



**Call for the
Funding and Protection of Public
Elementary Art Education
In BC:**

Submission to the
Select Standing Committee on Finance and
Government Services

Maggie Milne Martens
Director of AIRS
Artist in Residence Studio Program

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Preface

It is a widely acknowledged fact that Arts education in BC's public schools is under threat. In elementary schools, the critical loss of specialist teachers and dedicated space has meant that the majority of children between the ages of 5 and 13 receive NO significant Art instruction. While some districts and schools retain music specialists, authentic access to the visual and performing arts have all but disappeared.

The Arts are a fundamental form of human expression that is critical to the development of children's creative, cognitive and empathic capacities, and vital to their social and emotional wellbeing. This deficit within the public education system has created systemic inequities of access to educational opportunity for children in the arts, limiting individual potential with broad reaching implications for mental wellbeing and the democratic and economic health of our whole society.

While there is a vast body of scientific and academic evidence to support the relevance and critical importance of the arts within education, this document presents a different kind of evidence: the voices, actions and art expressions of children that attest to the value and importance of art in and for their lives and the teachers and parents who are witness to its impact.

All images and quotes in this document are from students and teachers participating in AIRS.

The Arts and COVID-19

While students have been relatively unaffected by COVID 19 in terms of physical health, they have been disproportionately impacted by the social disruption and disorientation of physical distancing, isolation from peers and anxiety around contagion from others. Prolonged physical distancing measures within school will further exacerbate psychological trauma for a generation of children, with disproportionate impact on those already disadvantaged within the system.

Psychologists are calling on schools to attend to the social and emotional wellbeing of students. This means that children need embodied processes that will enable them to access and feel their emotions - sadness, loss, anxiety- in the face of situations they cannot change, in order to restore mental equilibrium, build resilience and bring healing.

Child psychiatry experts like Dr. Gordon Neufeld and Dr. Jane Garland identify the arts as the primary means for children to process their emotions and feelings because they are non-verbal and implicit forms of expression.

The need for access to authentic, material and process based artmaking for students has never been more acute.





“I love the art room”, Kindergarten student


AIRS is a groundbreaking initiative and intervention developed between the Vancouver School Board and community partners to address the inequity of access to art education within underserved public elementary schools.

AIRS creates a studio space within public elementary schools and supports authentic, socially relevant artmaking experiences for students across the whole school through long-term artist residencies.

AIRS is a working model that showcases the vital importance of art and its transformative impact on student learning and wellbeing within public elementary schools.

“There is the joy of beautiful stuff coming out of the studio and the buzz about what is happening. Students know that in their school, there is room to observe, examine, think in big ways, to notice, to create. The space tells them that it is valued.”

Carrie Gelson, Grade 3 teacher



*“Art is everything. All our
imagination and the way we express
ourselves.”
Tanishka, Grade 6*

Art is relevant and vital for education today

“Art education has an important role to play in the constructive transformation of educational systems that are struggling to meet the needs of learners in a rapidly changing world characterized by remarkable advances in technology on the one hand and intractable social and cultural injustices on the other.”

Art education is vital for the promotion of “peace, cultural diversity and intercultural understanding as well as the need for a creative and adaptive workforce in the context of post industrial economies.”

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education*, 2010.



“Water, Justice, Thunderbird” Nightingale Elementary



Iris' Story

Art is important to me because it is my passion and it shows my inner self.


Also, it's my dream to become an artist and I can share my creativity and my thoughts to the world to make it turn into reality. And make it to history.

You can also reuse garbage when you reuse it, it makes less of a dump and space for new life to live and grow.

I love art because of its beauty and stories it shares through generations. Pictures and drawings are good for stories and memories.

You can share your talent and techniques to another person. Art is a good start for when your engineering, inventing, or making blueprints. It was also my passion.

Iris, Grade 4

A young girl with long brown hair, wearing a black cap and a pink t-shirt, is focused on painting a colorful artwork on a table. She is holding a paintbrush and applying red and purple paint. In the background, another person is partially visible, and there are various items on a table, including a water bottle and some papers.

Art is essential to the
Core Competencies
of the
BC Curriculum

Communication

Thinking

- *Creative Thinking*
- *Critical Thinking*

Personal and Social Competencies:

- *Positive Personal and Cultural Identity*
- *Social Emotional Learning*
- *Empathy*
- *Intercultural Understanding*

Art is central to *Communication* in a digital world

The primary forms of information exchange and communication within our digital, interconnected world are visual and performative.

90% of information processed is visual

84% of all communications is visual

80% of people remember what they see, compared to 10% what they hear and 20% percent of what they read.

Only 20% of text online is read

If students don't shape images, images will shape them."

Bill Ivey, 2000, Chair NEA.



Marketers invest heavily in visual content creation.

We must invest students with the visual literacy skills to decode and critically evaluate images and create authentic images that make a difference within our global communication sphere?

