

**Assembly Education/Assembly Arts Joint Hearing
Implementing Proposition 28 Arts Education Funding
February 12th, 2026 at 1:30 pm
1021 O Street (Swing Space) Room 1100**

Panelist Biographies:

Dylan Hawksworth-Lutzow is a Fiscal and Policy Analyst for the Legislative Analyst's Office. Dylan has been covering Prop 28, Child Care, After School Programs, and Teacher Issues for the LAO since late 2024.

Sharon Herpin is a Senior Research Associate with WestEd's Center for Education Services. She integrates her research, evaluation, and technical assistance experience to improve teaching and learning, streamline organizational operations, measure outcomes, and scale evidence-based practices. She has expertise in quantitative and qualitative research methods with a content focus in the arts, arts education, adult learning, educational technology, and school improvement.

Dr. Herpin has worked with a variety of federal, state, and local agencies, including the National Endowment for the Arts, the Arts Education Partnership, the California Arts Council, and dozens of nonprofit arts organizations and museums. Her research and evaluation work assists organizations to use data to make informed decisions about how to improve operations, expand reach, and move to scale. She also designs and facilitates professional development workshops and engages in ongoing technical assistance to help organizations define their goals and objectives, set benchmarks and milestones, develop logic models, measure outcomes, and assess impact.

Dr. Herpin is a Southern California native, growing up in Orange County. She received a BA and MA from California State University – Fullerton and earned a doctorate in organizational leadership from Brandman College, Chapman University.

Kyle Holmes is the Director of the California County Superintendents Arts Initiative, a statewide effort of California County Superintendents, the nonprofit association representing California's 58 county superintendents of schools. Through the Arts Initiative, CCS supports county offices of education across the state as they build capacity, coordinate regional leadership, and strengthen arts education systems serving school districts and county-operated programs statewide. This work focuses on strategic planning, standards and framework implementation, workforce development, and implementation and compliance support related to the California Arts Education Framework and the Arts and Music in Schools Act (Proposition 28).

Born in Michoacán, Mexico, **Dr. Veronica Alvarez** is an educator, historian, and arts advocate. She believes that access to arts education is a social justice issue. Veronica has worked with students of all ages and in teacher professional development, where she led arts integration and English Language Learner learning opportunities for teachers from 70 school districts in LA County. Currently, she is the Executive Director of Create CA. Previously, she was the Executive Director of Community Arts Partnership with a special appointment in the Critical Studies Department at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). Prior to CalArts, she was in the museum field for over 20 years, working at the Getty and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Veronica has served as a US Department of State English Language Specialist in Serbia and in the State Department of Cultural Affairs in Chiapas, Mexico, and has led sessions on using art for English Language Development with museums across the country. Veronica has a BA in liberal studies and MA in Ancient Greek and Roman history from CSUN. She received her doctorate from Loyola Marymount University's Educational Leadership for Social Justice Program.

A proud mother of two amazing young men, Veronica loves to read, visit museums, and travel. She is the recipient of several awards, including Museum Educator of the Year for NAEA's Pacific Region, the US Department of State English Language Specialist, and the CAEA Outstanding Visual Arts Administrator of the year in 2024.

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Dr. Jill Baker has served as the superintendent of the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) since August 2020. With 34 years in LBUSD, Dr. Baker worked 28 of those years as a successful teacher, principal, and central office administrator before becoming LBUSD's first female superintendent.

Dr. Baker's appointment occurred during the earliest months of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and LBUSD went on to become the first large school district in California to reopen campuses for in-person learning. As part of the District's recovery work, Dr. Baker led the development of LBUSD's Learning Acceleration and Support Plan, bringing together state and federal recovery funds to provide the best possible learning opportunities for students. In support of this work, the Board of Education adopted an Excellence and Equity Policy and implemented the Black Student Achievement Initiative. Dr. Baker also guided the restructuring of Board of Education meetings to align them more closely with student outcomes. She launched the Superintendent's

Student Advisory Committee (Raising Student Voices and Participation), resulting in student voices being elevated in settings traditionally occupied by adults. This work led to the introduction of an elected and paid student board member position in 2022.

Mary Sakuma serves as the Butte County Superintendent of Schools and executive leader of the Butte County Office of Education (BCOE). Her 30-year career in public education exemplifies BCOE's guiding belief that "students come first." Mary has served as a classroom teacher, school site principal, and district superintendent before taking office as Butte County Superintendent of Schools in 2019 — the first woman elected to the office in its history.

Mary has long provided consistent, engaged leadership within CA County Superintendents. She currently serves as Region 2 Chairperson, having previously represented the region on the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) Board as both a district and county superintendent. Before her election, she contributed for several years to PASCo (Personnel Administrative Services Committee). Since taking office, she has guided the creation of Region 2's first Safety and Communications Subcommittee, enhancing regional coordination and emergency preparedness, and twice served on the statewide interview and selection committee for the Arts Initiative Director.

A frequent statewide presenter and trusted voice in school disaster response and recovery, Mary continues to advance collaborative leadership that centers student well-being and local resilience.

Mary earned her B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley, her teaching credential at CSU, Chico, and her M.A. in Education and Administrative Services Credential from Simpson University. She and her husband John reside in Chico, California.

Chad Zullinger is an Assistant Professor of Music in Music Education at Sacramento State, where his duties include teaching courses in music technology, general, and choral music education. In addition, he serves as President of the California Music Educators Association (CMEA). He earned his BM in Composition at San Francisco State University, MM in Choral Conducting from the University of Delaware, and a DMA in Music Education at Boston University.

Chad is a self-taught guitarist who grew up participating in small groups (rock bands), in and outside of school, as well as creating music at computer workstations using MIDI keyboards, devices, and software. After attending San Francisco State University, he taught for over 20 years in a variety of classes including band, chorus, general music, and popular music performance in K-12 public school and university settings. His choirs consistently earned top ratings at state festivals that led to performances and ensembles earning accolades from prestigious organizations and associations, both regionally and abroad.