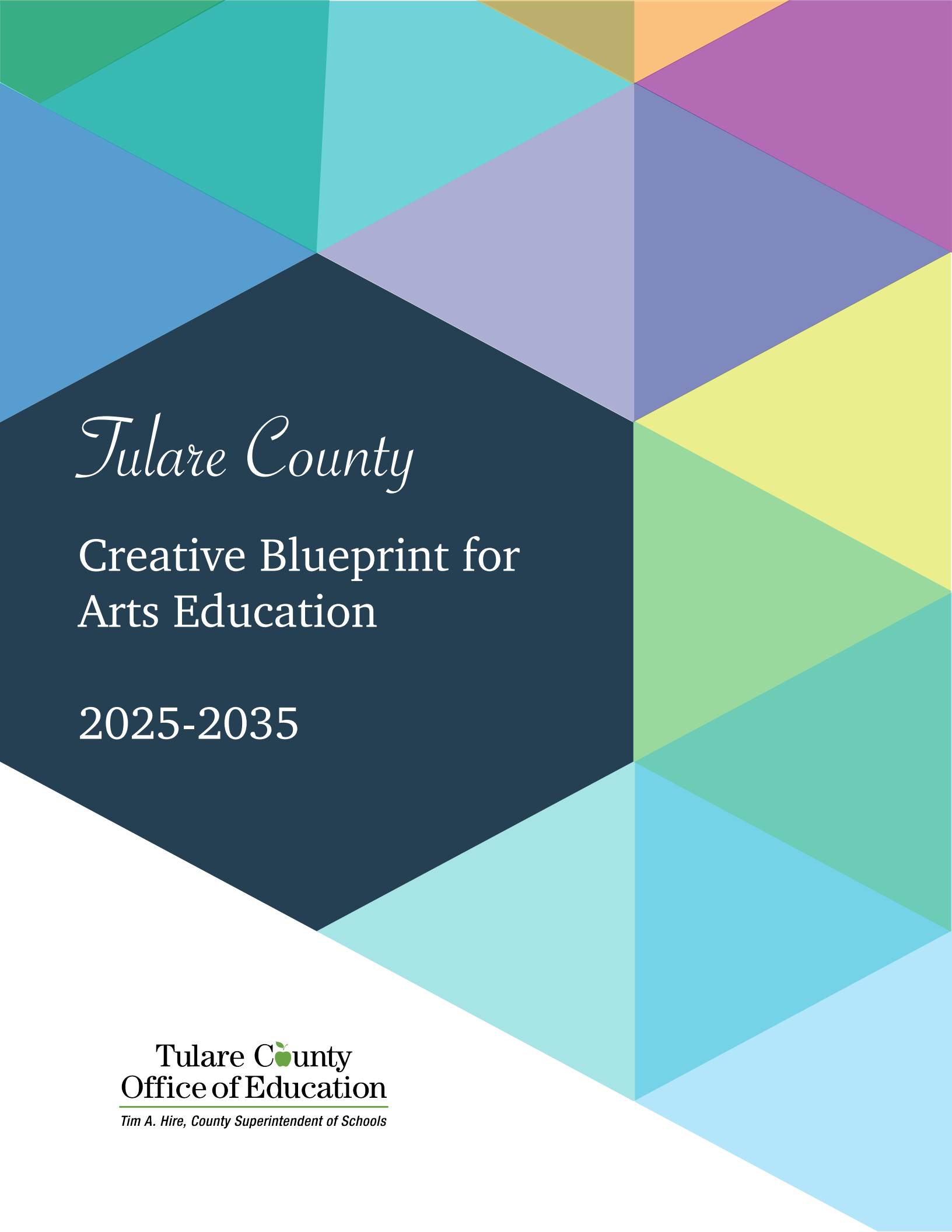




Tulare County

Creative Blueprint for
Arts Education

2025-2035

Tulare  County
Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

Tulare County

Creative Blueprint for Arts Education

Arts Education Vision

We envision a Tulare County where every student in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 has universal access to high-quality arts learning as part of a well-rounded education.

Foundational Cornerstones of the Creative Blueprint for Arts Education

Arts are Core: We believe the arts: dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts **are core academic subjects** and should be included in a broad course of study to ensure a **well-rounded education** for all students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. We further believe, in compliance with *California Education Code Sections 51210 and 51220*, all Tulare County schools and districts should provide discrete instruction in dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts as part of their core curriculum.

Arts for All: We believe **all students**, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, language, socioeconomic status, academic status, place of residence, and/or school of attendance are entitled to universal access to high-quality arts learning opportunities.

Strategic Directions and Core Values

Strategic Direction #1 - Arts Education for All

Foundational Belief - We Recognize the Impact of Universal Arts Access on Ensuring Success for Every Student



Core Value #1 - Define the Arts as Essential Components in a Well-Rounded, High-Quality Education



Core Value #2 - Ensure Standards-Based, Culturally Responsive, Arts Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Assessment

Strategic Direction #2 - Social, Emotional, and Cultural Well-Being

Foundational Belief - We Believe the Arts are Integral to Health, Wellness, Community Engagement, and Belonging



Core Value #3 - Embrace Hope, Healing, Empathy, Cultural Connections, and Self-Expression through the Arts

Strategic Direction #3 - College, Career, and Civic Life Readiness

Foundational Belief - We Honor and Celebrate Lifelong Learning in and through the Arts



Core Value #4 - Elevate the Arts as a Practical and Meaningful Educational Pursuit for All Students



Core Value #5 - Celebrate Student Creativity and Artistic Innovation on Campus and in the Community

Strategic Direction #4 - Sustainable Systemic Change

Foundational Belief - We Recognize the Lasting Impact of the Arts on Students, Educators, Families, and Communities



Core Value #6 - Empower and Build the Capacity of All Educators to be Leaders in the Arts



Core Value #7 - Leverage Resources, Partnerships, and Funding to Support High-Quality Arts Education



Core Value #8 - Build Public Will for the Arts through a Collective Impact Model



Tulare County

Creative Blueprint for
Arts Education

2025-2035

Tulare County

Creative Blueprint for Arts Education

2025-2035

Arts are Core. Arts for All.

Copyright © 2025, Tulare County Office of Education. All rights reserved.

The *Tulare County Creative Blueprint for Arts Education* was developed under the direction and recommendations of the Tulare County Arts Education Planning Team. The Blueprint honors the work and vision of the 2018 Tulare County Arts Master Plan in an updated and revised edition. This publication was edited by fourth-generation Tulare County resident Kate Stover, Tulare County Office of Education Staff Development and Curriculum Specialist for the Visual, Performing, and Media Arts. Support, mentorship, and guidance for the entire strategic planning process — from dream to reality, implementation, and revision — was provided by Peggy Burt from Mindful Strategies, Inc. “Trust the process.”

The Blueprint was approved by the Tulare County Board of Education on October 1, 2025.

Table of Contents

Land Acknowledgment	6
Introduction	7-10
Strategic Direction #1 - Arts Education for All	
• Core Value #1	12
• Core Value #2	13
Strategic Direction #2 - Social, Emotional, and Cultural Well-Being	
• Core Value #3	14
Strategic Direction #3 - College, Career, and Civic Life Readiness	
• Core Value #4	15
• Core Value #5	16
Strategic Direction #4 - Sustainable Systemic Change	
• Core Value #6	17
• Core Value #7	18
• Core Value #8	19
Innovative Initiatives and Arts Education Coalition	20-24
The Strategic Planning Journey	25-28
Appendix	
Recommendations for Schools and Districts	30
California Education Code	31
Acknowledgments	32-33
Tulare County School Districts	34-35

In honor of deep artistic roots and rich cultural traditions,
this plan is dedicated to the students, families, and communities of Tulare County.



