

Be a Leader for

ARTS EDUCATION

A Guidebook To Expand Arts Learning in Public Schools



California State
PTA[®]
everychild. onevoice.

What's Inside?

This guide — for school board members, parents, teachers, and administrators — offers concrete actions you can take to grow arts education in the public school system.

You can help bring the ARTS back into your schools!

**CALIFORNIA COUNTY
SUPERINTENDENTS
EDUCATIONAL
SERVICES ASSOCIATION**



The California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) provides the organizational mechanism for the 58 County Superintendents of Schools to design and implement statewide programs to identify and promote quality cost-effective educational practices and services, and provide support to school districts in the areas of student services, curriculum and instructional services, fiscal and business accountability services, and technology and telecommunications. CCSESA advocates on behalf of K-12 and early childhood education at state and federal levels and, in partnership with state agencies, develops and coordinates statewide training to implement new responsibilities of county superintendents to ensure consistent statewide application and standards.

With funding from the Hewlett Foundation, CCSESA launched a major arts education initiative in 2006 to strengthen and expand arts education in California schools as part of a comprehensive core curriculum. Hewlett funding has supported a multi-pronged effort to build support for California educators and to develop a delivery mechanism to provide resources, information, and technical services to schools and districts across California, as well as to advocate for quality visual and performing arts as part of a standards-based, sequential curriculum based on the state-adopted *Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California Public Schools*. The CCSESA Arts Initiative is prompting change at the local, county and statewide levels through an orchestrated effort to improve policy and implementation to help administrators, teachers, parents and school boards build and sustain arts education in California.

CALIFORNIA STATE PTA

California State PTA has an unparalleled network of nearly 1 million members with a mission to positively impact the lives of all children and families. PTAs are a dynamic part of local communities throughout the state, with PTA or PTSA units currently operating at nearly 4,000 school sites. In addition, there are nearly 170 councils and 29 regional districts that are all constituents of California State PTA. Locally elected volunteer leaders partner with educators and direct the activities of each of these units, councils and districts.

PTA focuses on four major areas: education, health, parent involvement and community concerns. As part of that focus, PTA has a long-standing commitment to arts education for every student at every school, in conjunction with a comprehensive, quality education. PTA believes that the arts are essential for a creative, engaged, thoughtful, work-prepared, fully educated and civic-minded student population. With the support of the Hewlett Foundation, California State PTA has developed a long-range plan to identify, develop and mobilize a network of “Parents for the Arts” throughout California. This network will promote student success by advocating for high quality arts education for all California students.

CCSESA and California State PTA extend special thanks to California Secretary of Education Glen Thomas for contributing to the content of this guide and for his ongoing support of arts education for the youth of California.

They also wish to acknowledge the generosity of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation in funding the production of this publication.

You Can Be a Leader for Arts Education

In this current environment of budget cuts, many worry that education in the arts (dance, music, theater and visual arts) will be on the chopping block.

Perhaps you have noticed that some school or state leaders appear to be unsympathetic to the need to maintain, let alone expand, arts education.

Maybe there's been talk in your local arts community about what the schools are doing – and what they should be doing – in arts education.

You may well have wondered what it would take to help lead an effort in your school district to increase access to a quality arts program for all students.

IF SO, THIS GUIDE IS FOR YOU.

You know that a student's education should be comprehensive, and that it is not complete without a grade-by-grade course of study in the visual and performing arts. You recognize the power of the arts to build self-esteem and teach students critical thinking and social skills. You understand that the arts can be a key component in school improvement.

You have a vision of expanding arts education – and **you** can be the leader who helps make it happen.

21st Century Skills

Arts education influences critical workplace skills and thinking habits, as well as fostering innovation. Studies have documented that skills such as collaboration, project completion, self-expression, creativity, problem solving, generating new ideas and approaches, and risk-taking are important for the new economy of this century.

Championing the Arts

At this time when you are making critical and far-reaching budget and program decisions for the upcoming school year, I write to bring to your attention the importance of the arts as a core academic subject and part of a complete education for all students. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) defines the arts as a core subject, and the arts play a significant role in children's development and learning process. . . .

