As the County Superintendent, I want to ensure that every child has access to the arts, every day. Arts education helps students think critically, develop sophisticated solutions to complex problems, become skilled collaborators, excel in all forms of communication, become engaged citizens, develop empathy, understanding, and a healthy sense of self-worth. The arts are for ALL, and the arts are essential in Fresno County.

– Jim Yovino, Fresno County Superintendent of Schools

Fresno County

Fresno County Superintendent of Schools
Contact: Aaron Bryan • abryan@fcoe.org

Fresno County Superintendent of Schools
The Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (FCSS) believes the arts are an essential part of every child’s well-rounded education. Our mission is to encourage arts learning for students and educators, to collaborate with school districts and arts organizations on large-scale initiatives and to advocate for the arts at the local, state and national level. Working together with our partners, we strive to create equity and access to a high-quality arts education for every student, in every school, every day.

Fresno County Superintendent of Schools Jim A. Yovino dedicates more than $250,000 of general fund support yearly to the arts, including staffing and direct services to schools and students. With a team of five full-time and 13 part-time employees, the FCSS Visual and Performing Arts Department is equipped to provide exceptional professional learning, curriculum development, individualized instructional coaching support for Arts Specialist Teachers, as well as General Education Teachers working to integrate the arts into their classroom, and student programs to PK-12 schools and students.

In 2012, FCSS entered into a partnership with Fresno Unified, the City of Fresno, and the John F. Kennedy
Fresno County

then the initiative, which supports schools in developing a strategic plan to ensure that all students have access to high-quality arts instruction, has expanded to include five additional districts in Fresno County: Caruthers Unified, Clay Joint Elementary, Fowler Unified, Sanger Unified, and Selma Unified. *Any Given Child* Fresno County is continuing to advance the cause of arts education for all, not just within the county, but across the state and nation.

FCSS is also honored to collaborate with the Fresno Arts Council as one of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts “Partners in Education” teams. This partnership has increased access to arts education for students in many underserved schools in Fresno County by placing Teaching Artists in classrooms to deliver arts instruction and experiences to students.

In addition to national partnerships, FCSS collaborates with major arts and culture organizations locally to create annual student engagement programs such as *Art of the Word* with the Fresno Art Museum and *LinkUp!* with the Fresno Philharmonic. As Region 7 Visual and Performing Arts Co-Lead, FCSS plays host to the annual arts and education summit drawing participants from throughout the Central Valley.

With support from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, FCSS has developed and maintained the *Spark! Initiative*, which seeks to ignite the arts in schools with little to no arts access. By pairing local business leaders with the schools in their community, the *Spark! Initiative* has been able to grant more than $300,000 to support the development and implementation of arts programs and opportunities. Investments through the *Spark! Initiative* have funded artist residencies, arts integration professional learning, mural projects, and arts opportunities for all students, including students with special needs. Additionally, the *Spark! Initiative* has helped raise awareness around the role of arts education and its impact upon the local economy through radio, television, and social media.

The *Fresno County Youth Choir (FCYC)* is a unique music and mentoring program that creates multicultural harmony through music that fills the heart, lifts the soul, and changes lives for high school college/university students throughout Fresno County. In partnership with higher education and professional theater partners, the *Stages* summer youth theater project engages high school students from throughout the county in creating authentic and relevant theater that connects with vital issues in their lives and community. *FCYC* and *Stages* use the arts as a lens through which students view difficult topics such as human trafficking, homelessness, teen suicide, school violence, poverty, racism, and peace. Through these unique programs students are finding their own voice and helping lead their community into conversation around these challenging topics. Both programs are offered to students 100% free of charge, thanks to the generosity of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools.
“Education in the Arts is an integral part of the curriculum for students in Kings County. From our preschools to our adult programs, artistic engagement impacts students’ broader course of study by providing avenues for individual expression and opportunities for deep interpretation. Art, in all its forms is one of the most human experiences we can have. It is the embodiment of experiences we all want for every student. Whether it is the product of mindful consideration or wild imagination, it is a window to a widened appreciation of our world. What an exciting responsibility it is to foster such appreciation in our students.”