Tulare

/tʊˈlɛəri/ ~ [too-LAIR-ee]

Land Acknowledgment

We honor the Native Peoples who have cared for the lands and waters of Central California since time immemorial. We acknowledge that Tulare County is comprised of the unceded ancestral land of the Yokuts peoples.

We recognize the artistic and cultural traditions of the original people of this land and we honor the indigenous people who have shared this legacy through generations of cultural traditions including art, music, dancing, and storytelling spanning time from the past to the present.

We commit to bring the stories and the artwork of the Native People of Tulare County into our learning spaces and conversations with students, educators, schools, and communities. We seek to learn from the past while we work to improve the present and inspire the future.



Introduction

*Know from whence you came. If you know whence you came,
there are absolutely no limitations to where you can go. — James Baldwin¹*

The story of Tulare County is one of contrasts.

From the air, a canvas of orange groves, dairy farms, and John Deere tractors dot the landscape like blocks on a patchwork quilt. Incorporated in 1852, Tulare County is named for the native Tule reeds filling river and lake beds across the area. Tule originates in *tullin* from the Nahuatl or Aztec language. Located in the southern portion of California's San Joaquin Valley, Tulare County sits squarely in the heart of the region known as the **Central Valley**. State Highway 99 and the tracks of the Southern Pacific railroad weave through the countryside as cars, trucks, and trains make their way across the Golden State. Centered three and a half hours from the metropolitan areas of San Francisco to the north and Los Angeles to the south, Tulare County is also a two and a half hour drive from the sandy shores of California's Central Coast.

The vast farmlands and foothills of Tulare County stretch across **4,824 square miles**, a land area roughly the size of Connecticut. On the eastern side of the county, the peaks of the Sierra Nevada mountain range rise to meet the sky. The mountains include the 14,505 foot peak of Mt. Whitney, the highest summit in the contiguous United States. In stark contrast, the west side of the county sinks to 184 feet, in the arid remnants of Tulare Lake, which was once the second largest freshwater lake in the United States (and largest west of the Mississippi River). For thousands of years the lake provided sustenance for Native Americans living in the valley, until diversion of the water, epidemics, and forced relocation altered the landscape and the population forever. By the turn of the 20th century, the lake had dried up and the area was subdivided into countless fields and orchards. The rich, fertile soil which remained in the lake basin has helped make Tulare County a worldwide leader in agricultural production. Every few decades, when the rains are plentiful, Tulare Lake occasionally reappears, a reminder that the history of that land will not be forgotten.

¹Baldwin, James. "A Letter to My Nephew," *Progressive Magazine*, January 1, 1962.

The soil of Tulare County is perfect for growing crops and trees, very tall trees. Among the most famous residents of the county are the towering **Giant Sequoias**. Travelers from around the world journey up winding mountain roads to stand in awe of these natural wonders. In 1890, President Benjamin Harrison signed legislation to establish America's second national park, Sequoia, specifically to protect these Tulare County giants. Dappled throughout the hillsides, dozens of the massive trees fill ancient groves in the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Sequoia National Forest and Monument, and Inyo National Forest. Among its lofty neighbors looms the world's largest tree by volume, the massive General Sherman. Standing 275 feet tall and measuring over 36 feet in diameter at its base, the stately conifer has marked the passage of time in Tulare County for approximately 2,200 years.

In the two millennia since the Giant Sequoias took root, Tulare County has grown and evolved. Today around **460,000** people call the area home. There are eight cities in the county: Dinuba, Exeter, Farmersville, Lindsay, Porterville, Tulare, Visalia, and Woodlake. The county is also home to over four dozen smaller, rural, unincorporated towns. Located in close proximity to stagecoach routes and railroad tracks, these cities and towns sprouted from the expansion of agriculture and farming operations in the region.

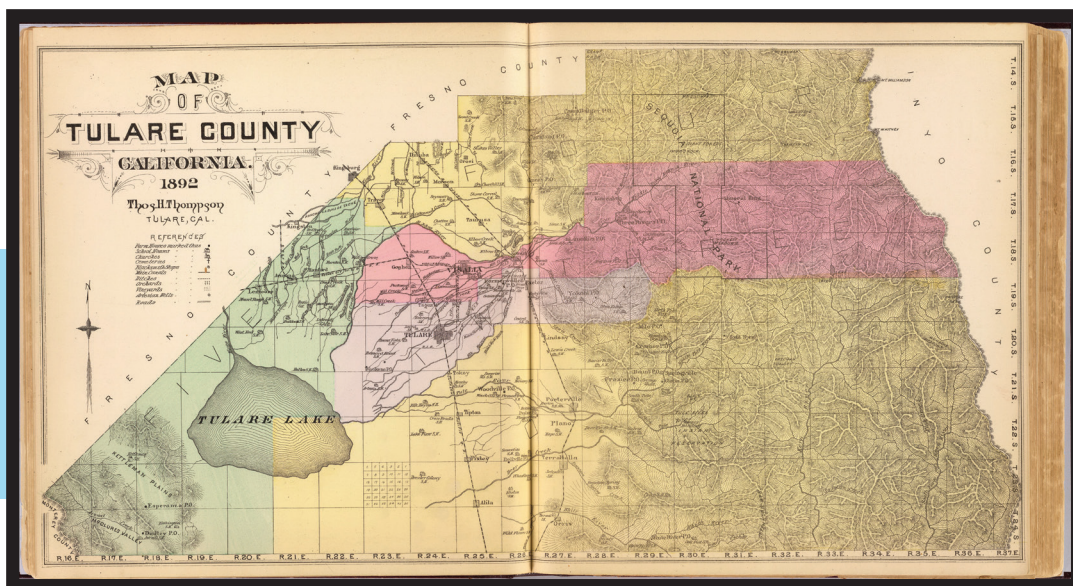
By the 1850s, cattle ranches and dairy farms peppered the landscape. The first orange tree was planted in the county in 1860 and by the early 1900s, **citrus groves** lined nearly every foothill, stretching as far as the eye could see. Oranges and lemons traversed the country on railcars, packed in crates bearing labels from Tulare County towns. The crate labels were functional pieces of art. They depicted the beauty of the hills and the lush landscape of the area while still advertising the brand of the produce and the location of the packing house. Today, like any other rare artwork, original crate labels are highly sought after.



Tulare County's community roots also lie deep in the region's fertile soil. As agricultural production expanded, so too did the population. Families migrated from across the nation and immigrated from around the globe, often settling in the **rural areas** of the county. Whether picking citrus, herding cattle, or harvesting wheat, they came to tend the land and build better lives. Through perseverance and determination, these hard working men, women, and children forged a new era for the region. The county's early settlers not only harvested crops and raised livestock, but they planted the seeds of economic prosperity which remain today.

Throughout the late 1800s, small family farms blossomed and with them came **colonies and townships**. These communities were often named for pioneer families or geographic features. Soon area maps were filled with places like: Alpaugh, Deer Creek Colony, Ivanhoe, Orosi, Plano Township, Three Rivers, and Woodville. Each location had its own unique identity and its own stories to tell. One such town, Allensworth, was established in 1908. The community was co-founded by Col. Allen Allensworth, who escaped slavery during the Civil War by joining the U.S. Army, ultimately becoming the nation's first African American Lieutenant Colonel. His namesake town, Allensworth, was the first in California to be founded, financed, and governed by African Americans. Today the original settlement is designated as a California State Historic Park and the story of Col. Allensworth's community lives on.

As the pioneer colonies and townships developed, the need for local services grew. Doctors, blacksmiths, newspapers, post offices, and churches emerged. Even fire and police stations became essential to protect the towns. Rising populations also meant an increase in the number of children and the necessity for local schools. Since the beginning, Tulare County's communities have had a strong commitment to educating their youth. In 1854, the **first public school** was established in the county seat of Visalia. That same year, the first County Superintendent of Schools, J.B. Hatch, was appointed. Before long, one room schoolhouses were scattered across the county. In 1900, there were 78 identified small schools in the area and by 1920 there were over 100. From the mountaintops to the valley floor, nearly every township had its own school. All were focused on providing a quality education to the children of the local communities.



