



10 Important Things to Know About Arts Education in California

California is falling behind. For the past thirty years arts education in California's schools has been disappearing at an alarming rate. Only 11% of the public schools are meeting state goals for arts instruction. The state's recent fiscal crisis has resulted in still more dramatic cuts to visual and performing arts education programs.

Extensive research has demonstrated that arts education engages students in learning, contributes to higher test scores and reduces truancy and dropout rates.

A Harris Poll shows that a resounding **93% of Americans consider the arts to be vital to providing a well-rounded education** for children and a critical link to learning and success.

Arts education helps prepare our students for the expectations of the twenty-first century workforce, which includes the ability to innovate, communicate and collaborate. One in six jobs in Southern California is now in the creative industries, including entertainment and communication arts, digital design, product and industrial design.

The arts are uniquely positioned to **engage students who might otherwise drop out of school**. Quality arts education is an essential component of a complete educational experience for every student.

Arts education is **an essential component of a strong academic foundation**, giving students the flexibility for whatever path they choose—whether it is the workforce or a community or four-year college.

As schools have felt increasing pressure from standardized tests and federal mandates to spend more time on reading and math, school curricula is narrowing in focus, leading to a **22% reduction in the amount of time spent on arts and music instruction**.

Arts education is mandated in our State Education Code for pupils in grades 1-12, in the disciplines of dance, music, theater and visual arts. The code does not mandate schools to follow these content standards, which leaves implementation of arts education to the discretion of each school district.

Due to the efforts of parents who value arts programs, **privately funded high quality programs have been maintained in wealthier school districts**. But a child's access to arts education should not be predicated by where they happen to live.

Your commitment to supporting arts education in our schools will make a difference. **We ask your support in helping to ensure that arts education becomes part of a more balanced and creative curriculum that every child receives as part of a quality education!**