

Burbank Unified School District's (BUSD) Budget Crisis and Arts Education

What impact does BUSD's current budget crisis have on Arts Education?

BUSD arts education is at risk. BUSD is currently facing up to a \$3.5 million Budget Deficit. Without additional state and/or local revenue sources, BUSD needs to cut expenses associated to staffing, programs or facility needs. (To review all proposed cuts and budgetary changes go to the May 8th BUSD LCAP Town Hall meeting). Unreliable and inadequate state funding make it difficult for BUSD to maintain and build arts education programming. BUSD's per pupil revenue is at \$10,768 compared to the average per pupil revenue of \$12,620 in other state unified school districts (General Fund Revenues 2017-18 ed-data.org) and its debt obligations are rising.

- **BUSD Elementary Music Program is at risk for budget cuts:** To balance their budget, BUSD planned to eliminate 3 of the 5 elementary music teacher positions, which serve 11 schools and provide weekly music instructions in grades 2 – 5, for a total savings of \$275,328. Thanks to funding from the Burbank Art for All Foundation, the Burbank Educational Foundation, the Roosevelt Elementary Booster Association, and the Chuck Lorre Family Foundation, these 3 elementary music teachers' positions were saved for the 2019-2020 school year. The elementary music program remains vulnerable in future years.
- **One of the two District arts administrative positions is slated for elimination in the 2019 -2020 school year.** This position, which provides district-wide oversight and strategic planning for the arts, is part of BUSD's proposed LCAP reductions of approximately \$800,000.
- **Until additional revenues are secured, BUSD will not be able to address a \$1 million backlog to restore, repair, and replace musical instruments in its current inventory.**

How can our community maintain and build arts education during this budget crisis?

Without new revenue sources, arts education will remain at risk, among other District programs. Our community must continue to remain vigilant in advocating and working with District and State leaders to increase revenues for education. Research indicates that arts education can improve student outcomes in key areas where BUSD students need support, including reducing chronic absenteeism and suspension rates, increasing college and career readiness, and increasing performance in English Language Arts and Math.

- **Advocate for increase state funding for Arts Education.** The State currently accounts for approximately 93% of BUSD's revenue. Visual and Performing Arts are required subjects in California State Schools and need to follow the Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards. Despite these standards, limited tax revenues for public schools and raising debt obligations make it difficult for districts to find a place in their budget for the arts. In addition, emphasis on reading and math state accountability systems unintentionally leave arts education vulnerable.
- **Tell your story.** Arts advocates need to tell neighbors, parents, business leaders, and other community members about BUSD's budget crisis and what that means for arts education and student achievement outcomes. Personalize what this mean for your family and how you think other students can benefit from arts education. Talk about arts education impact on student achievement outcomes in areas that need

improvement in BUSD, such as improving math and reading skills, and for decreasing absenteeism and suspensions. If your student is not able to access arts education programs, let the District know.

- **Advocate for an educational parcel tax inclusive of arts instruction and programs.** BUSD is considering placing an Education Parcel Tax on the March 2020 ballot. BUSD only generates local revenue sources at \$317 per student, compared to the average of \$703 per student statewide by unified school districts (General Fund Revenues 2017-18 ed-data.org). How much the parcel tax will raise and what it will fund is still being determined. Tell School Board members to include arts education as an area to receive additional funding from revenue generated by an educational parcel tax. The failed 2018 education parcel tax, Measure QS, included arts instruction as a potential area to receive additional funding.

How is Arts Education supported in our community?

BUSD is recognized as a state and national leader for its arts education programs. These programs are supported by a broad-based community collective in partnership with BUSD, and actively engage parents, foundations, and business leaders from Burbank's creative economy.

- BUSD launched its Arts for All masterplan in 2005 to restore dance, music, theatre, and visual arts programs in conjunction with the Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education. Since then, BUSD has maintained its commitment to arts education and revised the BUSD Arts for All masterplan in 2012 and 2016.
- Burbank Arts for All Foundation is an arts education foundation comprised of a concerned group of community members, including Warner Bros. Entertainment, The Walt Disney Company, citizens and parents. Since its formation in 2006, the Foundation's mission has focused on two areas of service. The Foundation's grants and giving initiatives have invested more than \$662,000 through 298 grants that provide supplemental funding for arts education in alignment with BUSD's Arts for All masterplan. Through its community outreach programs, the Foundation has worked to educate and engage the Burbank community and leadership to support arts education, to address governing policies that have a positive impact on the ability for all students to receive a high-quality arts education, and to provide nonpartisan opportunities for local candidates to comment on the role of arts education in Burbank's creative economy.
- Money raised through Burbank Arts for All Foundation, PTA units, Booster associations, local businesses, and the Burbank Educational Foundation has supported critical aspects of arts education that has strengthened all aspects of a student's educational career, such as supplies and materials to increase instructional support, integrated arts programs, digital media programs and equipment, auditorium and other building improvements, instruments and repair, travel, costumes, and performance competitions.
- A March 2018 BUSD-issued survey by FM3 Research found that 84% of Burbank survey participants stated their support that "Every student in Burbank schools should have arts and music education." Furthermore, more than six-in-ten voters said arts and music programs were at least a very important part of a parcel tax measure.