**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

**Time is of the Essence**

YOUR VOICE MUST BE HEARD NOW! Please write a letter to the members of the State Board of Education (contacts below) using your own experience and story. Include as many of the points below as you would like. Close your letter with the request to restore the two-credit graduation requirement in the arts.

Please send your letter to the email contacts listed below **NO LATER THAN Friday, September 20!**

**Remember:** Be respectful in your communication. Do not be confrontational or threatening. Focus on the needs of students. We suggest even recognizing what the State Board is trying to do for students, though they need to be aware of and address the unintended consequences.

**Sample Letter:**

To the members of the Indiana State Board of Education

The Indiana Department of Education has abruptly reversed decades of well-rounded diploma standards by **eliminating the fine arts requirement.** I am writing to respectfully request the restoration of the arts graduation requirement.

Just as **removing English** as a required subject would weaken literacy and future learning potential, **eliminating fine arts** will inevitably erode career skills that are crucial beyond high school: collaboration, teamwork, conflict resolution, time management, and social-emotional growth. Like English and Math, these leadership and workforce skills are not replicated in other classroom subjects. The lack of "soft skills" – interpersonal abilities – is already the top gap in the emerging workforce, exacerbated by the social stagnation caused by the pandemic.

This decision also threatens to stifle cognitive development fostered by new experiences, particularly for families who might not otherwise explore fine arts. Many students and parents start with uncertainty but go on to develop a lifelong passion for a discipline that was previously unfamiliar to them. By removing the fine arts requirement, the incentive for families to try something new disappears. Most concerning, this decision could lead to a budgetary "death sentence" for fine arts programs in rural and inner-city schools, where local administrators may cut funding as enrollments decline due to the new requirements.

Please restore the two-credit graduation requirement for music and arts education.

Respectfully submitted,

NAME

Address

Email/Phone