



115 Pine Avenue STE 350
Long Beach CA 90802



Nancy Valencia
Candidate for Long Beach
Unified School District Board of Education
District 4

Q. What will you do to ensure that every child has access to a complete education that includes the arts? What can you do to ensure all students have access to a complete education that includes arts?

A. The Board of Education is responsible “to establish policies for the efficient and effective operation of the Long Beach Unified School District.”ⁱⁱ As a member of the Board, I will work with the Superintendent and staff in the district office and in LBUSD schools to strengthen existing policies, and develop new policies as appropriate, that support high quality instruction in “visual and performing arts, including instruction in the subjects of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts, aimed at the development of aesthetic appreciation and the skills of creative expression”ⁱⁱ as required by the California Education Code. I will work to ensure that policies established by the Board include specific, measurable goals that are aligned with state priority curriculum and equity outcomes.

Policies, however, that lack an accountability plan are seldom successful. The Board is also responsible to “annually conduct a formal evaluation of the superintendent’s performance in order to assess his/her effectiveness in leading the district toward established goals.”ⁱⁱⁱ As a member of the Board, I will ensure that district progress toward achieving policy goals associated with



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visual and performing arts instruction is considered as one of the criteria during the annual evaluation of the superintendent.

Of course, the Board has a fiduciary responsibility as well to ensure that the district operates in a fiscally prudent manner. Measure B on the March 3, 2020 ballot levies a City of Long Beach hotel bed tax that would provide much needed support for arts education in schools.

- Q. What role do you think the arts can play in supporting key priorities of the district, such as reducing the dropout rate, closing the achievement gap, and preparing more students for college eligibility and/or meaningful careers?
- A. I believe strongly, and research has long indicated, that among the benefits of arts education is the unique ability “to reach, motivate, and capture the attention of students.^{iv}” Arts education can also have a particularly powerful effect on the acquisition of language and help resolve equity disparities especially for ESL students, “whose speaking and writing is enhanced when they can sing, dance, or draw an idea out prior to writing about it or speaking about it.^v” In addition, arts education is a key component of more recently developed interdisciplinary instructional models that provide strategies for students to express complex subject matter from science, mathematics, social science, and other fields through arts-based methods.



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Q. In light of the new funding structure for school districts in the state (i.e. the Local Control Funding Formula), how do you see arts education aligning with the eight priority areas?

A. As indicated earlier, arts education is explicitly associated with enrollment and outcomes in required subject areas (priorities 7-8), which include visual and performing arts. More importantly the potential of high-quality arts education “to educate a child to become an engaged, knowledgeable, and compassionate citizen who will contribute to his or her community” is closely aligned, even essential, to address the conditions of learning described in state priorities 1-6.

- i Long Beach Unified School District Board Policies, Article 1, Section 1160.2, Executive Functions of the Board.
- ii California Education Code §51210 for grades 1-6, and California Education Code §51220 for grades 7-12.
- iii Long Beach Unified School District Board Policies, Article 2, Section 2131.1, Process for the Evaluation of the Superintendent.
- iv Goldberg, M. (2019). Time for revolution: Arts education at the ready. Arts Education Network.
- v Gallas, K. (1994). The languages of learning: How children talk, write, dance, draw and sing their understandings of the world. NY: Teachers College press.