

Hello my name is, () and I reside in your school district.

Right now, students across our district are hurting. Multiple studies show that students are confronting serious mental health impacts due to the stress and isolation of Covid-19. We need to harness the power of the arts to support student health and increase student engagement.

As you work to create our district's Local Control & Accountability Plan (LCAP), I urge you to prioritize arts education as a key strategy for supporting student wellness and engagement. We are grateful for your work on including arts education in the current LCAP but more is needed.

Specifically, here are four priorities we urge you to include:

- 1. Make arts education for K-12 an ongoing budgeted line item to ensure fulfillment of the California Department of Education's requirement.**
- 2. Continue or add funding to guarantee an Arts Education Coordinator at the district level.**
- 3. Add or expand the number of credentialed arts teachers in the ongoing budget to ensure that each child receives arts education on a regularly scheduled basis.**
- 4. Continue to fund or begin funding for the Kennedy Center's Any Given Child programs for arts experiences, artist-in-residences programs and arts integration professional development for teachers.**

Student engagement through the arts is critical. **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.

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.

Given this clear evidence of the impact of the arts on student outcomes, can I count on you to champion the arts and fight for our students' health and success? Thank you for your leadership and commitment to the health and education of our students. I look forward to reviewing a robust arts education plan in the new LCAP that supports the urgent needs of our children.