



THE CENTER FOR ARTS EDUCATION

December 18, 2009

Last week, the City's Department of Education released its third *Annual Arts in Schools Report*. It's great that the DOE is providing regular information about arts education in our public schools – we commend them for it. However, while there are some encouraging signs to be gleaned from the report, it does raise serious concerns about the lack of compliance with state mandates for arts education, as well as a steady decline in funding for key elements of quality arts instruction.

We've [published a statement](#) on the release of the report, which includes a preliminary analysis of some of the report's data, that you can read on our web site. While the report raises many critical questions, what it does make clear is that we need more action to guarantee that every child in every school receives a quality arts education. As our advocacy at City Hall continues, please join fellow parents, educators, artists, and advocates in sending a message to your state legislator to pass legislation that would ensure our public schools comply with state regulations for arts instruction.

Click here to [send a message to your state legislator now](#).

After reading the DOE report, we are left wondering:

- With steep declines already occurring over the past three years in funds budgeted for instruments and arts supplies, as well as partnerships with cultural arts institutions, how will the DOE ensure that the arts don't take further hits with the looming educational budget cuts?
- While the DOE reports a slight increase in average per-school investment in the arts (attributable primarily to mandatory salary increases, raises and related growth in personnel costs for teachers already in the system), we know that averages conceal great disparities – how many schools are making next to no investment in arts education?
- How can students at close to 20 percent of high schools meet graduation requirements when their schools do not have any certified arts teacher on staff?

The DOE's Office of the Arts and Special Projects is trying hard. But working within an educational construct that is so heavily tilted towards achieving progress on state tests in just two subject areas, the arts stand little chance of flourishing across the system.

[Please take action now so that arts in our schools have a fighting chance.](#)

And please take the time to read our statement on the DOE's report.

Thanks for all that you do to help make sure that every child in every school receives a quality arts education.

We wish you a happy and arts-filled holiday season.

Sincerely,

Richard Kessler
Executive Director