From a letter by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan sent in September 2009 to educational community leaders



This capacity of human beings to create and appreciate the arts is just one of the many reasons to teach the arts in the schools. Study and practice in the arts refine students' abilities to perceive aesthetically, make connections between works of art and the everyday lives of people, and discuss visual, kinesthetic, and auditory relationships.

Visual and Performing Arts Framework

View California's nationally recognized Visual and Performing Arts Framework at

www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/documents/vpafamewrk.pdf

Did You Know?

The California State Education Code states that the arts should be taught to every student.

Section 51210 specifies that a required adopted course of study used by schools for grades 1-6 must include the visual and performing arts

Section 51220 specifies the same requirement for grades 7-12.

In recognizing the breadth of rich curriculum, California has adopted nine curriculum frameworks.

www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/allfwks.asp



The federal government, through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), recommends that the arts are to be offered to every student.

www.ed.gov/nclb

Why the Arts Are Essential

The arts are essential for student engagement, learning and creative expression, and play a vital role in the educational development of students. David J. Skorton, Cornell University's president, has shared his thoughts on why teaching the arts and the humanities in schools is not a luxury. He writes:

"They keep and convey our cultural heritage while opening us up to other societies and civilizations around the globe. They help us explore what it means to be human, including both the ethical and aesthetic dimensions. If science and technology help us to answer questions of 'what' and 'how,' the arts and humanities give us ways to confront the intangible, to contemplate the 'why,' to imagine, to create. If ever there were a time to nurture those skills in our young people, it is now, when our nation's future may depend on our creativity and our ability to understand and appreciate the cultures around the world as much as on our proficiency in reading and math."

In *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, a compendium of 62 research projects published by the Arts Education Partnership, research indicates that students' social and academic skills are enhanced by learning in the arts. From music's role in cognitive development and spatial reasoning to ways that drama fosters reading comprehension, the research indicates that education in the arts not only fosters specific cognitive skills, but also improves students' self-confidence and motivation to learn, particularly among poor and other at-risk students.

Ten Things To Know About Arts Education in California

1. California is falling behind—arts education is disappearing at an alarming rate.
2. Extensive research shows arts education engages students.
3. Teaching creativity and the arts contributes to higher test scores in all subjects.
4. Arts education helps to prepare students for the 21st century workforce.
5. According to a Harris Poll, 93 percent of Americans consider the arts to be vital to a well-rounded education.
6. There has been a significant reduction in the amount of time spent on arts and music education.
7. Arts education is mandated in the state *Education Code*.
8. Privately funded high-quality programs have been maintained in wealthier school districts.
9. We need ongoing funding for sequential, standards-based arts education for all children in grades K-12.
10. Your help is needed to ensure that arts education becomes part of the core curriculum that every child receives as part of a quality education!

Adapted from "Top 10 Things to Know about Arts Education in California" on the California Alliance for Arts Education website, www.artsed411.org

What Can You Do?

School leaders, community leaders, parents, educators, and board members can plan strategically to support and expand arts education. Here are some ideas.

Engage. Plan. Act. Does your board of education have a policy statement on arts education and the role of a comprehensive curriculum? Such board policies guide instructional planning and resource allocation.

Examine the statement. If the board has adopted such a policy statement, consider ways you can help to fulfill it. If you think the board policy is currently inadequate, communicate with your local board and offer to assist in strengthening it.

Remember. The elected district school board is responsible for determining the priorities that reflect enduring educational aims and community values. It is legally charged with the responsibility of approving individual courses of study, along with approving the district's budget in keeping with its priorities.

Strategies for Moving Forward

Engage the school board. Review the status of arts education in the district according to recommendations from the state-adopted *Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California Public Schools*. You will want to solicit support for a broadly stated board policy statement. Let board members know that you are interested in assisting them with the development and refinement of a board policy statement for the arts.

Bring in the PTA. The California State PTA is working statewide to support arts education, and has many resources to help. Let your school and district PTA know of your findings and intent. Invite them to join in the effort to support arts education.

