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Good morning,

The Mission of the Florida Art Education Association is to promote art education in Florida through professional development, service, advancement of knowledge, and leadership.

To that end, the Florida Art Education Association has collaborated with other arts associations throughout the state to sign on to an important position focused on the importance of Arts Education for all Florida students that aligns with the FAEA mission and goals.

As decision makers and policymakers plan for school reopening in the fall, it is critically important that we remember that Arts Education is Essential for all Florida Students.

We ask that you share this important information with your school administrators, school Board members, parents, and community.

Arts Education is Essential

It is imperative that all students have access to an equitable delivery of arts education that includes dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts that supports their educational, social, and emotional wellbeing, taught by certified professional arts educators in partnership with community arts providers.

Teaching and learning will never quite be the same in our post-COVID-19 world. However, our commitment to provide rich and varied educational experiences remains unwavering. The arts have played an important role in these tumultuous times and will continue to do so for all students, including the traditionally underrepresented, those with special needs, and from low-income families.

Here's why:

Arts education supports the social and emotional well-being of students, whether through distance learning or in person. Self-awareness, self-efficacy, self-management and perseverance, social awareness and relationship skills are central to any arts education activity, no matter the age and ability of the student or the environment in which the learning takes place. The arts, with their strong emphasis on team building and self-reflection are supremely suited to re-ignite students' interest in learning through collaboration, while simultaneously fostering creativity, critical thinking, and communication.

Arts education nurtures the creation of a welcoming school environment where students can express themselves in a safe and positive way. Celebrating our ability to come together as educators and students is vital to creating a healthy and inclusive school community. The arts, through a rich partnership among certified arts educators, teaching artists, and community arts

providers, play a valuable role in helping students and their families build and sustain community and cultural connections.

Arts education is part of a well-rounded education for all students as understood and supported by federal and state policymakers. As defined in ESSA, “music and the arts” are part of a well-rounded education. Every state in the nation recognizes the importance of the arts as reflected in rigorous PreK-12 state arts standards. Forty-six states require an arts credit to receive a high school diploma and 43 states have instructional requirements in the arts for elementary and secondary schools. As noted in *Arts Education for America’s Students: A Shared Endeavor*: “An education without the arts is inadequate.”

The healing and unifying power of the arts has been evident as the COVID-19 pandemic swept the country. We have seen and heard it play out through works of art on sidewalks, shared musical moments from porches, in plays and dance performances, and every other imaginable iteration of art making. As states and schools work through multiple challenges in the years ahead, arts education must remain central to a well-rounded education and fully funded to support the wellbeing of all students and the entire school community.

The Florida Arts Associations have banded together to sign an agreement about the arts and how essential arts education is for Florida’s students.

Arts Education is Essential

The signing organizations convey that the arts have already played a pivotal and uplifting role during the health crisis, and the arts education can help all students, including those who are in traditionally under-represented groups, as students return to school next year. Arts Education is Essential speaks to arts education’s role in supporting the social and emotional well-being of students, an area that administrators, educators, and parents have highlighted as essential to student safety and success during the pandemic. and as students return to school, whether in-person, online, or in a blended fashion, this fall. Arts education also creates a welcoming school environment and a healthy and inclusive school community, helping students, educators, parents, and the community at large build and strengthen their connectedness during this time of social isolation and social distancing.

The document at the National level was signed on by all of the National Arts Associations, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of Elementary School Principals and over 50 other arts and education associations.

- The Florida Alliance for Arts Education
- The Florida Art Education Association
- The Florida Association of Theatre Educators

- The Florida Dance Education Organization
- The Florida Music Education Association
- The Florida Music Supervision Association
- The Florida School Music Association

We have attached the National Statement and the National Associations that have signed on to the position for your information.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JH Dacey".

Dr. Jackie Henson-Dacey, FAEA President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathleen D. Sanz".

Dr. Kathleen D. Sanz, FAEA Board Consultant

Attachment: Arts are Essential Unified Statement