

# Arts&Minds

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## MEASURE TO INCREASE ARTS AND MUSIC EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS ON TRACK TO QUALIFY FOR THE NOVEMBER 2022 BALLOT

*Several Leading Labor Organizations Endorse the Measure, including SAG-AFTRA, California IATSE Council, Actors' Equity Association, and Associated Administrators of Los Angeles*

*The Recording Academy (Producer of Grammys) and Create CA Join the Coalition*

*Volunteer Signature Gathering Efforts Build Momentum in Local School Communities Across California*

*Fender Launches 'Vote Arts and Minds' Sessions - A month-long digital concert series*

**LOS ANGELES, Calif. (March 16, 2022)** - Californians for Arts and Music Education in Public Schools today announced it had collected nearly 700,000 signatures toward its goal of 1 million. The effort needs to collect 623,212 valid signatures from registered voters before June 30th to qualify the initiative for the November 2022 ballot.

"This great progress reflects the passion we are seeing from people across the state—families, educators, and local school communities all believe we need more arts and music education in public schools," said **Austin Beutner**, proponent of the initiative. "We are on track to put this measure on the November 2022 ballot."

California is home to the world's creative economy, supporting 2.6 million jobs across the state. This measure will help ensure the future workforce in media, technology, and entertainment better reflect the diversity of children in public schools by providing increased resources to schools that serve students from low-income families, particularly students of color, who often lack access to arts and music programs to help prepare them for the future.

Several leading labor organizations have recently joined in support of the measure. The Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA), which represents over 160,000 actors and other media artists across the world, the California IATSE Council, which represents 54,000 women and men in the entertainment industry, and the Actors' Equity Association, which represents more than 51,000 actors and stage managers, have endorsed the measure. The Associated Administrators of Los Angeles (AALA), which represents more than 3,000 school principals and administrators, has also expressed their support for the measure.

"SAG-AFTRA is excited to support this measure that will bring the creative fulfillment of arts education to our children statewide," said **SAG-AFTRA National President, Fran Drescher**. "When kids have exposure to the arts, they do better with core education and develop productive self-expression of feelings in healthy ways rather than antisocial. My personal experience of the arts and its positive impact on my development through public education programs like this has helped shape me into the adult I am today. Regardless of whether a child has aspirations of becoming a professional performer, politician or plumber, ALL children, of all races, nationalities and economics, grow up better for the arts and its profound awakening of their inner spirit!"

"Every child deserves an arts education. A love of the arts and understanding of its craft not only makes us better members of our communities but can provide the groundwork for a lifelong career," said **Kate Shindle, President of Actors' Equity Association**. "Our governments can and should do more to create these opportunities for students. Crucially, this initiative recognizes the importance of inclusion in public arts funding and will provide even more money to help students in schools from low-income communities, where it is needed most. We are hopeful that Californians will be able to vote to enact this measure come November."

"As school leaders, we see firsthand the importance and tremendous benefit of increased Arts and Music in schools," said **Nery Paiz, President of AALA**. "We're proud to support this effort in every way possible, including making a financial contribution to help support the campaign."

The Recording Academy, which represents a variety of music industry professionals, also endorsed the measure.

"The Recording Academy supports the California Arts and Music in Schools ballot initiative which, if passed by the voters, will ensure that public school students throughout the state can experience the joy of learning music," said **Harvey Mason jr., CEO, Recording Academy**. "As music creators, we at the Recording Academy know how enriching music is for our lives and our culture. Study after study has shown how arts and music education benefits students both in and out of the classroom. Unfortunately, many California public schools lack the staff and funding for this programming, making this initiative vital for providing students with the education they deserve. The ballot initiative gives voters the opportunity to bring music to the classroom. Let's lift up our civic voices and sing out a hit for California's students."

The effort continues to build support from local school communities across the state with volunteer signature-gathering efforts. Principal Marcos Hernandez of Ellen Ochoa Learning Center brought together families in Huntington Park to join the movement and collected 250 signatures. Music teacher Vince Womack from James A. Foshay Learning Center led efforts in Exposition Park to collect almost 200 signatures. LA Unified teacher Ed Kaz helped a number of schools learn about the ballot measure and gathered close to 100 signatures in the San Fernando Valley. Instrumental Music Director Leighanna Sears led efforts at Orange High School to collect about 100 signatures. And Russ Sperling, Director of Visual and Performing Arts for San Diego Unified, led a signature-gathering effort at the San Diego Civic Theatre, where the VAPA Foundation and the San Diego Unified School District co-sponsored an honor concert with students from all over the district. Local, grassroots efforts like these are helping build awareness and support in local school communities across California.