– Todd Barlow, Kings County Superintendent of Schools

County Office Arts Education/Support
Kings County Office of Education has been working with the Kings County ASES, after school program to conduct monthly Meet the Masters arts education for the students being served. Each ASES site will complete seven artist units, which instruct students about the artist and allow them to practice the arts elements emphasized in the units. Once they have learned about the master’s style, the students create their own art compositions. At the end of the learning, students will self-select their favorite piece of art from the seven units. The program will host a Meet the Masters showcase with those students pieces on display.
Additionally, the Kings County Tobacco Use Prevention Education program held a county wide poster contest entitled “Don’t Fall Into Tobacco.” The county received 56 entries from eight school districts.

**Local Arts Education Instructional Programs**

Meadow Lane Elementary School, part of Lemoore Union Elementary School District, recently led GATE students through learning about the elements of space, lines, patterns, perspective, and color theory. Armona Elementary, part of Armona Union Elementary School District, took part in an interactive video conference through the Kings Art Center. Students were guided through creating their own art compositions and were able to interact virtually with the instructor. Pioneer Middle School, part of Pioneer Union Elementary School District, participated in an International Peace Poster competition. Members of the Hanford Breakfast Lions Club selected winners. Kit Carson Elementary School, part of Kit Carson Union Elementary School District showcased their drama program by presenting *Elf* in December.

“All of the things an arts education gives a young person enhance leadership skills and help raise grades.”

– Josh Groban
The arts are essential elements to enable youth to develop an imagination and foster creativity.

— Cecilia A. Massetti, Ed.D., Madera County Superintendent of Schools

Madera County

ArtsFest

The Madera County Superintendent of Schools (MCSOS) and the Madera County Schools Foundation organize an annual ArtsFest in May. In 2019, more than 700 people enjoyed the day listening to live student musical and dance performances and visiting booths to create their own works of art. Children worked with their parents to create origami. One of the highlights of ArtsFest was the student gallery featuring 308 art pieces from 23 elementary, middle, and high schools in Madera County.

Multimedia Resources to Support Arts Education

The Madera County Superintendent of Schools’ Educational Resources and Services (ERS) program provides digital media resources to teachers and students to support arts education through www.CaliforniaStreaming.org and www.CalSNAP.org. Both are ongoing projects of the California County Educational Technology Consortium www.ccetc.net. Teachers also borrow a variety of multimedia resources from ERS to support their arts education curriculum, from art prints and musical instruments, to DVDs on dance, theatre, and music.

Arts Education in MSCOS’ Early Learning Program

MCSOS has an extensive early learning program serving young children in Madera and Chowchilla. Every day students in this program participate in creative dramatics, signing, instrumental music, and visual art lessons and activities. Not only do students learn the art foundations outlined in the California Preschool Learning Foundations, but there is the added bonus of supporting social and emotional learning through the arts for these young children.

Public Oral Interpretation Opportunities for Students in Correctional Academy

The Madera County Superintendent of Schools and the Madera County Correctional Academy share a unique experience providing competitive oral interpretation
opportunities for students in the Academy. For more than seven years, students have entered and won in community oral interpretation contests. The competitions include: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Local Host Committee Speech Contest, Madera Rotary Club Speech Contest, Poetry Out Loud, and Fresno State University’s Young Writers’ Conference. The success of these cadets can be attributed to the hard work and harmonious goals of both staff and students.

The Arts at MCSOS LIFE Games
The Madera County Superintendent of Schools hosts MCSOS LIFE Games. MCSOS LIFE Games grew out of the desire to demonstrate that all students, even the most severely disabled, can be included in any activity with the right preparation. The event connects the community to students, and families to community resources. Students from all districts in Madera County are served in the regional programs operated by MCSOS. Students have the opportunity to participate in a series of activities focusing on physical education and visual and performing arts standards. LIFE Games was organized by a team of MCSOS staff members for over 350 students with special needs and the 300 staff and community volunteers that assisted them. There were eight art stations for the students. Approximately 100 local high school students staffed the student stations.