Art develops *Creativity*

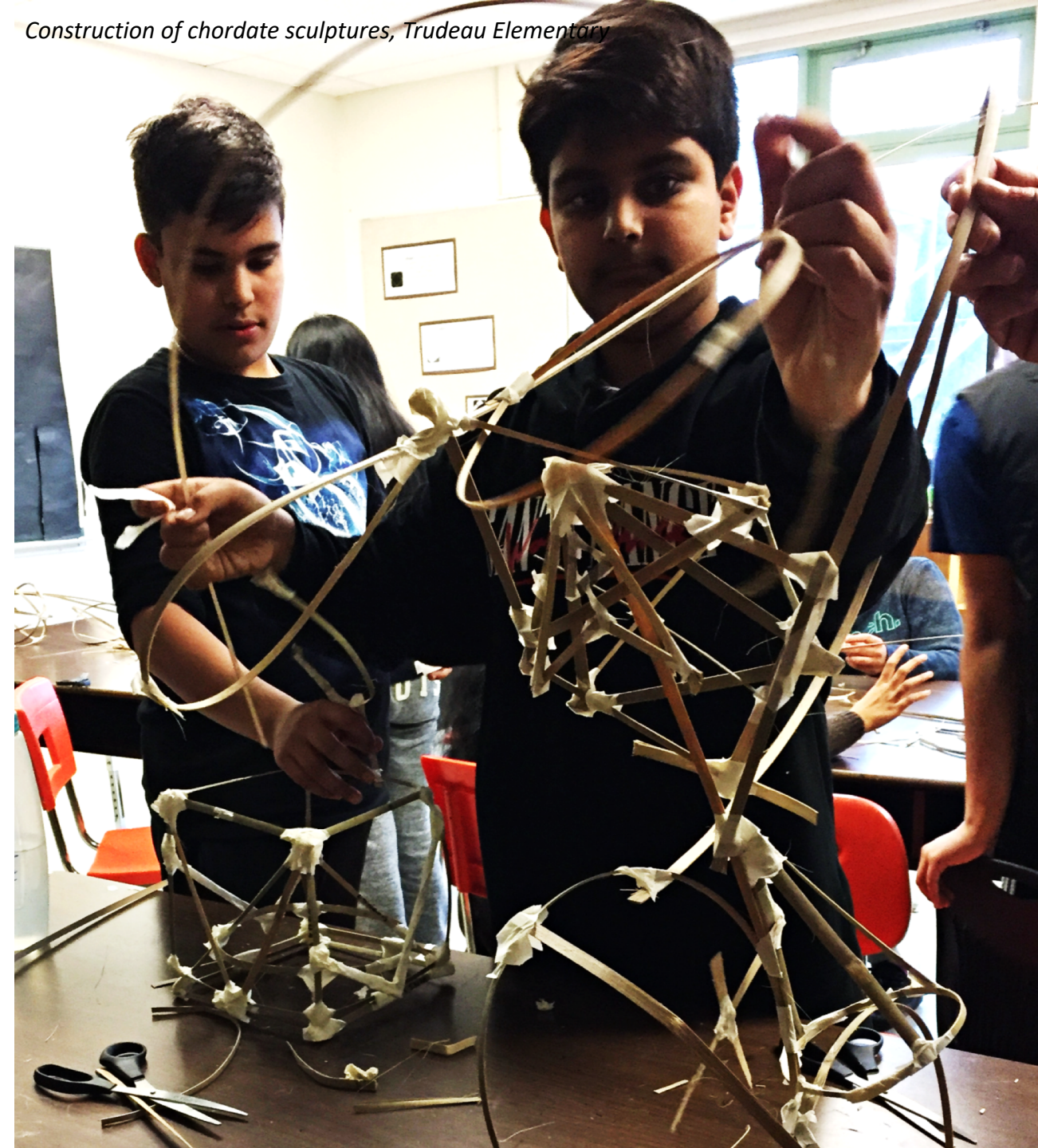
Creativity is widely regarded as one of the key skill sets for the 21st century workforce according to the OECD and the World Economic Forum. Art develops creativity and divergent thinking through envisioning, open ended problem solving and the transformation of materials. Art enlarges the imagination.

Art teaches you how to fix problems with creative solutions. Aisha, Grade 7

“When working on art you have to learn to problem solve and use different materials and strategies to make things work.” Rachel, Grade 7

“It is fun making stuff from different things using my hands.”

Evrett, Kindergarten





“The art room means a lot to me. Art is fascinating, designing, you can make stuff out of anything. You can paint nature, anything. I have made lots of things, a bird house, a paper mache bird, clay people, clay dragon cup. I really enjoy it. Even if you you make a mistake you can make something cool out of it. Being creative is art. I feel good when I’m creating.”

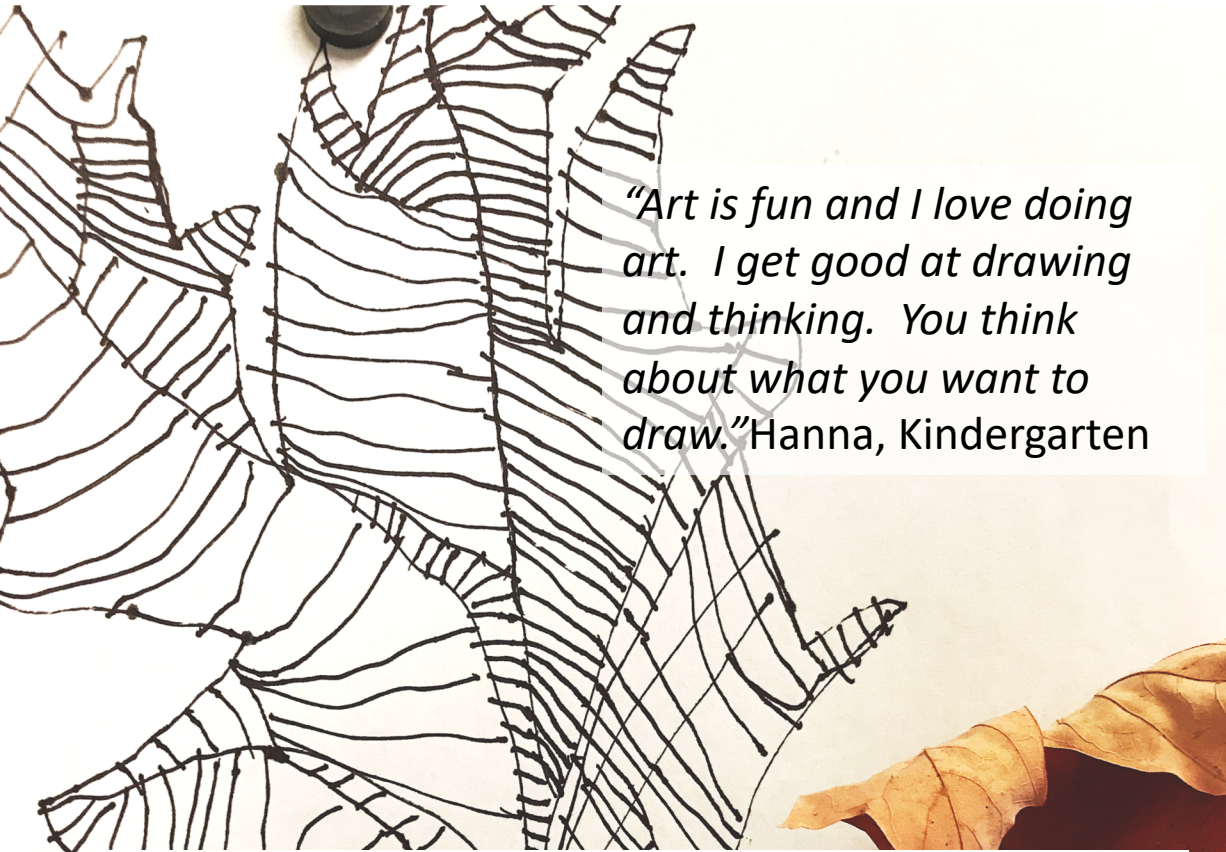
Ryan, Grade 4



Book of Beasts, Rufus, Grade 5

Art develops *Critical Thinking*

Art is a way of thinking and knowing; Through art, ideas and connections are generated, explored and clarified. The translation of ideas into material and symbolic form develops complex thinking and flexible, problem solving skills.

