May 5, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor
State of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

As a coalition of arts, education and entertainment industry organizations and leaders, we the undersigned are grateful to you for your steady leadership during this unprecedented time, and we are committed to supporting your administration and your Task Force on Business and Jobs Recovery in navigating how best to invigorate California’s economic recovery.

California’s creative economy generates 2.7 million jobs. If we do not provide students access to arts education, we sideline millions of young people soon to enter the workforce and endanger the future of the world’s fifth-largest economy.

Research consistently shows that the arts play an integral part in the economic vitality of California and, equally important, in the health and well-being of children. In particular, students are experiencing everything from obstacles to learning, increased homelessness, food shortages and increased mental health challenges as a result of this pandemic. Our students, communities and economy need to heal, and arts education is necessary to the solution.

We know the economic devastation caused by COVID-19 will translate into hard decisions for the state of California and its schools. The crisis has also made even more apparent the serious inequities faced by many of our student populations. In addition to closing the digital divide, we
have an important moment in time to bridge other glaring gaps as well, including the gap between those who have little or no access to the arts and those who do. Whether through virtual or physical classrooms, providing a comprehensive arts education is vital to both the academic and overall success of our students and critical support for our teachers and education leaders.

Multiple research studies show **arts education not only decreases feelings of anxiety, depression, and isolation, but also positively impacts all-around academic performance.** Students with an arts education are:

- 5 times more likely to stay in school,
- 3 times more likely to get a bachelor's degree, and
- 4 times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement.

At this moment, we are focused more than ever on the health and well-being of our state and all of its citizens. As a collective of organizations and leaders committed to arts education, we stand together to offer our support to you, your staff and the Task Force on Business and Jobs Recovery. California’s economy and the wellbeing of our students depend on our state’s ability to offer a comprehensive arts education to every student.

Sincerely,

Patricia Wayne  
Project Director  
Create CA  
California Alliance for Arts Education  
California Department of Education Services Association  
California State PTA  
California Arts Council  
Meg Spriggs  
Board Chair  
ArtCare, Friends of the San Francisco Art Commission  
Gustavo Herrera  
Executive Director  
Arts for LA  
Meryl Goldberg, Professor  
Director of ART=OPPORTUNITY at California State University San Marcos
Michael J. Despars  
President  
California Educational Theatre Association

Armalyn De La O  
President  
California Music Educators Association

Celia Jaffe  
President  
California PTA

Michael Fields  
Director  
California State Summer School for the Arts

Jean Johnstone  
Executive Director  
Teaching Artists Guild

Tiffany Siart  
Executive Director  
Turnaround Arts:CA

cc: Mr. Tom Steyer, Co-Chair, Governor’s Task Force on Business and Jobs Recovery  
Ms. Anne O’Leary, Co-Chair, Governor’s Task Force on Business and Jobs Recovery  
Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon  
Assemblymember Marie Waldron, Assembly Minority Leader  
Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins  
Senator Shannon Grove, Senate Minority Leader  
Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis  
Assembly Education Committee, Chair and Members  
Senate Education Committee, Chair and Members  
Joint Committee on the Arts, Chair and Members  
Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond