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May 13, 2020

Ms. Xilonin Cruz-Gonzalez, President  
California School Boards Association  
3251 Beacon Blvd.  
West Sacramento CA 95691

Dear Ms. Cruz-Gonzalez,

Throughout the state of California, Music Education Leaders and their respective organizations have united to support thousands of music educators and their students this spring. COVID-19 has created a dramatic shift in education and has impacted schools, many lives, businesses, communities, and non-profit organizations. We understand that the reduced state revenue will directly affect the state budget and funding to California's public schools and that California's significant economic downturn will have a dire impact on state revenue; both sales and income taxes.

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, which is part of a well-rounded education, assists students in learning how to cope with anxiety through developing skills such as self-awareness and self-management. Now more than ever, students need music and arts education to support their social and emotional well-being.

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.

On behalf of our members, we respectfully request that children in California retain the well-rounded education they are receiving including music and arts education. We ask that arts education be protected and preserved when making difficult budget decisions for our public schools, and if educational reductions are needed, we request an equitable approach to all content areas. All content areas are important and should remain a part of a child's development. Districts should hold music and arts instruction and courses to the same standards as other subjects and declare that no subjects are optional. We (CMEA) make this recommendation to ensure equity and access to a well-rounded education for all students that includes music and the arts.

Sincerely,

Armalyne De La O  
President

Cc: Vernon M. Billy, CEO & Executive Director

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