



California Dance Education Association
CALIFORNIA DANCE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
*dedicated to the artistic
and educational advancement of
the art of dance throughout California*

WHITE PAPER

California Dance Education Association,
the State Affiliate of National Dance Education Organization
supports SB916, the Theatre & Dance Act of 2016, proposed by Senator Ben Allen
(D-Santa Monica)

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S u m m a r y

CDEA's membership and executive leadership support SB 916 — the Theatre and Dance Act of 2016, known as "TADA!", which would reestablish Dance and Theatre credentials in the state of California — because dance and theatre education and all of the other arts and academics can benefit from this bill. Authored by Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica), the bill is currently progressing through the Senate and Assembly stages, and will ultimately be decided upon by the Governor of California, the Honorable Jerry Brown, in Fall 2016.

B a c k g r o u n d

Until 1970, California had Dance and Theatre credentials. Then, during the drafting of the Ryan Act, a clerical error was made in the language around credentials accidentally turning "music and arts" into "music and art." The simple omission of the plural meant that Dance and Theatre credentials were eliminated; now California is one of only two states in the US without Theatre or Dance credentials. The other state is West Virginia.

The word "Art" appearing in the singular was inaccurately interpreted to mean only visual art. Those who worked with the law assumed there must have been a reason, or came to believe that music and visual arts were indeed more academic. In that way, the myth that dance and theatre are somehow not discrete disciplines in their own right was mistakenly perpetuated for two generations of lawmakers, despite a few attempts to bring a bill to the Governor's desk to rectify the situation.

Throughout the 46 years since this error, our predecessors and colleagues have worked hard but unsuccessfully to get legislation passed that would make the correction and restore the credentials. A recurring challenge in the process was opposition by the California Teachers Association (CTA). Past spokespersons for the union suggested that the issue was a fear of "credential creep" or the proliferation of credentials-- that having too many credentials, in a sense, devalues and dilutes them all. However, in spring of 2016 CTA voted in a remarkable all call vote and passed a resolution in favor of SB916. Though this would not show up on a legislative timeline in looking at the bicameral process, it was a significant moment in the progress of SB916.

There has never been a bill like this nor have there ever been such conditions to set a context for its potential passage. Previous bills had neither the simplicity nor the clear grandfathering clauses that SB916 contains. Also, educational code in California now includes all four art forms as core academic subjects. CDEA partners closely with CETA (California Educational Theatre Association) as well as the other two of the four arts education organizations, CEMA (California Educational Music Association) and CAEA (California Arts Education Association). Working together as the 4ArtsEdOrgs, we are unified in our efforts to ensure that the arts teaching practitioner's voice is heard and represented to the best of our organizations' abilities throughout the process. We are all also members of CAAE, California Alliance for Arts Education. Thus, we form a unified effort throughout the state creating a new synergistic arts education climate.

Dance and theatre programs exist in good numbers in higher education in California. The fact sheet from Senator Ben Allen who sponsored the bill noted that there are 73 undergraduate programs in dance and 113 undergraduate programs in theatre in California.

However, currently, to teach dance in California K-12 schools requires a physical education credential. An English credential is needed to teach theatre. Since 1970, graduates of undergraduate dance and theatre programs have been left without an option to obtain pedagogical masters level training in their fields that would qualify them for instructional positions in K-12 settings in this state. They have had to leave California, often settling elsewhere, to obtain a dance or theatre credential.

Our organization has long been a connector for teachers who teach and inspire young dancers through progressive phases of their development and learning. Since 1970, we have seen the void that exists in California for the dedicated dance major student who successfully completes an undergraduate program and who wishes to bring his or her artistry to bear in education in K-12 schools. The trained dancer with pedagogical interests in dance must make a frustrating detour away from studying the art form of dance and instead dedicate herself or himself to P.E. courses that meet athletic, not artistic, learning goals and require competitive sports-oriented focus and testing.

Conversely, dedicated physical education specialists with at times minimal training in dance often find themselves teaching dance units. As non-dance teachers, they do their best, but have limited experience and resources that result in repetitive units from year to year. It is common to find dance represented in its social and recreational forms with little to no scaffolded instruction on dance as an art form. This would be equivalent to teaching the same math problem from kindergarten through sixth grade. This would not be tolerated, because math is known to be a subject in which instruction progresses through grade levels. So, too, are the arts. Early exposure and logical curriculum sequencing in the visual and performing arts help students achieve rich learning goals that give them a creative edge, help them become whole persons, and provide an expressive, meaningful, disciplined outlet for their energy, inspiration and ideas. Expert teaching is valued in any school subject. SB 916 reminds us that dance and theatre are part of the Educational Code of our state and thus should be held to the same standard as other scholastic subjects, and while there are certain people who embody both competitive sports training and dance prowess, we would be mistaken to assume that possession of one talent assures the other.

