How does learning in the arts help students develop capacities needed for civic engagement?

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT is a significant outcome of gaining an arts education and acquiring artistic literacy. Students understand that they each have the power and responsibility to affect the community and society at large and are able to do this through the arts. As a result, students can use the arts as “powerful agents of change” (Seidel et al. 2009).

Through learning in the arts students are able to:

- absorb meaningful information through the senses;
- develop openness in apprehension and push boundaries;
- effectively construct artistic meaning within their cultural milieu;
- grasp the nature and evolution of history;
- communicate effectively within variable situations and for diverse audiences; and
- navigate the intricacies of emerging digital and global environments (NCCAS 2014)

“Work in the arts is not only a way of creating performances and products; it is a way of creating our lives by expanding our consciousness, shaping our dispositions, satisfying our quest for meaning, establishing contact with others, and sharing a culture” (Esiner, 2002).

California Arts Education Framework for California Public Schools, Chapter 1