

## **Federal, State and County Laws and Authorities Confirming Arts Education is an Essential Component of a Well-Rounded Education**

The Arts are recognized by **federal law** as expressly being a core component of a “well-rounded” education.<sup>1</sup> This means that:

- All PreK-12 students should have a comprehensive, balanced, sequential, in-school program of instruction in the arts, taught by qualified teachers, designed to provide students of all ages with skills and knowledge in the arts in accordance with high national, state, and local standards.
- The Arts are serious, integral, core academic subjects, and should not be treated as extracurricular activities. All Arts disciplines should have formalized, sequential curricula, regular time-on-task, qualified teachers, and a fair share of educational resources. Similarly, arts instruction should be carried out with the same academic rigor and high expectations as befitting its standing as a core academic subjects.
- As education policy makers make decisions, they should incorporate the multiple lessons of recent research concerning the value and impact of arts education. The arts have a unique ability to communicate the ideas and emotions of the human spirit. Connecting us to our history, our traditions, and our heritage, the arts have a beauty and power unique in our culture. At the same time, a growing body of research indicates that education in the arts provides significant cognitive benefits and bolsters academic achievement, beginning at an early age and continuing through school.
- In-school arts programs are designed to reach and teach all students, not merely the interested, the talented, or those with a particular socioeconomic background. These teachers and curricula should be supported by local school budgets and tax dollars, nurtured by all decision makers in the educational apparatus.
- Arts education programs should be grounded in rigorous instruction, provide meaningful assessment of academic progress and performance, and take their place within a structure of direct accountability to school officials, parents, and the community. In-school programs that are fully integrated into state and local curricula afford the best potential for achieving these ends.<sup>2</sup>

California codifies ESSA in **Education Code** sections 51210 (grades 1 - 6) and 51220 (grades 7 - 12):

- The adopted course of study “shall include instruction” and “shall offer courses” in visual and performing arts.

Since the time ESSA was passed, arts education has been universally and categorically recognized as an essential part of every student’s education in every grade level:

- “The arts are a necessary and required component of each and every California student’s education towards developing well-rounded, life-long learners who contribute to the prosperity and quality of life for local and global communities.” (*California Arts Framework, May 2020*)
- “Arts education boosts school attendance, academic achievement, and college attendance rates; improves school climate; and promotes higher self-esteem and social-emotional development.” (*California Arts Standards for Public Schools, January, 2019*).
- “Arts education is an essential part of a comprehensive education for all students, preparing them for college, career and life. [ ] High quality arts programming across content areas promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills, supports overall academic achievement, and nurtures skills that prepare all students to productively contribute to LA County’s vibrant creative economy.” (*Declaration of Rights of All Students to Equity in Arts Learning, April 3, 2018*).

---

<sup>1</sup> Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”) - Signed into law 12/10/2015 - <https://www.congress.gov/114/plaws/publ95/PLAW-114publ95.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> “The Value and Quality of Arts Education” position statement by the National Association for Music Education - <https://nafme.org/about/position-statements/the-value-and-quality-of-arts-education-position-statement/the-value-and-quality-of-arts-education/>