Thompson, Thos. H. (1892) Map of Tulare County, California.

In 1893, Kings County was formed from a portion of western Tulare County.



During the late 1930s Tulare County, like many areas of the Central Valley, had a population boom as families from the Dust Bowl-ravaged states of Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas migrated west. These settlers made their homes in the farm labor camps of the county, joining other immigrant families to work in the fields and tend the crops of the region. Around the same time, photographer **Dorothea Lange** crisscrossed the country, capturing life in the dust-filled days of Depression-era America. Among her many stops, rural Tulare County. Her iconic images of local faces and places provide a window into the lives of those who helped shape the area. Families from across the world still immigrate to the county, bringing along their languages, traditions, and cultural heritage. Much like the pioneer families before them, the many cultures and stories of these modern settlers are woven into Tulare County's history.

Throughout the 20th century, businesses and industries flourished and the population grew across Tulare County. Today, nearly half a million people live in the county and over **100,000** of those residents are students. The oldest and largest school district in the area, Visalia Unified, has an average daily attendance of over 30,000 students. Conversely, the smallest district in the county, Hot Springs, serves just 7 students daily. Located high in the mountains southeast of Porterville, this quaint school has educated local children since 1896.

One-third of Tulare County's residents still call small, rural, unincorporated communities home and many of these towns still house neighborhood schools. The 100 plus pioneer school districts have largely been consolidated and 43 remain; nearly all of which have been in operation since the turn of the 20th century. Of the county's **43 districts**, 34 are considered small, with less than 2,500 students enrolled in each and in 30 of those small districts, enrollment is less than 1,000 students. In addition, 25 of the 43 districts are single school districts, containing only one school and serving students from Kindergarten through 8th grade. The small and single school districts are quiet reminders of Tulare County's vibrant history and of the students, families, and communities of the past.

From the depths of the Tulare Lake bed to the peaks of mighty Mt. Whitney, Tulare County is a land of contrasts. Shaped by the hands of its hardworking residents, the county was built on determination, perseverance, and the indomitable human spirit. Just like the fertile soil covering the landscape, Tulare County has a rich and vibrant history all its own. The deep roots in the area go back generations; crossing state lines, country borders, and vast oceans of time. From the air, the colorful patchwork quilt of crops and groves stretches for miles. Down on the ground, the voices of the past echo through the canyons and whisper through the branches of the Giant Sequoia trees. ***This, they say, is home.***



Tulare County

Creative Blueprint for Arts Education

2025-2035

Arts are Core. Arts for All.

Arts Education for All

Foundational Belief

We Recognize the Impact of Universal Arts Access on Ensuring Success for Every Student

Core Value 1

Define the Arts as Essential Components in a Well-Rounded, High-Quality Education

Goals

- 1.1 - Identify and address barriers to arts access for all Tulare County students
- 1.2 - Support districts with ensuring access to arts learning opportunities in all educational settings
- 1.3 - Build awareness for methods of leveraging funding and partnerships to support arts learning
- 1.4 - Recognize and celebrate exemplary models of discrete and integrated arts teaching and learning

Always Actions

Increase awareness of *California Education Code Sections 51210 and 51220*, requiring discrete instruction in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts as part of the core curriculum by:

- Advocating for arts learning opportunities to be threaded throughout the school day and within all settings, including traditional day; expanded learning (summer, before, and after school); early childhood education; migrant education; special education; alternative education (court, community, and continuation schools); charter schools; and prevention programs
- Multiplying and strengthening existing countywide arts-related student events, study trips, and extended learning opportunities, ensuring universal access for all schools and districts in Tulare County
- Piloting innovative practices in rural and single school districts that address their unique challenges ensuring access for all
- Supporting school districts with considerations for leveraging funding to meet the needs of all students
- Identifying and honoring models of innovative teaching practices, robust family and community engagement, and improved student academic performance

Arts Education for All

Foundational Belief

We Recognize the Impact of Universal Arts Access on Ensuring Success for Every Student

Core Value 2

Ensure Standards-Based, Culturally Responsive, Arts Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Assessment

Goals

- 2.1 - Support the implementation of California's Arts Education Standards (2019) and Framework (2020)
- 2.2 - Endorse both discrete and integrated inquiry-driven, standards-based, arts learning opportunities
- 2.3 - Balance process and product-oriented learning within and across the arts disciplines
- 2.4 - Value and build upon student cultural and linguistic assets through responsive curriculum and instruction
- 2.5 - Employ differentiated instructional strategies to affirm, welcome, and respond to the range of strengths, needs, and identities of arts learners

Always Actions

Support educators and administrators with creating standards-based, culturally responsive and relevant, discrete, and integrated arts learning opportunities through ongoing professional learning, coaching, and technical assistance in the following areas:

- Teaching and learning in the five arts disciplines identified in California's Arts Education Standards (2019) and Framework (2020): dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts
- Emphasizing programmatic alignment to the four artistic processes identified in the standards and framework: creating; performing, presenting, or producing; responding; and connecting
- Utilizing arts-based instructional strategies to advance academic outcomes for English and multi-lingual learners, students of color, at-risk students, students with special needs, foster and homeless youth, and other under-served groups
- Highlighting Universal Design for Learning (UDL) based instructional strategies and assessments to enhance student voice, learning, inquiry, and engagement through the arts
- Encouraging the use of non-traditional assessments such as: digital portfolios, performances, and observations to measure students' artistic literacy through engagement, representation, action, and expression

Social, Emotional, and Cultural Well-Being

Foundational Belief

We Believe the Arts are Integral to Health, Wellness, Community Engagement and Belonging

Core Value 3

Embrace Hope, Healing, Empathy, Cultural Connections, and Self-Expression through the Arts

Goals

- 3.1 - Endorse the arts as an evidence-based strategy for improving mental health and physical well-being
- 3.2 - Honor culture, community, language, and traditions in and through the arts
- 3.3 - Improve school climate and culture by applying the arts as a catalyst for change
- 3.4 - Address the wellness needs of students, educators, and families through community partnerships
- 3.5 - Inform and empower local communities through arts-related public health programming

Always Actions

- Design arts-connected, place-based, inquiry-driven teaching and learning experiences to positively influence and impact local communities
- Utilize the arts to reduce stigmas, stereotypes, and discrimination by promoting awareness and acceptance of sensitive topics such as: mental health, substance abuse, and cultural differences
- Develop the core social and emotional learning competencies of social awareness, self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills through the arts
- Work with strategic partners to create youth-centered, arts-based, community outreach and education campaigns on public health and prevention-related topics including: the harmful effects of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use; bullying; suicide; violence; and healthy active living
- Foster a sense of belonging by creating safe, affirming, engaging, and environments through the arts

College, Career, and Civic Life Readiness

Foundational Belief

We Honor and Celebrate Lifelong Learning in and through the Arts

Core Value 4

Elevate the Arts as a Practical and Meaningful Educational Pursuit for All Students

Goals

- 4.1 - Collaborate with educators, schools, and community members to recognize barriers and promote artistic fields as potential academic, college, and career choices
- 4.2 - Strengthen strategic partnerships with industry professionals to highlight college and career paths in the arts
- 4.3 - Develop opportunities for students to experience authentic arts learning in industry-specific settings
- 4.4 - Highlight the cross-sector impact of arts and creativity on Tulare County's local workforce and economy

Always Actions

Expand awareness that the arts provide students with both content knowledge and the practical skills to apply their learning in a variety of academic and career contexts through collaborations, partnerships, and communications, including:

