly to those outcomes. School boards are seizing this opportunity to invest in arts education strategies in unprecedented ways. We want to build upon their commitment, and to spread the word to neighboring districts, by offering a fresh approach to our new educational priorities.
LCFF offers an opportunity for arts education to emerge as a strategy that districts pursue to enhance student learning and improve school climate. For example, in the Chula Vista Unified School District $15 million has been invested in hiring over 70 credentialed arts teachers to ensure that all students receive instruction in music, theater, dance, and visual arts. Learn Here

Title 1 funds can be used to support arts education strategies that support Title I goals. In San Diego Unified School District, the school board has committed $3 million in Title I funds to support arts integration learning in 22 elementary schools. Learn Here

The implementation of Common Core curriculum also offers a unique opportunity to include the skills and practices inherent in arts education across subject matters. Learn Here

What’s the challenge?
The issue we face is this: How do we cultivate the kind of community and elected leadership that will prioritize arts education as an essential strategy to achieve student success and to improve school climate? Our arts education community must attract the attention of school board members and administrators, thought and policy leaders, and the public, to make them aware of the potential this moment holds. With our partners we intend to empower advocates at the local level with the tools and support they need in order to deliver the message of change effectively where critical decisions around funding are being made.

Our Campaign
Our campaign will focus on outreach, education, and recognition of the various arts education strategies being utilized. Campaign components will include:

• Statewide and regional arts exchange conferences
• Webinars
• Policy papers
• Building a coalition of support
• Speakers’ bureau to help push out our message
• Earned media communications
• Short films made by students using their voice
• Social media activity and promotion.

Together we will demonstrate the success of arts education learning in districts that have embraced a robust investment and determine how best these practices can be replicated elsewhere.

Who is the Alliance:
The California Alliance for Arts Education was established as a volunteer-driven grassroots organization in 1973, aimed at ensuring that arts education is at the core of every child’s education. The mission of the Alliance is to promote, support, and advocate for visual and performing arts education for preschool through post-secondary students in California schools. Our efforts focus on three key areas: public advocacy, statewide policy, and partnerships. Learn More
Coldplay, Bruno Mars and Beyoncé were not the only musicians rocking out during the Super Bowl 50 halftime show this year. Members of the Youth Orchestra Los Angeles, led by Los Angeles Philharmonic Music Director Gustavo Dudamel, were also on stage, looking like true rock stars. Over 111 million viewers tuned into to watch Super Bowl 50, making it one of the most watched broadcasts in U.S. TV history.

While countless eyes were trained on the halftime extravaganza, many in the arts education community were focused on the teen musicians who were clearly having the time of their lives. Countless children dream of being superstars. For the Youth Orchestra teens, that day, being on that stage — they were. Every young person should have the chance to shine and be able to express themselves just as these talented (and lucky) teens did.

Here in San Diego, our two school districts are leaders in the national effort to ensure every child benefits from having a well-rounded education that includes the arts. San Diego Unified School District and Chula Vista Elementary School District are creating arts education opportunities in our own unique ways so every child in our schools receives the unique benefits of learning in the arts.

With the passage of the new federal education law known as “Every Student Succeeds Act” (ESSA), leaders on both sides of the aisle have shown they recognize the importance of robustly returning the arts to our campuses for all our children to experience, succeed and grow.

As superintendents of two of the largest districts in San Diego County, we know that educating our children means more than preparing them to take tests. It involves cultivating their creativity, thoughtfulness and ability to collaborate with others to enable them to succeed, not just in school but in life. We know a well-rounded education includes the arts.

To that end, we have embraced arts education as a priority within our districts, and have begun to take concrete steps to ensure that every student receives access to arts education as a core part of their learning experience. With the active support of parents, teachers, students, nonprofits and administrators our two districts have been able to forge ahead. Our parallel investments in arts education have drawn national attention to San Diego County and the impact we are having on student learning.
Next week, the California Alliance for Arts Education — in collaboration with San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory, Arts for Learning San Diego, and the San Diego County Office of Education — is shining a bright light on the programs in our schools and celebrating student achievement at the “Arts Education Learning Exchange.”

San Diego Unified’s “Learning Through the Arts” initiative is reaching students in 22 schools with a coordinated arts integration system that pairs nonprofits and teaching artists with classroom teachers. The program, funded by federal Title I dollars, is leading the national conversation on how to use arts education strategies to reach historically disadvantaged students.

