ARTS ARE EDUCATION

Dear (replace with board member name)

As a (replace with parent, teacher, etc.) of the (replace with school name here) School, I would like to thank you for your service as a board member during this year like no other in education. You have been faced with unprecedented funding, staffing and safety issues, and I appreciate all that you have done to maintain a quality education for our students in the face of these challenges.

As you are aware, additional challenges lie ahead for the 2021-22 school year. As an arts education advocate, I am concerned about potential budget cuts brought on by the recession, the additional costs that might be needed for Personal Protective Equipment to ensure classroom safety, particularly in performing arts classrooms, and how the school will schedule remedial instruction while still maintaining access to the arts for all students, including those suffering from learning loss.

In April, more than 100 arts and education organizations, including the National Association for Elementary School Principals and the National Education Association, endorsed the "Arts Education is Essential" statement. The document asserts that the arts, a well-rounded subject area under federal law, support the social and emotional well-being of students, foster a welcoming and safe school environment, and encourage the inclusion of every student's voice.

I invite you and other members of the board to go one step further and to pass the Arts ARE Education Resolution at the next board meeting. The Arts ARE Education Resolution asks you, as well as other board members, to resolve that the school will continue to fully fund and provide appropriate resources to support arts education programs during the 2021-2022 school year and beyond because you agree that the arts support our students and create an inclusive and supportive school culture. More specifically, the campaign is asking that you ensure that:

- Arts education programs continue to be funded.
- Arts classes are offered across all areas and appropriately scheduled.
- Curriculum and scheduling designed to address "learning loss" keeps arts education within the school day and available to all students.
- Arts educators continue to be employed and teach in the discipline for which they were trained.
- Resources that are critical to an arts program's success should always be available.
- Professional development for arts educators be appropriate and comparable to that of other subject area teachers.
- Facilities built and furnished for arts-based activities be used for that purpose.
- Arts educator evaluation be done in the larger context of professional development and mindful of the "new norms" of practice adopted under the pandemic era.

I know these are challenging times and that your school's resources may not allow you to meet every expectation noted here or each of the stated Resolution declarations. Please commit to arts education at your school as best you can in your own customized version of the Resolution. The arts *ARE* education and must remain central to a well-rounded education and fully funded to support the wellbeing of all students and the entire school community.

Thank you for your commitment to education and for your support for arts education in our school. You can download the Resolution here and confirm your board's passage on the same page.

Sincerely,

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