Making the Arts Part of the Fabric of California Education
The Arts are Woven into Our Everyday Lives

We are surrounded by the creations of visual and performing artists conveyed through theatre productions, art museums and galleries, symphonies, television, movies, electronic media, popular music, in public buildings and streets, on the Internet and in many other venues. We experience performers expressing some of our very own hopes and feelings through a variety of media. This is why it is imperative for schools to provide students with opportunities to develop their imagination and creativity, and to appreciate and reflect on the artistic and cultural achievements of others.

Additionally, arts learning contributes to preparing students with 21st century skills. In classrooms that include arts learning, we see students: communicating their thoughts and ideas; collaborating to put their talent to work to reach a goal; critically solving problems; exploring their creativity in very tangible ways; and becoming informed and discerning creators and consumers of the arts who can apply what they learn to all aspects of life.
Experiences and learning in the arts are good for students, families, communities, businesses, and the economy. While not all students will become artists, research continues to grow proving that the arts are critically important to all aspects of education and learning. From an early age, instruction in the arts promotes cognitive links to learning across the curriculum including in the Common Core State Standards.

As elaborated below, the State of California affirms the importance of the arts for all students. Yet in many schools, the arts are minimal, or only available to some students. CCSESA advocates for an equitable arts education for all of California’s children as part of a comprehensive core curriculum. Arts education must not be seen as an “extra” or as an “elective.” It is a vital part of the curriculum—one that helps prepare students for productive and successful lives in our culturally and linguistically diverse world.

The pieces are in place for a mosaic of arts education to cover the state:
- The California Education Code states that the arts are to be included in the course of study for all students, kindergarten through grade 12.
- The UC and CSU systems require high school students to complete one full year in the arts as an admission requirement.
- The California Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards and Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California Public Schools provide the “what” and the “how” of arts education.
- Integrated arts learning models are being developed and arts learning resources are being researched and developed.
- The Common Core State Standards provide an open door to arts learning, creativity, and innovation.
- Statewide and local surveys show that parents support arts education in the schools.
Successful arts education programs share basic key elements and are responsive to and reflective of their community. Such arts programs include the following key components:

- **Provide strong leadership and support.** Build alignment of support with administrators, board members, parents, teachers, community members, and students.

- **Conduct an audit.** Review data to determine how many students are served by arts learning programs in your school or district.

- **Set clear goals.** Develop measurable outcomes for access to standards-based, comprehensive, sequential arts learning.

- **Strategically plan with partners.** Develop an arts team that implements arts learning with other school programs. Be sure to include culturally and linguistically responsive strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners.

- **Build capacity with all stakeholders.** Provide professional learning opportunities for administrators, teachers, parents, and school board members to understand the benefits of arts education. Equip teachers and teaching artists to be able to teach quality arts in the classroom.

- **Leverage and expand resources.** Leverage existing resources and look for new avenues of funding to support arts learning in the schools. Partner with community organizations to meet your goals.

- **Make arts learning visible.** Showcase student work in dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and media arts and acknowledge contributions by teachers and students.
The California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) launched the CCSESA Statewide Arts Initiative in early 2006 through generous funding from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. CCSESA works at all levels to tie arts education firmly into the core curriculum offered to every student in every school every day through the network of all 58 County Superintendents of Schools and their staff, and an established regional arts infrastructure with 11 identified Regional Arts Leads. Through the CCSESA Arts Initiative and the Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee (CISC) Visual and Performing Arts Subcommittee, state, regional, county, and local leaders are working to:

- Promote and facilitate county, district, and school long-range planning to expand and/or improve arts education programs.
- Provide guidelines for creating arts education programs and share effective model programs in districts and schools.
- Conduct regional and statewide professional development offerings for teachers, administrators, parents, school board members, arts leaders, and community members.
- Provide a one-stop, web-based location for information and resources to support arts education in schools throughout the state (www.ccsesaarts.org).
- Promote and support arts education through alliances, partnerships, and collaborations at every level in the state, especially through the coalition of CREATE CA (createca.net)
  www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/create.asp).
- Work with all state education agencies and organizations on initiatives that will improve a comprehensive education for all students, which includes learning in the arts.
Express your interest in helping to provide all students, locally and statewide, with a complete education that includes the visual and performing arts.

Here are some suggested next steps:

- Visit the CCSESA Arts Initiative website at www.ccsesaarts.org and explore the multiple resources available.
- Contact your CCSESA County and Regional Arts Leads to learn about their offerings and events (contact information can be found at www.ccsesaarts.org/about/regions/).
- Subscribe to the CCSESA Arts Initiative monthly newsletter by entering your e-mail address where it says “Join the Mailing List” on the bottom of the CCSESA Arts homepage.
- Learn how you can be a hero for arts education here: http://ccsesaarts.org/about/be-a-hero-for-arts-education/.
- Follow us on Twitter! @ccsesaARTS.

We hope you will be a hero for the arts!
The CCSESA Arts Initiative’s *Creativity at the Core* professional learning modules focus on key topics that weave together arts learning and California State Standards. CCSESA’s Regional Arts Leaders from county offices of education across California partnered with arts organization to collaboratively create these diverse materials to be used in K-12 educational and arts settings.

The creative work force is looking for innovative leaders to solve complex problems. As we explore how creativity connects with arts learning, common core standards, and other curricular areas, we understand the value of arts learning both as courses of study as defined by our state Ed Code, and also as vital subjects that connect across the curriculum — opening up many interdisciplinary opportunities for connections, relationships, and applications.

Perhaps one of the most important benefits of arts education and creative learning is that students learn multiple forms of literacy and cultivate deeper learning through inquiry, reasoning, imagining, problem solving, collaboration and many unique forms of expression. The arts, dance, music, theatre, visual arts and media arts, each provide many lenses through which we can understand language, science, mathematics, history, culture, and the world around us.

The suite of unique modules includes topics such as theatre arts for English Language Learners, building the creative process through dance, developing artistic literacy through the California State Standards, creativity in court and community schools, teacher and artist collaboration, leadership in the arts and the Common Core State Standards and many more relevant topics for K-university classrooms. They are yours to download from our CCSESA Arts Initiative website, www.ccsesaarts.org.

CCSESA’s *Creativity at the Core* initiative has been funded through generous support from the California Arts Council and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The California Department of Education, California Association of Bilingual Education, Loyola Marymount University, and CREATE CA have been key partners in the initiative.
Creativity at the Core

ccsesaarts.org/creativity-at-the-core/