Contra Costa County

Contra Costa County Office of Education
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“Arts education is as critical as other core subject areas in preparing students for college and career. The arts provide a foundation for their development as productive, healthy, well-rounded and thoughtful citizens. It is imperative that we provide quality arts education to all students to set them up for success.”

– Lynn Mackey, Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools

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Focus on the Arts

Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE) is committed to educating the whole child. We believe that the arts are an integral part of a high-quality, well-rounded educational foundation. CCCOE supports districts as they implement California arts standards, integrate arts into core curriculum, and develop STEAM programs that endeavor to engage all students.

The Contra Costa Arts Convening Group, comprised of arts instructional leaders from our county’s districts as well as leaders of our local arts community partners, meets bimonthly to lead the learning, provide professional development and support implementation of arts education in all CCCOE schools.

We also partner with community arts organizations, such as KQED, Lesher Foundation, local art museums and theaters, as well as the Arts Commission of Contra Costa County, to support arts education.

Partnership with Alameda County Office of Education’s Integrated Learning Specialist Program

Contra Costa County school districts partner with Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE) to provide professional development of arts integration with core subject areas for classroom teachers. The Learning Specialist Program (ILS), has provided specific training on project-based learning to improve student engagement, understanding, and performance across subject areas. New and veteran teachers alike learn to infuse creativity, technology, and service learning during in-school and after school programming.
**West Contra Costa’s District-wide Arts Master Plan**

The West Contra Costa (WCC) Unified School District’s vision for the arts is that through a robust, arts standards based curriculum which is articulated from Pre-K to 12th grade, students will acquire fundamental and evolving skills, knowledge, and experience in the arts enhancing each student’s readiness to enter the college and career of choice. To ensure an equitable access to arts education for all students, honor the cultural legacies of its communities and enable hands-on artistic learning, WCC has adopted a multiyear master plan for arts curriculum integration and implementation in elementary and secondary grade levels. In addition to General Fund money, the Local Control Accountability Plan includes goals and allocates funding to support the arts master plan.

WCC partners directly with the Alameda County Office of Education ILSP, Richmond Art Center, and East Bay Center for Performing Arts to provide professional learning and resources to teachers and their classrooms. Professional Development is focused on increasing teachers’ skill and comfort level for leading Arts activities as well as training teachers to integrate the Arts into daily curriculum. The integration of the various arts disciplines increases engagement and retention of core subject matter while exposing students to the processes and forms inherent in each art discipline. A dedicated Arts Liaison is identified at each school site to facilitate this process.

Elementary music programs in Band and Orchestra introduce students to the fundamentals of music performance and instrumental technique while school site partnerships with outside organizations provide opportunities for general music, theatre arts, and visual arts. After school programs further enhance student opportunities in these areas with the addition of movement instruction at some sites. The elementary arts experiences serve to develop students with the background and ability to participate at the middle school and high school levels.

By implementing this multiyear districtwide plan, all students receive foundational arts education at the elementary level and are provided opportunities to grow in advanced arts techniques at the secondary levels, as well as to participate in theatre competitions, music festivals and art shows within WCCUSD and in the surrounding communities.

**Wren Avenue Elementary School of the Arts and Coyote Creek Elementary School: Practices of Promise**

Wren Avenue Elementary School of the Arts is the Mt. Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD) visual and performing arts magnet school. It is a collaborative community that builds upon skills students will need as they prepare for colleges and careers.

Wren Avenue is developing an integrated MDUSD regional arts magnet program comprised of high academic expectations through common core standards via the visual or performing arts. The purpose is to provide an artistic avenue for students to fulfill their academic requirements, and to provide them with intensive in-depth training in the arts, English language development, math, and the use of technology.

Coyote Creek Elementary is an arts integration school in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. Coyote Creek is a recipient of the 2020 California Exemplary Arts Education Award. A high performing California Distinguished School, Coyote Creek offers theatre, music, visual art, dance, and media arts experiences to all students both as independent classes and as interdisciplinary subjects woven into core content areas of English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Students at Coyote Creek receive weekly instruction in visual and performing arts (VAPA) and integrated arts. Students in grades 4-5 receive two blocks of Performing Arts instruction per week, while students in the primary grades of TK-3 receive arts instruction in periodic cycles. Additionally, students receive integrated arts instruction from our classroom teachers, spearheaded by our teachers seeking certification through the Integrated Learning Specialist Program (ILSP). This program enriches the lives of its students while preparing and equipping them to meet the academic challenges ahead.