

# **PUBLIC COMMENT** **TALKING POINTS**

The talking points below can be used as a starting point for an effective 3-minute public comment at a school board meeting. In order to maximize impact, advocates should link their comments directly to the goals articulated by the district in the Local Control Accountability Plan or other strategic priorities document. Borrow the language of these plans to frame public comment to the school board. For example, if a district is focused on closing the achievement gap, an advocate should explain how the arts are an effective strategy to achieve this goal.

**Research consistently shows that the arts play an integral part 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.

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.

**Especially important during this time of trauma and upheaval, students need to develop self-management and self-discipline, interpersonal and relationship skills, and self-expression.** Numerous studies show the arts support the development of all of these essential skills.

**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.

**We know the economic devastation caused by COVID-19 will translate into hard decisions for the state of California and its schools.** If budget cuts are unavoidable, we would like to ensure that reductions to the arts are not disproportionate to other state mandated disciplines.