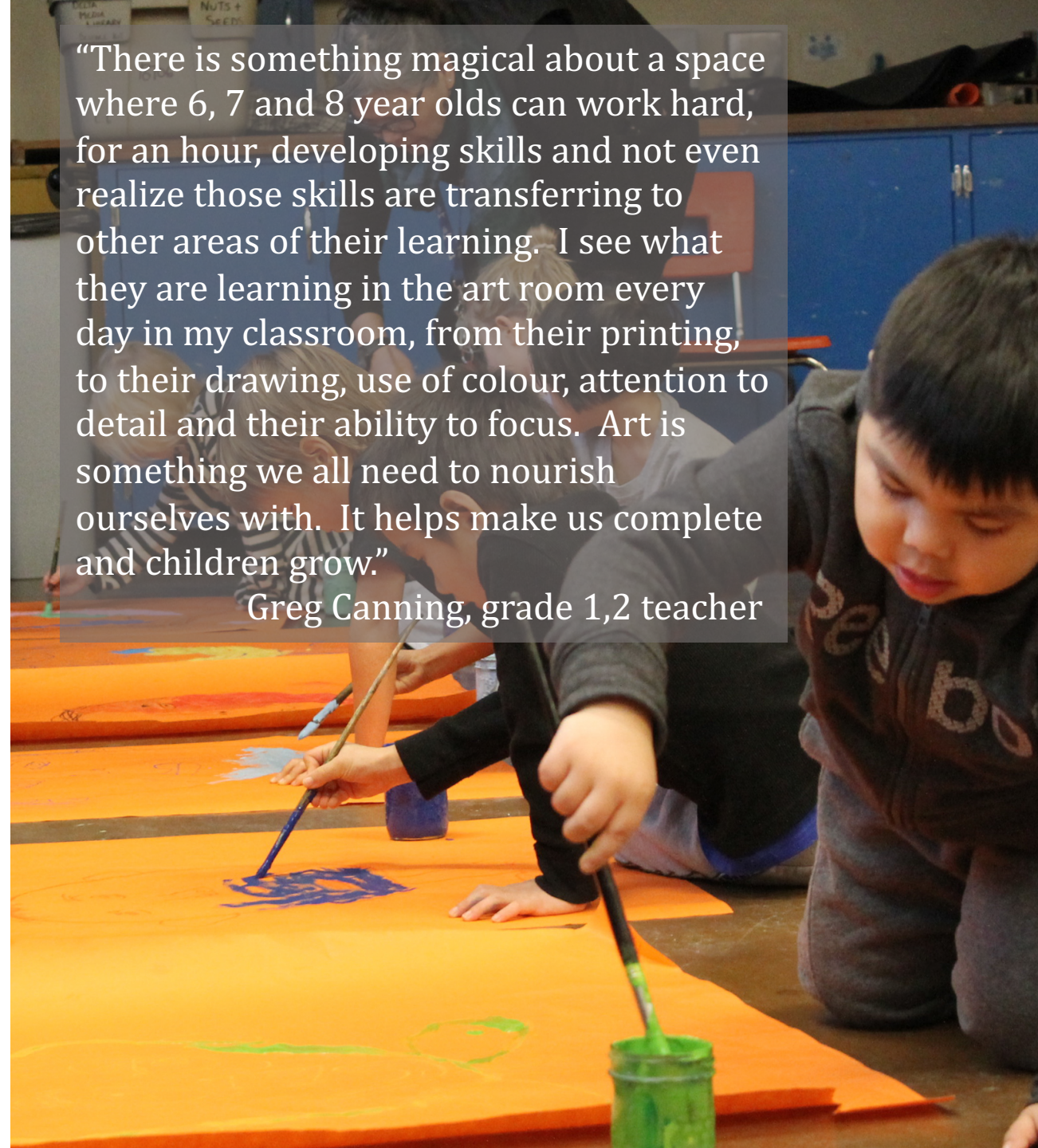


"Art is fun and I love doing art. I get good at drawing and thinking. You think about what you want to draw." Hanna, Kindergarten

"Art is an 'all brain' subject. It takes more brain power than other subjects." Nathan, Grade 7

"There is something magical about a space where 6, 7 and 8 year olds can work hard, for an hour, developing skills and not even realize those skills are transferring to other areas of their learning. I see what they are learning in the art room every day in my classroom, from their printing, to their drawing, use of colour, attention to detail and their ability to focus. Art is something we all need to nourish ourselves with. It helps make us complete and children grow."

Greg Canning, grade 1,2 teacher





Art supports *Positive Personal and Cultural Identity*

Within the barrage of social media and relentless pressure to conform and perform identity within a consumer aesthetic, it is critical that we provide students avenues for visual expression that affirm an authentic sense of self.

"I feel like whenever I do art, I always have a smile on my face. I feel like I crawl out of my shell. It's my favourite subject." Rachel, Grade 6

"Art lets us express our feelings without feeling discriminated." Stefani, Grade 6

"Art is a way of expression, communication, history, beliefs, and so many more interpretations. We all need to have exposure to art. I can be proud of my identity and show my emotions. In art, I learnt a lot about life in my home country, and I took pride in our endurance." Carl, Grade 7

Art supports *Social and Emotional Learning*

“The arts naturally foster and train the capacities and processes necessary for social emotional learning to occur. The visual arts invite close perception, attention to emotion and the expression of feelings through non-verbal, embodied processes.” Dr. Jane Garland

“Art is a very needed thing in schools because it really helps you open up your creativity and it really helps free your mind of other stressful things.” Nathan, Grade 7

“For some of the students who would otherwise be labeled “behavior concerns,” this was a solace, and a place of peace for them. Exploring the artistic, creative processes- as an aside from the regular academics of the classroom, I believe is a great, and necessary balance in ensuring the student's social, emotional, and academic success.”

Godwin Barton, Indigenous support worker



“Art allows your brain to be calm and when you are making art you are mindful.” Aisha, Grade 7 student

“Art makes me happy. I like art because I feel happy.” Sireen, Grade 1



Art builds *Empathy*

Research and recent developments in neuroscience confirm the powerful role of the arts in fostering empathy for self, others and the world. This is a critical capacity of citizenship in a world challenged by persistent socioeconomic inequities, injustices and environmental precarity.

