



^ Nimbus Arts

# The New Arts Education Master Plan for NVUSD

## How an Arts Education Plan Builds a Community, Builds a Future

By Olivia Everett, CEO of Arts Council Napa Valley  
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**D**id you know that student involvement in the arts is linked to higher academic performance, fosters critical thinking, problem solving, innovation, and decreases dropout rates? As new research becomes available about the importance of creativity in our lives, it has become clear that arts are essential to providing a comprehensive education to every child in Napa County.

Since its inception, Arts Council Napa Valley has been actively advocating for arts education in our school systems. In an effort to patch the blocked pathways that we saw trending in our community's study of arts, we

created Arts Council Napa Valley Education Alliance, an unprecedented collaboration of stakeholders -- including teachers, parents, administrators, arts organizations, students, funders, and business leaders -- who are committed to creating a hospitable environment for arts to thrive in our local school system.

After two years of sharing information and assessing our mutual arts education resources and practices available to students, both within and outside of the schools, we were able to create a landmark partnership with the Napa Valley Unified School District. With major support from our partner, Festival Napa Valley, the Alliance members

and hundreds of other stakeholders worked from Fall, 2015 through Spring, 2016 to create the NVUSD Arts Education Master Plan. This groundbreaking plan, a framework for how the NVUSD will proceed in bringing high-quality, arts education to all of our students, was passed unanimously by the NVUSD school board on June 2nd, 2016. The Master Plan presents a comprehensive outline for the development of a sequential, standards-based, visual and performing-arts education curriculum that is relevant and equally accessible for every child in every school, pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.

The Arts Education Master Plan will create pathways for students to access experiences in performance -- such as dance, instrumental music, choral, and theater; visual arts -- such as drawing, painting and sculpture; and traditional and digital media -- such as photography, video, film, and design.

According to research by Americans for the Arts, learning skills in the arts leads to superior academic performance (resulting in lower dropout rates, improved memory skills, higher GPAs, and SAT scores that are generally 100 points higher in reading, writing, and mathematics), the acquisition of tangible, creative skills that directly translate to post-graduation job placement. Most importantly, students report feelings of acceptance. This sense of place fosters a harmonious community, as well as a more positive general outlook.

The first phase of the Master Plan will be implemented during the 2016-2017 school year. The program will be overseen by NVUSD's Chuck Neidhoefer, Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Coordinator, who will guide the NVUSD's team of arts educators in the creation of the district-wide, arts curriculum that includes: The organization of internal resources to NVUSD; direction of communications between nonprofit resources (such as local museums, dance schools, and performing venues); curating a robust roster of guest teaching-artists; developing professional workshops to promote best practices for educators and community resources providers; and building a fund to support the current program, grow it within NVUSD, and then outreach the system to other school districts within Napa County.



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## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Learning from a smaller community about how we've come together to accomplish such a remarkable goal is an exciting opportunity, and there are several ways that you can help support the important work that the Education Alliance is accomplishing:

**1 - ADVOCATE** Spread the word about the amazing work that the ACNV Education Alliance is doing for all NVUSD students. Share this information on social media, link to our website and generate goodwill for this project.

**2 - DONATE** Make a gift to support these efforts or connect the Alliance to groups, foundations or companies that are interested in making an investment in arts in schools in Napa County.

**3 - ATTEND** Get involved in this important project by attending community meetings or become an Alliance Member yourself.

**For more info [artscouncilnv.org](http://artscouncilnv.org)**



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This September, we are thrilled to be the host of a special, arts-education summit that will be presented by the California Alliance for Arts Education in partnership with Arts Council Napa Valley. Due to the overwhelming positive response to Napa's educators, nonprofits, funders, and community volunteers, the CAAE has decided to host its Northern California arts education summit in Napa Valley. The summit is open for anyone who is interested in trends and strategies for growing and sustaining the arts in public schools. For more information or to attend, you can go to: [artsed411.org/arts\\_now\\_napa\\_summit](http://artsed411.org/arts_now_napa_summit).

^ ACNV, Students at student visioning session for the Arts Education Master Plan



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