Last summer, the Chula Vista Elementary School District culminated a five-year partnership with San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory by hiring over 70 credentialed visual and performing arts teachers. All 30,000 kinder through sixth grade students in the district now receive instruction in music, theater, dance, visual arts or media arts.

Our two district initiatives have clearly demonstrated arts education programs promote increased student engagement, parental involvement, improved school climate and significant student achievement.

Just as importantly, we are instilling dreams in these children and giving them the means to achieve those dreams. They need not reach an audience as large as Coldplay’s or Beyoncé’s to achieve their dreams. Simply performing in front of their family, friends and fellow students because they have arts education in school ensures they learn what it takes to share their talents with the world and the confidence to pursue their dreams. We all benefit when that happens.

Escobedo is superintendent of Chula Vista Elementary School District. Marten is superintendent of San Diego Unified School District.
San Diego Union Tribune, Op Ed, March 6,

Voice of San Diego- March 11, Kinsee Morlan
http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/education/san-diego-unified-looks-to-move-beyond-art-for-arts-sake/

KUSI-TV: Good Morning San Diego
https://sunshinesachs.egnyte.com/dl/i1d06Rvic0
Local Viewership: 15,310

CW6: San Diego Living
https://sunshinesachs.egnyte.com/dl/11ol3USbzq
Local Viewership: 1,940

ABC 10: Stories that Matter
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GK8hvAZNgKI

Voice of San Diego - On the Importance of Learning to Play the Recorder
http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/education/san-diego-unified-looks-to-move-beyond-art-for-arts-sake/

Hoy San Diego

CVESD Newsletter

KPCC-Radio
http://www.scpr.org/news/2016/03/16/58590/san-diego-school-districts-open-doors-for-arts-edu/

San Diego Union Tribune – 1-1 with Lauren Shelton
Star News – February 29, Digital Tear Sheet sent.

National El Sistema Newsletter

Post Conference
SDCOE Internal Newsletter – Pending
Our Hometown- Needs photos. Lucy to send
Jane Adams/Ed Source – TR Following up
KVIE Sacramento – SDYS in touch

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The National Center for Urban School Transformation selected Myrtle S. Finney, Hilltop Drive and J. Calvin Launderbach elementary schools as finalists for the 2016 National Excellence in Urban Education Awards.

The National Center for Urban School Transformation selected only 22 schools in the United States as finalists for this year’s awards program. Site visits have been scheduled for each finalist to validate the respective applications and look for evidence of high achievement, rigorous curricula, excellent instruction and enthusiastic student engagement. The schools that demonstrate the greatest evidence of these elements will receive the bronze, silver or gold winners.

“We’re very proud of each of our student school leaders,” Superintendent Francisco Escobedo, Ed.D., “Their respective staff members do an amazing job. You can see the impact of effective, engaging instruction on a daily basis, and it shows in the tremendous achievement of their students.”

Hilltop Drive Principal Lisa Parker noted that her students are achieving excellence in STEAM subjects (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics). She credits the support of parents and staff members.

“Hilltop Drive teachers, she said, have embraced the shifts toward the new state standards, including standards of mathematical practice. “They have developed a rigorous, Common Core standards-aligned math curriculum at each grade level using Engage New York/Eureka, Go Math and other teacher-selected resources,” Parker said. “We’ve created a strong schoolwide focus on conceptual development and increased problem solving using manipulatives and models. Students draw, talk and write about math. Each year, Hilltop Drive students enter the next grade level with a better foundation for success.”

Forty-five GATE students in grades four through six participate in Hilltop’s after-school coding class in which they practice the 21st century skills of creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking as they work to solve challenges.

The second-year class is writing codes for applications. Upper grade students teach coding skills to first-graders during cross-grade level collaboration. The creative spirit lines up nicely with the goals of the National Excellence in Urban Education Awards program, which recognizes the talent, dedication and hard work of urban school educators and students. Bronze and silver-level winners will be notified in March. Gold-level winners will be announced at the National Symposium on Excellence in Urban Education in May.

Hilltop Drive Elementary is among three CVESD schools in the running for a 2016 National Excellence in Urban Education Award. Hilltop Drive Principal Lisa Parker (left), PTA President Memo Meza and his wife Essie credit parent engagement as one of the factors in the school’s success.

