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# Arts Council gathers educators to discuss strategies

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(Photo: Lauren Diephof/For Off 68)

The Arts Council for Monterey County brought educators and others together on Saturday, March 12 in a summit meeting at the Embassy Suites in Seaside, entitled “Maximizing the New Momentum.”

Talk centered around the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). LCAP is the newest strategy to get a more rounded education in the schools through maximizing local partnerships.

To art aficionados, that means more art opportunities in education.

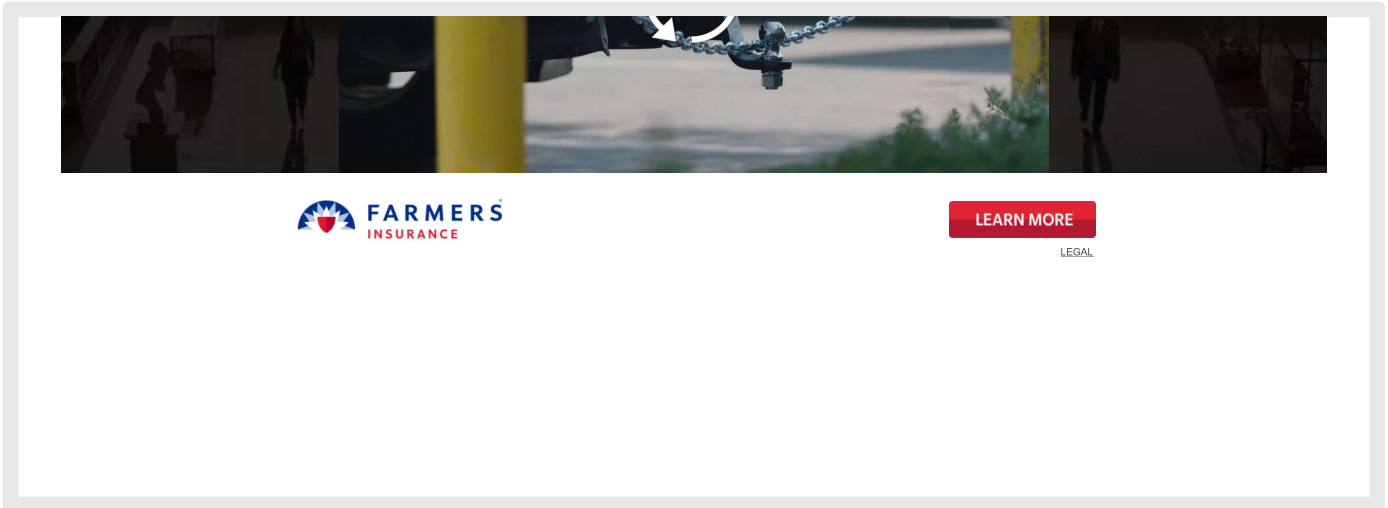
Keynote speaker Jeff M. Poulin of Americans for the Arts spoke about the new, Every Student Succeeds Act, signed in by President Obama last year.

“The state can now decide the arts,” Poulin said.

California, already maximizing the new act, uses the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) for each school district.

Poulin, introduced by Susan Breen, the Arts Council Vice President in charge of programs, as a former tap dancer. He travels all over the U.S. promoting communities to make change and build strategies to include arts in the schools.

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Shared delivery is one way to teach through learning from experts who are out working in their field of study, said Poulin.

He advised educators to advocate to the local level, the state, and to those who share the same interests, and also to do the research and lobby for policy change.

Speaker Sarah Brothers, the manager for the Arts Council of Santa Cruz County and California Alliance for Arts Education, said to map out an action plan, and to work on the most valuable asset you have now.

"The individual school districts must identify priorities, and to start with laying out goals. We pulled together an alliance with strategies that we presented to the school board," Brothers said.

Jon Hill, a participant in a breakout group said that as a board member himself, but speaking for himself, advised those who which to make a presentation to a school board, that a twelve minute presentation is better than a sixty minute presentation.

Arts Council for Monterey County Director Paulette Lynch spoke about how the whole system shattered in 2004 at the time she became the director.

"Now is the big opportunity to get on board," she said. "The time is now to connect with families, and the school boards to create a new normal," Lynch added.

Arts Council for Monterey County invited four speakers to give positive outcomes from providing art in the schools, beginning with Linda Hevern.

Hevern is the director and lead teacher of the Arts as Healing and Intervention Program at the Monterey County Probation Department Youth Center.

"Our art teachers show the way. Our students make it happen," Hevern said and that received applause from the audience.

Pilar Mendoza created Fiesta Mexicana and directs the Arcoiris Cultural dance group at the newly established cultural center in the City of Greenfield.

"This makes a difference in the community," Mendoza noted.

Garland Thompson, a poet, actor and director of the West Coast Poetry Slam is also a teacher. He told of a shy boy who never smiled, but because he got involved in poetry, he began smiling when he read his poetry and it earned standing ovations.

"His mother told me that he is now doing incredible things," Thompson related.

Hamish Tyler, director of the Media Center for Art Education and Technology (MCAET) at the Monterey County Office of Education said there are many opportunities for which students may get involved, and two of those are the three TV stations and two mobile vehicles. The TechMobile offers hands-on access to 21st century digital media technology.

Tyler gave the portrayal of Macbeth, performed by an all female cast at Santa Catalina School and filmed by MCAET, as a positive example of arts in the school.

"There's a richness now that's going to happen," said Lynch, summing up how educators and interested community members will maximize the new momentum.

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