Use arts research. Provide the school board with compelling research regarding the benefits of arts education. A one-page summary of the research may help you to advocate for the arts in the classroom. Several resources are included in this booklet to assist you in locating such research.

Action and Persistence

Two keys to successful leadership are action and persistence. The hardest part is often getting started, so step out now and begin. Successful leaders also must keep going, taking setbacks in stride and bouncing back. The key is persistence, which sustains us when we wonder if we are making a difference.

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

Eleanor Roosevelt



Arts education is not only a discipline on its own, but it also reinforces and supports all the other curricular areas.

SMARTS

SMARTS is California State PTA's program to encourage arts education, and to help parents, teachers and legislators recognize the arts' role in improving academic and personal success.

To learn more about the California State PTA's SMARTS program go to

<http://www.capta.org/sections/programs-smarts/index.cfm>



The PTA Reflections Program is an arts recognition and achievement program for students. The Reflections Program provides opportunities for students to express themselves creatively and to receive positive recognition for original works of art inspired by a preselected theme, while increasing community awareness of the importance of the arts in education. See inside back cover for examples of student work.



Highlight students. Ask the district to highlight student work and student performances at board meetings and other events, and to provide students an opportunity to talk about what they have learned in the arts.

Involve teachers. Highlight teachers who are making a difference by teaching the arts and/or infusing the arts into the comprehensive curriculum.

Involve County Superintendents of Schools. Contact your county office of education and involve the designated county arts lead and/or curriculum leader.

If you need additional assistance, contact your regional arts lead by accessing the contact information on the CCSESA Arts Initiative web site at: www.ccsesaarts.org. CCSESA Arts Initiative has developed templates and tools that will assist you in your planning process.



An Unfinished Canvas — Fact Sheet

A Summary of Research Conducted by SRI International sponsored by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

<http://policyweb.sri.com/cep/publications/AnUnfinishedCanvasFactSheet.pdf>

You've Got the District's Attention What's Next?

Bring in the community. It is important to form a broad-based committee to oversee and guide the development and expansion of arts instruction and curriculum planning. Ideally, the core curriculum in preschool and in grades K-12 would reflect the Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) standards and the state VAPA curriculum framework. The resulting arts education curriculum can then be supplemented by after-school programming and further enriched and expanded by community-based organizations and local artists.

Who should be invited to join the arts planning committee? Make sure your schools and arts community are included on the committee. Here is a suggested list:

- Teachers
 - Preschool
 - Elementary
 - Middle and High School
 - After-school program
- Administrators
 - Superintendents
 - Assistant Superintendents or Directors of Curriculum
 - Principals or assistant principals
- School board members
- PTA leaders
- Parents
- County Office of Education regional and county arts leaders
- Community arts groups (Typically these groups have had very little interaction with the district or the board, and their inclusion can be very valuable.)

Role of the committee. The role of the committee is to understand the goals of a comprehensive arts education, get behind the goals, and help articulate the goals to the board and to other groups. Without agreement on the importance of the arts in every student's instructional program, both at the committee level and at the school board level, it will be difficult to build momentum for expanding educational program offerings and for increased funding.



Good plans shape good decisions. That's why good planning helps to make elusive dreams come true.

Lester Robert Bittel
Editor of *Encyclopedia of Professional Management*

The Insider's Guide to Arts Education Planning

The purpose of the Insider's Guide to Arts Education Planning is to provide a hands-on, how-to planning process for schools, districts and counties. Field tested by experienced Arts Education Planning Coaches and Community Arts teams, best practices, innovative ideas, templates and strategies are offered as a guide to navigate the sometimes challenging terrain of arts education planning. California Alliance for Arts Education is pleased to offer this guide as a tool and catalyst for strategic thinking and district-wide planning throughout California.

<http://www.artsed411.org/educate/guides.aspx>



The Importance of Planning

Research. The 2007 SRI study “An Unfinished Canvas” found that school visual and performing arts flourished where there was **systematic planning** for arts education. Through a comprehensive planning process, teachers and other stakeholders establish goals, strategically use resources, rally support and improve existing conditions. Planning is even more critical in tight budget times.

