

February 10, 2010

Norman Yee
Commissioner
San Francisco Board of Education
555 Franklin St.
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Commissioner Yee:

We are writing to express our opposition to the proposal in Superintendent Carlos Garcia's budget to flex the California State Arts & Music block grant, in order to make up for cuts in funding. We understand that today's economic situation leaves little room for choices. However, the arts are an essential part of a high-quality education.

Through the arts, students learn critical thinking, creative expression, and the skills necessary to become well-rounded contributing citizens. Flexing the Arts & Music Block Grant widens the inequality between students who can afford access to the arts outside of public school settings and those who rely on the San Francisco Unified School District to supply them with the necessary tools for achievement in today's dynamic society. Furthermore, this move would undermine the tenets of educational access and equity outlined in *Beyond the Talk* and threaten the implementation of the Arts Education Master Plan.

For 45 years, Performing Arts Workshop has brought the arts to San Francisco students who might not otherwise receive them. Raiding the Arts & Music block grant will reduce students' access to a high quality education and perpetuate the educational inequity that has persisted in this city for too long.

Please support creativity, innovation, and an education that prepares San Francisco students for school, work and life in the 21st Century. Vote against flexing the Arts & Music block grants to make up for cuts to the general fund.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Tom DeCaigny
Executive Director

Jessica Mele
Deputy Director