

**SHAPING THE STORY:
THE ROLE OF THE ARTIST IN THE FUTURE OF CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

November 7, 2007

We, the undersigned, share the belief that the purpose and value of the education system is to build a healthy and equitable society. We believe that this happens through equitable classrooms, in which every child learns in the way most meaningful to him or her: Classrooms should teach children to: **1)** dispel ignorance; through inquiry; **2)** see what is; and then **3)** imagine what is possible. While there is a certain anxiety in brokering in inquiry, and most people would rather deal with certainty, artists (like scientists engaged in primary research) know that the mysterious place of inquiry is where the possible resides.

The best way to achieve this vision now, and in the California of the future where our children will be adults, is to ensure that high quality arts learning is offered to every child in every school every day.

We further believe that at this critical time with No-Child-Left-Behind restrictions, and with the serious lack of credentialed art teaching specialists, the Teaching Artist has a valid, critical role to play in partnership with classroom teachers.

Teaching Artists:

- Enliven learning outcomes of each student
- Act as catalysts for desperately needed changes in the education system
- Bridge cultures, languages and learning styles in diverse, multi-cultural classrooms
- Liberate intellectual options for both teachers and students
- Animate the whole child
- Offer creative, holistic views of the world
- Connect concepts to experience and experience to concepts

A strengthened network of professional Teaching Artists in every California school fulfills aspects of the three strands of the California Arts Council's strategic plan for building public awareness for the arts, advocating for the arts and artists, and providing essential programs that reach every California student and resident.

We urge that the California Arts Council move this vision forward by:

1. Investing in the professional development of Teaching Artists and classroom teachers to partner in arts-rich learning environments.
2. Supporting mentor, apprentice, and peer coaching programs as effective strategies for building communities of professional Teaching Artists to partner successfully with school and community educators.
3. Building supportive communities and networks of Teaching Artists and non-profit and local government agencies that support them.

California is the land of the possible. Please help our Teaching Artists to continue to teach our children to see this.

Signed:

Alameda County Arts Commission
Alameda County Office of Education Alliance for
Arts Learning Leadership
California Institute for the Arts
CCA Center for Art and Public Life
Fresno Arts Council
Humboldt Arts Council
Community School of Music and Art

Armory Center for the Arts
Sacramento Metro Arts Commission
Cultural Council of Santa Cruz
Sonoma Arts Council
Music Center, Performing Arts Center for Los Angeles County
Young Audience of San Diego
CSUSM Foundation, Center ARTES
California Poets in the Schools (North)
California Poets in the School (South)