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**Testimony before the Philadelphia Board of Education**  
Joint Committee Meeting – Finance and Student Achievement  
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Presented by Tim Gibbon, Picasso Project Director  
*Public Citizens for Children and Youth*

Good afternoon, my name is Tim Gibbon. I am a Philadelphia resident, parent, and Picasso Project Director with Public Citizens for Children and Youth. I would like to speak today about the critical importance of funding for arts education in Philadelphia's public schools.

While PCCY is working hard to advocate for the state education funding necessary for the coming year, we anticipate likely budget shortfalls and difficult funding decisions for this Fall. In the past, Philadelphia has experienced detrimental cuts to arts education in times of financial deficit. However, we implore you to hold arts education harmless for Philadelphia's students.

As research demonstrates, arts education is at the core of student achievement and engagement. Recent studies from the American Psychological Association and Americans for the Arts finds that students in low-income communities with access to strong arts programs in school have higher GPA, math and reading scores, reduced rates of school suspension, and are five times more likely to graduate from high school.

Daily interactions with students confirm this impact: Recently, a student from South Philadelphia High School who participated in a Picasso Project said that "without a music program, I wouldn't want to come to school." Arts are the glue that attach students to learning at school.

The District's Office of Arts and Creative Learning has made tremendous strides, including recently being named by the NAMM Foundation as one of the country's best districts for music education. Let's continue moving forward. Arts education is essential to learning, for this reason we ask you to hold arts education funding harmless from any potential budget cuts.