MCSOS LIFE Games received a Golden Bell Award from the California School Boards Association (CSBA) and an Apple for Excellence Award from California County Boards of Education (CCBE).

Almond Blossom Festival in Chowchilla Elementary School District
Each Spring, Merle L. Fuller Elementary School in the Chowchilla Elementary School District hosts the Almond Blossom Festival of Performing Arts and Visual Interpretation. The Almond Blossom Festival is a celebration of performing arts to promote literacy, public speaking skills, and self-confidence among the students at Fuller School. More than 500 students participate in large group, small group, and individual performances. Volunteers from the community, Wilson Middle School, Chowchilla High School, Chowchilla Elementary School District, and Madera County Schools Administration are essential to the success of the festival. The event is run strictly as a festival, not a contest. Participants are evaluated on their artistic performances and not ranked against one another. After each performance, the judges speak to the students for a few minutes to share positive and constructive feedback. As a culmination of their hard work students are recognized for their achievements at a special ceremony.

Teaching Artists in Madera Unified School District
Through the efforts of the Madera County Arts Council, all students in grades three and four in Madera Unified School District receive art lessons throughout the school year. Art instructors, hired by the Madera Arts Council, provide art lessons to students who would otherwise not have the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of art. The art lessons include air dry clay, chalk, oil pastel, and stop motion.

String Orchestras in Madera Unified School District
Madera Unified School District (MUSD) has a thriving String Orchestra Program at nine of their elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The string orchestra program continues to grow every year with approximately 300 students learning to play the violin, viola, and cello. Madera Unified has invested in the training of teachers to provide Mariachi music instruction to students beginning in third grade. Currently, there are two elementary programs, one middle school program, and one high school program with plans for expansion at the elementary level in the 2020-21 school year.
“Given the positive academic and social emotional impact the arts have on our students, we are excited to be investing in resources into building systemic practices and partnerships which grow and support equitable and rigorous arts learning throughout Mariposa County aimed at empowering classroom teachers, centering student voice, and integrating classroom curriculum with a myriad of creative placemaking efforts across Mariposa County at large.”

– Jeff Aranguena, Mariposa County Superintendent of Schools

Mariposa County Office of Education Awarded Rural County Arts Cohort Grant to Develop Strategic Art Plan

In 2019/2020 the Mariposa County Office of Education was thrilled to be awarded a capacity building grant from the CCSESA Arts Initiative in partnership with the California Alliance for Arts Education as part of the Rural County Arts Cohort to develop a Strategic Art Plan for Mariposa. The effort is led by Mariposa County Office of Education VAPA Consultant, Cara Goger, and facilitated by Peggy Burt of the California Alliance for Arts Education. Guided by the insights of classroom teachers, administrators, students, artists, parents and community members and leveraging the unique strengths of our rural community, this in-progress plan prioritizes the following:

- Develop a sustainable, progressive, and diverse arts curriculum.
- Empower teachers with relevant Professional Development that allows choice while easing and elevating teaching.
- Promote and empower student voice while exhibiting students’ creativity and expression.
- Support and celebrate relationships that foster each student’s growth through authentic experiences.
- Forge relationships with community partners to support arts education.
- Partner with local businesses and organizations to provide space for students to create and/or present art.
- Share our mission about arts education, advocating for its benefits, persuading the community to participate and support.
- Empower an inclusive leadership team to support an equitable and sustainable Arts Education Plan implementation.
- Leverage existing and create new funding sources.