The Chula Vista Elementary School District will be among the featured districts at the inaugural Arts Education Learning Exchange presented by the California Alliance for Arts Education in San Diego March 17-18.

The conference of arts education leaders in each respective field will bring a national focus to CVESD and the San Diego Unified School District. Schools in each respective field will be featured as a model of excellence in site visitations for conference attendees.

“School leaders recognize that instruction needs to be about more than preparation for standardized tests,” said Dalouge Smith, president and chief executive officer of the San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory. “They know arts education is an essential part of a well-rounded curriculum. Chula Vista is setting the example for California and the country on how to equitably restore arts education across an entire school system using the new California Local Control Funding Formula.”

In June 2015, CVESD’s Board of Education committed $15 million over three years to hire teachers in the Visual and Performing Arts.

The district designed a framework that uses sequential arts instruction for every student to free classroom teachers for collaboration and planning time. The arts push is part of the District’s Local Control and Accountability Plan for the 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years.

This decision was the culmination of a five-year collaboration with the youth symphony designed to rebuild access to music and arts education after a 15-year absence of arts instruction in the district. What started in 2010 as the Community Opus Project after-school music program for 65 third-grade students evolved into one of the largest and most rapid restorations of arts education in the nation, with over 70 VAPA teachers hired since June.

Community Opus drew its inspiration from the El Sistema movement in music education and social change that began in Venezuela’s most impoverished neighborhoods and grew into a national youth orchestra program.

The program promotes social change by inspiring young people — and their families and communities — to achieve through arts education. A pre-conference workshop is scheduled for March 16 at El Sistema, where attendees can view Community Opus’s spring camp in action and interact with teaching artists, parents and students.

SDYS assisted CVESD with rebuilding its arts education infrastructure as well as 197 gorgeously transformed classrooms at a cost of $597,000. The district is in the process of raising $2.5 million to bring arts education to every student in the district.

The National Arts Conference to spotlight Chula Vista, San Diego schools

CVESD Superintendent Francisco Escobedo, Ed.D., said that restoration of the arts in district schools can be replicated throughout California and positively impact learning outcomes.

“As part of our initiative to infuse 21st century skills into our learning outcomes, the arts are a perfect medium to enhance collaboration, creativity and critical-thinking skills throughout our system,” Escobedo said.

The Chula Vista Elementary School District serves nearly 30,000 students at 45 schools.

Registration for 2016-17 Begins March 1

The Chula Vista Elementary School District is committed to making your child’s education a fun, engaging and successful experience!

Registration begins March 1

Packets available at a student’s home school starting February 18.

Parents must register at their home school. This includes Transitional Kindergarten as well.

Children turning 5 by September 1, 2016, will attend Kindergarten.

Children turning 5 between September 2 and December 2, 2016, will attend Transitional Kindergarten.
SDYS Community Opus Lessons for Us All

By Ronnie Ragen, Program Director, Trenton Community Music School, Trenton, NJ

“Our message used to be – ‘Please don’t cut!’ Now it’s ‘Come and see what’s happening!’”

– Joe Landon, Executive Director of the CA Alliance for Arts Education

In mid-March, more than one hundred Arts Education supporters gathered in San Diego for the first Arts Education Learning Exchange conference, to witness and celebrate “what’s happening.” The conference, presented by the California Alliance for Arts Education and Arts Now California, highlighted two San Diego-area districts that, with the help of highly committed private partners, have made the arts central to learning in their schools. In Chula Vista Elementary School District, a five-year partnership with the San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory (SDYS) culminated with the district committing $15 million over three years to hire 70 credentialed arts teachers in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts – this in a district that had had no arts teachers for 15 years. In San Diego Unified School District, the district has committed $3 million in Title I funds to establish a district-wide arts integration program in 22 schools, pairing classroom teachers with teaching artists to provide effective arts integration across the curriculum.

In Chula Vista, the transformation began with a vision articulated by SDYS over six years ago: “to make music education accessible and affordable for all!” El Sistema values were at the heart of this vision. Under the leadership of Executive Director Dalouge Smith, SDYS began by applying the 10 Sistema Fundamentals to a plan for the entire district education ecosystem.

