REGION 1 COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS

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Chris Hartley, Ed.D., Humboldt County Superintendent of Schools
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REGION 1 ARTS LEAD
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**Del Norte County Office of Education**

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"The arts are an integral part of any well-rounded person’s education. As the County Office of Education, we are committed to finding ways to bring students, arts, and artists together."

– Jeff Harris, Del Norte County Superintendent of Schools

**Strengthening Learning with the Arts**

In 2019, Del Norte County joined three other counties in the *Arts and Creativity Initiative (ACI)*. The initiative emphasizes professional development to support teachers with the integration of arts standards, balancing structure and creativity, and using innovative teaching practices that promote the development of higher-order thinking.

At the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year, students in grades K-8 participated in various collaborative art projects where they learned elements of visual arts and collaboration skills. Students worked in small groups and made decisions about materials and composition. Teachers noted high levels of student engagement, collaboration, and persistence as students worked to create quality compositions.

Through the ACI grant, 23 teachers in Del Norte County have been introduced to the Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS). VTS begins with the natural human behavior of wondering about things and transforms it into high-level critical thinking. Students begin to learn about the strategy by closely looking at artwork and responding to a cycle of three questions.

- What’s going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say ____?
- What more can we find?

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Once the strategy is learned, teachers can transfer the same strategy into other content areas. Although this is relatively new in our district, we are already seeing results.

One elementary grade teacher noted, “I started asking questions in language arts to see what kinds of responses students would give about a passage. Students thought more deeply about the passage. They would tell me their observations and wonderings as long as I didn’t front load a bunch of information or direct answers. The discussions were way more enriching!”

Another teacher said, “Following several powerful VTS sessions centered around artwork with different groups of students, I decided to experiment using the strategy with other content areas. I was presented with an opportunity to use it when my own child was having a difficult time with her English homework. I changed the first question to, “What is going on in this stanza? She went from having nothing to write to writing several paragraphs analyzing the poem. It was truly amazing!”

Art Partnerships
The Del Norte County Office of Education (DNCOE) partners closely with the California Redwoods Art Association to expand exposure to visual arts to all students in Del Norte County and to encourage community involvement. The partnership consists of supporting all schools in maintaining their membership in the Association, which gives them access to a wide range of services, including the opportunity to take classes at the gallery outside of the school day. Additionally, DNCOE contracts with the Association to provide a variety of opportunities for local artists-in-residence to visit classrooms, provide art lessons, and to display the created pieces at the gallery. Other collaborative partners include the Del Norte Association for Cultural Awareness, the Wild Rivers Symphony, and local community theaters.

Arts and Career Technical Education (CTE)
Another facet of the arts integration in Del Norte County is the focus on including visual and digital media arts within the career and technical education pathways. Through the use of lasers, CNC machines, digital photography and printing, 3D printing in multiple media, and other avenues, students are able to combine artistic ideas with technical skills and envision ways to enhance and expand their opportunities in the workforce and higher education.

Students are also encouraged to participate in the innovative and highly successful E3 program. E3 stands for Education, Experience, and Employment. Through this program, which is a collaboration between the Workforce Development Center, Wild Rivers Community Foundation, The California Endowment-Building Healthy Communities, and DNCOE, students are able to participate in work related soft skills training and are employed by local arts-based businesses to explore the entrepreneurial side of visual and performance art.

Celebrating Success
This year Del Norte celebrates teacher, Kelly Troyna and student, Yanahlea Robinson. Mrs. Troyna has been awarded the 2019 California Hero Award by the California Arts Council and Poetry Out Loud. She received the award at the distinguished California state capitol and has been highly praised by the staff and students of Sunset High School for this achievement. Her student, Yanahlea, made it to the finals of the California Poetry Out Loud State competition in Sacramento. Yanahlea gives all thanks to her teacher, Kelly Troyna, for her tireless efforts and dedication in preparing her for the competition.
Humboldt County Office of Education

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“Access to a contemporary, innovative, and high quality arts education is essential for all students. Humboldt County is an incubator for artists and the Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE) serves as a catalyst and collaborator with schools and local organizations in program design, offering relevant professional development, providing engaging student experiences and advocating for the arts at the regional and state level. Student success is our top priority and the integration of a vibrant arts education not only improves student outcomes but fosters school culture that promotes community, connectivity and joy! Let the Arts Shine!”

- Chris Hartley, Ed.D., Humboldt County Superintendent of Schools

Humboldt County Office of Education

We strive to provide the highest quality arts-related professional development for teachers as well as promote many diverse opportunities for student engagement. From STEAM, Arts Integration, and Arts Subjects, to MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) and SEL (Social Emotional Learning); the Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE) strives to remain on the leading edge of research-based, trauma informed practices.

The Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE) continues to support and increase opportunities for teachers, administrators, students and community to participate in the arts. HCOE received a multi-year Arts Education Development and Dissemination Grant, and as a result, have been working with 100 teachers from four counties in Creative Education. This also allowed HCOE to hire one additional full time Arts Specialist in addition to part-time teaching artists and county coordinators. The focus of the Arts & Creativity Initiative is changing teacher practices to increase engagement and higher order thinking in arts and non-arts subjects. A repository of resources are available at: www.artsintegration.net
Professional Development is still ongoing for teachers in discrete arts subjects. Hands-on workshops for Music, Visual Arts, and Theatre teachers are still offered for anyone in the region who wishes to participate.

Four professional learning modules for CCSESA Arts Initiative’s Creativity at the Core grant are complete: Module 1 – Raising the Barre; Module 13 – Theatre Arts and English Learners; Module 18 – Reuse STEAM; and Module 20 – Music and Universal Design for Learning. Additional dissemination of the modules are ongoing at the local, regional, and state level. Additionally, HCOE served as a site for public input on the new California Arts Standards. Staff is working on preparing professional development for the new standards and framework.

Reserved Students Engaged in the Arts Through Schools (SEATS) include: Schools to Dance, Schools to Theatre, Schools to Symphony, and Schools to Studio. Partners leverage resources for students to attend live performances and funds are underwritten by HCOE. Humboldt County is rural and students must travel long distances to attend performances. A single bus ride to attend a performance can cost $1,000 per bus. Transportation stipends are provided by HCOE and our partners who receive grant money from the community. Curricula is reviewed and delivered before the students attend the performance. In addition, the complete suite of seven artists are highlighted in the Schools to Studio video. Students watch the video and after, one of the artists goes into the classroom to work on an art project which includes crossover in other curricular areas. To see these wonderful videos visit: www.hcoe.org/arts

Humboldt County Office of Education continues to be a hub for arts education on the North Coast as a result of multiple collaborations with the Humboldt Arts Council, higher education, public radio, community arts organizations, local businesses, PTA/PTO’s, school districts and neighboring county offices of education. HCOE passed the “Declaration of Equity in Arts Learning” in October of 2017.

HCOE also partners with the Humboldt Arts Now Community which advocates for arts education and helps inform the community about the arts learning being offered locally, as well as its positive impacts. With the assistance of the California Alliance for Arts Education and the Humboldt Arts Now Community (HANC), the Strategic Arts Plan was revised and presented in 2018 to every school board (32) in the county. HANC works in conjunction with the Humboldt Arts Council Arts and Education Committee to further opportunities for all students.

HCOE continues its collaboration with the North Coast California Music Educators Association (NCCMEA) and the HCOE Student Events program to coordinate the annual All County Music Festival, which garners participation of 400 6-12 grade students in seven ensembles from Humboldt, Del Norte, and Trinity counties. 2021 will mark the 65th annual All County Music Festival.
Lake County

Lake County Office of Education

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“Lake County schools take great pride in the variety of opportunities available to all students. I believe that students grow and benefit with exposure to visual and performing arts. Lake County Office of Education will continue to support local teachers as they address the needs of students by integrating opportunities for students to shine and express their learning both academically and artistically.”

- Brock Falkenberg, Lake County Superintendent of Schools

Creating Community

Lake County has been continuously involved with the development and adoption of new instructional strategies for arts education in the classroom. Local educators understand the advantage of incorporating art into the lives of students as a gateway to culture, diversity, and expression.

The past few years have been plagued with county-wide evacuations and wildfires. Despite these adverse events, local communities have emerged unified in their attempts to recover and rebuild what was lost. It has been observed that with expression of creativity comes problem solving, and with imagination comes innovation. These elements help cultivate a strong, diverse community where individuals are able to support and celebrate one another.

Art Education

Lake County became involved with the Arts and Creativity Initiative (ACI) during the 2018-2019 school year. Over 20 elementary school teachers are currently participating from around the county. These teachers receive support from the Lake County Office of Education’s Education Specialists, who coordinate Lake County’s implementation of the ACI. Teachers participate in workshops to learn and try new instructional practices that will benefit their students. These concepts add value in art and contribute...
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to a deeper understanding in other areas of study.

One example is *Notice – Wonder*, an exercise that encourages deep observation of a piece of artwork. This activity aims to stimulate classroom conversations where each student can contribute to a discussion about what they see and wonder about. These sorts of activities allow students to refine their attention to detail, and practice patience as they look further into an art piece. *Notice – Wonder* goes beyond artwork and forms a line of communication in the classroom where all students are able to contribute to the conversation. This process of reflection leads to what we want to see in our schools: engagement. A crucial benefit to this strategy is that it is accessible to all students and can be differentiated to engage students at multiple levels.