- Supporting the statewide transition from the Arts, Media, and Entertainment (AME) sector to the Arts, Entertainment, and Design (AED) cluster
- Assisting districts with programmatic alignment to the new AED standards through coursework, academies, industry opportunities, and high-quality arts learning
- Linking business and industry partners with area middle and high schools to strengthen arts-focused intern/externships, mentorships, scholarships, and campus collaborations
- Connecting with professional artists to highlight wide-ranging arts career opportunities
- Showcasing artistic careers in other industry sectors such as: agriculture, business, engineering, healthcare, justice, and manufacturing
- Amplifying the stories of Tulare County graduates and community members working in arts-connected careers across all industry sectors

College, Career, and Civic Life Readiness

Foundational Belief

We Honor and Celebrate Lifelong Learning in and through the Arts

Core Value 5

Celebrate Student Creativity and Artistic Innovation on Campus and in the Community

Goals

- 5.1 - Value the artistic processes of creating, responding, and connecting equally with those of performing, presenting, and producing
- 5.2 - Promote student voice, civic engagement, and cultural awareness in and through the arts
- 5.3 - Showcase student artistic learning, accomplishment, and achievement across all of the arts disciplines
- 5.4 - Leverage partnerships to inspire student creativity in unexpected places and spaces
- 5.5 - Honor the individual arts education journey of every student, campus, and community

Always Actions

Enable students to express, communicate, and demonstrate their arts learning in multiple ways throughout their schools and communities by:

- Promoting increased participation in existing arts-centered annual student events such as: Poetry Live!, the Student Art Exhibition, and the Young People's Concerts
- Communicating unexpected arts-connections in other annual student events such as: Academic Decathlon, History Day, Mock Trial, Poetry and Prose, and the Science and Engineering Fair
- Creating additional arts standards-aligned student events and showcases of learning
- Expanding partnerships to increase community-focused arts learning centered on cultural, historical, contemporary, and social contexts
- Developing additional real-world opportunities for students to pilot their designs, performances, and innovative creations

Sustainable Systemic Change

Foundational Belief

We Recognize the Lasting Impact of the Arts on Students, Educators, Families, and Communities

Core Value 6

Empower and Build the Capacity of All Educators to be Leaders in the Arts

Goals

- 6.1 - Prepare educators and administrators to plan, implement, support, and sustain high-quality, standards-based arts education programming through professional learning
- 6.2 - Develop opportunities for peer-to-peer collaboration and leadership among educators and administrators
- 6.3 - Collaborate with higher education and industry professionals to ensure current content delivery
- 6.4 - Continually update and inform the field about new policies, funding, and legislation impacting arts education programming

Always Actions

Support the current and emerging needs of the field by:

- Providing opportunities for arts educators to collaborate, connect, learn, and lead through local arts networks and leadership summits
- Developing new professional learning sessions and curriculum resources to meet the ever-changing educational landscape
- Strengthening strategic partnerships with industry professionals to provide up-to-date training and curriculum support on current and timely topics
- Communicating local, state, and federal program updates potentially impacting arts education
- Highlighting and celebrating arts teaching, learning, and funding resources through digital communications with arts educators and administrators

Sustainable Systemic Change

Foundational Belief

We Recognize the Lasting Impact of the Arts on Students, Educators, Families, and Communities

Core Value 7

Leverage Resources, Partnerships, and Funding to Support High-Quality Arts Education

Goals

- 7.1 - Champion the development of district strategic arts education plans across Tulare County
- 7.2 - Provide ongoing support to schools and district administrators on methods for funding and sustaining high-quality arts education programs
- 7.3 - Forge strong family, community, and school partnerships to advance arts education goals
- 7.4 - Implement the Innovative Initiatives of the Tulare County Creative Blueprint for Arts Education

Always Actions

- Support Tulare County school districts as they create, implement, refine, and annually update their board-approved strategic arts education plans
- Guide districts with best practices for aligning state and federal funding streams to sustain high-quality arts education
- Assist districts with navigating the implementation of *Proposition 28: The Arts and Music in Schools Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act (AMS)*
- Share exemplary models and resources to aid districts with writing arts education goals into their Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and other state and federal program plans
- Highlight strategies for utilizing the arts to actively engage families and community partners in school processes
- Provide programmatic support for Tulare County schools and districts through expanded partnerships with local, state, and national arts organizations, non-profits, and foundations

Sustainable Systemic Change

Foundational Belief

We Recognize the Lasting Impact of the Arts on Students, Educators, Families, and Communities

Core Value 8

Build Public Will for the Arts through a Collective Impact Model

Goals

- 8.1 - Foster and expand cross-sector partnerships to advocate for and support the advancement of arts education across Tulare County
- 8.2 - Adopt continuous improvement practices; using research, data, and evidence to assess the impact of all arts programming including professional learning, events, experiences, and other initiatives
- 8.3 - Collect and disseminate both quantitative and qualitative data and research to demonstrate the arts' impact on the whole child, whole family, and whole community
- 8.4 - Utilize digital platforms and physical convenings to provide ongoing communication with educators, administrators, and community partners

Always Actions

- Expand arts education and cultural development ventures through CreateTC – the Tulare County Arts Education Coalition – a collective impact model with varied cross-sector partners, including arts organizations, businesses, industries, city and county agencies, healthcare, and non-profits
- Advocate and apply for ongoing and increased public and private sector funding to strengthen, stabilize, and sustain arts education in Tulare County
- Disaggregate quantitative and qualitative arts data and statistics from local, state, and national resources to:
 - Highlight the impact of universal access to high-quality arts education on student success and achievement, specifically addressing the role of the arts in impacting education for English and multi-lingual learners, students of color, at-risk students, students with special needs, foster and homeless youth, and other under-served groups
 - Demonstrate the role of the arts in impacting school climate and culture as well as developing student capacities and dispositions related to academic achievement, social and emotional well-being, respect, empathy, and global perspectives
- Annually revise, refine, and reflect on the Tulare County Creative Blueprint for Arts Education



Innovative Initiatives and Arts Education Coalition

In addition to the *Always Actions* identified under each core value, **The Tulare County Creative Blueprint for Arts Education** establishes six initiatives for innovative and expanded opportunities. These initiatives will advance high-quality arts education and experiences for Tulare County's students, educators, families, and communities.

Innovative Initiatives

- The QUAIL (Quality Arts Instruction and Learning) Project
- Creative Placemaking
- Media Arts and Digital Learning Studio (MeDALS)
- Arts and Cultural Experiences and Celebrations
- Arts on the Go
- Tulare County Artists in Schools and Communities

The Blueprint also expands the work of CreateTC, Tulare County's Arts Education Coalition. This group acts as the backbone for the collective impact model driving all of the arts innovations in Tulare County schools and communities.

Arts Education Coalition

- CreateTC - Tulare County's Arts Education Coalition

The innovative initiatives and the arts education coalition align to the eight core values established in the Blueprint as outlined on the following pages.

