

# Nevada County

Nevada County boasts a vibrant arts community, deeply rooted in its traditions. Whether it's a film or music festival, art gallery exhibition, or poetry reading, the arts are an integral part of our community fabric. As educators, we recognize our responsibility to nurture this artistic spirit within our students, ensuring their journey into the world of arts starts within our schools. We are committed to providing a high-quality, integrated arts program that exposes our students to diverse forms of artistic expression. The undeniable link between art and a successful educational experience is at the core of our mission in Nevada County, reflecting our dedication to fostering a rich artistic environment within our schools and beyond.



– **Scott W. Lay, Nevada County Superintendent of Schools**

## Nevada County Superintendent of Schools

Contacts: Christine McCormick, [christinemccormick@nevco.org](mailto:christinemccormick@nevco.org); Nancy Jackson, [njackson@nevco.org](mailto:njackson@nevco.org)

### NEVADA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

The Nevada County Superintendent of Schools (NCSoS) offers a variety of art education programs within our county under the leadership of our Arts Instructional Specialist and supports other art programs with key community partners. These programs and services include our Art Docent Program and our Annual Young at Art Exhibition as well as our Annual STEAM Expo. NCSoS provides instructional coaching and professional development for teachers on integrating art across curriculum areas; facilitates a community of practice for site art leaders; and supports other extra-curricular activities and competitions across the county.

NCSoS partners with community cultural organizations and programs, including Nevada County Arts Council's Poetry



*Art Docent Program  
Environmental Art Project*

Out Loud, the County Library's Nevada County Reads Program, and the educational programs of InConcert Sierra, and Music in the Mountains. As a result of NCSoS's partnership with the Nevada County Arts Council over the years, a countywide comprehensive strategic arts plan was developed to guide increased and improved arts education within our schools, ensuring equity and access for all students. This partnership brought together key individuals composed of school administrators (active and retired),



*Young at Art High School Display*

educators, local artists, and local arts agencies. The committee meets annually to receive updates and give feedback on the progress of the implementation of Nevada County's strategic arts plan, which is in its fourth year.

The Nevada County Arts Council's partnership also includes the writing of the California Arts Council Arts Integration Training Grant and its award to the Arts Collaborative of Nevada County for the implementation of two components of the 2022-2025

Strategic Arts Plan. The first component was the establishment of an Arts Leads Community of Practice (COP), which meets quarterly to plan arts integration support at eight school districts, facilitated by the NCSoS Instructional Specialist for the Arts. The work of the Arts Leads COP continues through next year.



The second component supported by the grant was an arts integration institute held by NCSoS for the county's TK-12th grade educators and administrators. The June 2023 event, "BE THE SPARK! Ignite Your Core Through Arts Integration," provided a wide variety of workshops in all areas of the arts: performing arts/movement, visual arts, music, and media arts. Fifty Nevada County educators experienced four workshops of their choice given by ten local



educators and artists. A goal of this day-long summer institute was to build the capacity of the county's educators for arts integration into core curricular areas. The event "sparked" interest in arts integration collaboration opportunities, resources, and coaching for the 2023-2024 school year.

In addition to engaging in grant writing efforts and other activities, the partnership with NCAC includes local programmatic initiatives: Artists in Schools, Student Voices Campaign, the Wild & Scenic Film Festival, and Poetry Out Loud. One highlight among these collaborative programs is Artists in Schools. Five local schools are receiving a program that provides 45 classrooms weekly art lessons integrating VAPA Standards across Common Core academic curriculum, impacting 1,500 students. These model art lessons have been collaboratively developed by classroom teachers and teaching artists.

Historically, the NCSoS STEAM Expo was an opportunity to expand its community partnerships and adapt to new ways of engaging students. This event is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and Visual and Performing Arts Standards, ensuring that students' projects meet rigorous academic criteria, while fostering creativity and innovation within a structured academic framework. In recent years, the STEAM Expo transitioned to a virtual format which enabled the greater community to explore student submissions that highlight the value of integration of the art into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines, reinforcing our commitment to a holistic approach to education.



Generous support from community partners like the Nevada City Film Festival has led to well-deserved recognition and prizes for competitive student projects in the arts showcase and competition. The expo's primary goal was to inspire students to pursue STEAM pathways, providing them not only with recognition but also valuable experience that can lead to further opportunities, including participation in the statewide *California Science and Engineering Fair* and the *California Student Media Festival*. This multi-disciplinary approach equipped students for success in an increasingly innovative and interdisciplinary world, opening doors to diverse career and college pathways and fostering a bright and dynamic future.