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 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...
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.