Innovative Initiatives

The QUAIL (Quality Arts Instruction and Learning) Project

Key Program Objectives

Core Values: 

Program Goal

Improve student artistic literacy and academic performance by supporting educators in designing, implementing, and embedding standards-based instruction integrating the five arts disciplines (dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts) into other content areas

Strategic Actions

- Utilize arts-based instructional strategies to advance academic outcomes for all students
- Apply the arts as a catalyst for change to social, emotional, and cultural well-being
- Connect the arts to literacy across content areas
- Support educators and administrators through professional learning, coaching, and technical assistance
- Develop standards-aligned curriculum and resources to support program implementation
- Implement the goals and always actions of the **Tulare County Creative Blueprint for Arts Education**

Creative Placemaking

Key Program Objectives

Core Values: 

Program Goal

Activate partnerships to infuse creative placemaking projects throughout Tulare County schools and communities

Strategic Actions

Explore partnerships to bring creative expression to high-visibility campus and community projects such as:

- Artistic crosswalks for Safe Routes to School initiatives
- Campus and community murals, public art, and sculptures
- Little Library-style Tiny Studio Spaces on campuses and in communities
- Storytelling, music, dance, performances, and cultural connections

Innovative Initiatives

Media and Digital Arts Learning Studio (MeDALS)

Key Program Objectives

Core Values: 

Program Goal

Inspire Tulare County students and educators with media arts industry-standard resources, training, and process-driven learning opportunities for college, career, and civic life readiness

Strategic Actions

Develop strategic partnerships to advance program objectives including:

- Securing funding to design and develop the program
- Identifying or creating a physical space to house a media and digital arts learning studio
- Managing program logistics including scheduling, staffing, materials and supplies
- Developing standards-aligned curriculum and resources to support program implementation
- Providing ongoing training and support to Tulare County educators

Arts and Culture Experiences and Celebrations of Learning

Key Program Objectives

Core Values: 

Program Goal

Honor Tulare County's rich artistic and cultural heritage through intergenerational experiential learning

Strategic Actions

- Recognize and celebrate the many cultures who have lived in this region throughout history
- Collaborate with the Museum Alliance of Tulare-Kings Counties to connect area schools with local cultural and historical learning, including study trip opportunities and hands-on experiences
- Cultivate additional museum and arts organization partnerships to infuse cultural, historical, contemporary, and social contexts into student learning
- Provide expanded opportunities for students to showcase their learning in unique ways through community and countywide arts and culture events

Innovative Initiatives

Arts on the Go

Key Program Objectives

Core Values: 

Program Goal

Ensure that high-quality, culturally responsive and relevant, standards-aligned, arts curriculum resources are available and accessible to all Tulare County schools

Strategic Actions

- Expand arts-related print, digital, and physical resources available for check-out to Tulare County schools through the Tulare County Office of Education's ERS Library
- Develop lesson resources for educators and families on easy ways to create by growing the existing Arts All Around Us visual arts and literacy collection to include music, children's literature, and methods for art-making with reused, recycled, and non-traditional materials
- Explore the feasibility of mobile arts units to serve rural populations

Tulare County Artists in Schools and Communities

Key Program Objectives

Core Values: 

Program Goal

Collaborate with local artists to bring authentic arts learning opportunities to every corner of the county through Tulare County Artists in Schools and Communities

Strategic Actions

- Partner with the Arts Consortium, the Sequoia Symphony Orchestra, the Museum Alliance of Tulare-Kings Counties, and other local arts organizations, museums, and cultural centers to bring visual, performing, media, and literary artists to campuses and communities
- Recruit a unique group of professional artists, affirming our belief that the arts are for ALL
- Connect artists with local opportunities to highlight arts learning through lessons, presentations, performances, and other student and family experiences
- Showcase and amplify potential arts careers through real-world connections
- Support teaching artists with training on best practices for school and community-based lessons
- Provide resources for local professional artists on routes to teacher credentialing
- Create, disseminate, and annually update an online Artists in Schools and Communities directory

Arts Education Coalition

CreateTC - Tulare County's Arts Education Coalition

Key Program Objectives

Core Values: 

Program Goal

Act as backbone coordinator and collaborator to expand arts education and cultural development ventures through broad cross-sector partnerships including: arts and culture organizations, schools and universities, city and county agencies, businesses, industries, healthcare, and non-profits

Strategic Priorities

- Support the strategic directions, core values, goals, and always actions of the **Tulare County Creative Blueprint for Arts Education**
- Work collectively to promote and expand access to high-quality arts and cultural learning across the area
- Leverage partnerships, resources, and funding to increase access and opportunities for all
- Build public will and advocate for the advancement of arts education

Strategic Leadership Action Groups

- **Heath and Wellness through the Arts** 
 - *Goal: Identify resources and supports for safe and healthy schools and communities*
 - Action to Consider: Develop communication campaigns to support connections between the arts and wellness
- **Creative Economy through the Arts** 
 - *Goal: Leverage industry opportunities to promote college and career paths in the arts*
 - Action to Consider: Develop an Arts, Entertainment, and Design (AED) College and Career Day event for area middle and high school students and their families
- **Youth Leadership through the Arts** 
 - *Goal: Foster county-wide youth arts leadership, advocacy, and civic engagement*
 - Action to Consider: Facilitate the creation of an annual student-driven Youth Arts Leadership Summit for young visionaries from across Tulare County



The Strategic Planning Journey

***The arts empower.** The arts give a voice to the voiceless. The arts help transform American communities and, as I often say; the result can be a better child, a better town, a better nation and certainly a better world.*

Robert L. Lynch, Former President, Americans for the Arts²

The Case for High-Quality Arts Education

Time and again, research has demonstrated the virtues and benefits of arts education. Learning in and through the arts disciplines of dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts can positively impact all aspects of classroom, campus, and community life. The arts promote collaboration, communication, connection, creativity, and critical thinking. Developing artistic literacy influences countless other aspects of academic, social, and emotional learning. Arts education boosts attendance, academic achievement, and graduation rates. The arts also improve school climate and culture by increasing student self-esteem and promoting welcoming environments. Arts-rich schools report higher student, parent, and educational partner engagement. Additionally, the skills students learn in their arts classes also enable them to compete and to become successful in the global community. The lasting effects of a high-quality arts education reach well beyond the school walls into every part of college, career, and civic life.

²Lynch, Robert L. Editorial, *Huffington Post*, June 23, 2015.

A Commitment to Arts Education

Understanding that access to high-quality arts education is a critical part of a well-rounded education for all students, over the course of the 2017-18 school year, the Tulare County Office of Education brought together a dedicated group of educators, arts organizations, and community partners to envision a new reality for arts education in Tulare County. The work of the planning team was guided by an overarching vision - *We believe that every student in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 deserves universal access to high-quality arts learning as part of a well-rounded education.*

The team focused their collaborations and discussions around three core questions:

- What are the elements of a high-quality arts education system?
- In 3-5 years, what will be in place in our arts education system as a result of our actions?
- What creative, innovative actions can we take to address our challenges?

They worked together in a series of consensus workshops to identify strengths and challenges of the current structure. From their research and discussions, the team developed a series of goals and recommendations that crossed multiple sectors of the education system throughout the county.

Throughout the planning meetings, several strategic directions arose. One was the need to ensure comprehensive access to all of the arts disciplines for every student. Along with this, the group also discussed the impact of the arts on all aspects of a person's life and the myriad of ways in which the arts can improve social and emotional well-being, promote community connections, and ensure cultural relevance. The planning team also felt that preparing students for life beyond the classroom, including supporting college and career choices in the creative economy was a critical component of the plan. Lastly, the team wanted to support high-quality arts education through sustainable systemic change, including leadership development, community partnerships, and continued advocacy.

From this collective work, the original Tulare County Arts Master Plan (AMP) was born.

The Tulare County Arts Master Plan - (2018-2023)

The Arts Master Plan was a five-year strategic roadmap detailing key methods for expanding arts and cultural programs across Tulare County's schools and communities. The AMP identified goals and outcomes for planning, implementing, and sustaining high-quality arts learning experiences, both inside and outside of school. The plan also defined numerous cross-sector partnership opportunities to advance its objectives. The AMP aligned with the goals of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the eight state priorities in California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). The Arts Master Plan represented an ongoing commitment from the Tulare County Office of Education to promote high-quality standards-based arts education across Tulare County.

*The Tulare County Arts Master Plan was approved by the
Tulare County Board of Education on March 13, 2019*

From Paper to Practice - Celebrations and Challenges

The AMP became the guiding document for all arts curriculum, instruction, and partnership work happening at the county office. Implementation began with the launch of CreateTC in October of 2019. CreateTC is Tulare County's Arts Education Coalition and a continuation of the work of the planning team. Partner organizations represent the varied sectors of education, arts, government, healthcare, economic development, business, and industry. Momentum built as the 2019-2020 calendar was packed with professional learning opportunities, student events, and community collaborations, all designed to make the AMP a reality. The stage was set for an arts revolution in Tulare County...and then the world changed in the spring of 2020.