Much of what is needed for a successful arts education program – increase of professional development opportunities, review of instructional time, purchase of equipment and supplies and use of expert teachers – is likely to be phased in over time.

Since the arts are part of the state's core curriculum, the planning process should be integrated with the work of a district's curriculum committee, if there is one. In many districts, the endorsement of the curriculum committee carries weight with the board when the trustees engage in setting the district's budget.

The ultimate goal is twofold. First, have the district adopt a plan that supports the board policy statement on arts education. This plan can be used by parents and community members to support the district, and to advocate effectively for expanded resource allocation. Second, create a school-wide and district-wide plan for implementing a comprehensive curriculum that includes the arts. Most schools develop comprehensive school-wide plans, and this is the place to see the arts detailed and integrated with the full curriculum.

Planning Components

Brainstorm. Write down the ideal of what students need to know and what they should experience in the visual and performing arts. Use the *Visual and Performing Arts Framework* as a guide.

Create a big vision. In Hollywood, producers as well as screenwriters summarize their script in 25 words or less. Try to capture the “big vision” in one sentence such as, “Arts should be taught by prepared teachers to every student at every grade every week.”

Identify and honor what is working in the district. Are there ways to showcase what is successful to increase visibility?

Develop clear goals and objectives. These lay the groundwork for focused planning, assessment and instruction. Ask the question, “What elements should be in place in our arts program in five years?”

Take inventory. An accurate *survey of existing local conditions* that details what students receive and experience at each grade level, and the breadth of student involvement in the arts, is critical for several reasons:

- **Equity of access.** It is not acceptable to offer a few courses with the result that many students can't participate in arts education even if they want to. Every student needs to be offered arts courses and arts opportunities.
- **Standards-based.** California has standards (expectations for student experiences and learning) at each grade level in the four disciplines of the visual and performing arts. Data must be collected so that planning efforts can appropriately address what is needed to “close the gap” in offerings to ensure that all students have access to standards-based instruction.
- **Teacher expertise.** Some districts have only one art teacher for as many as 20 schools, thereby ensuring that many students will not have a quality arts-education experience. Data must be collected about teacher knowledge and expertise, and credentialing, in the arts. Some districts have surveyed their generalist teachers and found that some have had professional experience and/or academic content preparation in one or more of the arts disciplines. This database can be used to identify in-district expertise and provide appropriate professional development and support.
- **Resources.** An accurate recording of the supplies and space used for the arts is an essential component of planning.

Involve key personnel. While it might be that the plan itself is drafted by a small committee, it needs to be vetted and critiqued by a broadly assembled group – particularly one that includes those who actually would be affected (such as those working in facilities planning).



We must include the arts in the education of all students if we want our children to be prepared for the challenges of life and work in our global society. The challenges of today, and most certainly of tomorrow, require the abilities, skills, habits, and knowledge that education in the arts is uniquely able to provide.

*Kent E. Seidel, Ph.D.
Educational Administration & Policy Studies /
Higher Education Administration
Morgridge College of Education
University of Denver*



Every Child Deserves a Quality Arts Education



Tap existing networks and resources for enrichment, input and support. Include:

- Museums
- Performing arts troupes
- Cultural centers
- Colleges and university arts facilities
- Dance companies
- Arts councils
- Associations of local artists
- Parent-teacher associations (PTAs)

For some of these networks, partnerships can be developed. For example, a community-based group might use school facilities when classes are not in session, and in turn the community-based group can help the school plan, and raise money and support for, arts education.

Develop a staged action plan. Experienced arts educators should contribute to the development of the district action plan in the following steps:

- **Create a district vision statement.**
Compare this with the existing board policy statement and help update the policy, if needed. Identify the gaps in course offerings by creating an inventory review. This stage is sometimes referred to as the needs assessment stage.
- **Agree on priorities.**
While there may be many pressing arts education needs in the district, it is important to come to agreement on those of highest priority.
- **Develop or refine goals and objectives.**
This should include both short-term (one to two years) and long-term (three to five years). It is important to catalog the implementation tasks necessary to achieve those goals.
- **Develop a timeline.** Calendar each task.