"Art makes you feel." Vance, Grade 7 student



"When I look at the art, I feel love and kindness to everyone." Grade 1 student

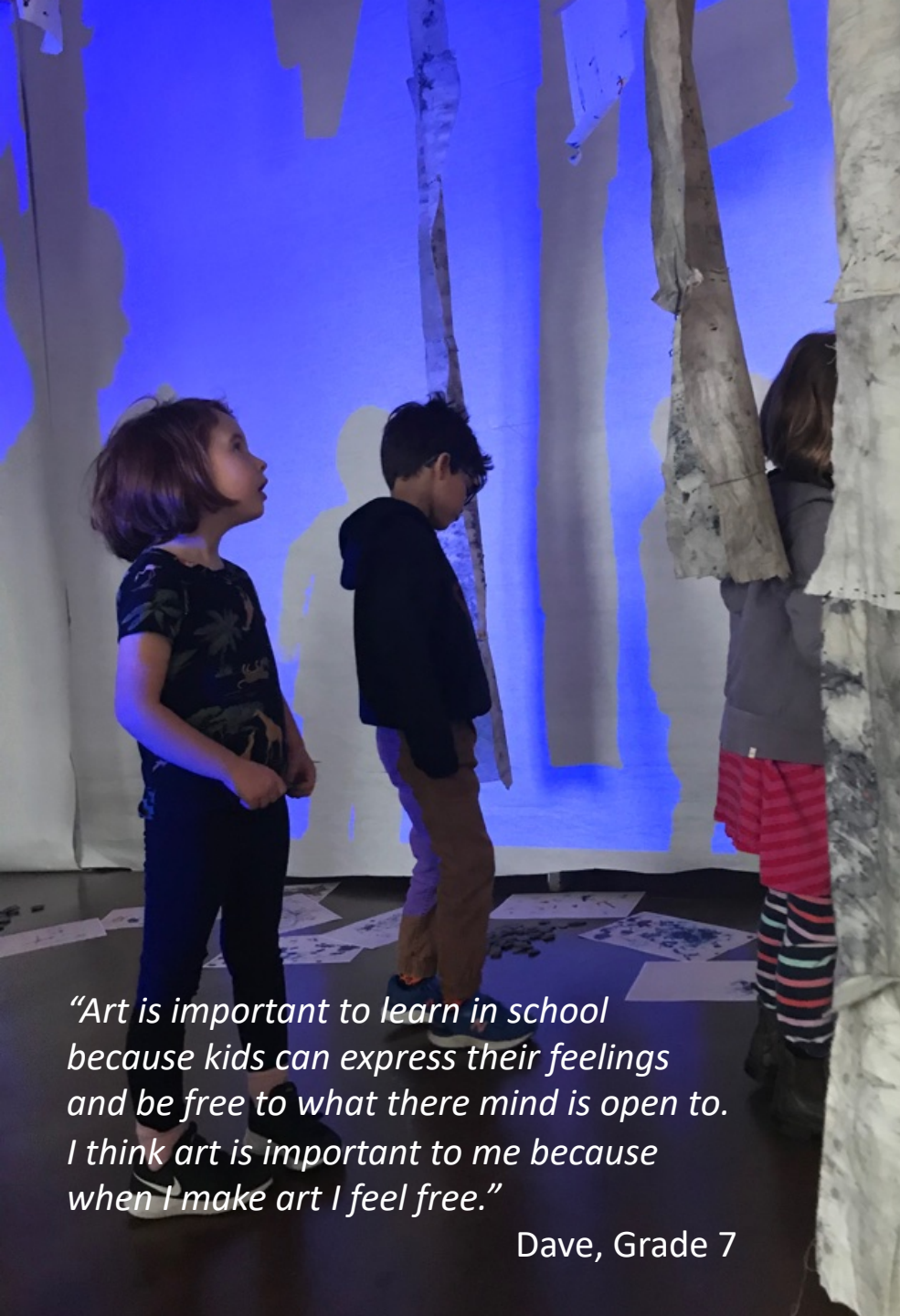


Art fosters *Intercultural Understanding*

The arts honour and invite children to attend with feeling to the experiences and perspectives of others. Participation in the arts is a right of the child and is critical to cultural empowerment for indigenous peoples.

*“Art promotes peaceful communication.”
Aryan, Grade 6*

“Art is important to me because, it expresses life and nature and it tells life. Like the first nations, they used art to tell their life story’s on totem poles to put it in front of their house’s. It is a symbol of their life and what they’ve been through.” Kaye, Grade 4



“Art is important to learn in school because kids can express their feelings and be free to what their mind is open to. I think art is important to me because when I make art I feel free.”

Dave, Grade 7

Art is a Space of Freedom


The arts provide an opening into a world of imagined possibility and freedom that inspires hope and furnishes the dreams of tomorrow.



“The AIRS program has shown me that it doesn’t matter what other people think because it is your art. I think every piece of art has soul because in art you are allowed to express your feelings however you want. Art is freedom.” L.O. Grade 7



"Learning art gives all children the opportunities to become what they want to in life." Nathan, Grade 7



“In a world of ever evolving technology, art in school remains tactile; kids can feel it, touch it, create it. Kids need art because it normalizes the creative process; brings art to a common denominator, makes it something that everyone can and should do. It is a way for kids to see the tangible and immediate results of their creativity and learning. Art in schools, like music, should NOT be optional; rather it should be considered an essential formative tool in our kid’s educations.”

Elaine Olensky, parent

Art education has been lost in BC elementary schools

Policy and funding decisions have resulted in critical and cumulative losses in specialist expertise, material resources and dedicated space within public elementary schools in BC. Currently, generalist teachers are required to teach the arts **with little or no training or background, and without adequate facilities, equipment or supplies.**

Key decisions contributing to the decline of Art Education in schools

- 1977 Move from specialist to generalist model of elementary education Over time, art specialists are eliminated from elementary schools
- 1980s Reduction of arts training for pre-service elementary teachers
- 2004 Area standards eliminates music and art spaces from new and seismically upgraded elementary schools.
Reduction of graduation requirements in the fine and applied arts
- 2016 Removal of accountability measures for the arts in elementary schools from the BC Student satisfaction survey

“If we didn’t have the AIRS program we would do little or no art. AIRS allows all kids to do art, not just the kids who are talented. In our school many kids are able to learn to draw and everyone in the school knows they are creative.”

