



TALKING POINTS AND BACKGROUND ON LCFF

This document is intended to provide local advocates with structure and talking points for a 3-5 minute school board presentation, as well as additional background on the current conversation around school funding and the role of arts education. These are guidelines for you to consider as you prepare your own presentation, which best suits the circumstances of your school board and district.

TALKING POINTS

- **Present yourself:** Who are you? Why does your perspective matter? (As a parent, as a local organizer, community leader) Why does arts education matter? (Give an example of the impact of arts education from your experience)
- **Acknowledge what our district/school board has accomplished:** What can you point to as evidence of the district's commitment to provide quality arts education experience for students? (Show that it's an existing value in the district – let the school board members know that you consider them to be partners, not adversaries in this effort)
- **We have a new opportunity** to envision what our district's priorities shall be, guided by the priorities of the Local School Funding Formula:

The purpose of the Local School Funding Formula is to ensure that every student is given an equal opportunity to an enriched education. We know from research that access to arts education is significantly influenced by the economic prosperity of the surrounding community: where those resources are scarce, arts education opportunities disappear. In more affluent schools students twice the percentage of students receive instruction in the arts. (Is this true in your district? See background section for citation.)

The new funding formula has eliminated categorical funding, including the Arts and Music Block Grant. That money was intended to uphold our state's commitment to provide arts education, as stated California Education Code, Section 51210 and 51220, which states:

The adopted course of study for grades K-12 shall include instruction in dance, music, theater, and visual arts.

As we shift to this new funding formula we must not lose track of our responsibility to provide access to arts education .

Arts education is listed among the enumerated state priorities for the new funding formula include arts education and its impact influences all of the listed priorities. (A complete list of state priorities is listed in 'background'.)

In addition to implementing the LCFF, our district is making the transition to Common Core curriculum. Common Core envisions the development of students' 21st century learning skills, including the ability to analyze, synthesize, and apply what they've learned and to solve problems. Access to arts integration strategies will enhance the mission of Common Core and should be included in the advancement of the Common Core mission.

- **Where do we go from here?**

What are we asking? What are the next steps our district can take? Based on conversations with school district personnel and the priorities of the district, evaluate what seems most appropriate/realistic for the district to pursue. Possibilities include:

Restoring an elementary music program that's been cut

Providing professional development for teachers on arts integration strategies across the curriculum

Developing a strategic arts plan for the district if one doesn't currently exist

The suggestions should be relevant, substantial and doable, giving school board members an opportunity to implement some aspect of their commitment to arts education.

BACKGROUND

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) approved by the Legislature and Governor replaces the current funding system of revenue limits and categorical funding with a funding formula that allows for greater local discretion and innovation. The formula is comprised of a base grant, supplemental grant and concentration grant for school districts. The formula will drastically change California's current system of education funding, providing a considerable increase in resources to the state's neediest students and schools. It's an unprecedented opportunity for advocates to raise their voices at the local level to encourage increased funding for arts education and arts integration strategies. The Alliance is determined to match this opportunity with a new set of strategies, communications materials, and organizers coordinating these local advocacy efforts.

We recognize the uniqueness of the current climate around pre-K-12 public education in California, in which school board members are being asked to integrate the adoption of Common Core standards at the same time that they address the expectations of this new funding formula. Given the magnitude of the changes being contemplated, we feel it is critical that our strategies align with these larger considerations, making the case for the role arts education in accomplishing the larger transformation of our education system envisioned by both Common Core and LCFF. Our message is that arts education is part of the solution that school districts are seeking in addressing the needs and expectations of both Common Core and LCFF. At the same time we recognize our role as the primary statewide voice for arts education, and will continue to maintain our commitment to the importance of highly qualified, credentialed teachers, teaching sequential arts education courses in our schools, as well as arts integration, as a strategy to promote student success throughout the curriculum.

THE STATE PRIORITIES OF THE LOCAL SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA

The following are the enumerated state priorities:

1. The degree to which the teachers in the district are fully credentialed.
2. Implementation of the content standards, including English language development.
3. Parental involvement, including efforts of the district to seek parent input in making decisions for the school district and each school site, including how the district will promote parental participation in in programs for unduplicated students and special education students.
4. Student achievement as measured by state assessments:
 - a. Academic Performance Index (API).
 - b. Percentage of students who have successfully completed A-G and CTE courses.
 - c. Percentage of ELs who make progress towards proficiency on CELDT.
 - d. EL reclassification rate.
 - e. Percentage of students who have passed an AP exam with 3 or higher.
 - f. Percentage of students who participate and demonstrate college preparedness per the Early Assessment Program (EAP).
5. Pupil engagement as measured by:
 - a. School attendance rates,
 - b. Chronic absenteeism rates,
 - c. Middle school dropout rates, and
 - d. High school dropout rates.
6. School climate as measured by:
 - a. Suspension rates,
 - b. Expulsion rates and
 - c. Other local measures, including surveys of students, parents and teachers on the sense of school safety and school connectedness.

7. Extent students have access to or are enrolled in broad course of study that includes mathematics, English, social studies, science, VPA, health, PE, foreign language, applied arts and CTE.
8. Student outcomes, if available, in the subjects in number 7.

THE FORMULA

A three-part formula to link funding to need and academic performance:

Base: 80 cents of each state per-pupil funding for all students to cover the basic costs of education – teachers, principals and staff, textbooks and materials, adequate facilities.

Supplement: 16 cents to extra per-pupil funding for students who come from lower-income families or who are learning English.

Concentration: 4 cents toward grants for school districts with high numbers of disadvantaged students.

