

# Humboldt County

As educators we prepare students for their preferred future. This is both a privilege and a profoundly challenging responsibility. Through partnerships with local school districts and organizations that help form the rich tapestry of the Humboldt arts community, HCOE is leading the way on the North Coast in providing students with high-quality immersive arts experiences that open the door to a world of possibilities.

– **Michael Davies-Hughes, Humboldt County Superintendent of Schools**

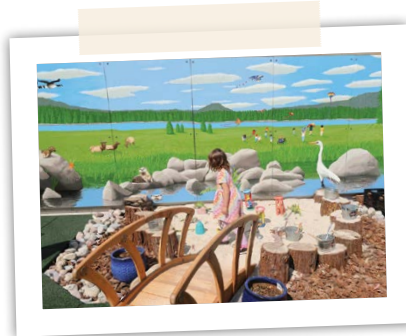


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## HUMBOLDT COUNTY ARTS IGNITE

The Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE) is proud to collaborate with local school districts and community arts partners to ensure equitable access to high-quality arts education for all students. We recognize that comprehensive arts programs significantly contribute to students' overall happiness and well-being. This year, at HCOE, we're eagerly anticipating the full return of our Students Engaged in the Arts Through Schools (SEATS) programs.

Together with incredible arts partners like the Eureka Symphony, North Coast Dance, Morris Graves Museum of Art, Cal Poly Humboldt, the Arcata Playhouse, and more, we are on a mission to immerse the youth of our county in diverse arts experiences. SEATS includes Schools to Dance, Schools to Theatre, Schools to Symphony, and Studios to Schools. Humboldt County is rural and some students travel long distances to attend performances. A single bus ride to attend a performance can cost \$1,000. HCOE prioritizes this initiative by forging partnerships with local organizations to leverage



resources, and underwriting transportation and ticket costs.

In 2023, over half of Humboldt County Schools joined the SEATS adventure. For many students, this is more than an arts program; it's their first transformative arts experience. Before stepping into the theater, students learn the nuances of participation etiquette and in-depth details of the artistic process. Dressed in their finest, they leave with memories that become lifelong treasures.

But there's more to share this year—introducing two exciting new initiatives! "Museums to Schools" is a collaborative project with the Morris Graves Museum of Art, bringing interactive activities that introduce students to the captivating world of museums.

Additionally, the Morris Graves Museum of Art hosts our annual Youth Arts Festival, a highlight of Art Education Month in March, showcasing the visual art and music talent of our local youth. Our second addition, "Murals to Schools," connects local muralists with schools to create vibrant murals that celebrate school spirit, inclusivity, and a sense of belonging through art.





### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS

In 2019 HCOE was awarded a four-year federal \$3.3 million Arts Education Development and Dissemination Grant. The Arts and Social Emotional Learning (ArtSEL) grant engages a dynamic cohort of 110 educators across seven schools serving 650 students based in very rural areas; it aims to develop cognitive and emotional growth through the power of the arts. ArtSEL stands out for its holistic school approach, providing support to all staff, from teachers to paraprofessionals and administrators. ArtSEL staff collaborates with arts partners to deliver professional development on visual and performing arts with SEL competencies woven throughout. Looking back on the first year of ArtSEL, one administrator shared a heartening observation – a noticeable increase in students’ emotional literacy, and confidence in their ability to express their feelings. They also noticed teachers embracing their creativity while experimenting with various art mediums and emphasizing the creative process with their students.



Along with supporting educators with model lessons and coaching, ArtSEL focuses on creating connections. ArtSEL staff collaborates with a local expressive arts therapist to bring workshops for staff and students to each of our schools. These workshops offer small groups the chance to explore diverse artistic expressions, while cultivating essential skills like relationship building, coping strategies, and community building. One student shared, “Another student in this class and I used to fight. We bonded in this class over art and creativity. This class helped me gain a friendship back.” To learn more, visit [ArtSEL.org](http://ArtSEL.org).

### HUMBOLDT COUNTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ongoing professional development for teachers specializing in discrete arts subjects remains a priority for HCOE. Workshops in music, visual arts, and theatre are open to all participants in the county. Facilitated by HCOE, the Creative Education Symposium invites educators, artists, and community members to explore innovative approaches that foster creativity within education. In 2023, the keynote speaker, Dr. Susie Wise, author of *Design for Belonging*, sparked a movement towards fostering a sense of belonging across the county, emphasizing the importance of building diversity, equity, and inclusion in education. Several departments within HCOE continue to work collaboratively to support “belonging” work in schools.



### EXPANDING THE ARTS

Recently, Humboldt County Schools have been gearing up for Proposition 28. Districts are in the process of creating strategic arts plans, and determining how to use these funds to broaden access to high-quality arts education for all students. For many schools in Humboldt this funding will allow them to create new arts programs. HCOE is actively working to foster collaboration between small and rural schools and our community arts partners to help bridge gaps where existing arts programs are not available.

### A TRADITION OF MUSIC PERFORMANCES

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. The festival showcases the vibrant musical talent of students from Humboldt, Del Norte and Mendocino counties. The festival, a testament to the region’s commitment to arts education, features a diverse range of performances, including orchestral arrangements, choral harmonies, and instrumental showcases. Students from various schools come together to create a symphony of talent under the guidance of dedicated music educators. With the support of the community, the All-County Music Festival is a harmonious celebration of the creative spirit flourishing within the county’s schools.

REGION 1  
NORTH COAST