“Incorporating the arts into everyday learning can spark imagination and innovation in students’ hearts and minds. In Marin County, we are integrating the arts through non-traditional means, such as technology and project based learning, to help all students develop a passion for creativity and essential analytical skills to thrive in a global economy.”

– Mary Jane Burke, Marin County Superintendent of Schools

Marin County Office of Education

The Marin County Office of Education (MCOE) leverages countywide collaborative efforts to prioritize the arts as an integral part of student thinking and learning. Thanks to local partner organizations and education agencies, Marin County students have access to a broad array of classroom and extracurricular programs that incorporate the arts in traditional and non-traditional mediums. These partnerships help build sustainable programs and networks by building teacher capacity, promoting the sharing of ideas and skills, and attracting the interests of experts in the field.

The Marin Arts Education Plan serves as a road map for providing a quality arts education for every student in Marin County. The Plan is comprised of strategic goals, objectives and actions with a shared implementation by all partners on behalf of each student in Marin County.

The Marin Arts Education Plan targets three pillars:

- **Sustainability:** Collaboratively building a sustainable network of potential funding sources that support equitable arts instruction.
- **Educational Support:** Support relevant, rigorous, quality arts education for every student in Marin County, including social emotional and academic learning for overall student success.
- **Community Support:** Support strategic partnerships to provide a network for arts education programs and opportunities that showcase Pre-K-12th grade student engagement.
Programs and Partnerships

With funding from a state Student Support and Academic Achievement (SSAE) grant, the MCOE launched the Advancing Teacher and Learning in the Arts and Sciences (ATLAS) program. In partnership with Oakland-based Agency by Design and several Bay Area environmental agencies, a four-day STEAM Institute (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) was developed by STEAM leaders, educators, and experts in the summer of 2019. The goal was to develop art integrated learning opportunities that would support youth to become environmental advocates and stewards. Facilitators modeled culturally responsive teaching practices incorporating the arts enabling teacher participants to replicate this type of learning with students. Simultaneously, educators worked with content experts to create a multi-disciplinary STEAM Unit of Study to empower students to become advocates for the environment by investigating real world issues.

Following the STEAM Institute, teachers piloted their newly developed STEAM units with K-8 students in an Environmental Leadership Summer Academy. Teachers implemented and revised their lessons in real-time while receiving immediate feedback from instructional coaches and student observations. One participant noted, “The balance between learning as a student and planning as a teacher using arts integration made the unit planning process meaningful and productive.” STEAM Units of Study are available on the MCOE website: [https://www.marischools.org/Page/6759](https://www.marischools.org/Page/6759).

In 2018, the MCOE partnered with the College of Marin, Marin County Free Library, Novato USD, and the Workforce Alliance of the North Bay to launch the XR Marin Regional Training Center, a public technology lab where students and community members can explore design and development through XR Marin immersive technologies (virtual reality, augmented reality and mixed reality). XR Marin exposes students to a blend of STEAM skills in a unique virtual environment. The mission of XR Marin is to provide students with access to training that can guide them on a college or career path leading to high demand skills in the workforce of the future.

XR Marin academies empower students to create immersive experiences with creativity, curiosity and teamwork. Students practice virtual reality art and design skills utilizing the latest technology mediums including Tilt Brush, Blocks 3-D and Oculus Medium to express their artistic talents. Immersive storytelling workshops train students to use 360-degree video to create films, virtual tours and 3-D immersive experiences. The XR academy teaches students to develop and place 3-D models in virtual environments using Unity, a video game development platform. In the Augmented Reality Student Academy, participants used digital art to enhance a liter sized soda bottle to create animated 3-D digital worlds inside the actual bottle. The project taught students to enhance objects in our physical world with digital imagery. This lesson teaches students the foundational skills in digital art, 3-D modeling, animation, and programming with Unity3D gaming.

The XR Marin initiative was featured at the Marin County Fair and the Sausalito Art Festival where students demonstrated the technology and taught members of the public how it can be used. In a short time, XR Marin has gained the attention and participation of technology leaders and companies from around the world.