



April 28, 2017

Jan Gustafson-Corea
Karling Aguilera-Fort
California Association for Bilingual Education
16033 E. San Bernardino Rd.
Covina, CA 91722-3900

Dear Jan and Karling:

I'm writing you to ask for CAFE's support for a major equity initiative, CREATE CA's ***Declaration of the Rights of All Students to Equity in Arts Learning***. For the majority of my professional life, I have worked to move equity forward in our schools and communities. I believe in the transformative power of the arts to create counter-hegemonic artistic spaces for students and educators to voice their full identities and aspirations.

Without this access, our most vulnerable students are left without crucial opportunities to become their full and best selves, to create themselves as powerful players in their own lives and in the life of their communities. And for me, this isn't just a professional commitment. This is very personal for me. It has import for and impact on my life and that of my family. So I continue in this work, and that has led to my involvement with CREATE CA, a statewide coalition of agencies, organizations and individuals partnering on an education reform movement that views arts education as an essential part of the solution to the problems facing California schools.

In July 2015, CREATE CA identified equity as one of its key organizational priorities, and subsequently, drafted a **DECLARATION** that would spell out what we believe are the rights of all students with regard to equity in arts learning. The Declaration was officially launched in March 2017.

Modeled on the United Nations and UNICEF Rights of Children, our **DECLARATION** sets out six fundamental rights that every student has with regard to the arts. These rights paint a picture of the type of world we envision where equity is a truth rather than simply an aspiration. They address the right to:

- Equitable access to and outcomes in the arts
- Protections from policies, practices, and other barriers that exclude students from full participation in the arts
- Arts learning that is culturally and linguistically responsive and relevant

- All the resources needed, including qualified staff, to engage successfully in the arts
- Educators, leaders, and communities knowledgeable about the powerful benefits of the arts
- School and community environments that value and protect the arts as essential to developing students' full potential

I encourage you and the CAFE leadership to take the time to read the **Declaration** for yourselves. Steep yourselves in its language. Imagine how these rights would play out in your organization and the communities, schools, and districts you serve.

Imagine what the world would be if we could live in a place where the rights in our **Declaration** were true statements DESCRIBING us as we ARE, rather than simply as we HOPE to be. After all, we are all artists in our hearts and souls, aren't we? We are designed to live out loud. To give voice to our hopes and dreams. To make them heard. As Proust so aptly pointed out, the arts are our magic carpet. They take us to new worlds, let us see and experience new landscapes, perhaps even give us the tools and capacities to build realities of our own making.

Please let me know how I can assist you in officially adopting the **Declaration of the Rights of All Students to Equity in Arts Learning**. We have designed a Communications Toolkit that provides sample board resolutions and other helpful information. You can find the Toolkit at <http://www.createca.dreamhosters.com/welcome-2/declaration-of-student-rights/>. To learn more about our organization, and to view the **Declaration**, you can go to www.createca.net.

I look forward to having CAFE join CREATE CA as one of a growing community of enlightened organizations that are willing to take a stand on behalf of equity for all of our children.

Thank you.

Respectfully,



Francisca S. Sánchez
Member, CREATE CA Leadership Council

Declaration of the Rights of All Students to Equity in Arts Learning

CREATE CA defines EQUITY in Arts Education* as the right of every student to engage and succeed in powerful, high quality, standards-based arts learning PreK-12. All students from every race, culture, language background, geographic region, and socio-economic level must have the opportunity to fully develop their own artistic, cultural, and linguistic heritage while expanding opportunities to study and explore artistic expressions across different cultures and time periods.

**We define arts education to include courses of study and interdisciplinary learning in dance, music, theatre, and visual and media arts, aligned with the State Standards and reflecting the provisions of the California State Education Code.*

1. The right to equitable access to PreK-12 free, coherent, and sequential standards-based arts learning that is part of the core curriculum and that provides both integrated and discrete visual and performing arts learning opportunities; and the right to equitable outcomes as a result of this access, without distinction on account of race, culture, language, religion, national origin, geographical location, or legal status.

I have the right to participate and succeed in high-quality courses in all the arts disciplines as part of my basic education, regardless of my background, culture, language or place of residence.

2. The right to special protection for every student's artistic and aesthetic development. The right to protection from policies and practices that exclude or preclude certain students or populations from equitable access to and success in powerful and coherent arts learning PreK-12.

I have the same right to fully develop my creative potential at every grade level and not be excluded for any reason.

3. The right to arts learning that is culturally and linguistically responsive and relevant, with attention to those populations that have traditionally been excluded or precluded, such as English Learners, students of color, foster youth, homeless youth, students in poverty, migrant students, and special needs students.

I have the right to engage in arts education that reflects, respects and builds on my culture, language and background.

4. The right to arts learning programs in every school, district, and community that are funded and supported with the necessary resources, including qualified administrators, teachers, teaching artists, and other staff, adequate materials, and appropriate facilities to support powerful culturally and linguistically responsive arts learning.

I have the right to receive the resources I need to be successful in my arts studies in dance, music, theatre, media and visual arts, including the proper supplies and facilities, and especially qualified teachers and curriculum that honor all cultures and languages.

5. The right to educators, leaders, and parents/community who are knowledgeable about the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of arts learning for individual students, families/communities, the nation, and global society.

I have the right to be supported by leaders in my community and school who understand the benefits of an arts education to prepare me for college, career and life.

6. The right to be brought up in school and community environments that value and protect the arts and equity as essential to the full development of every student, and that demonstrate those values/beliefs in their public policies and practices.

I have the right to learn and practice the arts in a positive environment where everyone understands and acts on the knowledge that I am engaging in valuable and important work.