Sasha, Grade 7 student

Lillie, Grade 2, self portrait





Access to Art is essential for Equity

- Participation in and enjoyment of the arts is a fundamental right of the child.
- Imagination and play are considered key capabilities linked to the degree of freedom and justice within a society.
- Participation in art and culture is critical to political empowerment for marginalized groups.
- Longitudinal studies show sustained participation in the arts narrows and sometimes closes gaps in achievement between at-risk youth and more advantaged peers in academic achievement graduation, civic participation and employment.
- The absence of arts education in public elementary schools creates and exacerbates systemic inequities.

Bridging the gap: Possible Solutions

How do we bridge the gap in specialist knowledge and dedicated space to create equitable access to quality art education for children in public elementary schools?

AIRS is one possible solution that addresses the loss of expertise and space within the public elementary school system.

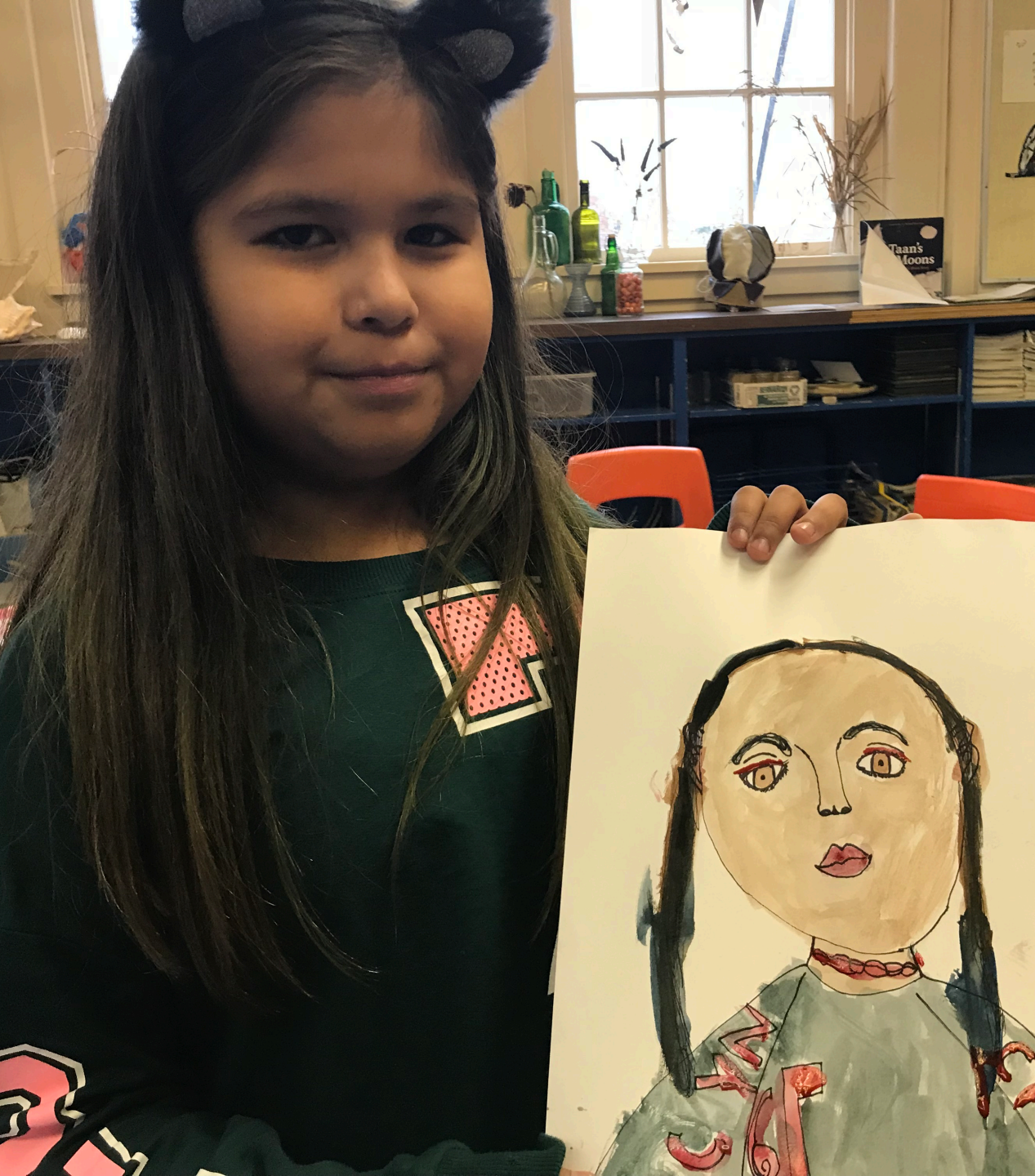
AIRS is a critical intervention developed collaboratively between community partners and the Vancouver School Board. AIRS reclaims space for artmaking within public elementary schools and enables a community-engaged artist-in-residence to work alongside teachers, to design and facilitate meaningful, hands-on art programming for students across the whole school one day a week over the course of the year.

Artists bring expertise in a diversity of practices from drawing and painting, printmaking, textiles to photography, filmmaking, and media arts. Working alongside the artist, students and teachers, develop technical and perceptual skills, confidence in visual communication and self-expression as well as a deeper understanding of the importance of aesthetic and empathic ways of knowing and engaging with the world.

Currently, AIRS has established studios in 13 public elementary schools, serving over 2,500 public elementary students.

Without public funding the AIRS program is in jeopardy.





Impacts of AIRS on Student Learning

The AIRS program has gathered action research over the past three years which has shown profound benefits for student learning and wellbeing . Across diverse schools and artistic practices teachers consistently observed increased:

- *confidence*
- *resilience*
- *persistence*
- *focused attention*
- *risk taking and comfort with ambiguity*
- *creativity*
- *sense of belonging and community*

Teachers also consistently spoke of the importance of the studio for students as a place of safety and freedom without judgement.

“The AIRS program promotes kids to express themselves in creative, problem solving ways without worry of imperfection. They are taught to connect to the bigger world and to have an appreciation of small beauties. I am continually awed and inspired when I enter the space and view the art created by the children.” Nightingale parent

Funding Challenges

AIRS is a flexible, working model for equitable access to ongoing quality arts education that might be adapted for local contexts and broadly achieved.

Existing public and charitable funding structures inhibit the development of sustainable, comprehensive solutions such as AIRS.

