Participation in arts programs is, for many students, the foundation of their identity. For many others, the arts help build confidence, the ability to work with others, a sense of responsibility, greater creativity, and pride in their accomplishments.

– Tim A. Hire, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools

The Tulare County Arts Master Plan

Understanding that access to high-quality arts education is a critical part of a well-rounded education for all students, in 2017, the Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE) leveraged a grant from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to create the county’s first strategic arts education plan. To make the strategic plan a reality, TCOE partnered with the California Alliance for Arts Education and over the course of the 2017-18 school year, the groups brought together a diverse cadre of educators, arts organizations, and community stakeholders to envision a new reality for arts education in Tulare County.

The Arts Master Plan identifies goals and outcomes for planning, implementing, and sustaining high-quality arts learning experiences, both inside and outside of school. The plan is guided by an overarching vision - We believe that every student in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve deserves equitable access to high-quality arts learning as part of a well-rounded education. It focuses on two foundational cornerstones – Arts as Core and Arts for All – and four strategic directions:
1: Educational Equity for All; 2: Social and Emotional Well-Being; 3: College, Career, and Civic Life Readiness; and 4: Sustainable Systemic Change.

County Partnerships

After completion of the Arts Master Plan, the first step toward implementation was to develop a Tulare County Arts Coalition. This group, CreateTC, began in 2019 with a goal of expanding
COUNTIES ON THE MOVE: Arts Education for All Students

Tulare County

High-quality arts education opportunities for Tulare County schools and communities. Organizations involved in the CreateTC Leadership Council include: Tulare County Office of Education, Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency, Tulare County Suicide Prevention Task Force, Tulare County Association of Governments, Tulare County Workforce Investment Board, Tulare County Museum, Arts Consortium – Tulare County’s arts council, College of the Sequoias, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These agencies have committed to supporting the ongoing goal of increasing access to arts education opportunities in Tulare County.

TCOE has several other partner agencies in the community. Since 1955, the Tulare County Office of Education and the Sequoia Symphony Orchestra have partnered to present the annual Young People’s Concerts. Over 9,000 students attend these concerts annually. TCOE also partners with the Arts Consortium to promote and fund the annual Tulare County Poetry Out Loud competition.

Committed to Students, Service, and Support

The Tulare County Office of Education supports districts with several annual arts programs designed to give students the opportunity to both experience and participate in the visual and performing arts. In the performing arts, the TCOE Theatre Company hosts musical theatre productions three times each year. Another longstanding event in the performing arts is Poetry and Prose On Stage. For more than 30 years, elementary and middle school students have honed their recitation skills before an audience and a judge at this event.

In the visual arts, all Tulare County schools are invited to submit two- and three-dimensional artwork to the annual Student Art Exhibition. Artwork is displayed from November-February each year and a culminating Best of Show event caps off the exhibition during Arts in Schools Month in March. Additionally, in May of each year, the Academic Collaborative for Exceptional Learners (AcCEL) program of TCOE’s Special Services Division also hosts an annual exhibition of student artwork.

TCOE supports media arts through coordination of the annual Slick Rock Student Film Festival. Hundreds of aspiring middle and high school filmmakers from across the Central Valley submit their videos to this competition every year.

To support arts educators, TCOE provides ongoing professional learning in a range of areas, including: arts integration, standards implementation, and social-emotional learning. In 2015, the Tulare County Arts Network (TuCAN) was formed. This professional learning community was created to promote the arts and arts education throughout Tulare County.