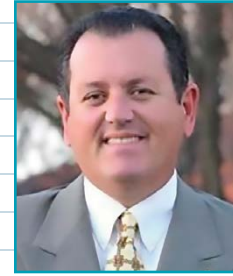


San Luis Obispo County

We need to recognize fine arts classes as core aspects of the academic curriculum rather than as merely “add-ons” or “feel-good” electives. Research is clear in indicating that students at all grade levels should be required to study the fine arts. In order to increase student opportunities, we should assure that funding for arts education in our schools is maintained or expanded. Ongoing maintenance of funding is necessary to continue the positive relationships between arts education and student learning as identified in the research literature.



– James J. Brescia, San Luis Obispo County Superintendent of Schools

San Luis Obispo County Office of Education ■ Contact: Brent Moser, bmoser@slocoe.org

We believe a school system that teaches students to think rigorously and to creatively articulate thoughts promotes our democracy. The San Luis Obispo County Office of Education (SLOCOE) supports a humanities-based education that equips students for long-term career development in our rapidly changing global economy. Nearly one in four American students will experience English as a second language in our ever-changing society. Education is one of the biggest factors in promoting social mobility and social justice. Arts and humanities-based programs do not assume individuals occupy a fixed place in society.

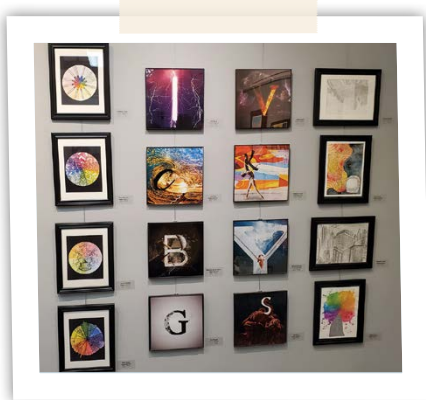
The local economy is more dependent on media, culture, and tourism than ever before in history. We acknowledge that these fields are driven by the creativity of the arts and humanities. If we do not support access to the arts and humanities, we risk damaging one of our most valuable natural resources, our human potential.



San Luis Obispo County is committed to the arts in education. In addition to the many wonderful programs implemented throughout its eleven districts, SLOCOE has partnered with a local arts studio, Studios on the Park to meet its arts education goals. Through local donors, SLOCOE is able to lease a professional studio space alongside eleven other professional co-op spaces under the same roof. The SLOCOE Student Art Gallery is unique in its ability to showcase countywide student artwork as well as provide a learning space for several students employed to work there.



The Student Art Gallery provides a venue, with cooperation from the highly acclaimed Kids Art Smart program, for elementary students to display their art. The county



produces six to eight exhibits annually in the space. Artists K-12 are encouraged to participate in the various exhibition opportunities, including countywide theme shows or shows highlighting specific districts. And county high school students have the opportunity to work at the gallery. These student artists in residences work part-time on the weekends. They interact with the public while they are creating their art, selling the artwork on display, and engaging with the professional artists continually surrounding them. This strategic partnership benefits the gallery and its workers, the community, and most importantly the students of San Luis Obispo County.

Another partnership created by the SLOCOE is a student outreach program that connects students and professional artists. During the school year, professional arts organizations visit campuses to provide both a performance and the companion educational content for students. Generally funded by local donors, these performance partnerships include Opera San Luis Obispo, Wine Country Theatre, Drum and Perk, SLO Symphony, violinist Brynn Albanese and her music nonprofit, Cuesta VOCE, Orchestra Novo, and Symphony of the Vines.



Our partnership with Opera San Luis Obispo is an example of this community collaboration; it entails presenting six outreach performances each fall to various county schools highlighting their annual opera production. Professional musicians and actors perform highlights from the show, explain the process of becoming a professional artist and answer questions from the student audience. Outreach performances are provided to enhance the exposure to the arts and are available to all county schools.

The purpose of these local partnerships is three-fold:

1. Help all students become lifelong learners and enthusiasts of the arts;
2. Students experience local professional level artists in action;
3. Students envision the arts beyond schooling and the limitless possibilities available to them.