Funding for Arts education in schools falls through the gap between Arts and Culture and Education portfolios at a ministry level and for most granting bodies.

The only provincial funds directed towards arts education are administered by BC Arts Council through ArtStarts in Schools. Funding is limited in scope, accessed by a competitive application process and requires matching funds. In 2018/19 artist in the classroom grants provided short-term classroom residencies to only 2.5% of BC's students.

Sustainable, predictable and protected public funding is needed for each school district to develop a comprehensive vision and sustainable partnerships for achieving equitable access to arts education as an essential component of public elementary education.





Recommendations

To support equitable access to art education for all BC children

1. **Short term goal:** Provide one-time supplemental COVID response grant to all school districts for the 2020/21 school year to support the social and emotional wellbeing of all students including access to the arts as an integral component of mental wellness.
2. **Long term goals:** Acknowledge the arts as essential to the goals of the BC curriculum and to create dedicated and protected funding and accountability frameworks that will enable school districts to develop and support a vision and mandate for equitable access to quality arts education for all children in the K-12 system with the flexibility and autonomy needed to draw on existing strengths and address gaps through locally developed partnerships and initiatives.

A message for decision makers

“Why are there so few elementary schools with art programs? It is unfair to students who don’t have an art program in their school. They are missing out. If you didn’t have art, your life at school would not be exciting. You would not have an imagination or be creative.

You may not think that art is important, but we are the ones in schools and we know how important it is.”

Sasha, Aisha, Nathan and Rachel, Grade 6 and 7 students at Nightingale Elementary

“Art makes us feel happy, good inside and inspired. If we didn’t have art school wouldn’t be fun. You wouldn’t see anything around us. School would be sad. We would feel angry, bored and the walls would be empty.”

Hanna, Amaya and Mae, Kindergarten



Hunter, grade 4, Collagraph print

Appendices

Appendix A:

Letter from Dr. Jane Garland regarding the impact of AIRS program on Social Emotional Learning

Appendix B:

[AIRS Collaborative Inquiry Report 2018/19](#)

Appendix C:

[PAN Letter of petitions signed by leading arts and art education experts across BC](#)

For references please refer to the web link.

Appendix D:

Bibliography of supporting Evidence

Appendix A

Dr. E. Jane Garland, MD FRCPC.
Clinical Professor Emeritus in Psychiatry
University of British Columbia
4050 West 34 Ave, Vancouver BC V6N 2L7
jane.garland@ubc.ca

May 11, 2018

Dear Colleen Mieczanec and Maggie Milne,

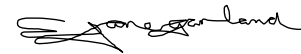
I am delighted to take this opportunity to support Art Education in BC schools. I have reviewed the March 5th, 2018 letter from the Parent Advocacy Network to the Minister of Education, and I fully support its summary and recommendations. As a child psychiatrist and researcher who has worked for over 25 years in school, community and hospital settings, I am well aware that children's cognitive and socio-emotional learning is enhanced by art and other creative activities. Art also cuts across cultural and language barriers, and can positively engage potentially marginalized children with learning differences or life difficulties. It is exciting to see these potential benefits being actualized in the Art and Discovery Studio at Vancouver's Florence Nightingale Elementary School. I would like to offer some specific observations on the work of Nightingale's Art Studio over the past several school years.

One of the ongoing Art and Discovery Studio activities which impresses me is the observational drawing and model-building of plant and animal forms. Even children in kindergarten are applying very precise observational skills to the natural world, recreating unique details with remarkable accuracy. These activities naturally train hand-eye and fine motor coordination, and improve the ability to visualize. At the same time, children are practising focused concentration, sustained attention, patience and persistence in the face of challenging tasks. The cognitive skills trained during these projects are not only important in creative fields, but are also essential in engineering and science.

Many of the Art and Discovery Studio projects specifically promote socio-emotional competencies necessary for success in other areas of learning. One such project is the school-wide community collage created from individual watercolor self-portraits, with accompanying posted interviews exploring "What does it mean to belong?" Another activity trains emotional literacy and the ability to read body language through the expressive painting of hand gestures and body postures, accompanied by the child's reflections on the thoughts and feelings their images express and the circumstances in which those might arise. Displays of these paintings and reflections invite other children to observe and discuss them, and to also practice the crucial skill of emotional perspective-taking.

The Nightingale Art and Discovery Studio demonstrates the potential for art activities to enhance children's self-regulation by integrating social and emotional awareness with cognitive capacities such as patience and sustained attention. Given the emphasis on core competencies in the new BC Curriculum, quality education in the visual arts should be available for all children in our schools. It is good to see that there is currently a strong initiative from parents and professionals to ensure that this happens.

Yours sincerely,



E. Jane Garland MD, FRCPC
Clinical Professor Emeritus in Psychiatry
University of British Columbia

March 5, 2018

The Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Education
Scott MacDonald, Deputy Minister

via email

Dear Sirs,

We, as citizens, parents, educators and arts professionals are writing to express our collective concern regarding the marginalization of the arts (visual and performing) within K-12 public education and ask that the government commit to restore arts education within our public schools.

Executive Summary

The arts are relevant and vital to a public education system that seeks to allow all learners to “be literate, to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic, and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.”ⁱ Education in the arts has a significant role to play in developing the social and emotional wellbeing of students and in equipping them with the creative, critical and empathic capacities needed to meet the social and economic challenges of a rapidly changing and interconnected world.

The absence of protected, targeted funding for the arts, coupled with the pressure to reduce operational expenditures at the school district level, has led to a steady and persistent erosion of quality and access to arts education over the last two decades. This erosion encompasses significant and critical losses in specialist expertise, material resources and dedicated space across K-12. In 2015/16, less than half of grade 4 and 7 students across the province indicated that they were learning about art or music.ⁱⁱ Dedicated spaces for art and music continue to be systematically eliminated as schools are rebuilt or seismically retrofitted to conform to the [Ministry Area Standards](#) that restrict the allowable square footage for new school facilities.

The public education system no longer provides a comprehensive, consistent or quality arts education. As a result, arts instruction is being outsourced through private lessons, charities or PAC fundraising, creating unacceptable inequity of access to the arts based on socio-economic advantage. A growing body of research underscores the pivotal role of art education for vulnerable student populations in academic success, mental health and social engagement. Participation in the cultural life of the community and the enjoyment of the arts is a fundamental human right; it is also integral to the implementation of the redesigned BC curriculum.