Create CA, a statewide leader and convener of arts education and parent engagement organizations, and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Los Angeles have also endorsed this measure.

“Every student deserves equitable access to a comprehensive education that includes the visual and performing arts. The arts promote social-emotional skills, increase academic achievement, develop creativity, and prepare students for success in school, work, and life. Currently, California schools struggle to provide the arts to all students, particularly in low-income communities. This measure is necessary to ensure that every student benefits from the arts regardless of their zip code,” said **Tom DeCaigny, Executive Director, Create CA.**

“This measure is critical to the healthy development of our children as students and adults. Increased access to arts and music programming positively impacts students' social and emotional wellness, while also enabling more equitable pathways to the creative economy,” said **Patrick Mahoney, President and CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Los Angeles.**

Fender Musical Instruments Corporation kicked off the “Vote Arts and Minds Sessions” campaign. The month-long digital concert series will feature nearly three dozen artists in support of the initiative. Artists across a variety of musical genres will perform hit songs and deliver personal anecdotes about the importance of arts education while discussing the impact those creative programs had on their careers.

To view the concert series, please tune in at [Fender's](#) and [Flood Magazine's](#) YouTube channels.

Leading artists and entertainers continue to join their colleagues from stage and screen in supporting the effort.

“I was fortunate to be educated in a time when public school art programs thrived. What I learned in those classes has stuck with me. What I learned there has inspired and supported me throughout my life”, said **Jeff Bridges, Actor.** “As one of our major academic minds, Albert Einstein, said, ‘Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire

world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution.’ Arts and music education programs are all about imagination. We need to recognize the vital role arts education plays in the wellbeing of our children and in strengthening our communities. Robust programs that allow creative expression, emotional development, and joy are vital for students, parents, and educators. These programs need our support. Let’s all work together to ensure our Arts and Music Education Programs get the funding they need for generations to come.”

“I am proudly supporting this wonderful initiative!” said **Amy Brenneman, Actor**. “Students need art! Art needs students! Arts education supports and encourages so many vital things: self-expression, collaboration skills, team building, physical and mental health, pride in accomplishment, and perhaps the most desperately needed thing of all — creative thinking. Our culture needs new and creative solutions and we cannot cultivate creative solutions without cultivating the practice of creativity early and often. Arts education is not an “extra”, second to math and science. It is at the core of every level of engaged and innovative thinking.”

“Artists use their art to communicate essential societal issues, keeping this type of communication and form of expression in our youth is vital to their development. The Arts and Minds Ballot Initiative will give students from low-income backgrounds access to equity by providing increased resources to all schools and additional funding to schools with families who are struggling the most,” said **political cartoonist and Cultural Consultant on the Oscar-winning animated Pixar film “COCO”, Lalo Alcaraz**.

“Arts and music education is critical to help kids develop their curiosity, creativity, imagination and confidence,” said **Wendy MacNaughton, Illustrator and Graphic Journalist**. “That’s why I started DrawTogether, and why I am proud to support the Arts and Music in schools ballot measure. The Arts and Music measure will increase arts and music funding in California public schools by more than 50% and help ensure that the 6+ million public school students in California receive a high quality arts and music education for years to come. Join the movement!”

“The healing power of art has long been recognized in helping young people who struggle with low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and learning disabilities,” said **Sylvester Stallone, Actor**. “Since the onset of the pandemic, where we have seen drug use and suicides among our children rise dramatically, it is more important than ever to support them with the resources to express themselves creatively. Ensuring arts education is accessible to all students through this ballot measure will not only help our children heal and thrive but also inspire and reengage those students who are likely to never return to school.”

#### About the Measure:

The Arts and Music in schools measure will provide almost \$900 million in additional funding each year for arts and music education in every PreK-12 public school in California - without increasing taxes. The funding from the initiative will be used for a wide range of arts and music education including traditional music, visual arts and performing arts, computer graphics, animation, coding and costume design.

Additional funds will be provided to schools that serve low-income students to address the lack of equitable access to arts and music education.

To Learn More about this effort and sign up for updates and volunteer opportunities, please visit:  
[www.VoteArtsandMinds.org](http://www.VoteArtsandMinds.org)

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