

**Eduardo Reyes, President, CVESD School Board**  
**Welcoming Remarks**

· On behalf of our Board of Education, I would like to welcome each of you to our schools and district office in the Chula Vista Elementary School District. We are proud to be your hosts today for the inaugural Arts Education Learning Exchange.

· You are going to be hearing a lot about family engagement during your visit here. As educators, we know a child's first teacher is mom or dad. A supportive family is a key determinant of student success. I am proud to say that our families are more engaged in our schools than ever.

· That's because of our investment in the arts, and our partnership with the San Diego Youth Symphony. The programs that they have nurtured in our district began with our neediest schools. And it is humbling to see the impact the arts renaissance has made in our school communities.

· The whole family will come to see a student perform. And when families are on our campus, that's the opening act. Their attendance is a window into drawing them into our schools, and letting them know how important they are to our mission in educating the whole child.

· Last June, our Board of Education announced its commitment to hire full-time music instructors and provide music and arts instruction during the school day for all students. We made an unprecedented \$15 million investment in arts instruction, spread over three years—in other words we are pumping \$5 million annually into the arts. The investment was made possible thanks to the Legislature's support of the new Local Control Funding Formula that shifted education spending decisions to the local level; the flexibility was key to our effort to target additional support to disadvantaged students and by extension all students.

· This was about prioritizing, and maximizing the dollars that we have. The release time allows teachers to plan lessons, attend professional development, and observe model lessons. The arts instruction allows students to foster their creative and critical-thinking skills in keeping with the objectives of the new state standards.

· We have received many honors because of our decision. This includes recognition from the prestigious Yale School of Music, support from VH1 Save the Music Foundation and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, among others. Most recently, we received a Golden Bell award from California School Boards Association.

· I could go on and on about the impact our program has made on students and families. But at this point, I would like to introduce our partners in presenting this Learning Exchange. We have with us Joe Landon, Executive Director of the California Alliance for Arts Education. Let's give him a round of applause.

· We also have with us Dalouge (pronounced DUH-LOOG) Smith, President & CEO of San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory. He has been a tremendous partner in our efforts. Thank you both for coordinating what we know will be an outstanding two days of learning and networking.