Urgent intervention is needed to restore equitable access to a quality arts education as a core element within the K-12 curriculum. We ask that the government:

- Amend the [Ministry Area Standards](#) to ensure that all new schools have sufficient dedicated space to provide quality arts education for future generations
- Allocate additional, targeted and protected funding to all school districts to enable them to provide the expertise and material resources needed to support a quality arts education for all students

Context and Background

Arts Education is Important

Education in the arts is essential for both the socio-emotional and the academic development of children. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), supported by a growing body of research, identifies the importance of quality arts education for renewing educational systems that seek to prepare students for the social, cultural and economic challenges of today’s rapidly changing world.ⁱⁱⁱ

The core competencies in the redesigned BC curriculum (critical and creative thinking, communication, understanding of personal and cultural identities and social responsibility) all underscore the relevance of the arts, as these are the skills and habits of mind that the arts intrinsically teach.^{iv}

Education in the arts is needed to develop:

Innovation and Creativity:

Artistic practices intrinsically develop the divergent thinking, flexible purposing, persistence and critical reflection central to the creative process. Education in the arts is therefore key for developing the innovative capacities identified by educational and business leaders as the primary skill set for competitiveness in our 21st century economy^v. Canada falls well below the OECD average for percentage of time allocated to compulsory arts education.^{vi} While Canada performs high on current international PISA tests, the World Economic Forum shows its economic competitiveness to be compromised by relatively weak innovation capacity.^{vii}

Visual Literacy:

Digital media has transformed the means by which we share and transmit information. Today, over 85% of the information we absorb daily is visual.^{viii} Education in the arts has a role and a responsibility to equip students with the visual literacy and cultural understanding needed to critically engage and meaningfully contribute within our increasingly mediated public sphere.^{ix}

Mental Health and Societal Well-being:

Research in education and science link engagement in the arts to building the self-confidence, self-regulation and resilience needed for social and emotional well-being.^x Anxiety, depression and substance misuse are increasing amongst our youth and the arts are shown to promote mental wellbeing through hands on, material exploration and nurturing a healthy sense of identity through authentic self-expression. The latest research in neuroscience links arts to developing empathy and attending to the perspective of others.^{xi} This has broad implications for societal health and fostering intercultural understanding.^{xii}

Personal Fulfillment and Inclusion:

The arts are essential for cultivating imaginative thought, the senses and the capacity for play. These are key capabilities internationally recognized as indicators of the degree of human well-being, freedom and justice in a society.^{xviii} Further to this, participation in cultural production and enjoyment of the arts is not only identified by the United Nations as a fundamental human right^{xiv}, it is integral to Indigenous ways of knowing, learning and cultural empowerment.^{xv} A commitment to the educational goals of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission must include access to culturally appropriate education in the arts for all students.^{xvi}

Arts Education in BC Has Been Eroded

The lack of protected, targeted funding for the arts within the education funding envelope, coupled with the pressure to reduce operational expenditures at the school district level, has led to a steady and persistent erosion of quality and access to arts education across K-12 public education over the last two decades. This erosion encompasses significant loss in expertise, material resources and dedicated space.

In elementary schools, when imaginative capacities are most crucially formed, there has been a precipitous decline in specialist teachers.^{xvii} Universities and other teacher-accreditation bodies have similarly reduced or eliminated arts education specialist training, particularly at the elementary level. The responsibility for arts education is now placed on generalist teachers, the majority of whom have limited background or training in the arts.^{xviii} According to the 2015/16, less than half of grade 4 and 7 students across the province indicated that they were learning about art or music.^{xix} Loss of quality, knowledge-based arts education at the elementary level has had a cumulative impact on the decline in quality and scope of fine and applied arts programming at the secondary level, where arts teachers are already under strain to generalize instruction and maximize class sizes for cost efficiencies.^{xx} Even where specialists are retained, the amount of compulsory time allocated to the arts has been dramatically reduced; in elementary, arts specialists are now prep time teachers and in secondary, the number of required fine and applied art graduation credits have been reduced by 75%.^{xxi} Once the new 2018 graduation guidelines take effect, students will no longer need a single fine or applied arts course to graduate. This decline in specialized time and instruction has resulted in a corresponding loss of art and music rooms.

Schools across the province are being rebuilt and seismically retrofitted to conform to Ministry Area Standards introduced in 2004 that restrict the allowable square footage for new school facilities.^{xxii} This document does not allow space provisions for art, music or performance space within elementary schools. The cost of including this additional square footage would increase the cost of construction by only 2%.^{xxiii} Dedicated space that can accommodate the materials, equipment and spatial arrangements for engagement in the arts is essential to quality programming. Without intervention, arts education will be structurally and systematically eliminated within the public school system for the next generation and beyond.

Inequities Result from the Erosion of Arts Education

In the absence of comprehensive, consistent and equitable arts education within public schools, families are outsourcing access to the arts through private lessons and PAC fundraising.^{xxiv} This creates inequity of access to arts education based on socio economic status. Given that aboriginal and immigrant families are disproportionately represented within disadvantaged populations^{xxv}, and that the arts are shown (through longitudinal studies) to correlate with improved life outcomes for at-risk youth^{xxvi} in academic achievement, employment opportunities and civic engagement, the loss of arts programming in schools should be a matter of grave concern.

The evacuation of arts programming at all levels within our public education system has reached a critical juncture. A quality arts education is essential for the economic prosperity and health of our society. Although the BC government, underscored by the evidence of arts organizations across BC,^{xxvii} acknowledges the fundamental importance of the arts for both economic and societal wellbeing, this understanding is not being supported at its most foundational level: our K-12 public education system.^{xxviii} Investment in the creative economy begins by giving every child the opportunity to develop their creative and aesthetic potential within a quality, publicly funded education system. If we acknowledge that the arts are fundamental to human flourishing, and that public education should empower students to be creative and compassionate contributors to the building of a healthy, pluralistic and democratic society, we must ensure that quality arts education is financially supported and protected across K-12 public education.

Therefore, to fulfill its responsibility and provide equitable access to a quality arts education as a key element within the K-12 curriculum, we the undersigned, request that the government work to:

- Amend the Ministry Area Standards to ensure that all new school builds have sufficient dedicated space to provide quality arts education for future generations
- Allocate additional, targeted and protected funding to all school districts to enable them to provide the expertise and material resources needed to support a quality arts education for all students

We thank you for your attention and commitment in addressing these issues.

