

Kern County

Kern County Superintendent of Schools

Contact: Robert Meszaros • romeszaros@kern.org

“No matter what corner of the world someone comes from, visual and performing arts speak to us all in a common way. The Kern County Office of Education works in collaboration with numerous community organizations on behalf of our 47 school districts to ensure young people are given an opportunity of discovery and self expression.”

– Mary C. Barlow, Ed.D., Kern County Superintendent of Schools



The Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS) values community collaboration that helps enrich students' lives through the arts. What follows are a few of the highlights:

Young People's Concerts

The KCSOS has long partnered with Bakersfield Symphony Orchestra to host three field trips throughout the year wherein thousands of local elementary students convene for a kid-friendly introduction to classical music and the types of instruments that make up the beautiful sounds of the symphony.

Bakersfield Symphony Orchestra Next (BSO NEXT)

Bakersfield Symphony Orchestra also gives away hundreds of tickets to students through its *BSO NEXT* program so they may attend the normal evening concerts with their

families. The program started in 2014 as a donor-based endeavor that allows students

from all over Kern County to experience live symphonic music. This program includes a special pre-concert lecture with the conductor, guest soloists and musicians, and a complimentary snack at intermission. Since most of the students sponsored are from underprivileged areas, the *BSO NEXT* program opens the world of possibilities for those who otherwise may never have the opportunity to attend due to financial limitations.



Kern County



Nutcracker Field Trip

Another community collaboration takes place every December when busloads of school

children get a sneak peek at the production of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet performed by the Civic Dance Center. The four performances over two mornings are a win-win. The field trip allows the dancers — the majority of whom are school-age kids themselves — to fine-tune their moves before the public opening, while giving kids from all across the county access to a holiday favorite that they might not otherwise have the fortune to see.

Alternative Education Bridges Academy Art Exhibit

One of the career and technical (CTE) pathway programs offered to students attending KCSOS' Bridges Academy is Media Arts. Students may complete introductory courses in this discipline and discover career options in this field of study. Annual trips to CalArts and an Art Walk of downtown Bakersfield are favorite events each year. Student-generated art is featured in an art show and silent auction during the fall with all proceeds going back into the program. With new CTE funding expected this year, plans are to install a silkscreen studio where original designs can be transferred to products and complement the other entrepreneurial CTE and project-based classroom programs at the school.

Honors Music Concerts

The KCSOS also partners with the Kern County Music Educators Association and local school districts to bring two very special educational concerts to the community —



one for junior high musicians and a second for those in high school.

In winter, the collaboration brings together 400 of the finest high school musicians and singers for the annual *It's a Grand Night for Music* — a concert, wherein the students have an opportunity to work with guest conductors and directors. Students earn a place in this annual showcase of Kern County's finest high school musicians and singers through an audition process.

The *Kern County Honors Music Festival* is a similar event that is geared toward junior high and middle school students and takes place every February.

History Day

History Day in California is an exciting, history-based learning experience, for students in grades 4-12. They not only learn



about issues, ideas, people and events in history, but they apply what they have learned through creative and original productions. Beyond simply memorizing names and dates and reporting on historical events, *History Day* students develop invaluable research and analytical skills as they process the information gathered through intensive research and present their conclusions through visually-appealing presentation boards, web sites and performances.

Oral Language Festival

Schools all over Kern County participate in the *Oral Language Festival*, a competitive event where students perform interpretations of pieces of literature in front of an audience. Presentations are 3-5 minutes in length with students in grades 4-6 and in grades 7-8 competing separately. Categories of competition are: Verse Choir, Humorous Interpretation Solo, Humorous Interpretation Duo, Serious Interpretation Solo and Serious Interpretation Duo.