CDEA supports SB 916 because this bill would eliminate the need for dance teachers to get a PE credential and for theatre teachers to get an English credential. It would grandfather in those who currently teach dance and theatre with these two different subject credentials or those currently on this path during a transitional time. Gradually, the landscape for all four arts —Dance, Theatre, Music and Visual Art — would become more equitable and consistent. If teachers wish to teach both PE and dance, they could obtain a credential in one and demonstrate subject matter competency in the other. This would align with standard practice for all dual subject teachers in secondary, who need only one credential but who need to show subject matter preparation in any subject they are assigned to teach.

Six reasons CDEA stands behind SB916:

1. **Aligning Credentials with Educational Code:** The bill creates a situation where all subjects in California's educational code will have a corresponding credential (whereas currently dance and theatre are the only two subjects that have no corresponding credential).
2. **Appropriate Preparation:** The Creative Sector of California accounts for 10% of the state's job creation and revenue. California students deserve to have appropriately prepared dance teachers who can expose them to higher order thinking in dance and rich artistic and creative experiments. Students deserve teachers who can connect them with the artistic community and professional world as well as opportunities to use dance education to deepen experiences in the arts or other fields. The bill clarifies the need for appropriate subject matter preparation in theatre and dance, thus eliminating the decades-long issue of under-qualified teachers teaching students in those art forms.
3. **A simple fix:** The bill rectifies an unintended omission of two of the four arts from the path to subject specific credentials, which only occurred as the result of a typographical error in 1970 when the credentials for Music and Art were meant to have read "Music and Arts" (note the "s").
4. **Competitive Market Draw and Retention of High Quality California Teachers:** Passage of SB916 makes us competitive with the other 48 states who offer one or both of these subjects. In this way we are more likely to retain teachers who currently are apt to depart California in order to obtain subject-specific credentials elsewhere, and to attract recent college graduates in dance and theatre to California for the graduate programs they desire and need. The teachers who leave are a drain on a fragile and diminishing teaching population in our state and often settle elsewhere. At the same time, California teachers who do not have a dance or theatre credential (which would be impossible for them to obtain here) are often overlooked in favor of out-of-state teachers who do. Even with legally appropriate PE or English credentials, California teachers suffer in the competition for jobs.
5. **Growth and Validation of the Field as a Whole:** Passage of SB 916



expands and strengthens the field of dance at all levels, from K-12 to community to four-year college to graduate programs. It enriches community-based arts groups, studios,

and professional dance companies with education programs connected to schools. It creates a clear path for those with a calling to teach dance in our schools, and it validates dance as an academic and artistic subject, equal to all other subjects.

6. The Research is In: Dance affects Whole School Improvement:



Research has shown that dance develops cognitive abilities and resiliency. Students do better in other subjects in school as a result of the arts, and socio-emotional needs are better met in dance than many other subjects. In fact, the benefits of dance are so numerous and multi-faceted, it might be difficult to find another subject that does so much to promote learning in the cognitive, affective and psycho-motor domains all at once.

T r a n s i t i o n s t o I m p l e m e n t a t i o n

While we foresee no negative outcomes ensuing from this bill, there will be a period of transition during implementation. Many secondary dance programs have been built in conjunction with physical education credit as a result of the past 46 years of misplaced credentialing through PE programs. This bill represents a shift toward dance (and theatre) as a stand-alone artistic discipline, valued on par with music and visual arts. We imagine that physical education curricula and standards will continue to draw on dance teachers' expertise in offering high quality dance units. Some sites may decide that both the dance and PE credentials or Subject Matter Authorization be required on behalf of the instructor in order to count the class for both PE and Dance credit. And, while dance classes do by their nature meet many of the physical education standards such as physical skills acquisition, health/wellness, fitness/conditioning and promoting life-long involvement in physical activity, with the passage of SB 916 the restoration of dance and theatre as subjects in their own right will move dance forward as an arts subject while it retains a an inherent movement component relating to physical education. Dance and Theatre as credential-backed subjects will eventually provide an influx of artistic offerings serving as college preparatory electives Sites and districts will have some choices to make and some shifts will need to happen to change structures that formed around the lack of proper credentials in the first place. These growing pains are well worth facing as we have seen many other states transition effectively and successfully. We have many models of success to draw from and California can look to most of the U.S. to see how this benefits our state.

