

SANTA MONICA Mirror

Theatre and Dance Act Signed by Governor

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Sacramento, CA – Legislation authored by Senator Ben Allen (D – Santa Monica) to establish single-subject teaching credentials for theatre and for dance was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown today.



Senator Ben Allen

“California is the arts and entertainment capital of the world, yet we are one of only two states in the country that does not authorize teaching credentials in theatre or dance,” Allen said. “I am so pleased that we have finally elevated these two important disciplines to the stature they deserve,” he added.

Under the current system, students who major in dance as an undergraduate are required to obtain a credential in physical education in order to teach dance. A theatre undergraduate major can only teach theatre after obtaining an English credential.

Four-time Academy Award nominee and Golden Globe winner, Annette Bening, testified in support of the bill earlier this year at a hearing of the Senate Education Committee. “I think it’s the right thing; it serves students, it dignifies our teachers, and it will uplift our community,” Ms. Bening said.

There are 13 core subjects for which specific credentials are authorized. Art and music are among them, but for no logical reason, theatre and dance are not. In fact, theatre and dance are the only subjects that have detailed standards in law which do not also have a credential.

SB 916 was coauthored by Senators Robert Hertzberg, Anthony Cannella, Jean Fuller, Andy Vidak, and Assemblymembers Kansen Chu, Cristina Garcia, Brian Maienschein, and Patrick O’Donnell. It had the support of the California Alliance for Arts Education (sponsor), the California Dance Education Association, the California Educational Theatre Association, Theatre Bay Area, the California Teachers Association, the California Federation of Teachers and United Teachers Los Angeles.