Their Sistema-inspired after-school program, Community Opus Project, was introduced in 2010. By year three, with 200 students, the change in school culture – student excitement, improved attendance, motivation, parental engagement – was so palpable the administration couldn’t help but take notice. As a result, the district decided to prioritize the re-introduction of in-school music instruction.

Perhaps the most moving part of the conference was meeting and hearing from impassioned parents who went 30-strong to a new principal to demand that the middle school start an instrumental instruction program, so their children moving up from elementary school Opus programs would be able to continue playing music. It was also thrilling to hear principals and superintendents speak about their new arts programs with the fluency of veteran arts education advocates. As Chula Vista Superintendent Francisco Escobedo said, “We want each child to thrive, not just cope. How can you thrive without the arts?”

So what about sustainability? Conference days 2 and 3 provided close inspection of the “Every Student Succeeds Act” and the application of Title I funding to large-scale arts-integration programming.

Both of these federal programs offer opportunities and promise for public/private partnering aimed at reinvigorating arts instruction across the country.

The “Every Student Succeeds Act” (ESSA) replaces the “No Child Left Behind” act and will come into effect in 2017. The bill shrinks the federal role in education reform and hands more decision-making to the states. The visual and performing arts, both in and after-school, are included in its definition of a “well-rounded education,” making the inclusion of the arts in schools THE LAW. We were told, “ESSA is on the way; we’d better get out in front of it.”

The Day 3 program showcased the San Diego Unified School District’s ambitious “Learning Through the Arts,” a Title I-funded arts-integration program. The Superintendent, Cindy Marten, inspired us with her fiery determination to infuse arts across all learning in California’s second-largest school district. We visited classes in which teaching artists taught side by side with classroom teachers to deepen student understanding and make them more flexible learners.

The final panel, with arts education leaders from across the country, emphasized the necessity for “seizing this moment” and doing our part to make the San Diego story “go viral.” I left feeling an uncommon sense of urgency and excitement. Let’s do it!

FROM THE EDITOR

From zero arts teachers in the district, to more than 70 arts teachers in the district – in less than five years. The arts ed success story of the Chula Vista school district is mind-boggling. We are so used to seeing those numbers go in the opposite direction! The transformation of the district from arts-starved to arts-abundant was fueled by the unmistakable success of the El Sistema-inspired Community Opus Project and the vision of its leaders. The San Diego Youth Symphony, which founded Opus and helped lead the district transformation, has set out to create a model for intensive partnership with the public school district. “For fullest impact,” says SDYS leader Dalouge Smith, “in-school and after-school music programs must work in complement.”

For me, one of the most interesting questions about this model is how it’s possible to create “Sistema-inflected” learning environments in an in-school framework. I talked about this with Dalouge and with Lauren Shelton, the district’s elementary coordinator for visual and performing arts. “When we created the pilot for the in-school program,” said Lauren, “the teachers were Opus teachers. So Sistema values were infused into the classroom from the very beginning.” She added that these values are woven into the professional development for all in-school music teachers.

Intensity is one of those important Sistema values. “We think of intensity here as a multi-platform experience,” said Dalouge. “There is the in-school experience, plus the Opus experience, and for the most advanced kids, there’s the youth symphony. The intensity is in the compounded experience.”

Parent and community involvement, they stressed, is one of the most important elements of Sistema practice that is infused throughout the district. “The Opus teachers are the leaders in showing how you as a music teacher can bring your community inside your classroom,” said Lauren.

At the core is the ideal of access and equity. Lauren said that younger teachers often come fired up with the spirit of making social outcomes happen from music learning. “They say that here, they can actually do what they set out to do as teachers!”

“We are on the brink of an arts education renaissance,” Dalouge added. “And arts educators are derelict if we are not engaged in the larger conversation about widening access. It’s big. And it’s happening.”

Tricia Tunsall
Resaltan la importancia de la educación artística

By Pablo J. Sáinz | 11:30 a.m. March 14, 2016

Distintas escuelas del Distrito Escolar Unificado de San Diego ofrecen actividades que buscan integrar las artes con el aprendizaje general. 

