



Using this Site to Advocate for Arts Education

Welcome to the Arts for LA website and our arts education advocacy center. We congratulate you on your interest in getting involved and making a difference, and our goal is that after reviewing this document you'll feel ready to dive in and join the community of parents, artists, organizations, businesses, students, and educators working together to make their voices heard on arts education.

Once you familiarize yourself with the resources on this site, we hope that you'll get more involved, either by joining an existing advocacy team, starting your own, or sharing your thoughts and ideas both on this site and with your friends, colleagues, and decision makers.

In this document you'll find information on

- [Creating a username and login](#)
- [Joining a group](#)
- [Generating content like blogs and forums](#)
- [Using the tools provided on this site to organize in your community](#)

Create a Username and Log-in

You probably already saw the "[Get a Log-in](#)" link in the box where you found this document. If you click on that, you'll be led through the process of getting a user name, login, and creating a profile for this site.

You can also sign up by clicking the large blue "[Participate](#)" link on the top right of the homepage of this site and go through the same process.

Once you've done this, you'll be able to join groups and begin generating your own content.

Joining a Group

The best way to get started with generating content is to [join a group](#). For arts education advocacy, we have created 5 groups for 5 school districts, including

- [Burbank USD](#)
- [Culver City USD](#)
- [Montebello USD](#)

- [Paramount USD](#)
- [Santa Monica-Malibu USD](#)

Each of these groups has its own forum that you can contribute to, and its own blog feed and calendar.

To join one of these groups, simply go to [“groups”](#) in the left navigation toolbar, find the group you want to join, and click on “request membership” in the right column.

Another option for joining one of the 5 existing school district groups is to click on the school district group linked at the top-right of the Arts Ed Teams portal page where you found this document. Once there, you can go again to the top right block where it says [“join this group.”](#) That will take you to the groups page where you can find your group and click on “request membership” in the right column.

If none of these groups in the groups section apply to you, you can start your own by sending an email to Camille@artsforla.org and asking us to set you up with a new group. Just let us know what the theme of the group is, whether it be another school district, municipality, or specific issue.

Once you’ve joined a group, you can see your personal list of groups in the “My Groups” tab. Some groups are private and do not show up on the public list; these are by invitation only. Once you have joined a group, click on its name to go to its main page. On the right-hand column is a list of actions and ways to contribute to your group. You may create a blog post, create a new forum topic, view the group calendar, look at all of the group’s forums and invite friends to join. Content posted to a group will be visible to all group members, who will be notified via email and provided with a link to the new content.

Keep up with group activity by clicking on “email subscription” in the Group Notifications section on the right sidebar within a group. This will show you your email notification settings in your profile. If you use RSS feeds, you can also subscribe to group-specific feeds at [our sitemap](#).

Authoring and Sharing Content

Blogs and Forums: Now that you’ve joined a group, you can get started generating your own content, like blogs and forums. Here is a quick how-to.

1. Within a Group, click “Create Blog Entry” or “Create Forum Topic.” Within a Forum, choose “Post New Forum Topic.”
2. Title your blog/forum. For blogs, choose which section it should appear in and which audience(s) would find it relevant. You can choose more than one audience by holding down “Control.” If your blog is about an arts education

- issue, it might be appropriate to choose Arts Education as the section and Educators, Parents, School Districts and Students as the audience.
3. For both the Teaser (blogs only) and the Body, it's a good idea to click "enable rich text" right away (see box above).
 4. Write your content.
 5. Choose your settings:
 - a. Input Format: Leave the format as Full HTML.
 - b. Groups: Select the Group(s) relevant to your forum or blog post. Choose whether or not you want your blog/forum to be public (we would prefer content to be public, unless a confidential issue related to your group).
 - c. Comments: Read/Write is usually appropriate.
 - d. Captcha: Annoying but necessary to prevent spam.
 6. Preview and submit it.

Calendars allow group members to view events relevant to a specific group. Additions to the calendar will also show up on the Group's main page. Right now, only group managers have the capacity to add events to a group.

Books allow group members to work collaboratively on a document or other language. They're a lot like Wikis: you can edit a current page or add a "child page" with a related topic or additional information. Books are labeled "Book Page" in the list of posts on the Group's home page. Click to look at a Book, and choose to "edit" if you have something to add. Some books may have many "pages;" you'll be able to jump to the first or last page of a book by scrolling to the bottom of the page and using the links provided. Clicking "Up" returns you to the "Parent" page: as in, you would click Up from a book page about Carrots to return to a book page about Vegetables. All group members are able to edit books within that group. Click on the Edit tab from any book page to change parts of its text. If you want to add a new section to any book, scroll to the bottom and click "Add Child Page."

Sharing Content: Most sections of ArtsforLA.org feature a row of small, colorful symbols below almost every piece of content. Clicking on these symbols allows you post that blog, forum, new item or group to a variety of social networking and news archiving sites, including FaceBook and Digg.

RSS Feeds: Arts for LA offers separate RSS feeds for each forum, blog, audience group, web section and story type, as well as a general Front Page feed. Subscribe to one or more at <http://www.artsforla.org/sitemap> to keep up with content additions.

Organizing Tools

On each other the [Arts Ed Teams](#) pages, there is a block on the right dedicated to the [Advocacy Toolkit](#). Here you will find training modules, planning aides, and

templates to help you organize in your community, whether you do it virtually or in-person.

The modules include

- [How to Start a Community Advocacy Team](#)
- [Campaign Planning](#)
- [Recruitment and Leadership Development](#)
- [Training Volunteers](#)
- [Running Effective Meetings](#)
- [Media & Publicity](#)
- [Working with Public Officials](#)
- [Event Planning](#)

These modules will guide you through everything from figuring out how to get people involved in your community, to meeting with an elected official, to putting on your own press conference.

We hope this tutorial has set you up for success! Please contact us with any questions at tstafford@artsforla.org