Although the immediate ripple effects of that unprecedented time meant pivoting, adapting, and adjusting to a new educational landscape, the AMP remained a constant and a North Star through it all. In that challenging period, as so many were just beginning to consider the social and emotional benefits of the arts on mental health and wellness, the AMP was a luminary. Its second strategic direction, *Social and Emotional Well-Being*, had been embedded in the vision for the plan from day one. Actions identified in the AMP led to professional learning, student and community collaborations, and deeper conversations about the connections between the arts and healing.

In this same precarious time, the new California Arts Education Standards and Framework were published. The AMP planning team anticipated this landmark event and developed several key actions in preparation. The plan laid a foundation of support for local school districts through capacity building, programmatic-alignment, and advocacy around the new standards and framework. Strategic actions in the AMP also identified numerous avenues for connecting students to their communities through arts-related projects and partnerships. The plan provided a roadmap of service and support.

The Legacy of the Arts Master Plan

In 2021, the AMP helped make history, when the Tulare County Office of Education was awarded a five-year \$1.7 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Assistance for Arts Education program. This grant was the first federal funding awarded to the county office specifically for arts education. The award was a direct result of the AMP, as the grant goals, objectives, and application narrative came directly from the strategic plan. This funding established The QUAIL (Quality Arts Instruction and Learning) Project, and ensured ongoing multi-year support to continue advancing the goals and actions identified in the Arts Master Plan.

Since its adoption, the AMP has become a statewide model for arts education strategic planning. With its unique strategic directions and core values encompassing the whole child and the whole educational system; and its deep focus on building and leveraging cross-sector partnerships, the AMP highlights many non-traditional ways of expanding arts education programming and opportunities. The legacy of the Arts Master Plan is a sustained commitment to ensuring the arts matter for the students, educators, families, and communities of Tulare County.

Reflection, Revision, and Moving Forward

The five-year implementation period for the original Arts Master Plan came to a close in 2023 and with it, the need for revisions to the work began. In the spring and fall of 2024, the Tulare County Office of Education reconvened a team of arts educators and community partners to reflect on the progress of the plan and to revise it for a new 10-year period.

The final version of the original AMP contained 34 goals and almost 100 strategic actions. When the revision team met, they reviewed every goal and action and categorized them: accomplished, in-progress, ongoing, attempted, and not-attempted. They determined that over two-thirds of the goals and actions were attempted and nearly all of those were ongoing or completed work. The goals and actions that were not attempted during the plan period were largely items that ultimately fell outside of the sphere of influence and/or locus of control of the office of education and its partner agencies.

In the course of reviewing the plan, the team realized that many of the strategic actions identified in the AMP would be continuing in perpetuity. They reformatted the plan and termed these *always actions*, because they are ways of doing and being that are ongoing. The revision team also had an important discussion about some of the terminology in the original plan and they have updated the language to be more welcoming. This includes a change to Strategic Direction 1 and a clearer definition of what is meant by *Arts Education for All*. Strategic Direction 2 was amended to include the word cultural. The updated phrase is now *Social, Emotional, and Cultural Well-Being*. The team also decided to add *Foundational Beliefs* for every Strategic Direction to provide more clarity on the philosophy behind them. One of the biggest changes to the plan was a change to its name. The word *master* is a complex term that often carries negative social, political, and cultural connotations derived from its roots in colonialism. Recognizing that the meaning of words changes throughout time, the planning team decided to retire the term from the title. Additionally, the team reviewed and revised some other out of date terminology used in the plan, with the goal of ensuring the language of this revision remains representative of all.

The Creative Blueprint for Arts Education

The newly updated plan is now called, *The Creative Blueprint for Arts Education*. This name gives a nod to the Create CA 2015 document, *A Blueprint for Creative Schools*, a resource that inspired portions of the original AMP. The name also centers creativity and ensures the plan provides actionable steps to continue increasing and expanding access to high-quality arts learning across Tulare County.

Due in large part to the work of CreateTC and the cross-sector partnerships resulting from that group, the Blueprint is much more of a collective impact model than the original plan. In the Blueprint, the revision team identified a series of *innovative initiatives* which bridge multiple core values. These initiatives exemplify the work of the county office and its CreateTC partners over the next decade. This revised plan remains a North Star and a launch pad for arts education dreams to come. Onward and upward. The Creative Blueprint for Arts Education provides a sustained commitment to ensuring that the arts continue to thrive in our local area. We believe the arts matter, for the students, educators, families, and communities of Tulare County.



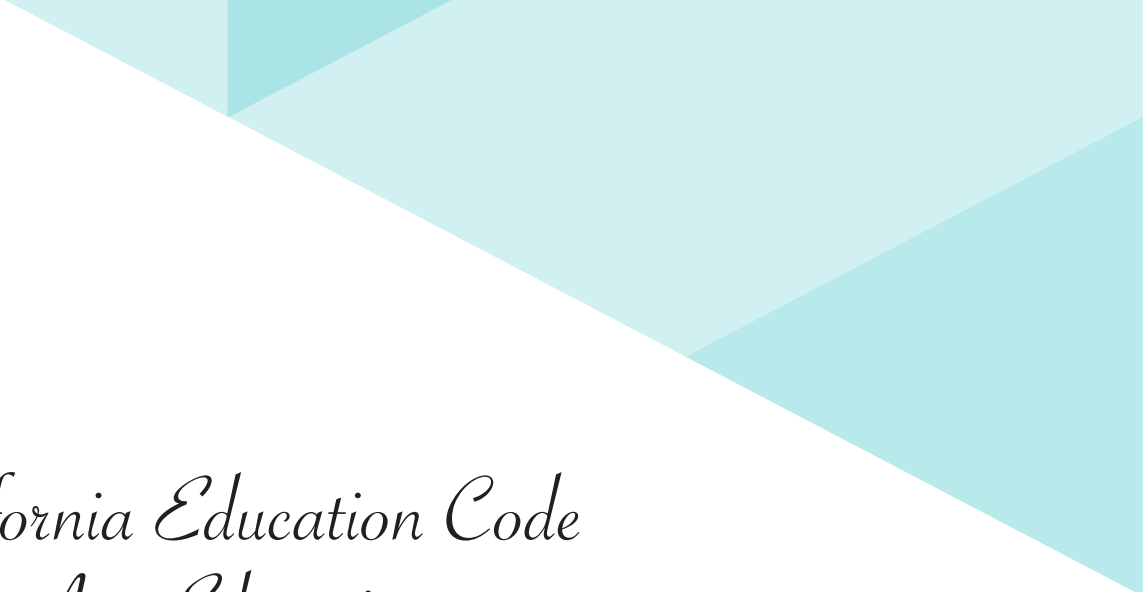
Appendix

Recommendations for Schools and Districts

There are a number of entry points for schools and districts seeking to improve and expand their arts coursework and programming. While every journey toward universal access for all is unique, here are a few common first steps to consider:

- **Provide Professional Learning in Discrete and Integrated Standards-Based Arts Instruction**
 - *Ensure that all staff are trained in implementation of the 2019 California Arts Education Standards and the ways that the arts can connect to their content area or coursework through both discrete and integrated instruction*
- **Connect With Educational Partners to Support the Arts**
 - *The Arts are embedded in every sector; not just education. Consider ways to work with non-traditional partners in the local community to advance arts education goals*
- **Develop an Arts Education Strategic Plan**
 - *Establish an ongoing commitment to ensuring access to high-quality arts education for every student by creating a comprehensive, board-approved, district-wide, multi-year strategic arts education plan*
- **Allocate Sustainable Funding for the Arts**
 - *Align state and federal funding streams such as: Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), Proposition 28, and Titles I, II, III, and IV, with arts education goals*
- **Hire Qualified Arts Educators and Teaching Artists**
 - *Ensure that all arts instruction is provided by qualified certificated and classified staff**
- **Offer Standards-Aligned Courses in All Five Arts Disciplines**
 - *In accordance with the California Education Code (page 31), students should have access to courses and learning in all of the arts disciplines: dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts*
- **Ensure Arts Access for All**
 - *Review master schedules, course listings, teacher assignments, and program offerings to ensure all students can access arts learning opportunities*

*Single-subject credentials are available in Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts. Note that single-subject English and single-subject Physical Education credentials issued prior to January 2022 qualify the credential-holders to teach Theatre (English) and Dance (Physical Education). For up-to-date information on credentialing requirements, visit the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) website.