Additional Planning Components

Finally, there are a few additional components of planning that can be helpful:

Focus on student learning and assessment.

- Could the district envision an eighth-grade arts assessment/portfolio that would bring attention and focus back on student learning?

- Are there other assessment tools that would serve to assist teachers as well as highlight and reinforce student learning and public accountability?
- Could a cohort of teachers begin to identify agreed-upon outcomes based on the Visual and Performing Arts content standards, and evaluate samples of student work that support those outcomes?

Review and provide necessary support systems. For example, provide teacher and community workshops as well as a professional development plan for teachers.

Build in an evaluation system. Determine ways to make learning visible in each of the four arts disciplines, and develop measures for collecting evidence of learning and understanding. This information will be useful to teachers, parents, artists, administrators and students, so that arts education implementation is tracked and transparent. Develop a process to make the findings public in ways that parents, artists and the wider community can participate.

Community Discussions

Share your plan with the local community and school district educational leaders. To promote understanding and to garner support, the staged action plan needs to be supported by as many people as possible, at the school level, the district level, and in the community at large. Don't be wedded to the plan as initially presented. It is more important to modify it and gain additional support than to insist that it is perfect as is.

Conclusion

Whether you are a parent, student, elected school board member, teacher, administrator, community artist, or interested neighbor, **you can help bring the arts back into your schools!**



It's Time To Start

Now for the hard part, taking the first step. Sometimes it is important to go with the one thing that will attract the most support initially. Sometimes you will need to consider what district resources and person power is available. You may have to think creatively to find solutions.



Footprints on the sands of time are not made by sitting down.

Ancient Indian Proverb

Web-based Resources

- Americans for the Arts. “New Harris Poll Reveals That 93% of Americans Believe That the Arts Are Vital to Providing a Well-Rounded Education,” News Release, 2005.
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www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml
- Wallace Foundation. *Arts Participation and Arts Education Research*.
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www.hewlett.org/search/?kwd=library+unfinished+canvas





The PTA Reflections Program is an arts recognition and achievement program for students. The Reflections Program provides opportunities for students to express themselves creatively and to receive positive recognition for original works of art inspired by a preselected theme, while increasing community awareness of the importance of the arts in education.



"Wow!" a photograph of a Ferris wheel reflected in water, by Andrew Austin, 11, who won an Award of Excellence in Photography, Middle-Junior Division, 2008-09.



Kent "Marshall" Schaffer, age 10, who won an Award of Excellence in Dance Choreography, Intermediate Division, 2008-09.



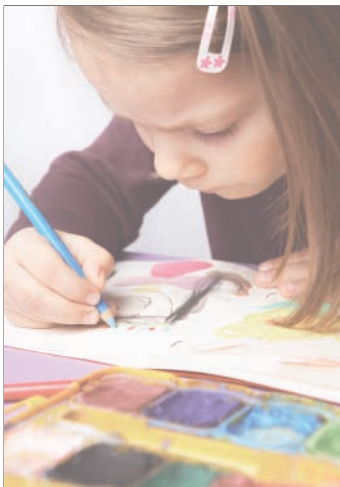
"Fireworks!" by Kacey Kim, 6, who won an Award of Excellence in Visual Arts, Primary Division, 2008-09.

California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA)

Eleven Service Regions



1. North Coast
2. Northeastern
3. Capital
4. Bay
5. South Bay
6. Delta Sierra
7. Central Valley
8. Costa Del Sur
9. Southern
10. RIMS
11. Los Angeles



To learn more about CCSESA's regional and county arts leadership and programs go to the CCSESA Arts Initiative web site at: www.ccsesaarts.org



**California County Superintendents Educational
Services Association (CCSESA)**

1121 L Street, Suite 510
Sacramento, California 95814

Phone: 916-446-3095

www.ccsesa.org • www.ccsesaarts.org

California State
PTA[®]
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California State PTA
2327 L Street
Sacramento, CA 95816
Phone: 916-440-1985
www.capta.org