Arts Education Learning Exchange

El Arts Education Learning Exchange, que se realizará el jueves 17 y viernes 18 de marzo en diferentes ubicaciones del condado, resaltará los programas de artes en los distritos escolares de Chula Vista y la Ciudad de San Diego. Durante la conferencia educadores de toda la nación visitarán salones de clases en Chula Vista, donde el año pasado el distrito escolar decidió traer de regreso clases de arte y música para sus más de 30 000 estudiantes gracias a unos 15 millones de dólares en fondos que se utilizarán durante tres años.

Conferencia de maestros resaltará los programas de artes en los distritos escolares de Chula Vista y la Ciudad de San Diego. 

“Como parte de nuestra iniciativa de incluir herramientas del Siglo 21 a nuestros resultados de aprendizaje, las artes son el medio perfecto para mejorar la colaboración, la creatividad y el pensamiento crítico por todo nuestro sistema”, dijo Escobedo.
Chula Vista ha trabajado de cerca con la San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory para ofrecer las clases de arte y música.

“Los líderes educativos reconocen que el aprendizaje debe ser más que prepararse para los exámenes estatales”, dijo Dalouge Smith, presidente y director ejecutivo de la sinfónica juvenil. “Saben que la educación de las artes es una parte esencial de un currículo académico bien balanceado. Chula Vista le está poniendo el ejemplo a California y al país sobre cómo restaurar la educación artística en un distrito escolar completo”.

Destintas escuelas, como Ocean Beach Elementary School, cuentan con actividades artísticas que favorecen la creatividad.

En la conferencia, organizada por la California Alliance for Arts Education, cientos de maestros de las artes visitarán salones de clases, tendrán paneles con líderes en las artes y aprenderán técnicas de cómo implementar nuevas ideas en sus escuelas.

“La música (y el arte) puede tener un poderoso efecto en el aprendizaje de los niños y en unir a la comunidad”, afirmó Smith.

Sáinz es periodista independiente.
In elementary school, I, like almost every other grade-school student in the '80s and '90s, learned how to play the recorder. It’s not much more than a glorified whistle with a few holes carved in it to change notes, but I embraced the silly instrument for a short while and went beyond the standard “Hot Cross Buns” to earn extra credit by teaching myself how to play the Irish classic “Molly Malone.”

Fast-forward a few decades and that song is still burned into my brain. It’s become an important staple in the nightly lullaby repertoire I sing to help both my sons fall asleep.

“See, and that’s just one small example of how powerful and important an arts education can be,” said Joe Landon, executive director of the California Alliance for Arts Education, after I told him about my recorder skills.

The advocacy coalition Landon runs is putting on a big conference about arts education in San Diego this week. Called Arts Education Learning Exchange, the first-of-its-kind conference will, in part, highlight the Chula Vista school district’s recent $15 million investment in expanded arts education and San Diego Unified’s initiative to integrate arts education into most its schools. For San Diego Unified, the accolades come in the midst of an effort to make sure not just some, but all of its approximately 130,000 students eventually get access to a quality arts education. Last week, I wrote about that effort. But back to me and my recorder.

Landon told me there’s an entire generation of kids who went through the educational system after me without getting much of an arts education at all. He said the federal K-12 public education policy No Child Left Behind and the economic downturn played a big part in killing creativity in schools. The economy and the policy, he said, forced many educators to cut budgets and worry too much about teaching kids how to pass tests. The arts were widely seen as unnecessary.

Landon said that’s changing. He praised the replacement for No Child Left Behind, the so-called Every Student Succeeds Act, as a public education policy he thinks will result in a huge boost for arts education. The co-author of a paper called “A Policy Pathway: Embracing Arts Education to Achieve Title I Goals,” Landon said another positive trend in arts education is more and more school districts using Title I funds, a federal source of money earmarked for assisting students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, to pay for arts education. In the paper, he argues that arts education has been proven to help disadvantaged students.
“There are still some districts that are hesitant to spend Title 1 funds on arts education,” Landon said. “But that's changing, too.”

A final note on the recorder: Last year my colleague Mario Koran conducted an important investigation into why kids in San Diego still play it in school. Here’s a snippet of what he found: Turns out there’s an actual reason schools encourage the recorder. Little-kid fingers aren’t all that dexterous. Because it’s a bit easier to play, it serves as a nice transition that gets kids ready for more complicated instruments like the clarinet, Nicholson said. Plus, they’re cheap. You can buy one on Amazon for about $10.