Another tool from ACI is the *Visual Thinking Strategy* (VTS). VTS uses objective conversation between the teachers and the students when looking at a new art piece to develop and promote an art-based vocabulary. Teachers are trained to ask the question “What do you see that makes you say that?” Teachers then paraphrase and link student responses using domain-specific vocabulary. For instance, when a student says that an artwork looks happy, we hear teachers responding with, “you’re noticing the bright colors and you’re thinking this creates a positive tone.” This is when teachers are able to introduce elements of art such as: composition, texture, light, color, etc.

Participating teachers worked alongside their colleagues during the *Summer Art Institute*, to develop a collaborative art project that they would later conduct in their classrooms. This project integrated a hands-on approach where teachers played the role of students and worked alongside each other just as their students would in the future. The project was designed to give students the opportunity to work through challenges with one another. Teachers guide students through making decisions, adapting to change, taking turns, and sharing materials and a creative space as they complete projects together.

**Community Involvement**
Apart from the required elements of ACI, the Lake County Office of Education is collaborating with the Middletown Art Center to bolster the quality of professional development available to teachers over the course of the three-year initiative. Artists from the Middletown Art Center instruct and guide teachers through strategies learned from the *Art and Creativity* initiative trainings as they visit classrooms, model strategies, and offer field trips to the Middletown Art Center. Field trips consist of a gallery tour and include studio time where students get the chance to work on an art project with professional artists.

Lake County Office of Education will continue to support art in schools and curriculum as local teachers learn and adopt new techniques to empower student self-expression, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking skills.

Resilient communities are built from diversity and innovation; Lake County is dedicated to nurturing the curiosity of children by providing the tools and expertise needed to produce work and foster these ideals.
As a former art teacher, I can speak to how integrating the arts into instruction increases student achievement. It is not just limited to the easily observed and undisputed benefit of increased student engagement and motivation. In addition to increasing creative problem-solving skills, arts instruction also helps children with the development of motor, language, and social skills, along with decision-making and inventiveness. Research suggests that art is a link to increased retention: Each time a student interacts with information in a new and different way, the information is embedded slightly more into their brain.

- Michelle Hutchins, Mendocino County Superintendent of Schools

Arts Integration Professional Learning
Mendocino County Office of Education (MCOE) has a goal of reaching our schools and community through the arts. One way MCOE works towards this goal is through sponsorship and support of arts programs and grants that benefit students and teachers in our county. Arts and Creativity Initiative (ACI), Mock trial, Poets in the Schools, Young Authors’ Grant, Get Arts in the Schools Program (GASP), Poets in the Schools (PITS) and Science Fair are some of the programs at MCOE that are arts focused or contain artistic elements which blend art into other subject areas.

Arts and Creativity Initiative (ACI) is a regional collaborative art grant with Mendocino, Del Norte, Lake, and Humboldt Counties. The grant provides professional development around the arts to teachers in K-5 classrooms with a focus on student instruction. The goal of the project is to prepare participating teachers to integrate high quality arts components into their daily instruction. The grant provides resources and supplies for participating teachers to use in their classroom with coaching support and follow up trainings.
The courtroom Art Contest is a competition that allows students the opportunity to participate in the Mock Trial Program. Contestants observe their schools’ Mock Trials and create drawings of the courtroom scenes.

Coordinated by the Arts Council of Mendocino County, Get Arts in the Schools Program (GASP) is funded by the Mendocino County Office of Education with additional funding from private donors. GASP funds artist workshops and live performances in Mendocino County schools during the school year. The goal of the program is to infuse the arts in the core curriculum and to involve and expose school children to quality, educational, curriculum-based artistic experiences. Artists work closely with classroom teachers and after-school coordinators to enrich the curriculum by presenting arts programs that are relevant to other core academic subjects. Teachers benefit from the partnership by exposure to current techniques and developments in the various art forms.

An affiliated branch of California Poets in the Schools, the Mendocino County Poets in the Schools (PITS) is an independent educational organization that is funded in part by MCOE, individuals, and foundations. PITS poets are a multicultural community of trained, published poet-teachers who bring experience for their craft into classrooms. Poet-teachers help foster an appreciation for poetry and encourage students to develop their poetic voice. It also helps students celebrate their creativity, intuition and intellectual curiosity through poetry and the creative writing process. An anthology of student poetry is collected and printed annually with published students receiving a copy. In addition, students are given the opportunity to participate in the Coast and Countywide Poetry Slams.

The Young Authors’ Fair inspires students in elementary schools to write, edit, and publish their own writing. An elementary school may apply for the award funding. Schools which have received funding report that participation in this project enhances children’s writing abilities and appreciation of literature. This program dovetails effectively into the daily writing program by encouraging students to write and publish their own books. The Young Authors’ Fair is a journey through the writing process and a showcase for celebrating student voice.