The final draft of this plan is scheduled to be completed in March 2020 and Cara Goger will be participating on a panel at the CCSESA Rural Arts Convening in April 2020, talking about the process of developing the plan.
Mariposa County Office of Education Partnership Programs
The Mariposa County Office of Education has a long standing partnership with the Mariposa County Arts Council to deliver standards aligned arts programming and teacher professional development equitable across all schools in Mariposa County. Here are two examples of these partnership programs:

Artists in the Schools This artist-in-residency/teacher PD program is offered in all 5th grade classes in Mariposa and integrates arts learning with Next Generation Science (NGSS) and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) based curriculum. Residencies span 12 weeks and provide hands-on visual art and music experiences that develop students’ critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills. One of the major shifts in CCSS is its focus on critical thinking skills and evidence-based reasoning which challenges students to transfer knowledge across subject area boundaries in order to build capacity for the complex-decision making and problem solving they will surely face. Art can play an important role in realizing this pedagogical goal. “Through viewing, making, and discussing art works, students come to realize that the arts do not exist in isolation, but are always situated within multiple dimensions...” (National Core Arts Standards: A Conceptual Framework for Arts Learning). Furthermore, “students who actively study the arts engage in and develop a disciplined, step-by-step approach to problems in creating, realizing, or understanding art...” (National Core Arts Standards: A Conceptual Framework for Arts Learning).

Additionally, the program builds capacity in teachers to integrate the arts into the existing curriculum through an instructional approach known as graduated release. This method begins with the artist-educators providing 100% of the instruction, graduates to a co-teaching model with the teacher joining at previously determined points in the lesson, and culminates in the classroom teacher leading instruction while the artist-educator moves into a coaching role.

SITE + VISION
Is a visual literacy program for high schoolers offered in every high school in the County that centers around field trips to exhibitions curated by major regional museums and supports a growing body of academic research indicating that exposing youth to art promotes emotional intelligence, a greater sense of self-worth and critical thinking skills. This program consists of a standards-aligned unit comprised of these three components:

- Pre-Field Trip Prep (3 weeks): Utilizing the image lists, interpretative resources, and study guides developed by museum curators/education staff for the selected exhibitions a museum educator will develop curricula for each exhibition and facilitate in-class discussions designed to build visual literacy skills and encourage engagement through interactive and inquiry-based discussion that prompts evidentiary looking.
- Field Trip (1 week): Students will visit the selected exhibitions and receive a gallery tour from an on-staff museum educator, this may include the opportunity to visit the vault or archives or meet with curatorial staff.
- Post Field Trip Reflection (1 week): Students will create a piece of artwork and compose an accompanying piece of prose or poetry inspired by the work of the artist(s) or curators involved in the exhibition they visited.

The selected exhibitions are presented by the Cantor Art Center/ Stanford, SFMOMA, the deYoung, the Oakland Museum of California and the Crocker Art Museum and leverage MCACI’s relationships with these museums’ Education Departments. MCACI’s staff, museum educator and classroom teachers work with museum staff to select 3-4 current/upcoming exhibitions around which to build the units. Exhibitions are selected based on their artistic and cultural/social significance.
I heard someone say recently that ‘talent is equally distributed across our student population, but opportunity isn’t.’ I believe this to be true and it is our mission at Merced County Office of Education that we find ways to nurture and develop the talent of our Merced County children whenever and wherever we can. Our districts and community leaders believe this too, and that is why the arts are flourishing in Merced County.

– Steve M. Tietjen, Ed.D., Merced County Superintendent of Schools

Merced County Office of Education

Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) has placed premium resources on arts education by hiring Arts Education consultant Noelle Chandler, who serves as a primary contact for schools and districts interested in furthering their arts experiences and advocacy. Noelle has trained After School Student Education: Teamwork for Success (ASSETS) teachers, worked with MCOE’s special ed program, and taught in ten different districts in the county, as well as run county-wide programs like Broadway Show Choir and STRUT, a county-wide talent show.

MCOE is working directly with the Merced County Arts Council to run Poetry Out Loud in Merced and send a student to the state competition in Sacramento, as well as offering workshops and coordinated professional development sessions that integrate arts with NGSS, ELD, ELA, Technology/Media Arts and more. In addition,
work has begun on a strategic arts education plan for the county that will support all districts in partnering with local artists to provide professional, standards-based visual and performing arts education. In addition, Merced County is hosting CISC 2020 in Monterey, as will be providing numerous opportunities to attendees to be enveloped in dance, music, spoken word and visual arts from Merced County and beyond.