So it looks like the recorder might be here to stay. Lord help us.
Lauren Shelton counts music among her earliest and fondest memories, starting with her father's impromptu serenades when she was a little girl. She joined the San Diego Children's Choir at 8 years old and continued until she graduated from Torrey Pines High School, touring with the organization nationally and internationally.

After discovering that she loved teaching music as much as playing it, she became a classroom educator, music director of multiple choirs and ran the Community Opus Project with the San Diego Youth Symphony, which provides free after-school music instruction.

Shelton, 34, of Marina Village, wished every student could have the rich arts education that she enjoyed. So when the Chula Vista Elementary School District allocated $15 million over three years to restore arts education that had dwindled in recent years, Shelton gladly took the role of coordinator for the district's visual and performing arts program.
The program offers visual arts and music instructions in all Chula Vista schools, giving students a chance at the cultural education that she treasured in her own childhood.

Q: How did you become interested in music?

A: My father is a musician and composer. He would have me sit on his lap while he was playing piano and sing to me since I was 8 months old. I was given my first record player for my second birthday and played the soundtrack from "Annie" on repeat and would perform for anyone who walked into our house.

Q: What do you love about singing?

A: Singing feeds my soul - whether I am in the car, on stage, singing karaoke or with a choir. There is a sense of euphoria that occurs when I perform a very intricate choral piece and a rush when the applause sounds after the final note.

Q: How did you pursue a career in music education?

A: My mother was an administrator for San Diego Unified for over 30 years. She was very supportive of my love for singing and my career. She also saw my love for teaching when I was an instructional aid on her campuses. In my last year of college at the University of California Riverside, she encouraged me to take the tests to go into teaching. Before I graduated, I was offered a job at King Chavez Academy of Excellence to become a teacher, as well as begin the after-school music program and lead the school choir. After my first year, I knew that I was meant to provide students with a robust arts education.

Q: Please tell us about the Chula Vista arts program.

A: Chula Vista Elementary School District is emerging from years of very limited arts programs. The San Diego Youth Symphony partnered with the district in 2010 to start an after-school program in an effort to advocate for music in the schools. Through the work of the Community Opus Project, the district began to bring more music opportunities to students across the district. This past June, the district approved $5 million a year for the next three years to pay for visual and performing arts teacher salaries in support of teacher collaboration. Last year, we had six full-time music teachers across the district. This year, the district has hired over 65 full-time arts teachers.

Q: Why is it important for kids to study the arts in school?

A: The arts are a pathway to greater understanding of self, community and the world. The arts teach children resiliency, determination, pride and focus. When students participate in the arts, studies have shown that attendance and test scores increase, but it also develops the social and emotional side of the child.

Q: What are some of your favorite arts projects offered in the program?
A: I really enjoyed attending all the winter performances that showcased visual and performing arts. One that stands out was the kindergarten class at Liberty Elementary. It was incredible to see all of the kindergartners playing instruments, singing and dancing all at the same time.

Q: How can parents, students and teachers help bring arts education to other schools?

A: The California Alliance for Arts Education is working through their Arts Now California campaign to communicate the value of making the arts a core part of every child’s education. I encourage them to connect to artsed411.org to learn how to be advocates.

Q: What’s the best advice you ever received?

A: My husband is a retired chief from the U.S. Navy. He has provided guidance and support as I have gone through the adventure of arts management. He has helped shape me as a leader and given me confidence in my position.

Q: What is one thing people would be surprised to find out about you?

A: When I was in college, I worked for Jerry Lewis as a nanny for his 8-year-old daughter when he and his family would visit their boat in the San Diego harbor. His daughter and I completely connected and I ended up spending 10 years with the family. When I became a teacher, I brought Danielle with me to work and had her volunteer. I absolutely loved my time with the Lewis family, learning from Jerry, and hearing all of his amazing stories of his time in show business.

Q: Please describe your ideal San Diego weekend.

A: Our ideal weekend begins with happy hour with our neighbors at The Lion’s Share. Our multigenerational group enjoys our evenings spent with co-owner Carlos and the delicious food. When the weather is perfectly sunny, you will find me hiking at Torrey Pines or walking around the Hillcrest Farmers Market. My husband and I can always be found attending one of San Diego’s many cultural events or outdoor concerts, or simply sharing a glass of wine on our patio watching the sunset.