

The Future of the VUSD Arts Education Master Plan

What is the current progress of the Arts Master Plan? Two years ago K through 5 students began receiving eight weeks of music instruction for thirty minutes per week. Art instruction has been provided for students in all 17 elementary schools upon request. There's an elementary school choir and a band for underprivileged children begins this school year, as does a high school glee choir. With these baseline accomplishments, the good "word" about the plan is slowly spreading, yet a recent survey shows less than half the respondents are aware that an art master plan exists.

What place should the arts have in our country and community? Acclaimed economist and author Richard Florida cites the growing role of creativity in the U.S. economy where 40 million Americans—over one third of the national workforce—create for a living. He claims that our country's "creative class" fuels a broad range of sectors from engineering, theater, biotech, education, architecture, and small business. A core curriculum that incorporates teaching of the arts in schools offers children a "critical thinking" tool that helps them to find a sure pathway to their creativity in all endeavors while it engages them to become passionate lifelong learners as well as the future workforce of talented and productive people who provide the real source of any community's economic growth, problem solving and strategic development.

What does the Arts Master Plan need to grow and thrive? Mainly, three intertwining goals: more funding, more materials and more involved people. We need to hire more arts specialists to show our teachers how to incorporate the creativity of the arts into all other core subjects during in-service trainings. We need more parents, artists and volunteers involved as classroom arts docents and for community arts assemblies and performances. We need arts materials and funds donated by individuals, businesses, foundations and government agencies. We need everyone to become an advocate for the Arts Master Plan so that we can succeed locally in what America does best—lead in the development of creativity throughout the world. Please support the Arts Master Plan by giving generously in any way that you can!