Our county has deep roots in the arts community and are excited about the state initiative highlighting arts in the schools. Teachers are thrilled to once again have arts be a focus for a well-rounded education. Mendocino County Office of Education is committed to supporting our schools in this venture.
Sonoma County

Sonoma County Office of Education
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“All great journeys begin with a first step. Districts and schools are encouraged to learn and consider the Arts Education Framework as a first step in considering how the Framework can be used to achieve school goals. Arts education provides creative solutions to look forward and plan a journey for the future.”

– Steven D. Herrington, Ph.D., Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools

Sonoma County Office of Education

Through a collaborative effort of the Arts Education Alliance, Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE), and Creative Sonoma, the Sonoma County Arts Education Framework presents a vision of what arts education can be in Sonoma County and includes strategies to implement that change forward. The Framework offers a menu of choices to Sonoma County Public schools and districts to increase and improve access and equity in arts education. In addition to the many resources existing in our county, it includes recommendations prescribed by leading educational authorities throughout California as well as a statewide coalition of educational agencies.

The Framework is the result of research and data collection on the state of the arts in Sonoma County. From this data, key takeaways have been developed, identifying areas of greater effectiveness. Starting with a vision of arts education in Sonoma County, the Arts Education Leadership Team developed strategies that help districts enhance and increase their offerings. Specific action steps have also been developed for strategic ways to address developing more arts for students while developing support for sustainability.

In addition, Creative Sonoma in cooperation with SCOE has invited any Sonoma County public school or district to apply for a planning grant to receive customized consultation in the development of a strategic plan to increase access and equity in arts education. The grant
Sonoma County

will be awarded to five schools or districts, and it is expected that five more will be awarded each year until we have supported all 40 districts in Sonoma County.

**Sonoma County STEAM Showcase**

The Synopsys-Sonoma County STEAM Showcase began in 2017. The traditional science fair, a long-standing event in Sonoma County, had always been well attended. However, in 2016 we began to examine the radical shifts in both science as a profession and science education. We also heard from students themselves that they wanted learning to be integrated and purposeful. The STEAM Showcase was developed to address these needs and allow more equitable access to STEAM for all students.

The STEAM Showcase promotes integration and purpose for projects and encourages digital documentation and multiple project iterations. The event isn’t a competition but rather a celebration of what had been done and an opportunity to engage in making and engineering activities. A diverse group of students participate, TK-12th graders from private and public schools, from clubs and after-school programs, and from special education classes. Students share with the industry professionals serving as project evaluators about their work and the purposes and possibilities that lay behind what they’ve done. When they aren’t interviewing, students make event t-shirts, engage in engineering challenges, and view each other’s projects.

A number of interesting projects have been brought to the Showcase, including those incorporating visual and performing arts. One student learned how to weld in order to make a sea turtle sculpture that could be sold to raise money for conservation...out of spare parts from a VW Bug. Another group of students performed a dance about water properties accompanied by a song that was written by one of the students and sung by the school’s choir. A group of 6th grade students, including English learners, an RSP student, and an elective mute, stood on the stage together and showed and narrated films they’d created about plate tectonics and earthquake safety. In 2018 after the devastating wildfires in Sonoma County, many groups addressed this tragedy in their work. One team designed a new house for their teacher who had lost her home. Another developed an app for cataloging the contents of your house.

The STEAM Showcase highlights the incredible capacity, potential, and creativity of students. The adults who volunteer are consistently blown away by what’s possible when students are given opportunities to learn and create with purpose. Many have commented that the event has restored their hope.

**Community Involvement**

The Five-Minute Film Festival is an annual countywide event that provides an opportunity for K-12 students to demonstrate learning in a 21st century context and showcase their work in front of a community audience. To participate, students create, as individuals or in groups, short films (up to five-minutes long) on a designated theme and submit them to SCOE for judging. The SCOE judging committee uses a rubric to score the films on storytelling, connection to the theme, creativity, and curricular content. The top films debut at a spring film festival at Third Street Cinema in Santa Rosa where students walk the red carpet. A panel of celebrity judges from the media industry provide feedback to all the top films and select winners in various categories. Selected films are also automatically entered into the Alexander Valley Student Film Festival so they can reach a wider audience.

Students learn storytelling as well as digital media skills when they create films for this event. Each year more than 1,000 students throughout the county participate, many of them first time filmmakers.
“Research shows that participation in the arts has a positive effect on a wide range of outcomes for youth. Engagement with the arts not only reinforces deeper-learning skills, but studies show that it also positively impacts academic outcomes, such as standardized test performance. In addition, arts engagement has been linked with improved social behaviors, reduced likelihood of school suspension and increased school engagement. These outcomes may be particularly significant for low-income and at-risk students.”

- Creative Youth Development, Transforming the Learning Environment, Education Commission of the States