V i s i o n o f a r e s t o r e d c r e d e n t i a l s l a n d s c a p e

California has been behind in arts education offerings since Proposition 13 passed in 1978, often in the bottom two states in terms of per capita spending on each student in the arts. Schools and districts will benefit from working closely with their Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator to develop better offerings in all four art forms and to continue to advocate at all levels of school leadership and government for increased arts funding. The presence of discipline specific credentials in the arts has profound results that we often take for granted in music and visual arts. Just as some schools have band, orchestra, choir, as multiple music offerings or painting, photography, ceramics and media arts as multiple visual arts offerings, so too will California schools of the future have a diverse array of cultural dance and theatre styles, projects and performance opportunities created because of the restored credentials. We are confident that through time dance and theatre programs will find they can thrive and contribute to the overall learning goals of the school in ways we cannot now even imagine.

For generations, we have shortchanged the way dance and theatre are taught in schools by not having experts in the classroom or studio, or by having the experts pulled away to subjects in which they were required to obtain a credential, even though they did not intend to teach them. We have limited post-graduate options for college students in dance and theatre. At the same time, the growth of the art form has been stunted by far too many dance and theatre classes taught by teachers with the wrong interests or skill set, but who possess the supposedly correct but essentially unmatched credential on paper. In this landscape of restored dance and theatre credentials, there will be work to do to foster the return of graduate level preparation programs and to rethink how arts offerings are made available to every child in California. The members of California Dance Education Association represent the most active, passionate and informed dance educators in the state and we hope to provide passion and guidance to these efforts so every child can eventually have equitable access to high quality dance education in any and every California school.

Dance Advocacy

How can I better advocate for dance in our schools and communities?

For those wishing to advocate for dance, the arts and a bill such as SB916, it is helpful to articulate what all dancers and dance teachers know experientially. Share these



points with all stakeholders making legislative decisions that potentially support the growth of the arts in our schools.

Dance offers:

- creative practice, which is the highest process on Bloom's taxonomy of learning;
- a gateway to understanding cultural differences, diversity, regional histories, and particular rituals and values of a variety of societies throughout history;
- spatial reasoning, which is the biggest predictor for females entering the STEM professions;
- deepened awareness of self, others, and the world through movement arts literacy;
- physical conditioning, which is critical given the health epidemics caused by sedentary lifestyles;
- kinesthetic learning, which keeps more learners engaged in learning and therefore in school as a whole and which prevents disruptive behavior, thus diminishing the need for other classroom management techniques;
- coordination, which helps all sports, movement, work, poise and physical labor;
- balance, which leads to mental strength, grace and pride;
- musicality, which is related to logic and mathematics;
- sequencing, which is related to literacy;
- a way of democratizing the classroom and presenting a level playing field for students who are speakers of other languages besides English;
- possibilities for full inclusion of differently-abled learners and learning styles; and
- a sense of respect for discipline, hard work, experimentation, fun and learning all at once.

CONCLUSION & TIMELINE:



With all of these tangible and intangible benefits, it is a wonder we have not seen more schools incorporate dance into more areas of the curriculum for whole school improvement efforts. However, without a credential, dance as a subject has been undervalued, offered less frequently than all the other arts, and taught by inconsistently trained instructors. With better educational backgrounds and a path to the credential, teachers of dance and theatre can do their subjects justice — offering not only the intrinsic values of those arts to their students, but also the deep and rich connections to other academic subjects such as the STEM fields, the humanities, social sciences, medicine, cultural studies, creativity, entrepreneurship and globalization. Passage of SB916 means high quality dance and theatre artists can open up these artistic fields that are by their nature interdisciplinary. California Dance Education Association intends to play a supportive role in shaping this new era of inspired, aligned educational programs in all the arts for every child.

Summer 2016 update to timeline: SB916 has passed through the following areas of California's bicameral legislature: Senate Education Committee (unanimous, bi-partisan support); Senate Appropriations Committee (passed); Senate Floor (passed and moved on to Assembly); Assembly Education Committee (unanimous, bi-partisan support); Assembly Appropriations Committee hearing (August 2016, results, t.b.d.); Next steps: Vote on Assembly Floor and then to Governor Brown's desk in Fall 2016.

CDEA supports SB916 in 2016.

The Executive Board welcomes your feedback, comments and inquiries:

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CDEA is a non-profit professional organization dedicated to the artistic and educational advancement of the art of dance in diverse sectors and communities throughout California. CDEA inspires, clarifies and amplifies the voice and presence of dance education and advocacy. CDEA is a State Affiliate of NDEO, National Dance Education Organization