The top right corner of the page features a decorative background of overlapping teal triangles of various shades.

California Education Code

Arts Education

Education Code Section 51210

(a) The adopted course of study for grades 1 to 6...**shall include instruction** beginning in grade 1 and continuing through grade 6, in the following areas of study:

(5) Visual and performing arts, including instruction in the subjects of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts, aimed at the development of aesthetic appreciation and the skills of creative expression.

Education Code 51220

The adopted course of study for grades 7 to 12...**shall offer** courses in the following areas of study:

(g) Visual and performing arts, including dance, music, theatre, and visual arts, with emphasis upon the development of aesthetic appreciation and the skills of creative expression.

Acknowledgments

The Tulare County Creative Blueprint for Arts Education would not have been possible without the contributions of these individuals.
Note: These positions and titles were accurate at the time that the revision team met.

2024 Revision Team

- **Tara Adams** – *Administrative Clerk* – Tulare County Association of Governments
- **Deanna Bowers** – *Visual Arts Educator* – Woodlake High School, Woodlake Unified School District
- **Jenny Burrow** – *Visual Arts and GATE Educator* – Kings River Union School District
- **Shelsy Hutchison** – *College and Career Engagement Specialist* – Tulare County Office of Education
- **Amy King-Sunderson** – *Curator* – Tulare County Museum
- **Ampelio Mejia Perez** – *Executive Director* – Visalia Arts Consortium
- **Merry Miller-Gass** – *Author and Illustrator*
- **Brideget Moore** – *TCAG Administrative Supervisor* – Tulare County Association of Governments
- **Lori Narahara** – *College and Career Engagement Specialist* – Tulare County Office of Education
- **Amie Rangel** – *Art Gallery Director* – College of the Sequoias
- **Kate Stover** – *Staff Development and Curriculum Specialist, Arts* – Tulare County Office of Education
- **Travis Walters** – *Creative Director* – Film Owl Productions and *Member* – Visalia Unified School District Media Arts Academy Advisory Committee
- **Peggy Burt** – *Strategic Planning Coach and Facilitator* – Mindful Strategies

2024 Additional Planning Support

- **Aaron Bryan** – *Director of Arts Education* – Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools
- **Pauline Crooks** – *Arts Coordinator* – San Diego County Office of Education
- **Letty Kraus** – *Director* – Statewide Arts Initiative – California County Superintendents
- **Stacy Young** – *Director, Community Outreach and Engagement* – Humboldt County Office of Education

Tulare County Office of Education

- **Tim A. Hire** – *Tulare County Superintendent of Schools*
- **Chris Meyer** – *Assistant Superintendent, District Support Services*
- **Julie Berk** – *Assistant Superintendent, Student Support Services*
- **Samantha Tate** – *Administrator, Educational Resource Services*
- **Robert Herman** – *Communications Director*
- **Nayirah Dosu** – *Communications Specialist*

Additional planning feedback and guidance was provided by educators and administrators from twenty-four Tulare County school districts and a dozen Tulare County Office of Education internal programs and departments.

Acknowledgments

The Tulare County Arts Master Plan would not have been possible without the contributions of these individuals.
Note: These positions and titles were accurate at the time that the planning team met.

2018 Planning Team

- **Deanna Bowers** – *Visual Arts Educator* – Woodlake High School, Woodlake Unified School District
- **Jenny Burrow** – *Visual Arts and GATE Educator* – Kings River Union School District
- **Amanda Guajardo** – *Executive Director* – The Creative Center
- **Erik Gonzalez** – *Creative Outreach Consultant* – Urbanists Urban Art Collective
- **Joshua Kaneversky** – *Marketing Coordinator* – Visalia Arts Consortium
- **Kathy Masters** – *Visual and Performing Arts Educator* – Pixley Unified School District
- **Miguel Pasillas** – *Music Educator* – Farmersville High School, Farmersville Unified School District
- **Kate Stover** – *Staff Development and Curriculum Specialist, Arts* - Tulare County Office of Education
- **Robert Styles** – *Media Arts Educator* – Monache High School, Porterville Unified School District
- **Randy Wallace** – *Consultant* – Networks2Action
- **Noah J. Whitaker** – *Community Outreach Manager* – Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency
and *Task Force Director* – Tulare and Kings Counties Suicide Prevention Task Force
- **Peggy Burt** – *Strategic Planning Coach and Mentor*

2018 Contributors

- **Michael Alvarez** – *Professional Photographer and Board Member* – Visalia Arts Consortium
- **Sarah Anderberg** – *Director* – Statewide Arts Initiative – California County Superintendents
- **Jenny Bautista** – *Business Services Manager* – Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County
- **Toni Best** – *Gourd Artist, Basket Weaver, and Retired Elementary Educator*
- **Jennifer Francone, Ed.D.** – *Administrator* – Tulare County Office of Education
- **McKenna Friend-Hoffman** – *Patron Relations Manager* – Visalia Fox Theatre
- **Amy King** – *Curator* – Tulare County Museum
- **Kent McNatt** – *Retired High School Educator, Veteran, and Outstanding Arts Champion*
- **Jack Mitchell** – *Education Programs Consultant* – California Department of Education
- **Erin Olm-Shipman** – *Executive Director* – Visalia Fox Theatre
- **Mary Rice** – *Visual and Performing Arts Consultant* – California Department of Education
- **Alvaro Rodriguez** – *Specialist* – CHOICES Prevention Programs, Tulare County Office of Education
- **Seraya Sanchez** – *Student (Class of 2018)* – El Diamante High School, Visalia Unified School District
- **Charlene Stringham** – *Assistant Superintendent* – Tulare County Office of Education
- **Patricia ‘Pat’ Wayne** – *Program Director* – Create CA

Special Thanks

- **Jim Vidak** – Tulare County Superintendent of Schools – 1990-2018

Tulare County School Districts

Allensworth Elementary
Alpaugh Unified
Alta Vista Elementary
Buena Vista Elementary
Burton Elementary
Columbine Elementary
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified
Dinuba Unified
Ducor Union Elementary
Earlimart Elementary
Exeter Unified
Farmersville Unified
Hope Elementary
Hot Springs Elementary
Kings River Union Elementary
Liberty Elementary
Lindsay Unified
Monson-Sultana Joint Union Elementary
Oak Valley Union Elementary
Outside Creek Elementary
Palo Verde Union Elementary
Pixley Union Elementary