Arts @ MCOE (the VAPA resource program run by Miss Noelle) has partnered directly this year with Merced City Schools to provide support for their Spotlight program, an evening of talent which features a performance act from each of their 18 elementary and middle schools. By creating a menu of options and offering appropriate resources to connect schools to artists, Arts @ MCOE helped support the MCSD practice of advocating for and valuing arts in the classroom and after school at all sites in Merced.

“To encourage literature and the arts is a duty which every good citizen owes to his country.”

– George Washington
Participation in arts programs is, for many students, the foundation of their identity. For many others, the arts help build confidence, the ability to work with others, a sense of responsibility, greater creativity, and pride in their accomplishments.

– Tim A. Hire, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools

The Tulare County Arts Master Plan
Understanding that access to high-quality arts education is a critical part of a well-rounded education for all students, in 2017, the Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE) leveraged a grant from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to create the county’s first strategic arts education plan. To make the strategic plan a reality, TCOE partnered with the California Alliance for Arts Education and over the course of the 2017-18 school year, the groups brought together a diverse cadre of educators, arts organizations, and community stakeholders to envision a new reality for arts education in Tulare County.

The Arts Master Plan identifies goals and outcomes for planning, implementing, and sustaining high-quality arts learning experiences, both inside and outside of school. The plan is guided by an overarching vision - We believe that every student in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve deserves equitable access to high-quality arts learning as part of a well-rounded education. It focuses on two foundational cornerstones – Arts as Core and Arts for All – and four strategic directions:
1: Educational Equity for All; 2: Social and Emotional Well-Being; 3: College, Career, and Civic Life Readiness; and 4: Sustainable Systemic Change.

County Partnerships
After completion of the Arts Master Plan, the first step toward implementation was to develop a Tulare County Arts Coalition. This group, CreateTC began in 2019 with a goal of expanding
Tulare County

Organizations involved in the CreateTC Leadership Council include: Tulare County Office of Education, Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency, Tulare County Suicide Prevention Task Force, Tulare County Association of Governments, Tulare County Workforce Investment Board, Tulare County Museum, Arts Consortium – Tulare County’s arts council, College of the Sequoias, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These agencies have committed to supporting the ongoing goal of increasing access to arts education opportunities in Tulare County.

TCOE has several other partner agencies in the community. Since 1955, the Tulare County Office of Education and the Sequoia Symphony Orchestra have partnered to present the annual Young People’s Concerts. Over 9,000 students attend these concerts annually. TCOE also partners with the Arts Consortium to promote and fund the annual Tulare County Poetry Out Loud competition.

Committed to Students, Service, and Support

The Tulare County Office of Education supports districts with several annual arts programs designed to give students the opportunity to both experience and participate in the visual and performing arts. In the performing arts, the TCOE Theatre Company hosts musical theatre productions three times each year. Another longstanding event in the performing arts is Poetry and Prose On Stage. For more than 30 years, elementary and middle school students have honed their recitation skills before an audience and a judge at this event.

In the visual arts, all Tulare County schools are invited to submit two- and three-dimensional artwork to the annual Student Art Exhibition. Artwork is displayed from November-February each year and a culminating Best of Show event caps off the exhibition during Arts in Schools Month in March. Additionally, in May of each year, the Academic Collaborative for Exceptional Learners (AcCEL) program of TCOE’s Special Services Division also hosts an annual exhibition of student artwork.

TCOE supports media arts through coordination of the annual Slick Rock Student Film Festival. Hundreds of aspiring middle and high school filmmakers from across the Central Valley submit their videos to this competition every year.

To support arts educators, TCOE provides ongoing professional learning in a range of areas, including: arts integration, standards implementation, and social-emotional learning. In 2015, the Tulare County Arts Network (TuCAN) was formed. This professional learning community was created to promote the arts and arts education throughout Tulare County.
“Art is a nation’s most precious heritage. For it is in our works of art that we reveal to ourselves and others the inner vision which guides us as a nation. And when there is no vision, the people perish.”

- President Lyndon B. Johnson