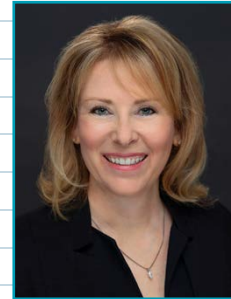


# Santa Clara County

Art benefits children in multiple ways, it helps them understand themselves and the world around them. The Santa Clara County Office of Education is committed to supporting and encouraging students to explore the arts through various mediums. Having access to high-quality arts education that is culturally relevant and inclusive in all forms as part of a comprehensive education sparks curiosity, imagination, creativity, and joy.

– *Mary Ann Dewan, Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools*



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Santa Clara County Office of Education's Artspiration, established in 2007, is a countywide arts initiative to support arts education for students and educators. Its vision is to partner with schools, arts organizations, and the greater community to foster an equitable and transformative education through the arts. We do this through a shared leadership model to support a sustainable arts education.

## **EQUITABLE AND TRANSFORMATIVE ARTS EDUCATION**

In June 2020, community arts leaders, funders, and arts educators came together in an Arts Equity Community of Practice facilitated by Studio Pathways to set the direction of Artspiration through a lens of cultural equity with an increased focus on those students most needing support. This reset was particularly compelling as schools moved to distance learning at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The arts became the vehicle for critical self-reflection, creative inquiry, and

liberation through an embodied practice for the participants. These elements became pillars for the work of Artspiration.

## **SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) continues to partner with SVCCreates, the county arts commission in Silicon Valley, to reimagine and expand the ArtsEdConnect Grant, a mini-grant for teachers to bring arts experiences into their classrooms. The program has had increasing success, with the largest awards in the 2023-2024 funding cycle of almost \$200,000. Teachers applied for grants for arts projects, field trips to arts venues, arts residencies with local teaching artist organizations, and materials and supplies.

In 2023, SCCOE hosted its first ¡Viva el mariachi! Showcase with Mariachi Los Gavilanes from Monaco Middle School in Clark County School District in Las Vegas. Sixteen schools from four districts brought their ballet folklórico or mariachi groups to perform at



the event at San Jose's Mexican Heritage Plaza at the School of Arts and Culture. Los Lupeños Juvenil, a youth group with the storied San Jose ballet folklórico and the Aztec dance group Calpulli Tonalehqueh, opened the concert as guest performers that night.

In all, 250 musicians, singers, and dancers performed on the stage to a capacity audience.

In partnership with the Lurie College of Education at San Jose State University (SJSU), the Santa Clara County Office of Education has hosted the Marion Cilker Conference for Arts in Education for teachers and education students at San Jose State. In 2020 and 2021, the conference was successfully hosted online, bringing in teaching artists and arts organizations to present sessions that exemplified racial equity, social justice, and culturally responsive learning through the arts. In 2023, the final Cilker Conference was hosted at SJSU. Participants learned strategies to incorporate hands-on arts activities in their classrooms. The sessions were joyful, creative spaces.

### SHARED LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

Technical assistance to schools and districts is a significant part of the support provided to educators. Participation in the county arts and regional Arts Leads meetings provides the training and support to be effective partners to districts. Since the passage of Proposition 28, there has been concentrated work to support districts and schools in developing plans with increased funding allocations for arts education. Working across divisions has been key to being effective in providing district support. The SCCOE has been working with the county Arts Leads in its region to provide valuable information to districts to assist with this effort.

### COUNTY SPOTLIGHT: SANTA CLARA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT'S STRATEGIC ARTS PLAN

Beginning November 30, 2022, a team of more than 40 educators, representing administrators, labor association members including elementary and secondary arts teachers from the five disciplines (dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual art), and elementary classroom teachers were invited to meet with Superintendent Gary Waddell and Assistant Superintendent Kathie Kanavel to develop a comprehensive, bold, and inspiring arts education plan for the district. The meeting and subsequent planning process were facilitated by Armalyn De La O and Kris Alexander from The California Arts Project (TCAP). The passionate group of participants went through a rigorous, thoughtful process—including analyzing input from the Superintendent's Student Council and Student Senate—to determine priorities for a world-class arts education program for the students of Santa Clara Unified School District. The group was asked to dream big and create a vision for providing all students



with rich experiences in the arts as part of their educational pathway.

The educators met several times over the next six months, sometimes in small groups to focus on a priority and sometimes as a whole group. A small leadership group of teacher leaders and administrators kept the work going between the group sessions.

For each priority area, teams drafted a focus statement, goals, action steps, and a timeline to outline the implementation of the priority area. In June 2023, the group met to finalize the mission, vision, and as well as plans for each priority area. The five priorities (Leadership and Qualified Personnel; Facilities and Resources; Curriculum, Instruction and Scheduling; Professional Learning; and Student Opportunities) presented in this plan form the pillars of the Santa Clara Unified School District's Strategic Arts Plan. (Excerpted from Santa Clara Unified School District, Strategic Arts Plan 2023-2028, June 2022)

See the plan in its entirety:



<https://qrco.de/beoiNu>