Sincerely,

ArtStarts in Schools
Families Against Cuts to Education
Nanaimo Parents Supporting Public Education
Parent Advocacy Network for Public Education
Public Education Network Society
Richmond Schools Stand United
Simon Fraser University Arts Education Faculty
Surrey Students Now
Doris Auxier, M.A., M.F.A., Associate Professor of Art and Design
Elizabeth Barnes, Faculty of Fine Arts, Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Marie-France Berard, PhD, Lecturer Art Education, University of British Columbia
Sabine Bitter, Associate Professor, School for the Contemporary Arts, Simon Fraser University

Elizabeth Volpe Bligh, UBC School of Music, VSO School of Music, President West Coast Harp Society, retired principal Harp, Vancouver Symphony
David Brown, President, Vancouver Musician's Association, member Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Turning Point Ensemble
Dr. Jessica Bushey, Sessional Instructor, Department of Continuing Studies, University of Victoria
Cyndy Chwelos, Faculty Instructor, Recreation Studies, Langara College
Margaret Chrumka, Executive Director, Kamloops Art Gallery
Daniel Cleland, Board Director, Sarah McLachlan Foundation; Sarah McLachlan School of Music
Leslie Dala, Music Director, Vancouver Bach Choir, Associate Conductor, Vancouver Opera
Dr. Terence Dawson, Chair, Keyboard Division, School of Music, University of British Columbia
Dr. Alex de Cosson, Art Education Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of British Columbia
Dr. Jeff Derksen, Dean Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Simon Fraser University
Alexander J. Fisher, Professor of Music, University of British Columbia
Judith Forst, OC, OBC.
Kenneth Friedman, Double Bass Instructor, School of Music, University of British Columbia
Paula Funk, Coordinator, Completion Advising, University of the Fraser Valley
Jesse Adam Garbe, Sessional Instructor Visual Arts, Emily Carr University of Art and Design
Robert Gelineau, Fine Arts Instructor, Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Leila Getz, C. M., O.B.C., D.F.A, Founder and Director, Vancouver Recital Society
Katherine Gillieson, PhD, Associate Professor, Communication Design, Emily Carr University of Art and Design
J. Scott Goble, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Music Education, University of British Columbia
Ana Gomes (Black), BC Artist and Fine Art Instructor, Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Frances Grafton, Sessional Instructor, Emily Carr University of Art and Design
Dr. Wendy Grant, Coordinator, Music Diploma program, Capilano University
Dr. Erica L. Grimm, Associate Professor of Art, School of the Arts, Media + Culture, Trinity Western University
Joshua Hale, Chair and Assistant Professor, Art + Design, School of the Arts, Media + Culture, Trinity Western University
Dr. Keith Hamel, Professor of Composition, School of Music, University of British Columbia
Prof. Nancy Hermiston, O.C., Head, Voice and Opera Divisions and University Marshal, University of British Columbia
Nathan Hesselink, Chair and Professor, Ethnomusicology, University of British Columbia
Jaz Holloran, Sessional Instructor, Communication Design, Design and Dynamic Media, Emily Carr University of Art and Design
Keiko Honda, PhD., MPH, President and Executive Director, Vancouver Arts Colloquium Society
Dr. Rita Irwin, Distinguished University Scholar and Professor, Art Education, University of British Columbia
Gail Johnson, General Manager, Gordon and Marion Smith Foundation for Young Artists
Jaymie Johnson, Sessional Instructor, Emily Carr University of Art and Design
Nané Jordan, Sessional Lecturer, Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of British Columbia
Lizzy Karp, Senior Manager for Distribution, Experiential and Engagement, Telus Storyhive
Richard Kurth, PhD., Professor and Director, School of Music, University of British Columbia
Karen V. Lee, PhD, lecturer and faculty advisor, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia

Dr. Jillian Lerner, Sessional Instructor, Culture and Community, Emily Carr University of Art and Design
Donald Lawrence, Professor, Department of Visual and Performing Arts, Thompson Rivers University
Christin Reardon MacLellan, Coalition for Music Education in BC
Paul Martin, Producer, Next Level Games Inc.
Pia Massie, Artist, Designer, Scholar in Residence, Culture and Community Faculty, Emily Carr University of Art and Design
Colleen Maybin, Director of Education and Community Engagement, Vancouver Opera
Sarah McLachlan, Board Director, Sarah McLachlan Foundation; Sarah McLachlan School of Music
Julia Nolan, PhD., Saxophone Faculty, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, University of British Columbia
Maria Anna Parolin, Vice President, Burnaby Arts Council; Fine Art Instructor, Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Alec Pearson, Sessional Instructor, University of British Columbia; President, Vancouver Classic Guitar Society
Lorelei Pepi, Associate Professor, Animation, Emily Carr University of Art and Design
Magnolia Pauker, Lecturer, Faculty of Community and Culture, Emily Carr University of Art and Design
Eric Randall, President, Next Level Games Inc.
Helen Reed and Hannah Jickling, Sessional Instructors, Emily Carr University of Art and Design
Bob Rennie, Rennie Foundation
Jayce Salloum, BC Artist, Governor General Award recipient
Alison Shields, Assistant Teaching Professor, Art Education, University of Victoria
Michael Tenzer, Professor and Graduate Advisor, School of Music, University of British Columbia
Bramwell Tovey O.C., Music Director, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra
Cheyanne Turions, Curator and Writer
Lisa Turner, Trustee, Vancouver Art Gallery
Jen Weih, Itinerant Faculty, Emily Carr University of Art and Design
Alexander Weimann
Rita Wong, Associate Professor, Emily Carr University of Art and Design
Tara Wren, Lecturer, Critical and Cultural Studies, Emily Carr University of Art and Design

CC:

Hon John Horgan, Premier, BC NDP
Hon Carole James, Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier
Hon Andrew Wilkinson, Leader of the Opposition, BC Liberal Leader
Hon Andrew Weaver, BC Green Leader
Hon Dan Davies, BC Liberal Spokesperson for Education
Hon Mary Polak, BC Liberal Spokesperson for Education
Hon Sonia Furstenau, BC Green Spokesperson for Education
Hon Bob D'Eith, Chair, Select Standing Committee on Finance & Government Services
Hon Dan Ashton, Deputy Chair, Select Standing Committee on Finance & Government Services
Jen Mezei, President, BCCPAC
Gordon Swan, President, BCSTA
Glen Hansman, President, BCTF
Tom Longridge, President, BCSSA
Kevin Reimer, President, BCPVP

Appendix D

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