

Mariposa County

Given the positive academic and social emotional impact the arts have on our students, we are excited to be investing resources into building systemic practices and partnerships which grow and support equitable and rigorous arts learning throughout Mariposa County aimed at empowering classroom teachers, centering student voice, and integrating classroom curriculum with a myriad of creative placemaking efforts across Mariposa County at large.

- **Jeff Aranguena, Superintendent, Mariposa County Office of Education/
Mariposa County Unified School District**



Mariposa County Office of Education

Contacts: **Cara Goger, cgoger@mcusd.org, Lydia Lower llower@mcusd.org**

LEVERAGING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Over the past three years, Mariposa County Office of Education (MCOE) has leveraged a number of community partnerships in order to implement many of the recommendations outlined our Strategic Arts Education Plan (adopted in 2021), including:

1. Deliver curriculum, instruction, and professional development to support the arts and arts integrations for all students.
2. Promote and empower student voice while exhibiting student creativity and expression.
3. Build support for the arts through partnerships, relationships, and shared spaces for community and school engagement, through:
 - a. Relationships with community partners that support arts education
 - b. Opportunities that foster each student's growth through authentic experience
 - c. Developing inspiring school sites for students to thrive.

The implementation of these recommendations are exemplified through the following projects, programs and initiatives.

ART + ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION DAY CAMP

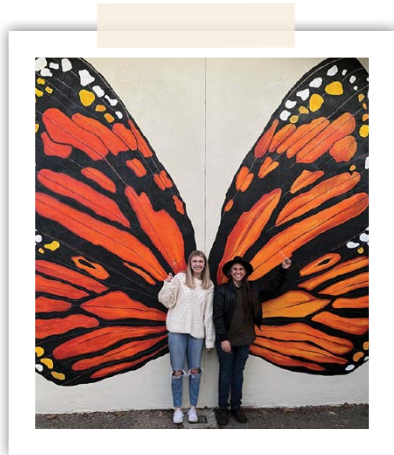
In partnership with the Mariposa County Arts Council and Sierra Foothill Conservancy (a regional land trust), in 2023, MCOE/MCUSD piloted a place-based arts + environmental education day camp for grade TK-6 students. Led by naturalists, scientists, Indigenous culture keepers, and teaching artists, this program was designed to allow students to safely and artistically explore preserved natural landscapes right where they live. Activities were guided by the unique ecosystems, materials and history of each place, fostering a sense of investment and stewardship that students will carry with them beyond the program. The curriculum included building models of their home watershed, creating watercolor paint with natural materials, measuring the health of a riparian landscape with scientific tests, and making music with sounds from the



natural environment. The program prioritized student-led observation, action, and reflection to guide experiences, with an emphasis on "learning by doing." Priority was placed on creating a safe environment for students to learn, improvise, share, and express themselves creatively based on their personal experience.

STUDENT MURAL ART PROJECT

With support from the Mariposa County Arts Council, MCOE/MCUSD works with students to design and install vibrant murals at all MCUSD campuses. This project provides an authentic learning experience for the young artists as they work alongside pro-social



mentor teaching artists while adding beautiful, engaging, and meaningful pieces of public art to our community's creative placemaking portfolio. This is an ongoing program with 1-2 murals being completed each year.

ARTISTS IN THE SCHOOLS

Artists in the Schools is an artist-in-residency/teacher professional development program offered in partnership with the Mariposa County Arts Council to all grade 5 classes in Mariposa, and integrates arts learning with Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) based curriculum. Residencies span 8-12 weeks and provide hands-on visual art and music experiences that develop students' critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills. CCSS's focus on critical



thinking skills and evidence-based reasoning challenges students to transfer knowledge across subject area boundaries in order to build capacity for the complex decision making and problem solving they will surely face. Art can play an important role in realizing this pedagogical goal.

"Through viewing, making, and discussing art works, students come to realize that the arts do not exist in isolation, but are always situated within multiple dimensions..." states the National Core Arts Standards: A Conceptual Framework for Arts Learning.

Additionally, the program builds capacity in teachers to integrate the arts into the existing curriculum through an instructional approach known as graduated release. This method begins with the artist-educators providing 100% of the instruction, advances to a co-teaching model with the teacher joining at previously determined points in the lesson, and culminates in the classroom teacher leading instruction while the artist-educator moves into a coaching role.

SITE + VISION

The Site + Vision visual literacy program for high schoolers, also a partnership with Mariposa County Arts Council, is offered in every high school in the county. The program revolves around field trips to exhibitions curated by major regional museums, and supports a growing body of academic research indicating that exposing youth to art promotes emotional intelligence, a greater sense of self-worth, and critical thinking skills. This program consists of a standards-aligned unit comprised of the three components:



1. Pre-Field Trip Prep (three weeks): Utilizing the image lists, interpretative resources, and study guides developed by museum curators/ education staff for the selected exhibitions, a museum educator develops curricula for each exhibition, and facilitates in-class discussions designed to build visual literacy skills and encourage engagement through interactive and inquiry-based discussion that prompts evidentiary looking.
2. Field Trip (one week): Students visit the selected exhibitions and receive a gallery tour from a museum educator; this may include the opportunity to visit the vault or archives, or meet with curatorial staff.
3. Post Field Trip Reflection (one week): Students create a piece of artwork, and compose an accompanying piece of prose or poetry inspired by the work of the artist(s) or curators involved in the exhibition they visited.

The selected exhibitions are presented by the Cantor Art Center/Stanford, SFMOMA, the de Young Museum, the Oakland Museum of California, and the Crocker Museum, and leverage the Mariposa County Arts Council's relationships with these museums' education departments.