EDUCATION CODE AND CATEGORICAL FUNDING

Education Code Section 51210, 51220: The adopted course of study for grades K-12 shall include instruction in dance, music, theater, and visual arts.

“In California’s more affluent schools, almost twice the percentage of students received instruction in each arts discipline, compared with high-poverty schools.” *An Unfinished Canvas*, SRI

In 2007 the legislature and Governor supported over \$100 million in ongoing funds for the Arts and Music Block Grant. In 2010 those funds were turned over to the discretion of school districts when ‘flexibility’ was instituted in 2010.

Though the ongoing funding for arts education continues, the Local Control Funding Formula eliminates the Arts and Music Categorical requirement, leaving it permanently to the discretion of school districts to determine how that money shall be spent.

School districts must now develop a Local Control Accountability Plan for up to three years, to be updated annually. The plan must include annual goals for students and specific action the district will take during each year to achieve those goals.

There are 8 state priorities listed for this accountability plan. #7 reads: “Extent students have access to or are enrolled in broad course of study that includes mathematics, English, social studies, science, **VPA (visual and performing arts)**, health, PE, foreign

language, applied arts and CTE.

Public meetings and school board meetings will be occurring in the coming year to vet district plans and receive public input on district plans. The purpose of this effort is to ensure that the public voice of arts education is represented in those conversation and decisions.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ARTS EDUCATION

The arts prepare students for success in school.

Arts instruction and arts integrated instruction—lessons teaching skills and content of an art and non-art subject in tandem—engage students and increase learning and achievement. Arts education:

- **Boosts literacy and English Language Arts (ELA) skills.** Arts education helps students become better readers and writers. Drama instruction, for example, increases reading readiness and word fluency in early grades and continues to improve reading comprehension and writing skills throughout middle and high school. When the arts are integrated with literacy instruction, all students benefit, especially English Language Learners and students from low-income backgrounds.
- **Advances math achievement.** Students who study the arts, especially music, outperform their non-arts peers on mathematics assessments. Arts integrated math instruction also facilitates mastery of computation and estimation skills, and challenging concepts like fractions.
- **Engages students in school and motivates them to learn.** Arts education helps make learning matter to students by giving them a medium to connect new knowledge to personal experiences and express what they have learned to others. Students who are typically disengaged in school are more likely to participate in arts and arts integrated classes than in classes where the arts are absent, and students who receive arts integrated instruction have higher attendance than those who do not.
- **Develops critical thinking.** In a world where students must frequently wade through a sea of information to determine which facts are trustworthy and relevant to a particular topic, critical thinking skills are key to college readiness and lifelong learning. Arts education develops students' critical thinking skills—including skills for comparing, hypothesizing, critiquing, and exploring multiple and alternative viewpoints.
- **Improves school culture.** Arts education helps foster a positive culture and climate

in schools. When schools integrate the arts across the curriculum, disciplinary referrals decrease while effectiveness of instruction and teachers' ability to meet the needs of all students increase. Arts integration also contributes to increasing teacher satisfaction and lowering teacher turnover rates, often challenges for low performing schools.

The arts prepare students for success in work.

Arts education develops thinking skills and capacities key to success in the 21st Century workforce. Arts education:

- **Equips students to be creative.** Arts education develops creativity, one of the top five skills employers prize for the 21st Century. Students receiving an arts-rich education perform better on assessments of creativity than do students receiving little or no arts education. Performing arts students, for example, show greater flexibility and adaptability in thinking than their peers.
- **Strengthens problem solving ability.** The arts develop reasoning skills that prepare students to solve problems. Students who study the arts, for example, score higher than their peers on tests measuring the ability to analyze information and solve complex problems, and are more likely to approach problems with patience and persistence.
- **Builds collaboration and communication skills.** In the arts, students learn to articulate their intentions, receive and offer constructive criticism, and listen actively to others' ideas. Art making allows students to experience what it feels like to be active members of a community and to work as a team to determine and achieve common goals.
- **Increases capacity for leadership.** Students who participate in the arts develop leadership skills, including decision-making, strategy building, planning, and reflection. They also prepare to use these skills effectively by developing a strong sense of identity and confidence in their ability to affect the world around them in meaningful ways.
- **The arts prepare students for success in life.** Arts education prepares students to engage meaningfully in their communities. Arts education:
- **Strengthens perseverance.** Arts education develops students' capacity to persist in the face of a challenge. Through arts study, students improve in their ability to turn barriers into opportunities, overcome difficulty in completing complex tasks, and sustain attention. In a longitudinal study of 25,000 secondary school students, those with higher involvement in the arts scored better on measures of persistence than their peers with lower arts involvement.

- **Facilitates cross-cultural understanding.** Arts experiences foster pro-social behaviors and social tolerance that help prepare students for life in an increasingly global and culturally diverse world. Ensemble performance, community mural painting, and other group arts experiences in which participants are from diverse backgrounds demonstrate particular value for developing cross-cultural understanding.
- **Builds community and supports civic engagement.** Arts programs foster a sense of community among participants that supports their personal, artistic, civic, and social development. They also offer a vehicle for effecting change in the surrounding community. Students who have had an arts-rich education volunteer more often and exhibit greater civic engagement than other students.
- **Fosters a creative community.** Students who study the arts in their school years are more likely to engage with the arts in later life as consumers, performers, or creators than their peers who receive no arts education. Additionally, researchers find that the more art forms students study, the greater their arts participation in adulthood.

For a complete list of references to the information provided above, go to:

<http://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America-FINAL.pdf>