



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

California Alliance for Arts Education Names New Executive Director

Los Angeles, CA, July 7, 2011 - The Board of Directors of the California Alliance for Arts Education has named Joe Landon the organization's new executive director, effective August 1. Landon currently serves as policy director for the Alliance. He will replace Laurie Schell, who has served as executive director for the past ten years.

"I am honored that our Board of Directors has entrusted me to guide California's leading policy and advocacy organization," said Landon. "At this challenging time for our public education system, the Alliance is committed to ensuring that every student receive the benefits of a well rounded curriculum that cultivates creativity."

Schell, who has led the Alliance for the past ten years, said she was leaving to pursue new career opportunities.

"It's time for me to move on to explore the next chapter," she said. "In this transition I am mindful of the privilege the role afforded me in working with such talented colleagues and dedicated community partners and advocates, and I hope to remain a part of the Alliance's extended family for years to come. It's an honor to pass the reins to my close colleague, Joe. I look forward to supporting him during this exciting transition."

Board chair Mark Slavkin praised Schell for her accomplishments during the years she led the Alliance.

"Under Laurie's leadership the organization grew by leaps and bounds, gaining national recognition for its work, and impacting the lives of millions of California students," Slavkin said. He noted Schell was instrumental in securing a \$105 million new state block grant program to support arts education, the largest in state history.

"The Alliance is very fortunate to have a talented leader in Joe Landon. My board colleagues and I are excited about the passion and creative spirit he brings to the role. We have the utmost confidence in his ability to guide the organization into the future," Slavkin added.

Landon joined the Alliance in 2006. He has helped the California Alliance achieve greater influence in Sacramento and played a key role in the development of local advocacy coalitions in 29 school districts and counties throughout the state.

Prior to working for the Alliance, Landon worked in the California Legislature, as a speech writer and senior consultant for Assembly Speaker Robert Hertzberg and Assemblymember Wilma Chan.

The bulk of Landon's professional career was spent as a practicing artist, having been a Playwright in Residence at the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, with his plays and musicals produced there, at the Manhattan Theater Club in New York, and the Z Space in San Francisco. He also spent 15 years writing for television in Los Angeles, with credits that include the movie "The Comeback Kid" and working for several years on the award winning series "The Paper Chase."

His background also includes six years of classroom teaching experience, one as a preschool teacher, and five as a music and theater specialist at Marin Primary and Middle School. He lives in Davis with his wife Laura, and the comings and goings of three fully grown children.

The mission of California Alliance for Arts Education is to promote, support and advocate for visual and performing arts education for preschool through post-secondary students in California schools.

The California Alliance is in its fourth decade of working to build a brighter future for our state by making the arts a core part of every child's education. A statewide leader and convener, the Alliance galvanizes California's educators and other experts in arts and culture to advocate for quality arts education for all students. www.artsed411.org

Contact:

Sibyl O'Malley, Communications Manager

California Alliance for Arts Education

Email: sibyl@artsed411.org

Phone: 626.578.9315 ext. 100