



**State Arts Action
Network**
A Program of Americans for the Arts

The SAANbox



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Joe Landon's story has always been surrounded by the arts, having been raised in a home where his mother was a piano teacher and music educator, and his European father instilled a strong cultural identification with the essential value of arts in life.

After 25 years as a playwright and screenwriter in Los Angeles, Joe shifted directions and began teaching music and theater for five years; after which, he then became a speech writer for the Speaker of the

Assembly in California. After five years working at the capitol in Sacramento, he went to work for the California Alliance for Arts Education as its policy director and brought much of what he had learned about policy and grass roots organizing to the organization. Working to promote arts advocacy allows Joe to bring everything he has always believed and learned along the way to his daily work.

Joe has now been with the Alliance for 8 years – 5 as its policy director and 3 as executive director. The Alliance's work includes a vibrant local advocacy network, which promotes arts education in school districts and counties around the state. The organization is also deeply involved in creating access to Title I funding to promote arts education strategies that support Title I goals. Their advocacy activities include a student voices campaign, which encourages students to create films that express the importance of arts education, and their candidate survey project in which they poll candidates' responses to a series of questions related to arts education. The Alliance continues to expand the base of support for arts education with its Policy Council whose membership includes over forty organizations that share the Alliance's commitment to arts education.

One of Joe's favorite advocacy moments was being invited to present at the closing plenary session for the 2014 National Title I conference and sharing the Alliance's work creating a pathway for arts education strategies in Title I programs. Joe advises future arts advocates, "Pick targets where you feel you can make a difference and stay focused on those outcomes; partnerships are the most important aspect of the work we do. And, be willing to accept your limitations in a way that enables you to keep on keeping on."

As previously mentioned, Joe was first a playwright and then a screenwriter. His play "Blessing" was performed by the American Conservatory Theater and the Manhattan Theater Club and his television credits include the movie "The Comeback Kid" and the television series "The Paper Chase."