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April 24, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
State Capitol, 1st Floor
Sacramento CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of our members, we wish to thank you for your outstanding work responding to the immediate needs of all Californians during this crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has impacted so many lives, businesses, communities, non-profit organizations, and schools. We recognize that California's significant economic downturn will have a dire impact on state revenue; both sales and income taxes.

We understand that the reduced state revenue will directly affect the state budget and funding to California's public schools. On behalf of our members, we respectfully request that music and arts education is protected and preserved when making difficult budget decisions for our public schools. If educational reductions are needed, we request supporting an equitable approach to all subjects.

Music education and arts education contributes to the development of students' creativity and capacities preparing them to enter and contribute to California's creative economy. During these difficult times it is important that this development continues uninterrupted. Engaging in learning and making music also plays an important role in supporting students' mental health as they confront the current challenges of fears over the pandemic, distance learning, and related impact on their lives. A standards-based music education assists students in learning how to cope with anxiety through developing skills such as self-awareness and self-management. Students, now more than ever, need strong coping skills to adjust to the new reality that will extend through the end of the school year and possibly beyond.

We believe music in difficult times provides joy, supports lifelong learning, and builds culture that contributes to California's rich culture and economy. As Congress has not allocated a level of funding that will significantly shore up public education, we will continue to advocate alongside our national association for federal support. Our members stand ready to assist in any manner to help California heal and return to the path of economic certainty.

Sincerely,

Armalyne De La O
President

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