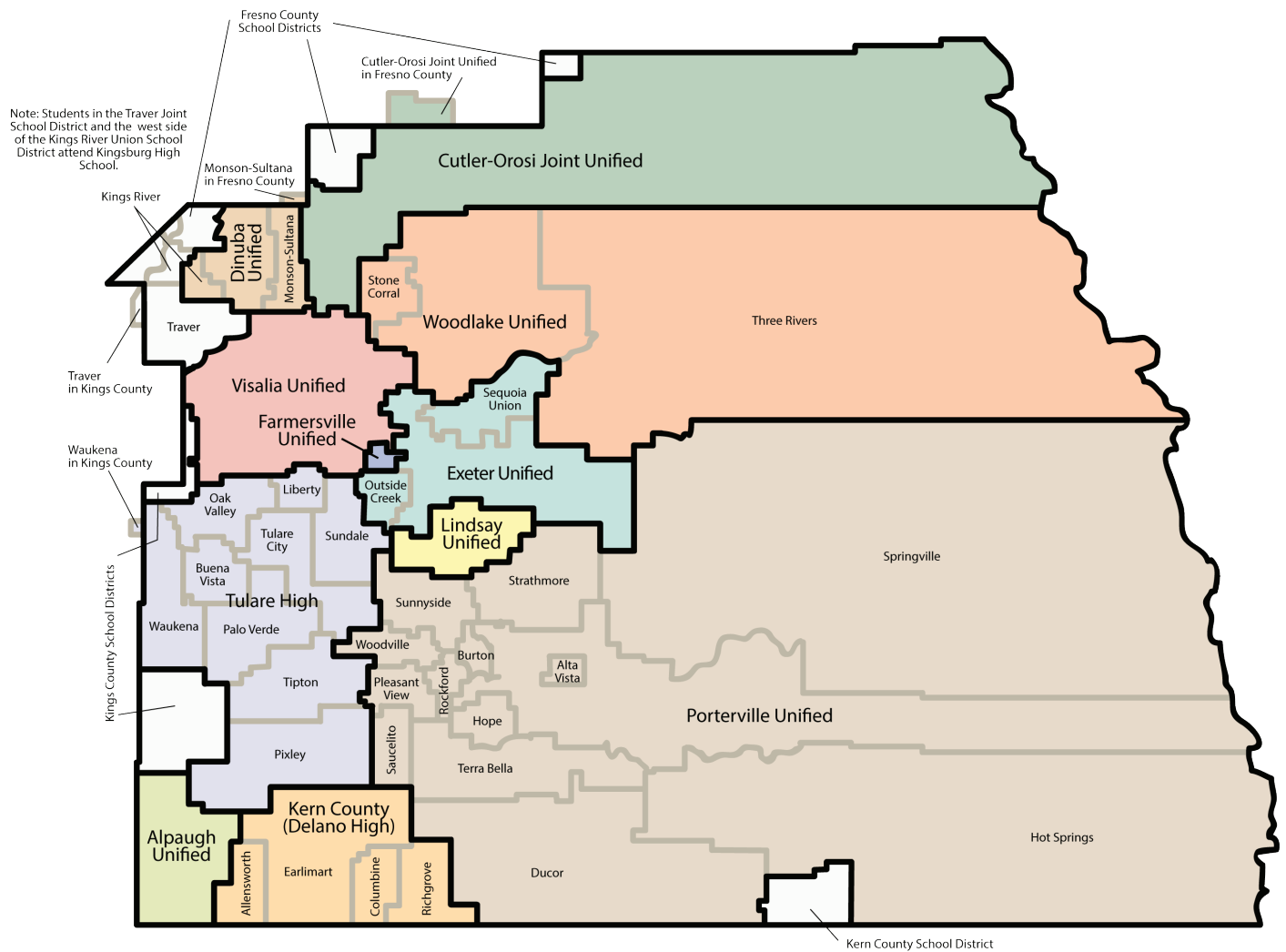
Pleasant View Elementary
Porterville Unified
Richgrove Elementary
Rockford Elementary
Saucelito Elementary
Sequoia Union Elementary
Springville Union Elementary
Stone Corral Elementary
Strathmore Union Elementary
Sundale Union Elementary
Sunnyside Union Elementary
Terra Bella Union Elementary
Three Rivers Union Elementary
Tipton Elementary
Traver Joint Elementary
Tulare City
Tulare County Office of Education
Tulare Joint Union High
Visalia Unified
Waukena Joint Union Elementary
Woodlake Unified
Woodville Union Elementary

Tulare County at a Glance

43 School Districts - 204 Public Schools - Over 100,000 Students Served

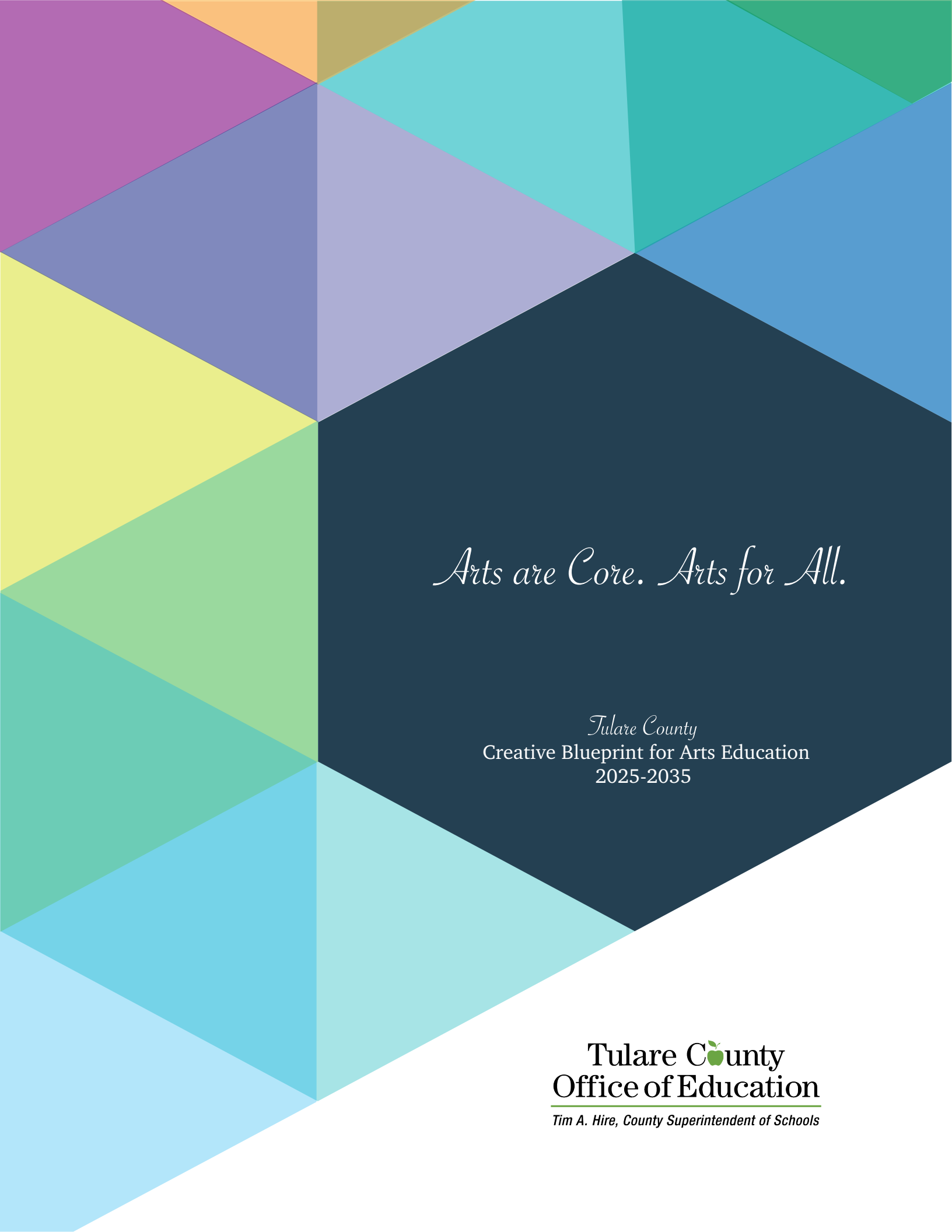


Tulare County School Districts



Colors indicate areas of high school attendance and their feeder districts





Arts are Core. Arts for All.

Tulare County
Creative Blueprint for Arts Education
2025-2035

Tulare County
Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools