

LA COUNTY artsed COLLECTIVE

2025-26 End of Year Report



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Reporting, Data, and Images Contributed by
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Harder+Company Community Research

Established in 2002, the LA County Arts Education Collective envisions positive child and youth development under the **Arts for All Children, Youth, and Families: LA County's Regional Blueprint for Arts Education** (Arts Ed Blueprint), which addresses societal inequities, fosters social-emotional development, promotes healing, builds cohesion and cultural identity, and uplifts communities through the arts.

The Arts Ed Blueprint establishes three primary goals for achieving scale, equity, and quality in arts education:

GOAL 1: Develop systems and infrastructure that expand and sustain arts education for all young people in all schools, and in all communities.

GOAL 2: Build and strengthen partnerships and collaborations to create, expand, and leverage resources for arts education.

GOAL 3: Increase public awareness about the importance of arts education and mobilize stakeholders to advocate for robust implementation.

To achieve these goals, Arts Ed Collective activities take place under the following strategies:

School-Based Arts Education

Directs resources to school districts to help expand arts education in schools through strategic planning and coaching, matching grants, professional development for classroom teachers, and networking that allows promising practices to be shared across school districts.

Community-Based Arts Education

Embeds arts-based youth development across LA County systems of care to help young people, families, and the adults who work with them to heal and thrive.

Creative Career Pathways for Youth

Addresses systemic barriers within creative industries and supports young people in entering and shaping LA County's creative economy.

Shared Learning & Leadership

Enables practitioners and advocates to pool resources and leverage expertise for greater impact while cultivating diverse leadership within communities, across sectors, and at all levels of experience.

Communications & Advocacy

Builds public will and accountability for expanding youth access to the arts in school, after school, and within communities.

Research & Evaluation

Collects and analyzes data to inform strategies, identify Countywide trends, and educate the public about systemic inequities and the impacts of arts education.

Report Highlights

The LA County Arts Education Collective (Arts Ed Collective) is a public-private, collective impact initiative dedicated to making the arts a core part of every child's growth and development. Established in 2002 by the LA County Board of Supervisors, the Arts Ed Collective is coordinated by the LA County Department of Arts and Culture (Arts and Culture) and is implemented in partnership with nonprofit partners and other County agencies.

This year-end report summarizes the LA County Arts Ed Collective's work from July 2025 through June 2026. Efforts across all strategic priority areas are funded by LA County government, general operating support from the LA County Arts Ed Collective Funders Council (see Attachment 1 for list of member organizations), or restricted funding from other government and philanthropic partners. Restricted funding is noted in italics throughout the report.

School-Based Arts Education

- Sixteen local education agencies (LEAs) developed, updated, or launched a five-year strategic plan for arts education.
- Via the Advancement Grant Program, 34 LEAs invested more than $2.2 million of grant dollars and matching funds into school-based arts education.
- As part of the Arts Coordinator Network, 30 LEAs participated in shared learning and leadership focused on Proposition 28, arts curriculum alignment, and community partnerships.

Community-Based Arts Education

- Youth in Institutions programs logged 56,305 student attendances and up to 250 weekly sessions across eight juvenile justice facilities, seven high schools, and one adult and career education center.
- Arts-based workforce development programs equipped justice-impacted youth with foundational creative workforce skills in areas like mural design, public art production, music engineering, film editing, and silk-screening.
- Creative Wellbeing services (healing-centered arts education for youth and professional development for adults) impacted 14,358 youth and 15,431 adults across in-school, institutional, and community settings.

Creative Career Pathways for Youth

- The Bloomberg Arts Internship Program launched in June 2026, with 48 high school interns hosted by 22 organizations.
- The Media Career Pathways Prototype concluded programming with a second cohort of 12 young adults, preparing them for work in filmmaking, media arts, and other creative work.

Shared Learning & Leadership

- In February 2026, the *Arts Education Forum: Preparing Youth for the New Creative Economy* event raised awareness about how the entertainment industry, nonprofit, and K-12 education sectors are preparing the next generation of creative workers.
- In the first year of a two-year term, the Arts Ed Collective Leadership Circle shared learnings and best practices from the field at quarterly meetings and supported the Funders Council in planning the 2026 Arts Education Forum.
- Arts and Culture staff provided guidance and resources to help school districts spend down their first-year Proposition 28 allocations by the end of June 2026.

Communications & Advocacy

- California Assembly Bill 2440 seeks to help public schools spend unused Proposition 28 funds by strengthening clarity, transparency, and accountability.

Research & Evaluation

- As part of a multi-year evaluation plan to track progress on the Arts Ed Blueprint, Arts and Culture published *Drawing Connections: A Social Network Analysis of the LA County Arts Education Collective*.

Message from the Acting Director of Arts Education

Over 700 stakeholder convenings attended by more than 14,000 individuals. Up to 250 weekly sessions of arts programs in probation facilities and other settings. Fourteen thousand youth and 15,000 adults impacted by Creative Wellbeing services in schools and communities. Four divisions of the Department of Arts and Culture engaged in designing and implementing youth programs. While the past year's numbers speak to new highs in reach and scale, as well as expanded commitments from the department to support this work, the past year's successes are better demonstrated by young people's creativity, many examples of which are included in this report.

In the spring, we visited Azusa (page 13), a high school in the San Gabriel foothills that perennially produces talented visual artists who win honors in the Congressional Arts Competition. Teachers and administrators shared how investments in arts instruction for elementary students, inspired by their strategic arts plan and supported in part by the Advancement Grant Program, serve to improve the artistry of students entering middle and high school. The talent across grade levels and artistic disciplines on display in Azusa spoke to the dedication and hard work of educators building trust with students and families to foster a lifelong love for the arts.

Young people's collaboration and creativity are evidenced by the output of arts programs at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall in Downey, where teaching artists mentor and guide justice-impacted youth in developing skills in screen-printing, music production, songwriting, and other creative disciplines. I encourage you to click through the audio link on page 24 and "catch that vibe" with a student work sample submitted by nonprofit partner Theatre of Hearts/Youth First. At The Geffen Contemporary, high school students from Compton and Pasadena, guided by teaching artists from artworxLA, exhibited imaginary "sound systems" in conversation with the *Monuments* exhibit, creating their own sites of historical and cultural memory in the museum space (page 27).

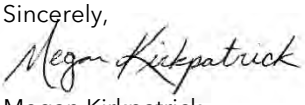
At a culminating event hosted by the Watts Labor Community Action Committee, young filmmakers enrolled in the Media Career Pathways Prototype (page 38) presented short films in a range of genres reflecting their visions, lived experiences, and responses to current events. Ayanna Chalyse screened a film inspired by her mother's experience as a social worker, shedding light on the emotional toll of family separation and the care required to rebuild trust and hope for reunification, while Nagi Moore's film follows a young man navigating his brother's legacy and the crossroads he must confront to change the course of his life in a difficult environment.

These are just a few examples among many of youth creativity in schools and communities. The power and inspiration of our collective impact efforts come from witnessing young people's ability to create new worlds and positively shape their environments when equipped with the right tools, spaces, and relationships.

Next year marks the Arts Ed Collective's twenty-fifth anniversary. Reflecting on our progress and what work remains under the Arts Ed Blueprint, we remain committed to nurturing and uplifting the creative expression of all young people in LA County. Whether you're an educator, parent, student, or arts advocate, I invite you to be part of this collective work to build public systems that provide young people with transformative arts experiences year-round.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge two leadership transitions bookending the 2025-26 fiscal year. Last fall, Denise Grande, our long-time Director of Arts Education, concluded her public service to LA County after 13 years. Under Denise's leadership, the Arts Ed Collective made significant gains in impact and scale. We're grateful for her stewardship of the programs and partnerships that have brought us where we are today. And in June, Kathy Bonalos served out her final term as co-chair of the Arts Ed Collective Funders Council. Much thanks to Kathy for always offering thoughtful, compassionate, and sage leadership over the past four years!

Sincerely,



Megan Kirkpatrick
Acting Director of Arts Education
LA County Department of Arts and Culture

School-Based Arts Education

Directs resources to school districts to help expand arts education in schools through strategic planning and coaching, matching grants, professional development for classroom teachers, and networking that allows promising practices to be shared across school districts.



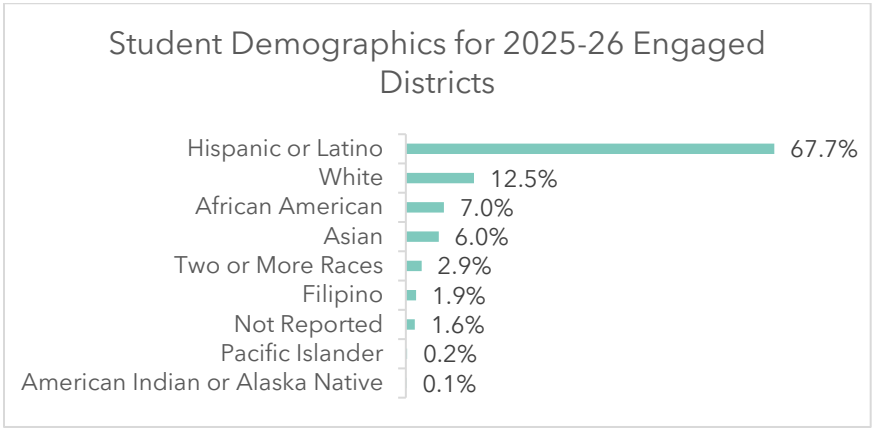
Azusa Unified arts teachers Stacy Nolting and Irin Simon present on elementary arts programs initiated with support from the Advancement Grant Program. Photograph by Fiona Cansino.

Highlights

- 16 local education agencies engaged in Strategic Planning & Coaching
- $2.2 million in total investments into arts education by 34 local education agencies
- 30 local education agencies represented in Arts Coordinator Network convenings

School District Partners in 2025-26

During the 2025-26 school year, 49 local education agencies (LEAs), which include 45 districts and four charter networks, participated in the Arts Ed Collective's programs and services for School-Based Arts Education. These partners represent 781,846 students. Of these students, 76.4% are English learners, eligible for free/reduced-price meals, and/or foster youth.



School District Strategic Planning

For the 2025-26 school year, 16 LEAs, including 14 school districts and two charter networks, worked with an Arts Ed Collective coach to develop, update, or implement a five-year strategic plan for arts education.

Year-One Coaching
(Strategic Planning)

1. Covina-Valley Unified
2. Glendale Unified
3. Los Angeles Unified
    a. Monroe Community of Schools[1]
4. Montebello Unified
5. Wilsona Elementary

Year-Two Coaching
(Capacity Building)

1. Baldwin Park Unified
2. Burbank Unified
3. Eastside Union
4. Glendora Unified
5. Green Dot Public Schools
6. William S. Hart Union High
7. ICEF Public Schools
8. Lawndale Elementary
9. Long Beach Unified
10. South Whittier[2]
11. Whittier Union

Coaching Consultants
Kimberleigh Aarn (lead)
Jill Newman
Melissa Valencia Thomson

First Year Coaching (Strategic Planning)

In the first year of coaching, school districts work with an Arts Ed Collective coach to develop and initiate a five-year plan that builds capacity for delivering year-round TK-12 arts instruction for all students. Coaches work closely with district planning teams throughout the school year to guide them through data collection, analysis of current strengths and challenges, visioning, and strategies for scale. Teams may include administrators, principals, arts specialists, generalist teachers, students, parents, community arts partners, business leaders, or philanthropic representatives. Five LEAs created new plans focused on ensuring equity and access to arts education across all school sites and grade levels, social-emotional learning, and community partnerships to support culturally relevant arts instruction.

Second Year Coaching (Building Capacity)

School districts receive a second year of coaching to implement their newly adopted plans. A key focus is helping planning teams become long-term leadership bodies to sustain progress on their arts plan. Eleven LEAs that created and adopted plans in the prior year worked on building capacity for first-year plan implementation, including but not limited to leveraging Prop 28 funds to achieve long-standing goals (e.g., expanding visual arts instruction to multiple grade levels, creating compliant funding strategies/waivers), leadership coaching, teacher professional development, and design and articulation of sequential arts integration.

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[1] Community of Schools (COS) consists of a group of schools centered around a neighborhood and is structured to be as responsive as possible to the distinct needs of that neighborhood. The Monroe COS covers the San Fernando Valley neighborhoods of North Hills and Panorama City.

[2] South Whittier School District received a third year of coaching to support capacity-building for a new arts lead hired by the district.

Arts Ed Collective coaches reported the following challenges and recommendations in the school district strategic planning process:

- **Time Constraints and Hiring Barriers:** Nearly all districts faced challenges with scheduling, leadership changes, or competing leadership priorities. For small districts with a "thin" workforce, this necessitated packing strategic planning work into shorter sessions. Other districts faced delays due to substitute teacher shortages or having to reimagine their implementation model after new teacher collective bargaining agreements eliminated planned collaboration time.

- **Environmental and Financial Realities:** External factors such as declining enrollment, reallocation of specific funding streams (e.g., California Department of Education's Expanded Learning Opportunities Program), and new hiring restrictions created challenges that required teams to revise implementation plans to remain practical.

In response to these issues, Arts and Culture staff adapted the coaching process as district priorities evolved.

Highlights from school district arts planning in 2025-26 include:

- Use of Proposition 28 funds to fulfill long-standing strategic goals (e.g., expanding visual arts) and mapping compliant funding strategies/waivers to align state money with district needs
- Professional development tailored to build teacher capacity for supporting students with special needs, arts integration, and/or new arts teachers
- Strengthening instructional rigor and vertical alignment so students have sequential instruction and clear pathways in disciplines as they progress from elementary to high school
- Expansion of community partnerships to support culturally relevant arts instruction and address instructional gaps in specific arts disciplines
- Inclusion of other Arts Ed Collective services to support implementation of key priorities (e.g., Advancement Grant Program, Creative Wellbeing)

Connections to Workforce Pathways

Arts Ed Collective coaches supported school districts with strategic thinking about creative careers exposure and preparation by utilizing the Department of Arts and Culture's Building Creative Careers for Youth field scan report (2019) as a resource in focused discussions and incorporating its key tools and recommendations into the planning process.

Integrating arts with Career Technical Education (CTE) was a recurring theme among planning teams. School districts that received coaching to create/update strategic plans with creative career pathways in schools include:

- LAUSD (James Monroe High School Community of Schools): The plan addresses careers in the arts through pathway development and media arts expansion. It identifies existing courses like Digital Media, Animation, and AP Drawing as support for student exploration of creative career pathways. Additionally, the plan emphasizes expanding opportunities for internships, dual enrollment, and partnerships with higher education institutions like CSU Northridge and Pierce College.

- Covina-Valley Unified: The plan addresses careers in the arts by focusing on expanding

exposure and strengthening pathways. It includes actions to increase student awareness through festivals, field trips, and community engagement. While the plan is not primarily CTE-focused, it supports media arts and other courses that connect to creative industries and "college, career, and life readiness."

- Glendale Unified: The planning team made a deliberate decision not to include CTE as a focus area within the strategic arts plan, as CTE has its separate instructional priorities. However, the district acknowledged that access to "advanced Arts, Entertainment, and Design CTE pathways" aligns with their broader Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) goal of maximizing student achievement and college/career readiness. The Glendale Unified arts plan is primarily focused on discrete instruction or an arts-integrated approach of the five arts disciplines.

- Montebello Unified: The plan does not directly address CTE as a framework, but it does include a specific action to "expose students to the creative economy and the multiple career pathways in the arts."

School District Strategic Planning is managed by the Department of Arts and Culture's Arts Education Division and received dedicated support from The Deutsch Foundation, The Music Man Foundation, and Sony Pictures Entertainment.

2025-26 Advancement Grant Program

The Advancement Grant Program offers matching grants to LA County school districts working to expand school-based arts education for students. Grant funds assist districts in achieving key action items in their strategic arts plans, and help them to launch, expand, or sustain projects that align with priority goals. Districts with an active strategic plan may apply for up to $25,000 in matching funds, with priority given to those with large student enrollments (10,000+) and/or a greater than countywide average[3] of students who are English learners, eligible for free/reduced-price meals, or foster youth (also called the Unduplicated Pupil Count[4]). Since 2014-15, the Advancement Grant program has disbursed $8.3 million to 65 school districts and charter networks, matched by an estimated total of $20.2 million in local investments.



An elementary Fine Arts class at Rosemead School District

In the 2025-26 cycle, 35 LEAs (including 33 school districts and two charter networks) were awarded a total of $810,800 in matching grants to advance and/or sustain arts education infrastructure. Twenty-four of these grantees received priority points for having 1) a student population of 10,000+ and/or 2) greater than the Countywide average of students in the Unduplicated Pupil Count.

Of 35 initial grantees, 34 school districts completed their projects as planned. Two districts came under budget on their grant-funded projects by a total of $1,328. One district ultimately declined their $25,000 grant award due to staffing transitions at the organization. Please see Attachment 2 for a list of grantees and projects completed during the 2025-26 school year.

[3] Based on the California Department of Education's Unduplicated Pupil Count data from 2025-26, the Countywide average is approximately 72.44%.

[4] Unduplicated count of pupils who (1) are English learners, (2) meet income or categorical eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program, or (3) are foster youth. "Unduplicated count" means that each pupil is counted only once even if the pupil meets more than one of these criteria.

Connections to Workforce Pathways

Examples of matching grants to launch specific action items identified in five-year strategic arts plans

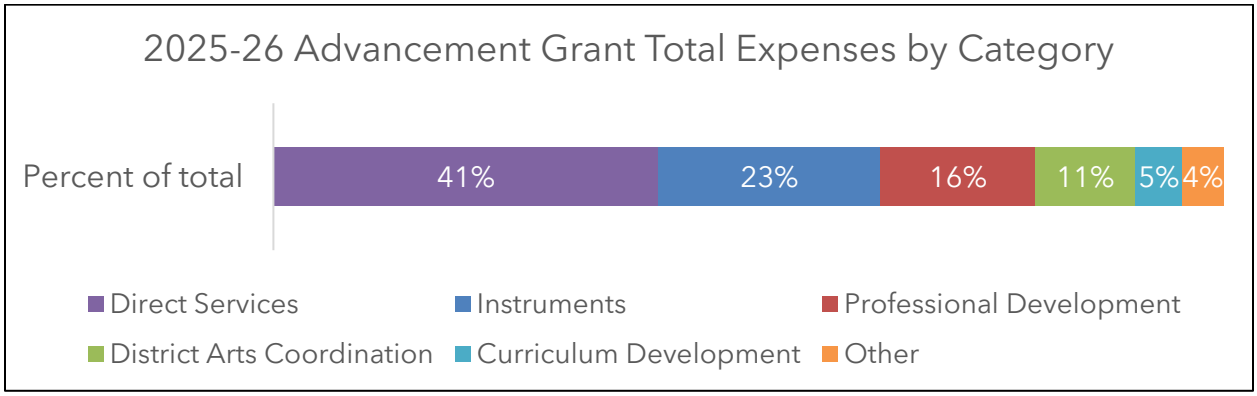
- Inglewood Unified School District: Grant funds supported the establishment of site-based teacher leads and a parent and student ambassador program that advocates for career-connected arts education through CTE and Arts, Media, and Design (formerly Arts, Media, and Entertainment) pathways. Student ambassadors proved particularly effective in promoting programs through peer-to-peer engagement, classroom presentations, recruitment activities, workshops, and community events, resulting in expanded exposure and awareness of CTE arts pathways available in high school among TK-8 students and families. The district observed increased interest and enrollment inquiries in CTE Arts, Media, and Design and visual and performing arts (VAPA) courses. Grant funds also contributed to planning efforts for future TK-8 arts pathways that can help establish a stronger pipeline into secondary arts programs and increase equitable access to arts education opportunities.

- Inner City Education Foundation (ICEF) charter network: Grant funds supported a second year of partnership between dance organization Creative Netwerk and ICEF View Park Preparatory High School's CTE Theater Pathway. Ninety students enrolled in four cohorts across Drama, Advanced Drama, and Advanced Theater Production received weekly 55-minute dance instruction during the school day. Students worked with a rotating team of three professional choreographers who specialized in a variety of dance styles (e.g., jazz, hip-hop, step, bachata). In addition to weekly instruction, students participated in 12 specialized workshops led by accomplished choreographers and industry professionals at dance studios throughout LA, which exposed them to a broader range of dance styles and career pathways in the performing arts. Grant funds also enhanced production costuming, allowing students to collaborate directly with the school's costume designer and gain hands-on experience in the design process.

- Magnolia Public Schools charter network: Grant funds supported the purchase of performing and media arts instruments, equipment, and materials; hiring of performing arts staff; and arts integration professional development and curriculum development. Newly purchased cameras enhanced instruction in media arts classes and enabled students to document, create, and present their work more professionally and meaningfully.

Overview of Investments

With a confirmed cash match of $1,469,219 from grantees, the program yielded more than $2.2 million in investments to advance school-based arts education during the 2025-26 school year. Total grant awards and matching funds supported projects in the following six programmatic categories:



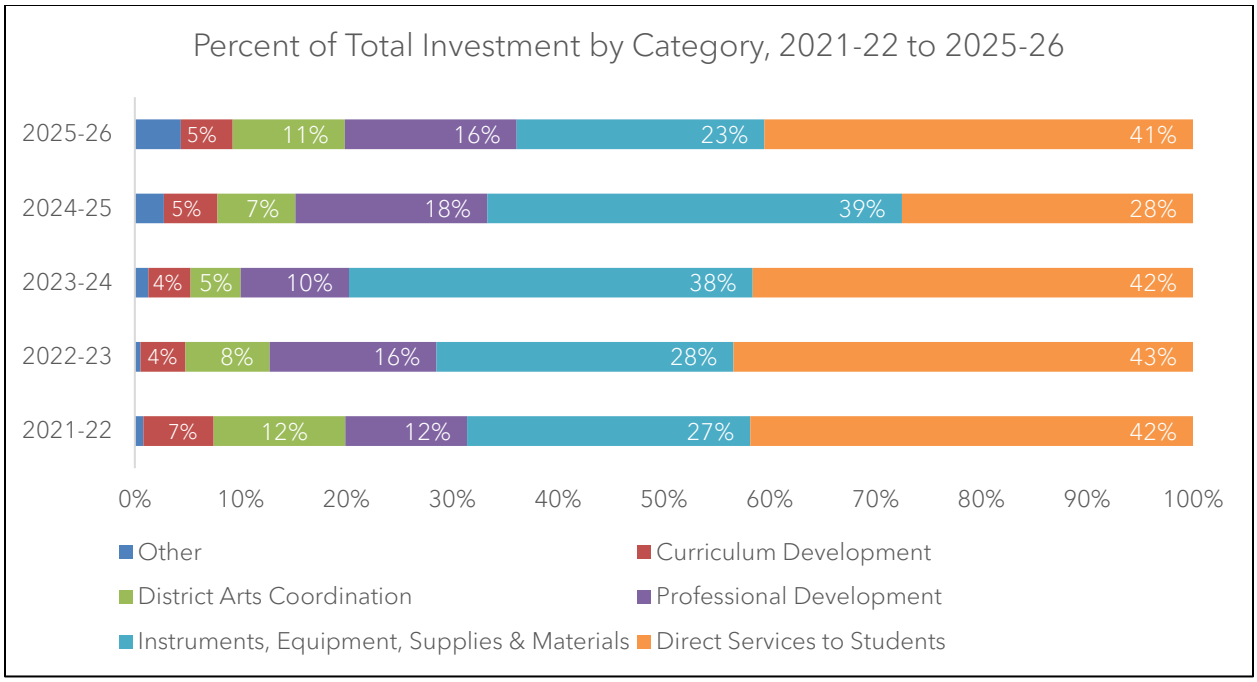
	Grant Award	Cash Match	Grand Total
Direct Services to Students (41%)	$280,406	$632,515	$912,921
Instruments, Equipment, Supplies (23%)	$223,457	$304,052	$527,509
Professional Development (16%)	$122,808	$243,085	$365,893
District Arts Coordination (11%)	$77,987	$160,842	$238,829
Curriculum Development (5%)	$42,729	$67,701	$110,430
Other (4%)	$37,074	$61,025	$98,099
Grand Total	**$784,462**	**$1,469,219**	**$2,253,681**

Impacts on Students and Educators

DIRECT SERVICES TO STUDENTS	# OF STUDENTS	# OF INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS
Teaching Artist Residencies	6,410	319
Assemblies and Workshops	17,849	311
Field Trips	1,895	42
Other[5]	13,530	2,293
TOTAL	39,684	2,965

	# OF TEACHERS	# OF INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS
Teacher Professional Development	879	382

[5] Some grantees used part of their grant to fund classroom teachers and reported the number of students receiving instruction from those teachers. One school district reported many students benefiting from creative career pathways events, master classes, and student ambassadorships. Others reported students benefiting from instructional supplies, equipment, and classroom upgrades.



Year-to-Year Comparisons

"Direct Services to Students" was the top investment category at 41% in 2025-26 (compared to 28% in 2024-25). There was renewed interest in providing students with field trips to theaters or museums; some districts opted for artist assemblies as a more cost-effective approach to expand student engagement with the arts. Teacher professional development remains high, as districts try to retain new teachers and create equity by ensuring arts teachers have access to the same knowledge and curricula across school sites.

"Instruments, Equipment, Supplies" dropped to 23% in 2025-26, compared to 39% in 2024-25, possibly due to the slowing expansion of arts programs spurred by Prop 28 funds. Some districts went from offering music (or another arts discipline) at one school site to weekly arts instruction districtwide. This was made possible by hiring arts teachers with Prop 28 dollars, coupled with Advancement Grant funds used to purchase new instruments and instructional materials. There are still districts looking to spend Prop 28 dollars to hire arts teachers. When districts find new arts teachers, they may use future Advancement Grant funds to support those classrooms with purchases of instruments and equipment.

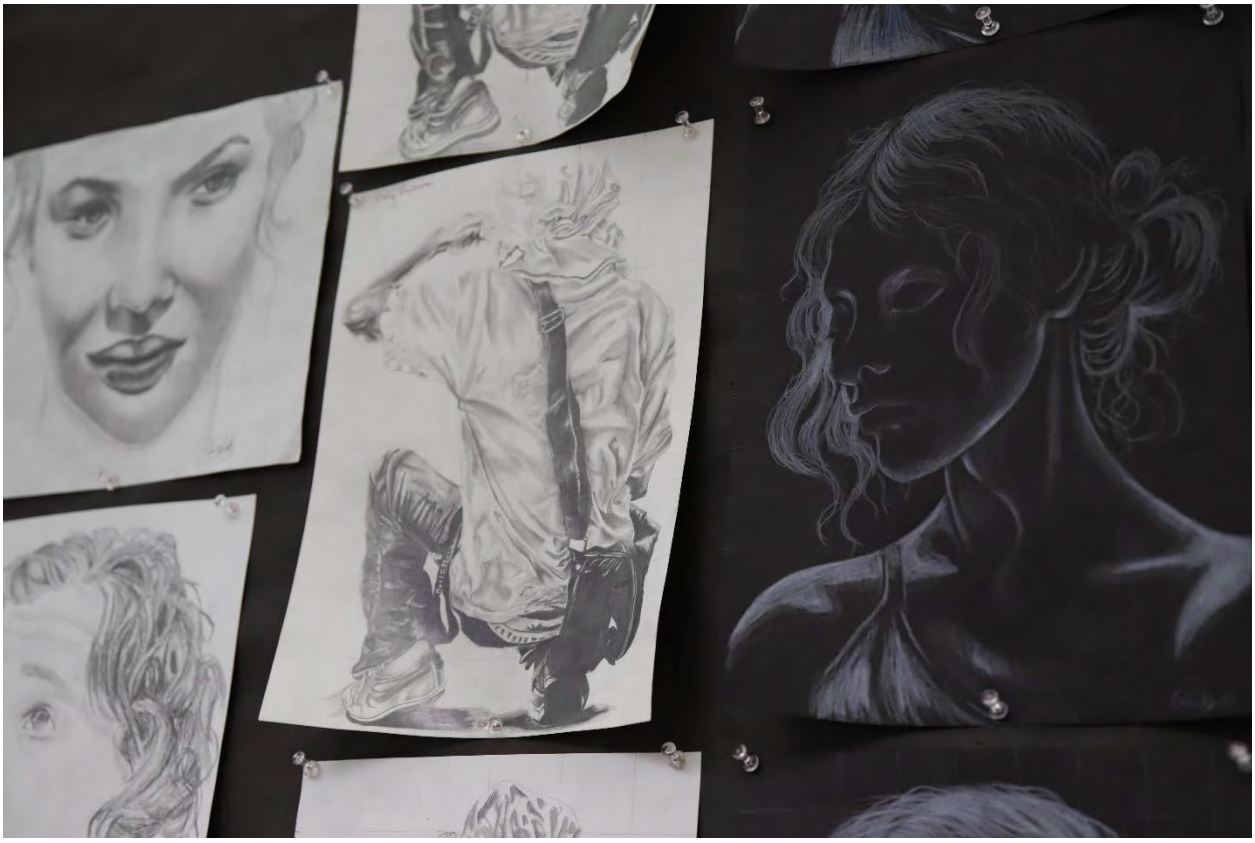


Arie Grace-Lugo of the Kodaly Association of Southern California facilitated a Kodaly and Orff Instrument Integration Professional Development for teachers at Las Virgenes Unified School District.



A production of Matilda Jr. put on by middle school students at Wiseburn Unified School District

Spotlight on Azusa Unified School District



Student artwork at Azusa High School. Photo by Fiona Cansino.

In fall 2018, the Department of Arts and Culture invited the Azusa Unified School District (AUSD) to engage in a strategic planning process to expand equitable student access to arts education. Guided by the district's vision, mission, and core values, a planning committee of district and community stakeholders wrote a comprehensive multi-phase plan including the visual and performing arts and partnerships with local colleges. Through the research and guidance of the first strategic arts plan, the district identified the need for itinerant elementary arts faculty and hired three teachers to serve the discrete needs of TK-5 students. In November 2023, Azusa Unified re-engaged in strategic planning to develop its second five-year strategic arts plan (2024-2029 Strategic Arts Plan). To date, AUSD has created two strategic plans with the Arts Ed Collective and has been a grantee of the Advancement Grant Program since 2020-21.

Advancement Grant funds supported the hiring of elementary arts teachers to expand arts programming across all seven elementary schools in the district. Grant funds also supported the expansion of music and movement for TK-3 students, creating more outlets for student expression. Azusa has seen a high degree of student-teacher collaborations in the arts across school sites and improvements in the level of student artistry from year to year. Large turnouts of families and community members to student art exhibition openings demonstrate that AUSD's arts programs are resonating. AUSD is also proud to have several high school visual arts students placing as finalists every year in the annual Congressional Arts Competition. Several Azusa High School students were finalists, including a first-place win for a fifth consecutive year, for California's thirty-first congressional district in the 2026 Congressional Arts Competition.



Left to right: Azusa High School students Sofia Felix (AP Studio Art), Margueritte Medina (AP Studio Art, Sculpture), and Omar Solis (AP Studio Art, Guitar) with Orchestra and Guitar teacher Kevin Morton. Photo by Fiona Cansino.

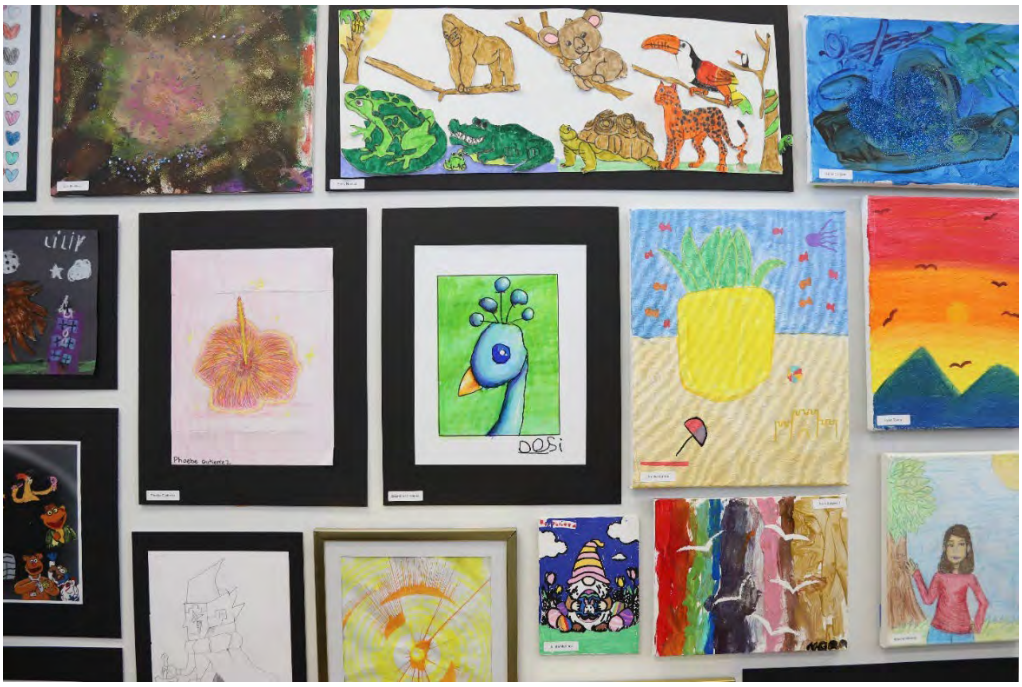
On April 30, AUSD hosted a site visit to showcase the impact of strategic planning support and Advancement Grant Program investments from the Arts Ed Collective. In attendance were Arts Ed Collective Funders Council members, a representative from LA County First District Supervisor Hilda L. Solis' office, AUSD faculty, and AUSD administrators. The day featured an exhibition of elementary school visual artworks; demonstrations of high school visual art, theatre programs, and an alternative rock band club; and a salon-style discussion with the AUSD community. The visit highlighted how AUSD has come together through the arts since its arts faculty formed the Fine Arts Professional Learning Community over a decade ago.

Due to declining student enrollment, AUSD reorganized its schools in 2022-23 to improve and increase the quality of programs and facilities. This resulted in the closure of Gladstone High School and a complete transfer of its student population to Azusa High School by 2023-24. The arts served as a vehicle for former school rivals to come together and reconcile their different cultures and backgrounds following the merger.

Azusa High School students also shared how the arts became a safe space for students and teachers to grieve and heal after the tragic loss of a classmate and artist, Angelina Gonzales, in 2025. They spoke about how the community honored Angelina with a memorial that included her senior portrait, photo collages, and first-place certificate for the 2024 Congressional Arts Competition. These campus experiences, along with the high degree of talent and creativity emerging from AUSD students, speak to the impact that the arts can have on student success and wellbeing.



First-place winning entry in the 2024 Congressional Arts Competition by Azusa High School student and artist Angelina Gonzales



Elementary artwork displayed at Azusa High School's gallery space. Photos by Fiona Cansino.



The Advancement Grant Program is managed by the Department of Arts and Culture's Arts Education Division. The 2025-26 grant cycle received dedicated support from Los Angeles County, The Herb Alpert Foundation, The Deutsch Foundation, The Music Man Foundation, and Sony Pictures Entertainment.

Arts Coordinator Network

The Arts Coordinator Network is part of a wide-reaching strategy to help LA County's 80 school districts[6] build infrastructure for expanding and sustaining equitable arts education across their schools. Through quarterly gatherings, school district arts coordinators connect with each other to share expertise, strategies, and helpful tools and resources.

Three school district arts coordinator convenings took place during 2025-26. These convenings featured case studies on elementary arts curriculum alignment, site arts lead teacher programs, community partnerships, and integrating visual and performing arts with Ethnic Studies coursework. Proposition 28 implementation remained a common thread across all convenings as districts strived to be student-centered and meet the initiative's "supplement rather than supplant" requirement while navigating arts teacher shortages and enrollment declines. Arts for LA, Create CA, and the LA County Office of Education (LACOE) also partnered to share learning opportunities and resources on Prop 28 implementation.

Convening Dates	Participating LEAs (30)	Presenters	Topics & Resources Covered
September 25, 2025 January 29, 2026 April 16, 2026	Acton-Agua Dulce Unified Antelope Valley Union Arcadia Unified Baldwin Park Unified Beverly Hills Unified Centinela Valley Union High Claremont Unified Culver City Unified Downey Unified Glendale Unified Glendora Unified Green Dot Public Schools Hacienda-La Puente Unified ICEF Public Schools iLEAD Public Schools LACOE Las Virgenes Unified Lawndale Elementary Los Angeles Unified Los Nietos Lynwood Unified Magnolia Public Schools Montebello Unified Pasadena Unified Pomona Unified San Gabriel Unified Santa Monica-Malibu Unified South Whittier Elementary Whittier Union High Wilsona Elementary	Arts for LA Create CA LACOE	Arts and Music in Schools: Exploring Prop 28 Implementation and Public Perceptions in Los Angeles County Bloomberg Arts Internship Program Create CA: Tools You Need to Support the Arts & Music in Schools Act Create CA shared initial outcomes from their recent strategic planning process, focused on local and state programming, development of legislative briefings on Prop 28, and strategies to support arts teacher pipelines. LACOE's Arts and STEAM Newsletter Updates Media Career Pathways Prototype State of the Arts Summit: Roots, Recovery, and Regeneration Stitch for LA Youth

[6] In December 2025, the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education voted to separate the school district into two independent entities, the Malibu Unified School District and Santa Monica Unified School District. When this change is formalized, LA County will have a total of 81 school districts.



At the April 2026 Arts Coordinator Network convening, Dr. Emil Ahangarzadeh presented on Glendale Unified School District's latest strategic arts plan, including ways the district has leveraged Prop 28 funds, community partnerships, and strategic design for their 25,000+ students.

Community-Based Arts Education

Embeds arts-based youth development across LA County systems of care to help young people, families, and the adults who work with them to heal and thrive.



In September 2025, a photography/mixed-media exhibition of student works took place at the Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory (BHAC). The showcase featured justice-impacted youth who were recently released from juvenile detention and participated in BHAC's Bridge Academy Movement[7] program supported through the Department of Arts and Culture. Photo by Rudy Torres.

The Department of Arts and Culture (Arts and Culture) partners with the Probation Department and other County agencies to serve systems-impacted and at-promise youth through arts-based strategies that include healing-centered arts instruction and professional development. Across multiple County systems, including juvenile detention and foster care, we embed the teaching artistry and healing-centered approaches of community-based organizations (CBOs) into services for youth in schools, institutions, communities, and civic spaces. Since 2014, over $38 million of State and County funding for areas like juvenile justice and mental health have been dedicated to teaching and learning in the arts that help young people take charge of their own healing, build positive relationships with peers and mentors, and develop skills that prepare them for creative employment.

Highlights

- Youth in Institutions programs logged 56,305 student attendances and up to 250 weekly sessions across eight juvenile justice facilities, seven high schools, and one adult and career education center.
- Arts-based workforce development programs equipped justice-impacted youth with foundational creative workforce skills in areas like mural design, public art production, music engineering, film editing, and silk-screening.
- Creative Wellbeing programs impacted 14,358 youth and 15,431 adults across in-school, institutional, and community settings.

[7] Bridge Academy Movement is BHAC's re-entry program that supports justice-involved youth through meaningful access to the arts, hands-on production assistance training, workforce development, and other resources. This program begins inside the juvenile camps/halls and continues after youth are released and offered an internship at BHAC.

Services for Youth in Institutions

(Intervention Strategy in Partnership with the LA County Probation Department)

Type	Site	Total Youth Attendance[8] (56,305)	Arts Partners (23)
Juvenile Detention Facilities (6)	Camp Afflerbaugh (La Verne)	2,840	Arts for Healing and Justice Network (AHJN): • The Actors' Gang • Dance and Dialogue • Give a Beat • Jail Guitar Doors • Project Knucklehead • Returning Home • Rhythm Arts Alliance • Street Poets Inc. • Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural • Versa-Style Dance Company • WriteGirl Independent Organizations: • Advot • Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory • Center for the Empowerment of Families • Heidi Duckler Dance • Homeboy Art Academy • Inner City Youth Orchestra of LA • InsideOUT Writers • Michael's Daughter Foundation • Million Little • Spirit Awakening Foundation • Theatre of Hearts/Youth First
	Campus Kilpatrick (Malibu)	2,905	
	Dorothy Kirby Center (Commerce)	3,150	
	Camp Joseph Paige (La Verne)	41	
	Camp Glenn Rockey (San Dimas)	585	
	Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (Downey)	22,098	
Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF)	Barry J. Nidorf SYTF (Sylmar)	16,295	AHJN: • Give a Beat • Jail Guitar Doors • Returning Home • Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural • Unusual Suspects Theatre Company Independent Organizations: • Advot • Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory • Heidi Duckler Dance • Homeboy Art Academy • Inner City Youth Orchestra of LA • InsideOUT Writers • Million Little

[8] The Department of Arts and Culture tracks and reports total attendance, rather than the unique number of participants, for Youth in Institutions programs. This protects youth privacy and personally identifiable information. Total numbers in this report are based on attendance logs received from contracted CBO partners.

Over the course of 2025-26, the population across all six juvenile facilities ranged from 551 to 618 youth. The majority of youth are between 15 and 18 years old while the full age span of the youth is 12 to 26.

Juvenile Day Reporting Centers	Boyle Heights Technology Youth Center	2,267	Advot Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory Theatre of Hearts/Youth First
Continuation Schools (4)	West Adams Preparatory High School (Los Angeles, 90007)	97	Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory
	Central High / Tri-C Community Day School (Los Angeles, 90021)	1,531	Spirit Awakening Foundation
	Frontier Continuation High School (Whittier)	667	
	Will J. Reid High School (Long Beach)	268	
Other Schools (3)	La Serna High School (Whittier)	681	Spirit Awakening Foundation
	New Earth High School (Los Angeles, 90066)	1,090	
	Whittier High School	1,657	
Adult and Career Education Program	Pomona Technical Center	133	Advot

Spotlight on Professional Development



Fabian Debora presents on the "Art of Faciliation." Photo by Rudy Torres.

In 2025-26, Arts and Culture launched a series of professional development workshops to highlight the approaches and knowledge of contracted arts partners who serve justice-involved youth, with the aim of promoting interactive arts engagement, peer learning, and new perspectives. These events work to build the capacity of teaching artists, reentry partners, youth development practitioners, and others to meet and align with the needs and strengths of youth and communities impacted by the justice system.

On February 20, community partners, artists, and youth advocates gathered at the Homeboy Art Academy for a day of learning, reflection, and connection. In partnership with Arts and Culture, Homeboy Art Academy facilitated a leadership development seminar centered on how arts and cultural practices can support transformation for young people impacted by the justice system. The day opened with Fabian Debora, executive director of Homeboy Art Academy, leading a session on the "Art of Facilitation," and then transitioned to West African cultural practitioner Tanee Osborne, who spoke about the historical roots of traditional instruments and their role in wellness and healing. To close out the day, Martin Flores and Homeboy Art Academy's Music Heals team guided participants through a restorative drumming circle to harness collective energy into rhythm, connection, and community. Participants gained a deeper

understanding of arts-based healing and strengthened their facilitation skills through trauma-informed, empathetic approaches.



Tanee Osborne (left) performed alongside her mentor Baba Fode Sissoko (right) as part of an introduction to the historical roots of traditional West African instruments and their role in wellness and healing. Photo by Rudy Torres.

On March 19, Spirit Awakening Foundation hosted a full-day, in-person professional development session, "In the Heart of Creation," for 60 teaching artists and other community partners serving justice-involved youth to engage with the types of creative, project-based learning that can transform the lives of young people. Spirit Awakening artists specializing in music, visual arts, theatre, and creative writing led interactive sessions to facilitate and model self-expression through drawing, writing, improvisation, sound, and role playing. The day provided concrete strategies to infuse teaching artists' work with joy and creativity, and to reignite purpose and resilience among adults who serve justice-involved youth.





Participants had the opportunity to select their breakout sessions, which included activities like visual artmaking and songwriting. Photos courtesy of the Spirit Awakening Foundation.

Barry J. Nidorf Secure Youth Treatment Facility (Sylmar)

In May 2025, Arts and Culture, Probation, and the Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory (BHAC) launched the Bridge Academy Movement x Mural Workforce Academy (BAMxMWA) at Barry J. Nidorf Secure Youth Treatment Facility. BAMxMWA is an ongoing 26-week workforce development and arts education program designed to equip youth with foundational skills in mural design, visual arts, and public art production while fostering creativity, teamwork, and professional readiness. Through hands-on instruction led by experienced teaching artists and industry professionals, youth explore identity, build confidence, and develop real-world creative skills in the principles of mural creation, project planning, and collaboration. The program emphasizes positive youth development, leadership, communication, and civic engagement, culminating in the creation of collaborative mural projects or portfolio-based work that reflects participants' artistic growth and lived experiences.

The first cohort of BAMxMWA ran through fall 2025, and the program continued through the end of June 2026 with a subsequent cohort of youth participants. BAMxMWA remains active and continues to provide youth with workforce development opportunities through mural design, public art, creative leadership, and project-based learning.



Mural completed by BAMxMWA participants in fall 2025



Mural completed by BAMxMWA participants in June 2026

In June, the Workforce Readiness Apprenticeship Program (WRAP) launched in partnership with the Arts for Healing and Justice Network (AHJN) and Jail Guitar Doors. WRAP is a workforce development initiative designed to prepare youth for successful entry into employment, post-secondary education, apprenticeships, and career pathways. Through hands-on learning, career exploration, and professional skill-building, youth participants develop essential workplace competencies, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, time management, professionalism, financial literacy, and job readiness. Initial activities included enrolling youth in recording engineering and digital film editing apprenticeships, getting to know their needs, and acquainting them with terminology and digital audio workstations, cameras, and editing software. The WRAP program will be providing youth with industry-recognized certifications in Pro Tools and DaVinci Resolve.

By pairing compensated skill-building with mentorship and financial empowerment, the BAMxMWA and WRAP programs support justice-involved youth in gaining practical experience and preparing for successful reintegration into their communities upon release. These programs reflect LA County's investment in arts-based workforce development, ensuring young people have the tools, confidence, and opportunities they need to thrive.

Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (Downey)

Over the past year, the Center for the Empowerment of Families (CEF) facilitated Department of Mental Health (DMH) professional development sessions for Probation officers at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall. Since March, CEF expanded their services to provide a mandated professional development series focused on strengthening the capacity of Probation staff and community partners to support the mental health and wellbeing of youth and families. Through creative mindfulness practices, reflective activities, and interactive discussions, the trainings provided adult participants with practical tools and trauma-informed strategies to manage stress, promote resilience, strengthen emotional wellbeing, and cultivate positive relationships with colleagues, youth, and the communities they serve.

On May 1, Arts and Culture and Homeboy Art Academy launched an in-school arts integration program in partnership with the LA County Office of Education (LACOE) at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall. The

program focuses on silk-screening, equipping youth with hands-on learning in design concepts, image preparation, printing techniques, and production processes, in addition to promoting cultural awareness, identity exploration, and positive communication. Youth participants create custom designs on apparel and other printable materials for occasions like graduations, special events, and other facility celebrations.

Youth from four LACOE classrooms made T-shirts and stoles for all graduating students and LACOE staff members in June. The graduation celebrated youth who successfully completed their designated arts, workforce development, or enrichment program at Los Padrinos. The graduation also honored participants' accomplishments and provided an opportunity for youth to showcase their work, reflect on their experiences, and celebrate their achievements alongside Arts and Culture staff, Probation representatives, and program partners. Certificates of completion were presented to acknowledge participants' successful completion of program requirements and encourage continued educational, vocational, and personal growth.



Graduation T-shirts and stoles designed and screen-printed by youth for the LACOE graduation in June

Another highlight from the past year was original works and compositions by youth participants in programming led by Theatre of Hearts/Youth First. Over the year, youth learned to work in watercolor painting, printmaking, hip hop songwriting, and music production. With guidance from teaching artists, youth learned to find their voice, build confidence, and transform their ideas and experiences into original works of music, shaping the musical direction and lyrical themes of songs like "Floatin'," which was written and recorded collaboratively by youth. Through multiple sessions, youth gained essential life skills like communication, collaboration, and conflict navigation, and learned creative career skills like songwriting, vocal performance, microphone techniques, audio recording, and music studio engineering.



A selection of watercolor and printmaking pieces created by youth during sessions led by Theatre of Hearts/Youth First

Youth in Institutions is managed by the Department of Arts and Culture's Youth Development Division and was funded through the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act and Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant (administered by the Los Angeles County Probation Department and Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council).

Creative Wellbeing

Creative Wellbeing is a strategic collaboration between the LA County Department of Arts and Culture (Arts and Culture); Office of Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being (formerly Office of Child Protection); Department of Mental Health (DMH); Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS); Justice, Care, and Opportunities Department (JCOD); and Arts for Healing and Justice Network (AHJN).

As a strengths-based, whole-systems approach to nurturing creativity and wellbeing in schools and communities, Creative Wellbeing offers healing-informed arts instruction for youth as well as arts-based professional development for educators and other adults who work with young people.

The intentional, parallel focus on supporting both young people and the adults who serve them is central to the model. This approach generates a powerful and multi-directional ripple effect at multiple levels. As young people engage in healing-informed arts instruction, they explore identity and self-expression and discover ways to connect with each other and caring adults. Similarly, as youth-serving adults engage in arts-based professional development and self-care sessions, they increase their understanding of healing-informed approaches, mental health protective factors, self-attunement, and the preventative significance of their own self-care.

As part of LA County's Unified Prevention Framework for Children, Youth, and Families, Creative Wellbeing also strengthens the County's broader prevention efforts by expanding access to arts, cultural connection, and community belonging—core conditions identified as essential for children, youth, and families to thrive.





Pasadena Unified School District educators were engaged in "living art" and movement activities at an all-staff professional development day in August 2025. Photos by Rudy Torres.

In 2025-26, Creative Wellbeing crossed a critical turning point driven by newly hired Arts and Culture staff who have enabled services and partnerships to reach an increased number of young people across school and community settings. This moment marks a transition into sustained, intentional growth. In the past year, Creative Wellbeing services provided by 32 community-based organizations[9] (CBOs)

[9] **Arts for Healing and Justice Network (AHJN):** Armory Center for the Arts, artworxLA, ClayDD, Fostering Dreams Project, Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, Give a Beat, Green Arrow Co-Lab, InsideOUT Writers, Jail Guitar Doors, No Easy Props, The PLUS ME Project, Project Knucklehead, Rhythm Arts Alliance, Street Poets Inc., Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural, The Unusual Suspects Theatre Company, Upward Together, Venice Arts, Versa-Style Dance Company, and WriteGirl

impacted 14,358 youth and 15,431 adults across in-school, institutional, and community settings. Program evaluation findings (including learnings and outcomes related to mental health, social-emotional competencies, and social support) from the past year by Harder+Company Community Research are available as data dashboards.



Outcomes from 2025-26 services delivered as seen in social media posts for the Creative Wellbeing data dashboards

Creative Wellbeing in Schools

During the 2025-26 school year, Creative Wellbeing services took place at nine school districts[10], two charter schools (Alliance Morgan McKinzie High School in East LA and Learning By Design in South LA), and DMH's School Based Community Access Point. At Alliance Morgan McKinzie High School, Creative Wellbeing services included a special project called "Connected Roots" where Families Uniting Families/Project Fatherhood social workers, Upward Together teaching artists, and the school's community engagement coordinator collaborated to implement an intergenerational program to nurture family connection and protective factors, including concrete supports like housing referrals, healthcare navigation, and case management.

Spotlight on Cesar Chavez Continuation High School (Compton Unified)

Arts and Culture deepened its partnership with Compton Unified School District and extended Creative Wellbeing services to Cesar Chavez Continuation High School in the spring 2026 semester. One of the arts partners who provided a 12-week artist residency at the school included AHJN member artworxLA, who has long-standing roots as an arts provider in continuation schools. artworxLA engaged students in creating a multimedia installation in conversation with The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA's *Monuments*

Independent Organizations: Advot, African Soul International, Arts and Healing Initiative, Center for the Empowerment of Families, CONTRA-TIEMPO, Homeboy Art Academy, Justice for My Sister, POIETO, Rhythm & Truth, Spirit Awakening Foundation, and ZEAL

[10] **Antelope Valley Union** (Eastside High), **Bassett Unified**, **Compton Unified** (Cesar Chavez Continuation High, McKinley Elementary), **Long Beach Unified**, **Lynwood Unified**, **Los Angeles Unified (**Grant Early Education Center), **Palmdale**, **Pasadena Unified** (Pasadena High, Rose City Continuation High, McKinley Elementary), **Whittier City (**Christian Sorensen Science Academy, Daniel Phelan Language Academy, Lou Henry Hoover Elementary, Lydia Jackson Elementary, Orange Grove Elementary, Mill School and Technology Academy, Wallen L. Andrews Middle School, Water Dexter Middle School, West Whittier Elementary)

exhibition. Students assembled their own cardboard "sound systems," layering visual and sonic elements to explore how music and sound systems can become sites of historical and cultural significance. The installation spoke to students' personal histories and connection to their community of Compton, family lineage symbols, and radical imagining of portals to other worlds via color and sound.

At the end of their residency, artworxLA hosted a culminating youth showcase in April at The Geffen Contemporary to celebrate artworks created by students from various Arts and Culture partner sites, including Cesar Chavez Continuation High School and Rose City Continuation High School (Pasadena Unified). The culmination connected students from various regions throughout the County and reinforced their tremendous assets, creativity, and hopes for the future, despite students navigating systems that may isolate or narrow their pathways.



Installation by Cesar Chavez Continuation High School students in the culmination showcase at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA

Continuation of Post-Wildfire Recovery

Creative Wellbeing partners implemented teaching artist residencies across Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD), including those serving Pasadena High School teachers and students with disabilities enrolled in the CARE special education program. Rose City Continuation High School also received professional development sessions and artist residencies, one of which involved artworxLA teaching artists training and mentoring students to curate and produce the annual district-wide art exhibition, *No Boundaries*. Student curators crafted exhibition themes rooted in the Creative Wellbeing curriculum guide (e.g., hope, joy, identity, resilience). The 10-day exhibition of artworks by TK-12 students across PUSD opened on March 13 as part of ArtNight Pasadena. This project demonstrated how Creative Wellbeing leverages the arts and artists as a crucial component of bringing a community together to nurture wellbeing and resiliency.

Following the success of past Creative Wellbeing professional development sessions at PUSD, Creative Wellbeing nonprofit partners are now incorporated into the district's semi-annual district-wide teacher

professional development days. PUSD invited these partners back to facilitate additional arts-based professional development to close out the 2025-26 school year. On June 8 to 9, Advot, Homeboy Art Academy, POIETO, and the Armory Center for the Arts provided experiential workshops that engaged teachers in self-reflection and a space to connect with colleagues. These workshops energized conversations about the importance of the arts in creating peer connection and supporting young people's social-emotional and cognitive development in the face of increased technology use. The Armory Center for the Arts also supported a retreat for PUSD school principals on June 10, which helped to foster the socio-emotional wellness of school leaders who were at the frontlines of navigating another challenging school year compounded by the aftermath of, and recovery from, the 2025 Eaton Fire.

Spotlight on Loma Alta Park

Since June 2025, Arts and Culture has partnered with the LA County Department of Parks and Recreation to launch healing-centered youth arts programs at Loma Alta Park in Altadena. Nonprofit partners[11] fostered much-needed collective healing and community engagement for local youth (ages 3 through 17) recovering from the Eaton Fire, including summer camps as well as early childhood and after-school enrichment programs like Tiny Tots and Our SPOT.



At Loma Alta Park, African Soul International enriched the Every Body Plays After-School Program with a West African dance and drumming artist residency. Their performers joined the park's Black History Month Celebration hosted by the Department of Parks and Recreation on February 6, 2026. Photos by Rudy Torres.

[11] **Arts for Healing and Justice Network (AHJN)**: Fostering Dreams Project, No Easy Props

Independent Organizations: African Soul International, Center for the Empowerment of Families, Homeboy Art Academy



Young people and families during the Black History Month Celebration at Loma Alta Park

Youth participants reported powerful moments of healing and joy at Loma Alta Park. For example, youth were initially skeptical of summer dance sessions, but teaching artists from No Easy Props quickly won them over. Several children reported it being their first time learning any form of dancing and said it is now their favorite activity.

Through a collaboration between Arts and Culture, Parks and Recreation, and the Department of Aging and Disabilities, nonprofit partners also provided intergenerational arts workshops at Loma Alta Park's community garden space and temporary senior center. In another example of impact, nonprofit partner Center for the Empowerment of Families (CEF) bridged the healing-arts programming they led with youth incarcerated at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall with the intergenerational sessions they led at Loma Alta Park. CEF invited youth at Los Padrinos to engage in acts of healing and community service by creating paper flower arrangements as gifts to wildfire-impacted seniors. These seniors then created cards for the youth at Los Padrinos, all of which helped to deepen intergenerational empathy.

> "Youth from [Los Padrinos] created mixed media art pieces intended to uplift senior Altadena residents impacted by the Eaton Fires. [The seniors] were deeply moved and took great care in selecting pieces that resonated with them. We were also touched to learn that a couple of our seniors were retired Los Angeles County Probation officers, making the exchange especially meaningful. We would also like to thank [the Department of Arts and Culture] for providing access and partnership that allowed us to serve seniors recovering from the Altadena Eaton fires. This experience offered moments of connection, gratitude, and hope for everyone involved." – CEF

Elinor Johnston, a teaching artist with Fostering Dreams Project, shared in an end-of-year reflection that Loma Alta Park has been one of her favorite places to teach. Since the launch of Creative Wellbeing programs at Loma Alta Park, she has seen first-hand how youth participants have increased their engagement, confidence, and self-esteem through dance. A young child who initially struggled to focus and follow instructions gradually found his stride and learned to dance on beat and count the rhythm, with support from Johnston and her co-facilitator Raven Fierro. At the Tiny Tots graduation, parents

shared stories about their kids coming home and raving about how much they enjoyed learning dance as a form of self-expression, which further affirmed the positive effects of the program.

Creative Wellbeing in Foster Care

Multiple foster care agencies have thrived from Creative Wellbeing services. At Aviva Family and Children Services' Uplift Drop-In Center, which supports unhoused transitional age youth (TAY), Arts and Culture increased services to four weekly sessions to meet youth demand. In the past year, Spirit Awakening led "aspiration and future landscape" sessions where youth created vision collages and crafted self-affirmation greeting cards, letters, and poems. Teaching artists also provided art supplies for young people to take with them and continue their artmaking. POIETO facilitated weekly skill-building sessions on ethical and creative applications of artificial intelligence (AI) and connections to creative career pathways through analog and digital artmaking activities. At Aviva Wallis House, an interim supportive housing program for TAY women and their children, Justice for My Sister led weekly visual art, music, and short film production workshops.



Youth work on collage masks at Aviva's Uplift Drop-In Center during an activity led by Spirit Awakening Foundation.

At Families Uniting Families/Project Fatherhood, social workers and Creative Wellbeing teaching artists practiced an innovative model in which they worked together during supervised visitations[12]. During these sessions, parents spent meaningful time with their children alongside arts activities and family therapy. This model of service enables reunification and the long-term goal to prevent deeper entry into foster care systems.

[12] Supervised visitations are court-ordered arrangements where parents can only see their children with supervision by a neutral third-party provider to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child.

Creative Wellbeing LA County and Community Partners
Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS): • Policy, Leadership, and Staff Development Division • Out-of-Home Care Management Division • Dream Home Care (Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program [STRTP]) • The Virtuous Woman (STRTP) • ZOE House (STRTP) • Aviva Family and Children's Services (Foster Family Agency [FFA]) • Families Uniting Families / Project Fatherhood (FFA) • Office of Equity (OOE), LGBTQ+ Champions
Department of Mental Health (DMH): • School Based Community Access Point (SBCAP) • Partners in Suicide Prevention (PSP) • Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Network (LASPN) • Office of Transition Aged Youth (TAY) • Sheila Kuehl Family Wellness Center
Department of Parks and Recreation: • Loma Alta Park
DMH / UCLA Prevention Center of Excellence: • Wellbeing4LA Learning Center
Office of Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being (OCFW)
LA County Office of Education (LACOE) • Nutrition and Wellness
Department of Health Services (DHS): • Edward R. Roybal Comprehensive Health Center • Alvarado Health Center • Claude Hudson Comprehensive Health Center • Ambulatory Care Network (Town Halls, Primary Care Physicians)
Department of Public Health (DPH): • Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) • Pomona Wellness Community

Creative Wellbeing Gatherings

Creative Wellbeing partners gathered for two days of hands-on learning and cross-sector capacity-building on January 16 and June 5. Diverse partners[13] in Creative Wellbeing shared their expertise; presentations focused on neurodiversity, perinatal mental health, domains of youth wellbeing, and systems supporting youth with disabilities. Many attendees, which included teaching artists from various CBO partner organizations, school district representatives, and staff from LA County departments, emphasized the importance of having space to cultivate cross-sector relationships and find alignment and points of connection. They expressed a strong desire for more gatherings in the future to continue to learn and practice healing-centered arts strategies for self- and community care.

[13] January 16 agenda: "Community Learning" with CONTRA-TIEMPO, UCLA Center of Prevention Excellence, Department of Mental Health + Eastern Regional Center, and ZEAL/Coloured Art Studio; presentation on Creative Wellbeing evaluations and surveys

June 5 agenda: "Community Building" with Rhythm & Truth; "Community Learning" with Alisha Manning (DMH), Nana Sarkodee-Adoo (Department of Youth Development [DYD]), and Sahar Moheize (DYD)



Attendees of the Creative Wellbeing gathering on June 5, 2026



Creative Wellbeing partners engaged in breakout groups for a "World Cafe" activity, where they reflected on the strengths of the Creative Wellbeing approach and ideated about tools, resources, and cultural practices that can further support the growth of Creative Wellbeing.

Open Cohorts and Special Events

Virtual and in-person cohorts allow participants to cultivate relationships with LA County agencies, pilot ideas for embedding the arts into their daily work, and engage in self and community care practices to prevent burnout.

In partnership with the UCLA Child & Youth Behavioral Health Center of Excellence (formerly UCLA Prevention Center of Excellence), the Arts for Healing and Justice Network (AHJN), and the Wellbeing4LA Learning Center, virtual *Self & Community Care Open Sessions* provided year-round engagement opportunities across the Creative Wellbeing network, which is comprised of educators, mental health professionals, advocates, youth content advisors, youth development workers, teaching artists, LA County staff, and others. The monthly series created space for adults who dedicate their time, hearts, and energy to support young people in LA County to explore creativity, build community, connect to their joy and purpose, and support their own healing and wellbeing. Each session was led by a different guest artist among contracted arts organizations, including those from AHJN's 24-member (and growing) network.

Arts and Culture also co-hosted the following events to support arts partners and practitioners who serve youth (e.g., social workers, educators, teaching artists) to provide restorative, healing-centered practices and resources in service of meeting the needs of young people and the communities they serve:

- On April 22, Arts and Culture hosted *Creative Co-regulation With Neurodiverse Communities* in partnership with DMH + UCLA Wellbeing for LA Learning Center. Through interactive experiences with presenters from ClayDD, Rhythm Arts Alliance, and Jazz Hands For Autism, this online session engaged participants in embodied practices (e.g., mindfulness exercises, breathwork with live drumming, guided movement) that fostered connection, accessibility, and collective care. Participants explored educator frameworks for co-regulation and heard from an expert-led panel who shared practical strategies for including neurodivergent youth and adults, adapting to sensory needs, addressing stigma, and fostering connection and empowerment in arts-based settings. The recorded session is available here.

- On May 4, Arts and Culture hosted a virtual program, *Nurturing Wellbeing Through Arts and Culture: Digital Tools and Creative Practices for Youth Wellness*, to recognize May as Mental Health Month. The event highlighted the essential role that arts, culture, and cross-sector partnership play in supporting individual and community wellbeing. Participants learned about current mental health resources available to youth and the adults who support them, particularly Soluna—a free, state-supported digital behavioral health platform available at no cost for young people ages 13–25 across California. Soluna is a core component of the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) and was launched in partnership with the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). The platform is fully funded by the State of California to support prevention, early intervention, and access to behavioral health resources for youth and young adults statewide. The program also featured a healing arts experience through Creative Wellbeing and a curated selection of healing arts resources.

External events hosted by Arts Ed Collective partners also provided opportunities to disseminate and embed the Creative Wellbeing approach through healing-centered, arts-based workshops and engagements. Engaging over 6,300 attendees, Creative Wellbeing workshops were embedded across partner events in LA County, including (but not limited to) the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Network Annual Summit, Aviva Family and Children's Services' Resource Families and Relative Caregiver Celebrations, LA County Arts and Health Week Summit, and the Penny Lane Centers' EDGY Conference.

Ahead of the fifth annual LA County Arts and Health Week Summit in June 2026, Arts and Culture staff and Creative Wellbeing partners also participated in *LA Opera Podcasts: Behind the Curtain*, as part of *LA Opera Connects*, a free, virtual learning series focused on arts and health, for an episode titled, "At the Intersection of Arts and Health - Creative Wellbeing with Elisabeth Nails."



At Penny Lane Centers' annual EDGY (Embracing the Diversity of GLBTQ+ Youth & Families) Conference on June 15, Creative Wellbeing partners facilitated "Creative Wellbeing: Centering LGBTQIA2S+ Joy and Care Through Healing Centered Arts Practices." This mental health and wellbeing workshop was attended by mental health professionals, social workers, educators, caregivers, and parents to ground their practice in collective care through the arts. The session included an opportunity for participants to add names to an altar (pictured above) of "Transcestors" and LGBTQIA2S+ champions and artists, co-created by teaching artists and Arts and Culture staff.

Creative Wellbeing is managed by the Department of Arts and Culture's Arts Education Division. It received dedicated support from the Care First Community Investment (administered by the LA County Justice, Care, and Opportunities Department) and California Mental Health Services Act (administered by the LA County Department of Mental Health). This project was also funded in part by FireAid and LA Care Health Plan and benefited residents of LA County that were directly affected by the 2025 LA County Wildfires.

Creative Career Pathways for Youth

Addresses systemic barriers within creative industries and supports young people in entering and shaping LA County's creative economy.

The LA County Department of Arts and Culture's Creative Career Pathways for Youth work emerged out of the 2017 Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative (CEII) and is dedicated to expanding opportunities for young people to access careers in the arts and creative industries. With the goal of cultivating a more diverse and inclusive workforce, the agency focuses on those who have historically been excluded from, and are underrepresented in, these fields. In 2019, Arts and Culture published the Building Creative Careers for Youth field scan report, which includes interviews with arts organizations, school districts, industry professionals, and young people. This field scan offers 23 recommendations to remove barriers and improve access to creative careers for LA County youth, some of which are being implemented today.

Highlights

- The Bloomberg Arts Internship program for high school students launched in June 2026, preceded by the recruitment of host sites and regional hub partners in fall 2025.
- Twelve young adults participated in the second youth cohort of the Media Career Pathways Prototype.
- Efforts to expand career pathways and Career Technical Education (CTE) programs as part of school district strategic planning (see page 6) and the Advancement Grant Program (see Inglewood Unified, ICEF Public Schools, and Magnolia Public Schools in Attachment 2)



Bloomberg Arts Internship interns at a field trip to the California African American Museum on Juneteenth

Bloomberg Arts Internship Program

Funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Bloomberg Arts Internship (BAI) program is a national effort operating in nine US cities: Baltimore, Boston, Detroit, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, and in 2026, LA County and San Francisco. Since 2012, the program has provided more than 2,250 rising public high school seniors with paid internships at over 250 cultural organizations, along with work-readiness and college preparation training. As the largest and one of the few paid internship programs for high school students, BAI aims to prepare young people for success

in the workforce, whether in the arts or other industries, promote engagement with the arts and cultural sector, and prepare students to undertake the college admissions process and transition into higher education.

In 2025, Bloomberg Philanthropies provided a planning grant for Arts and Culture to launch BAI in LA County. For Arts Education Month in March, the LA County Board of Supervisors adopted a motion authored by First District Supervisor Hilda L. Solis directing Arts and Culture to implement the BAI program as part of Creative Career Pathways for Youth. In February 2026, Bloomberg Philanthropies awarded Arts and Culture a multi-year grant to launch LA County BAI.

LA County BAI offers an eight-week paid summer internship (at a living wage of $27.81 per hour) for rising public high school seniors at arts and cultural organizations, in addition to professional development, college preparation support, mentorship, and cultural excursions. Summer interns are eligible to continue their internships through BAI: School Year, a 22-week paid extension for high school seniors. In alignment with the Countywide Cultural Policy and Arts and Culture's long-term commitment to cultural equity and inclusion, LA County BAI is designed to ensure that youth from all backgrounds, including those from historically disadvantaged communities, have access to internship opportunities.

Arts and cultural organizations in select regions of LA County applied to become internship worksites in fall 2025, and 22 organizations[14] from the San Fernando Valley, South Los Angeles, and Metro Los Angeles were selected as host worksites. Each worksite hosts two to three interns, three days per week, where interns gain meaningful work experience through a project-based workplan and exposure to professional pathways in the arts and culture sector.

On the other two weekdays, interns gather at nonprofit partner sites operating as a Regional Hub[15]. Regional Hubs host 8–12 interns twice a week for cohort-style professional development, personal enrichment, college preparation support, mentorship, and cultural excursions. Regional Hubs manage and design these "Program Days" to expose interns to creative careers, provide academic and career development opportunities (e.g., writing support, professional skills building), peer learning, mentorship, and wraparound services to support mental and physical health.

Participating arts and culture organizations posted their internship positions and conducted outreach in April, and a total of 48 interns were selected in May. LA County BAI began on June 15 and ran through August 7, ending with a culmination event to celebrate the interns' achievements.

The Bloomberg Arts Internship program is managed by the Department of Arts and Culture's Cross Sector Initiatives Division. It received dedicated support from Bloomberg Philanthropies.

[14] **Arts for Healing and Justice Network (AHJN):** artworxLA, Street Poets Inc., Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural

Independent Organizations: 826LA, African Soul International, Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory, Filipino American Symphony Orchestra, Friends of the McGroarty Arts Center, Get Lit - Words Ignite, Grand Performances, Heidi Duckler Dance, HERO Theatre, Las Fotos Project, Latino Film Institute's Youth Cinema Project, Latino Theatre Company, Little Tokyo Service Center, Mission Opera, Outside In Theatre, Plaza de la Raza, The Blank Theatre, The Ebell of Los Angeles, and Women's Voices Now.

[15] **Regional Hubs** include 11:11 Projects, Arts for a Better Tomorrow, artworxLA, New Filmmakers LA, and Street Poets Inc.

Media Career Pathways Prototype

The Department of Arts and Culture's Media Career Pathways Prototype (MCPP) explores pathways to visual effects, gaming, animation, and music production careers for LA County youth who have historically experienced barriers to employment. Goals of the program include:

- Creating pathways to family-sustaining careers in the arts and creative sectors for LA County opportunity youth, ages 18–24 (as well as youth impacted by foster care, justice system, and/or economic precarity)

- Implementing the California Department of Education's AME Workforce Training Initiative model, which provides industry-aligned education, work-based learning, and apprenticeship opportunities in community settings for youth who do not have access to in-school CTE

- Addressing critical social and structural barriers through community-embedded and culturally responsive approaches

Implementation Partners	*Instructors*	*Evaluation Partner*
Watts Labor Community Action Committee Heart of Los Angeles The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture	Tony Chennault Logan Jackson	Harder+Company



Logan Jackson, MCPP instructor (center); Meia Johnson, Program Manager for Creative Career Pathways for Youth (right-end); and the second MCPP cohort

After the first cohort of nine transitional age youth (TAY), ages 18-24, completed the program in May 2025, the Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC) recruited 12 young adults to launch the second MCPP cohort in October 2025. Over 24 weeks, Cohort 2 participated in industry-aligned, hard skills training in media arts (e.g., post-production and editing, visual effects, digital storytelling communications, multimedia production) provided by The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture and two professional filmmakers who served as instructors, mentors, and role models. They also received general career soft skills training provided by Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA). The prototype used healing-centered approaches and provided wraparound support services. Participants received access to state-of-the art technology, donated by Sony Pictures Entertainment, and a stipend for completing at least

80% of the program. WLCAC leveraged federal workforce resources available through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to co-enroll six of the 12 MCPP participants in additional supportive services (e.g., monthly check-ins from an assigned case manager, counseling sessions, food resources).



MCPP students during the filming of a director pitch at The Watts Museum of Civil Rights at WLCAC

The Creator's Compass

In spring 2026, three MCPP students (Ayanna Chalyse, Nagi Moore, and Nathan Torres) were interviewed and featured in "Creative of the Week" segments of *The Creator's Compass*, the Snap Foundation's free newsletter for young creatives (ages 14–24) in Los Angeles featuring job opportunities, inspirational stories, and applicable how-tos related to creative work.

Culmination

On April 16, 2026, all project partners—Arts and Culture, WLCAC, The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture, and HOLA—came together to celebrate the achievements of the second cohort. The culmination event included red carpet interviews and movie posters, followed by screenings of the cohort's short films. These films represented a wide range of genres such as romance, sci-fi, noir, and drama. Across all films, young people demonstrated their responses to present realities in their communities, by drawing on their lived experiences to invent new worlds and explore themes spanning family bonds, young love, federal immigration raids, skate culture, and the child welfare system. The showcase concluded with remarks by MCPP instructors Tony Chennault and Logan Jackson and a panel discussion with the youth cohort about their experiences as filmmakers, directors, writers, and producers. In total, 12 participants graduated from the program and received a certificate of completion. Please see Attachment 3 for film posters created by the MCPP graduates.

Evaluation

Over two years of MCPP, evaluation partner Harder+Company Community Research (Harder+Company) conducted a mixed-methods evaluation to understand the experience of program leaders and the program's impact on youth. Data collection included on-site observations of programming at WLCAC, focus groups with students, and staff interviews. Harder+Company also documented best practices and challenges for replicating a media arts training model that supports LA County transitional age youth who experience barriers to high-wage creative careers. A comprehensive evaluation report featuring findings, promising practices, and actions for future programming is planned for release in fall 2026.





At the MCPP culmination, graduates were greeted on the red carpet and interviewed about their films. Photos courtesy of the Watts Labor Community Action Committee.

The Media Career Pathways Prototype (MCPP) is managed by the Department of Arts and Culture's Cross Sector Initiatives Division. MCPP, including the evaluation by Harder+Company, received dedicated support from Los Angeles County, the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (administered by the Los Angeles County Probation Department and Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council), Sony Pictures Entertainment, and the Stuart Foundation.

Shared Learning & Leadership

Enables practitioners and advocates to pool resources and leverage expertise for greater impact while cultivating diverse leadership within communities, across sectors, and at all levels of experience.

Highlights

- 14,842 individuals engaged across 764 stakeholder convenings
- In the first year of their term, the Arts Ed Collective Leadership Circle gathered best practices and surfaced community needs around access to arts education programs.
- The 2026 Arts Education Forum convened educators, philanthropic representatives, artists, and LA County representatives to explore how to collectively build sustainable, equitable pathways into the creative economy.
- As part of ongoing strategic planning efforts, school district network convenings, and matching grants, the Department of Arts and Culture co-sponsored events to support school districts in spending Prop 28 funds effectively and equitably.

Convenings

Between July 2025 and June 2026, the Arts Ed Collective, through its many partners and programs, hosted 764 events for learning, sharing, and collaboration. Attendance counts estimate 14,842 unique participants and a total attendance of 16,213. Attendees represented 45 LA County school districts, four charter networks, 17 LA County government agencies, and 209 community-based organizations. These convenings supported each of the Arts Ed Collective's strategic priorities with content for target audiences and the broader public. Please see Attachment 4 for an overview and summary of all Arts Ed Collective convenings in 2025-26.



Arts Ed Collective Leadership Circle members at their quarterly meeting in May 2026. Photo by Rudy Torres.

Arts Ed Collective Leadership Circle

During the 2025-26 fiscal year, the Arts Ed Collective Leadership Circle, a community advisory body launched in January 2025, participated in quarterly meetings and community engagements. Community engagements were external programs, events, and convenings in the arts and education fields where Leadership Circle members cultivated relationships, surfaced community needs, and gathered best practices around expanding access to arts and education programs. Please see Attachment 5 for a list of Leadership Circle members.

Quarterly meetings during summer and fall 2025 focused on identifying themes and issues to be potentially addressed by the Arts Ed Collective, such as funding cuts to arts and culture programs; access to community third spaces[16]; and federal attacks on anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. The group also discussed findings and recommendations from a Department of Arts and Culture (Arts and Culture) report, *Relief, Recovery, and Reform: Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic for arts and culture*, about reforming funding and emergency response systems in the arts and culture field, and reflected on how they help young people engage in the arts as a vehicle for activism, protest, relief, healing, and joy during fraught times.

Quarterly meetings were also devoted to sharing learnings from community engagements and shaping the Leadership Circle's Four Pillars:

1. Centering young people in the decision-making process
2. Empowering communities through self-determination
3. Integrating arts across systems and agencies to provide holistic support for young people
4. Fostering authentic, respectful relationships to promote community wellbeing

Informed by the Four Pillars and Arts Ed Blueprint, community engagements included Leadership Circle members creating youth "listening" walls at the Mid City Arts and Music Festival, learning about arts programs and youth fellowships at Color Compton and the Compton Art & History Museum, and exploring community- and healing-centered design and cultural expression at a festival hosted by Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural. Select Leadership Circle members also served as panelists for the 2026-27 Advancement Grant Program, reviewing and scoring applications, and helped plan the 2026 Arts Education Forum (see page 46) alongside the Arts Ed Collective Funders Council.

On February 27, Director Kristin Sakoda joined the Arts Ed Collective Leadership Circle's quarterly meeting to share perspectives about Arts and Culture's budget, LA County's budget process, and efforts to improve fiscal transparency. After discussing Arts and Culture's mission-aligned partnerships with other County departments and sectors, Leadership Circle members emphasized the need for a multi-phased approach, including hyper-local engagements across the region, for long-term, sustainable, and systemic change.

The Leadership Circle's broad area of interest is accessibility, including access for artists to utilize public and "empty" spaces, trainings for artists and cultural practitioners working with disabled and neurodivergent young people, and creative career opportunities for formerly incarcerated youth. Members also discussed ways arts education can contribute to community building, intergenerational knowledge-sharing, and joy during a time when so many communities are feeling strain.

[16] Third spaces are informal gathering spaces that are outside of home or work environments where people can socialize, build relationships, and foster deeper sense of belonging and connection.

On May 13, Arts and Culture convened the Arts Ed Collective Leadership Circle for the final quarterly meeting of their first year as an advisory body. The group reconnected after a year of community engagements in the field and discussed what their observations and learnings might suggest for the next phase of the Arts Ed Collective's work. Members consistently emphasized the strong need for youth-driven creative spaces. They also described ongoing challenges, including adult-centered decision-making structures, limited opportunities for authentic co-creation with young people, and tensions between "meaningful" arts practice and "performative" use of the arts within institutions. In breakout groups, members reviewed their Four Pillars and discussed the addition of a fifth pillar focused on inclusion, access, and belonging.

The meeting closed with a review of roles and expectations for the year ahead, including more structured opportunities for Leadership Circle members to participate in and inform the work of the Arts Ed Collective, such as joint meetings with the Arts Commission and Arts and Culture staff as well as events designed and led by the Leadership Circle. Members also identified areas that can be supported by the County and the arts education field, including more opportunities for co-creation with youth, strengthening accessibility across initiatives, and ensuring that educators and young people have a more consistent presence in future convenings.



The Leadership Circle shared reflections with Arts and Culture staff at the May 2026 quarterly meeting. Photo by Rudy Torres.

Leadership Circle Spotlight: Ifunanya Nweke



Photo by Rudy Torres

Residing in LA County's Fourth Supervisorial District, Ifunanya Nweke, Ed.D., is the founder and executive director of Jazz Hands For Autism as well as a leader at the intersection of entertainment, education, workforce development, and disability advocacy.

Reflecting on her experience with the Leadership Circle, Ifunanya spoke about her passion and interest in the Four Pillars and the emerging fifth pillar (inclusion, access, and belonging). "People who have accessibility or support needs, whether they are neurodivergent or have learning disabilities… are often left out of conversations, equations, and solutions. So it's really important that we include that fifth pillar," she said.

In her community engagements, Ifunanya observed how neurodivergent learners themselves can become teachers of other neurodivergent learners. When asked what neurodivergent individuals need to succeed in creative industry jobs, Ifunanya noted that the kinds of supports will vary from individual to individual. Generally, acquiring relevant job skills and receiving arts discipline training in a supportive environment prior to entering a job site, as well as access to an on-the-job coach, are key initial supports.

Furthermore, Ifunanya emphasized that inclusion, access, and belonging are important to consider in planning any event or program, pointing out that budgets need to include accessibility as a discrete line item, so that considerations are discussed early in the planning process. As an example, organizers of school-based events need to address questions like "If we have students who are neurodivergent, how do we support them?" "What are some tangible tools that we can have in place for them?" Having accessibility as a discrete line item ensures that accessibility needs are centered and appropriate funds are allocated to meet those needs.

In the next year of the Leadership Circle, Ifunanya looks forward to action. "Action that can be measured in the sense of what have we actually done with our time meeting as a Leadership Circle? What are the quantifiable things that we can share? I think the numbers are important. I want us to be able to set some benchmarks to work towards…What does success look like for our Leadership Circle?"

Leadership Circle Spotlight: Veronica Popovic



Photo by Rudy Torres

A resident of LA County's Fifth Supervisorial District, Veronica Popovic is a Chicana/Latina arts advocate and scholarships expert, born and raised in LA County, and dedicated to expanding access to arts education for underserved communities.

Thinking back to her community engagements, Veronica reflected on instances where the Leadership Circle's Four Pillars came into play. With the first pillar (Centering young people in the decision-making process), she noted that the Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory's annual youth event made a lasting impression on her, as "Youth were at the forefront of everything at that annual event." From passing out resources and information to taking care of games and activations for kids to photographing and documenting the event, "This organization is 100 percent doing that thing! That was a really great example of how organizations can center youth in a decision-making process."

Veronica described the domino effect of her participation in the Leadership Circle on her two children. Although not part of her initial plans, she naturally ended up taking them to almost every single community engagement. When her children saw her taking notes at events, they wanted to write down their own observations. Driven by curiosity, they often joined her at community engagements.

"My son Leonardo enjoyed it so much that he decided he wants to be a journalist when he grows up," Veronica said. "He applied to be a 'Kid Reporter' for *TIME Magazine* and *TIME for Kids Magazine* earlier this year and he was selected."

After attending a year-end culmination event hosted by Las Fotos Project, where Veronica and her children observed high school–aged girls expressing their voice through their community photography projects, her 11-year-old daughter was inspired and said, "Next year, I want to be the photographer on the yearbook at my school."

Next year, Veronica hopes to further connect with the LA County Arts Commission. She recalled how at a past Leadership Circle meeting, she had a great conversation with an Arts Commissioner from the Fourth Supervisorial District about art and growing up on the east side of Los Angeles. "I definitely want to work with her in some way or within my role on the Leadership Circle."

Veronica spoke about her desire to archive the Leadership Circles' community engagements, stating that "I've kept every brochure, every flyer… I've kept a lot of documentation, and I want to do something with that. It's important to remember and document these events, especially post-COVID and pre-Olympics… It's a time and space that I hope can be documented and saved and [that] other people can access."

These interviews with Leadership Circle members have been condensed and edited for clarity.



Left to right: Filmmakers and teaching artists Logan Jackson and Tony Chennault as well as student filmmakers Ayanna Chalyse, Nagi Moore, and Nathan Torres present on the Media Career Pathways Prototype. Photo by Rudy Torres.

Arts Education Forum: Preparing Youth for the New Creative Economy

The *Arts Education Forum* is an event series co-presented by the Department of Arts and Culture (Arts and Culture), Arts Ed Collective Funders Council, and SoCal Grantmakers (SCG). These events examine the roles that arts education plays in youth, community, and economic development in our region. They also encourage networking and discussion on ways to refine strategies and promote positive youth development for communities that have been historically excluded or precluded from resources/opportunities.

On February 4, Arts and Culture, SCG, and the Arts Ed Collective Funders Council hosted the *Arts Education Forum: Preparing Youth for the New Creative Economy* event at the Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA) Arts and Recreation Center, convening 81 educators, philanthropic representatives, artists, and LA County representatives to explore how to collectively build sustainable, equitable pathways into the creative economy. Stephania Ramirez of the Perenchio Foundation and Joel Arquillos of the Snap Foundation served as co-hosts and representatives of the Funders Council.

Covering topics ranging from LA County's Creative Career Pathways for Youth initiative to the California Department of Education's (CDE) new model curriculum standards for Arts, Media & Entertainment, the day was packed with creative thinking and collaborative action. To showcase Arts and Culture's Media Career Pathways Prototype program (see page 38), filmmakers Logan Jackson and Tony Chennault shared how they approach their work as teaching artists through the lens of craft, vulnerability, and business fundamentals, while youth filmmakers Ayanna Chalyse, Nagi Moore, and Nathan Torres presented short films created during the program.

Presenters from the Entertainment Equity Alliance—including Allison Frenzel of CDE, DeJon Ellis of International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 80, Nicole Hendrix of the BRIC Foundation, and Wendy Levy of The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture—shared how they are preparing

young people for the next generation of creative workers, while a discussion panel comprised of Logan Jackson, Lauren DeVillier of Exceptional Minds, Hatha Parrish of Centinela Valley Union High School District (Lawndale), and Christina Sibul of the California State University (CSU) Entertainment Alliance called for the expansion of paid internships, wellness resources, and support for neurodiversity. These speakers and conversations made evident that the arts are an economic engine and a vital tool for equity, wellness, and innovation in California's future workforce.



Breakout discussions during the Arts Education Forum focused on three topics: supporting a resilient creative ecosystem, holistic pathways for youth success, and inclusive industry partnerships and legacy investments. Photo by Rudy Torres.

Proposition 28: Arts and Music in Schools Act

With the passage of California's Arts and Music in Schools funding guarantee (Prop 28), the Arts Ed Collective's core services are more important than ever in engaging district leadership and school communities in strategic action for scale and equity. The 2025-26 school year was the final year for districts to spend down their first-year (2023-24) allocation, with any remaining 2023-24 funds being returned to the state's general fund after the end of June 2026. School districts have sought guidance on challenges such as understanding allowable expenses, strategies for creating and hiring classified arts positions, consulting with their district auditors and legal counsels, and how to leverage the waiver process to meet the spending deadline. In response, the Department of Arts and Culture shared resources through our strategic planning services and Arts Coordinator Network. Our ongoing strategic planning efforts, school district network convenings, and matching grants continue to be building blocks for long-term arts education infrastructure in public schools.

Over the past year, Arts and Culture co-sponsored the following events in support of districts and school sites that had not implemented a Prop 28 spending plan to ensure funds were spent effectively and equitably:

- On November 13, 2025, Arts and Culture co-hosted "Creativity Can't Wait: Maximizing Arts & Music in Schools Act Funds" with Create CA. The webinar provided information and resources from CA PTA, CA County Superintendents Arts Initiative, and school district leaders, along with concrete action steps for districts, families, and community advocates. Of the 130+ participants from across California, over 50 of these attendees represented local education agencies and arts organizations from LA County. Access the webinar recording and list of resources here.

- On December 4, 2025, Arts and Culture staff supported an in-person workshop "Fulfilling the Promise of Prop 28," hosted by LACOE at The Huntington for school districts that have not yet spent down their first-year (2023-24) Prop 28 funds. A total of 21 local education agencies (individual charter networks and school districts) attended. Participants received hands-on guidance to identify allowable expenses, craft waiver language, and develop concrete plans to spend their first-year allocation by the end of June 2026. Arts and Culture staff and Arts Ed Collective coaches also discussed implementation challenges with districts and shared examples of how strategic plan coaching and the Advancement Grant can be utilized alongside Prop 28 funds to ensure all students have access to arts education.

- On January 14, 2026, Arts and Culture staff supported LACOE and the Greater Los Angeles Education Foundation in convening 74 school district administrators, educators, and teaching artists for an in-person event, "Arts Program Assessment Workshop: Measure What You Treasure," at The Ebell of Los Angeles. The session featured case studies from LA County school districts, assessment strategies for evaluating and reporting on arts education programs, and tools to help school districts communicate effectively with their funders, boards of education, and communities about the utilization of funding sources like Prop 28 and the Advancement Grant Program.

- On February 18, 2026, 121 arts providers, educators, and advocates from LA County and across California joined a webinar on SRI's *CA Arts Education Landscape 2025* report (commissioned by the Hewlett Foundation). Presented by researcher Candice Benge Steele, the landscape scan examines arts education across the state amid new funding and policy shifts, including Prop 28, and identifies seven essential levers for change: Data, Accountability, Research, Advocacy, Policy, Planning, and Resource & Capacity Building. Attendees underscored opportunities for LA County to strengthen arts education via strategic planning, workforce capacity-building, and advocacy for funding streams beyond Prop 28.

Shared Learning and Leadership strategy is managed by the Department of Arts and Culture's Arts Education Division

Communications & Advocacy

Builds public will and accountability for expanding youth access to the arts in school, after school, and within communities.

Assembly Bill 2440

California state Assembly Bill 2440 (AB 2440) seeks to help public schools spend the Arts and Music in Schools Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act (Prop 28) funds by strengthening clarity, transparency, and accountability for the initiative.

What AB 2440 does:

- Helps ensure Prop 28 funds support high-quality arts education aligned with California's arts education standards, Arts Education Framework, and early learning foundations.
- Provides clearer rules for determining whether schools are meeting Prop 28's funding requirements.
- Makes spending more transparent by requiring schools to publicly share their Prop 28 expenditure plans.
- Helps protect each school's share of Prop 28 funding when funds are combined across multiple schools.
- Strengthens accountability at every school by requiring local education agencies to confirm that Prop 28 is being properly implemented at each school site.

AB 2440 has received broad support from the California County Superintendents, California Music Educators Association, California Teachers Association, Create CA, EdTrust-West, and former LAUSD superintendent and author of Prop 28, Austin Beutner.

The bill has advanced through the legislative process with unanimous support and was signed and enacted by Governor Gavin Newsom at the end of September 2026. AB 2440 will take effect on January 1, 2027.

Research & Evaluation

Collects and analyzes data to inform strategies, identify Countywide trends, and educate the public about systemic inequities and the impacts of arts education.

Highlights

- Program evaluation in progress for the Media Career Pathways Prototype (see page 39)
- Social Network Analysis published in June 2026 as part of a two-phase evaluation project to track Arts Ed Blueprint goals

Tracking Progress on the Arts Ed Blueprint

Every year, the Arts Ed Collective conducts program assessments that evaluate effectiveness and responsiveness to the needs of the field. These efforts are conducted by both the LA County Department of Arts and Culture's Research & Evaluation Division and third-party evaluators.

For tracking progress on the overall initiative, the Arts for All Children, Youth, and Families: LA County's Regional Blueprint for Arts Education (Arts Ed Blueprint) calls for three overarching long-term goals:

1. Develop systems and infrastructure that expand and sustain arts education for all young people, in all schools, and in all communities.

2. Build and strengthen partnerships and collaborations to create, expand, and leverage resources for arts education.

3. Increase public awareness about the importance of arts education and mobilize stakeholders to advocate for robust implementation.

Since the adoption of the Arts Ed Blueprint, the Department of Arts and Culture has developed a multi-year evaluation plan to track progress on these long-term goals set forth in the Arts Ed Blueprint. The methods and approaches in this plan include the following project.

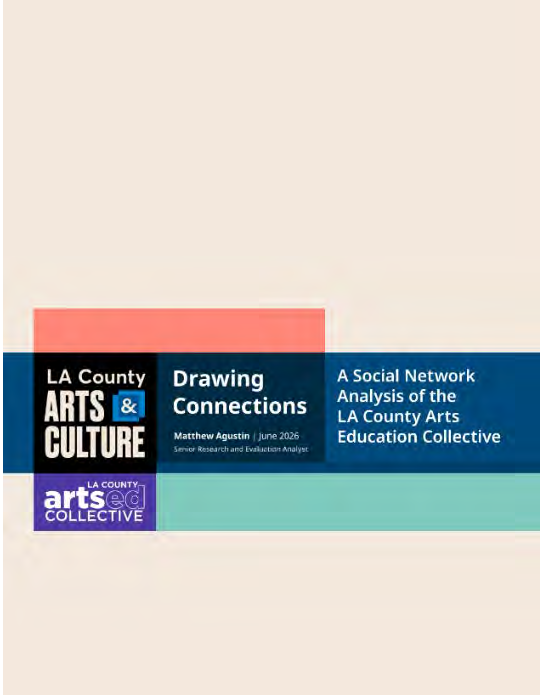
Policy Evaluation

The Policy Evaluation is a two-phase evaluation project that seeks to measure Goals #2 and #3 of the Arts Ed Blueprint:

- Phase 1: Analysis of networks/relationships between school districts, community-based organizations, County agencies, and philanthropic organizations (measures Goal #2)

- Phase 2: Qualitative analysis of who the field thinks are the key players in arts education and what they think has been most effective at advancing systems change and arts education (measures Goals #2 and #3)

As a collective impact initiative, the Arts Ed Collective regularly brings together hundreds of arts and culture leaders and organizations across various settings and contexts. Implementation for the first phase, the Social Network Analysis, began in 2024-25, using attendance data from across the Arts Ed Collective's stakeholder convenings from fiscal years 2023-24 and 2024-25 to map out the organizations and individuals who are part of the Arts Ed Collective network.



The purpose of the Social Network Analysis is to measure the reach of the Arts Ed Collective and better understand the key connectors and potential influencers within our network. In October 2025, the Funder Council's Planning and Evaluation Subcommittee met to review a draft of the analysis report, presented by Arts and Culture's Research and Evaluation Division. The Planning and Evaluation Subcommittee offered recommendations for refining the report before publication and discussed potential next steps for the Policy Evaluation.

After completing refinements, *Drawing Connections: A Social Network Analysis of the LA County Arts Education Collective* was published at the end of June 2026. For the first time, we now have data, visualizations, and findings about the social network of people and organizations the Arts Ed Collective gathers through social and collaborative spaces. The report reveals the connective power of the network formed through its convenings and events. Based on data from more than 1,200 individuals and nearly 500 organizations across two years, the analysis identifies Arts Ed Collective partners central to the flow of information, resources, and relationships.

With insights that reflect the countywide Arts Ed Blueprint's call for deeper partnerships, this social network analysis underscores the Arts Ed Collective's role in weaving together a diverse set of educators, artists, funders, and community leaders. These findings can support the Arts Ed Collective as the initiative continues to cultivate an interconnected arts education community. A more connected arts education network strengthens the system that works to ensure that all young people in LA County have access to the arts.

Research & Evaluation activities of the Arts Ed Collective are managed by the Department of Arts and Culture's Research and Evaluation Division. The Social Network Analysis received dedicated support from the Reissa Foundation.

Looking Ahead

In 2027, the Arts Ed Collective will be celebrating 25 years of service to the young people of LA County. Since its founding, the initiative has partnered with 76 school districts and six charter networks, equipping them with strategic planning, matching grants, professional development, and teaching artist residencies to advance arts education.

Our work also goes beyond K-12 education by embedding the arts into youth development, mental health, and workforce development efforts that support young people navigating LA County systems. These efforts involve a diverse network of community-based organizations and government agencies working together to equip all young people, from TK through young adulthood, with the arts learning, creative skills, career pathways, and healthy relationships needed for them to thrive.

An individual entering young adulthood today, having grown up in LA County over the past quarter-century, is likely to have been impacted by the Arts Ed Collective, whether they attended a school that was part of a districtwide strategic arts plan, played an instrument purchased with Advancement Grant funds, received an arts lesson from a teaching artist trained in an Arts Ed Collective workshop, or spent evenings at a County park painting or composing songs with their peers.

Having established a solid foundation for our work, we face many programmatic and legislative opportunities ahead. For one, the passing of AB 2440 will help to strengthen clarity, transparency, and accountability for Prop 28 funds, and subsequently help push school district spending that supports high-quality arts education aligned with California's arts standards. With these policies in place, the Arts Ed Collective's Advancement Grant Program and strategic planning efforts are reaffirmed as essential building blocks for long-term arts education infrastructure in public schools.

Creative Wellbeing is positioned to grow and serve more communities, thanks to increased staff and nonprofit arts partners who help us be responsive to young people's needs. Partnerships with the Department of Parks and Recreation and LA County Libraries will expand healing-centered arts engagement and meet more young people and their caregivers where they are. The Department of Arts and Culture and other partners will also work on launching new tools and programs, such as a collaboration with the Department of Mental Health's Office of Transition Age Youth (TAY) to serve additional drop-in resource centers across LA County.

Research and evaluation efforts play an important role in informing future programs and strategies. We look forward to releasing the evaluation report for the Media Career Pathways Prototype, which will share key outcomes, lessons learned, and recommendations for future implementation. As part of a multi-year evaluation plan to track progress on the Arts Ed Blueprint, Arts and Culture will shape plans for the final phase of the Policy Evaluation project, which will measure the impact of systems-change efforts to date and identify policy gaps and future actions.

And in their second and final year of service, the Arts Ed Collective Leadership Circle will help gather and shape recommendations for the Arts Ed Collective. Keeping young people and their families at the center, Leadership Circle members will help design and host listening forums to engage youth, community members, and government representatives in shaping policies and priorities for LA County's 25-year and running arts education initiative.

Attachment 1



Co-Chairs
Katherine Bonalos, Director, Grants & Initiatives
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation

Sarah Lyding, Executive Director
The Music Man Foundation

Immediate Past Chair
Matty Wilder, Senior Program Officer
Herb Alpert Foundation

Chair, Advancement Grants Subcommittee
Julianne Green, Vice President
Programs & Operations
The Green Foundation

Chair, Planning & Evaluation Subcommittee
Stephania Ramirez, Chief Executive Officer
Perenchio Foundation

Herb Alpert Foundation
Rona Sebastian, President
Jennifer Garratt, Grants and Operations Manager

The Philip & Muriel Berman Foundation
Nancy Berman, President & Executive Director

The Louis L. Borick Foundation
Lauren Johnson, Program Director

Vladimir and Araxia Buckhantz Foundation
Diana Buckhantz, Director

The Carol & James Collins Foundation
Cathy Hession, Executive Director

The Deutsch Foundation
Eduardo Cetlin
Managing Director, Programs and Operations

Fox Foundation
Kristen Paglia, Executive Director

The Rosalinde & Arthur Gilbert Foundation
Sean Ostrovsky, Chief Program Officer
Robyn Wasserman, Senior Program Officer

Max H. Gluck Foundation
Jessica Kaswick, Executive Director

Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation
(Formerly) Emily Garvie, Program Officer

The William & Flora Hewlett Foundation
Tom DeCaigny, Program Officer
Performing Arts Program

LA County Department of Arts and Culture
Kristin Sakoda, Director

The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
Jennifer Price-Letscher, President & CEO

Reissa Foundation
Caitlin Scott, Board Member

Snap Foundation
Joel Arquillos, Executive Director

Sony Pictures Entertainment
Lani Monos, Vice President
Global Corporate Social Responsibility
& Community Impact

Stuart Foundation
Kathryn Bradley, Director, Purpose of Education Fund
Delia Reid, Senior Manager,
Communications & Partnerships

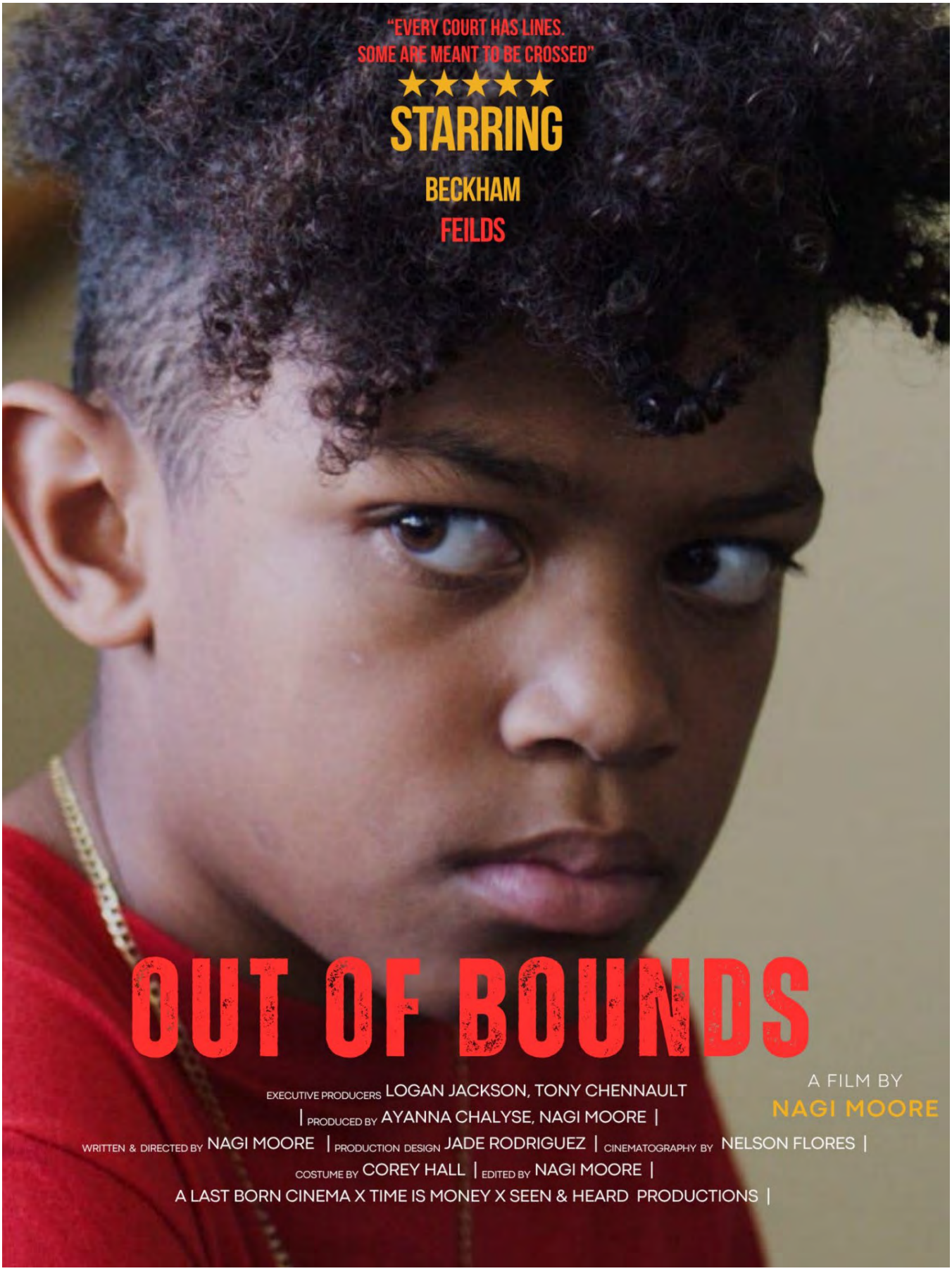
Dwight Stuart Youth Fund
Wendy Chang, Director

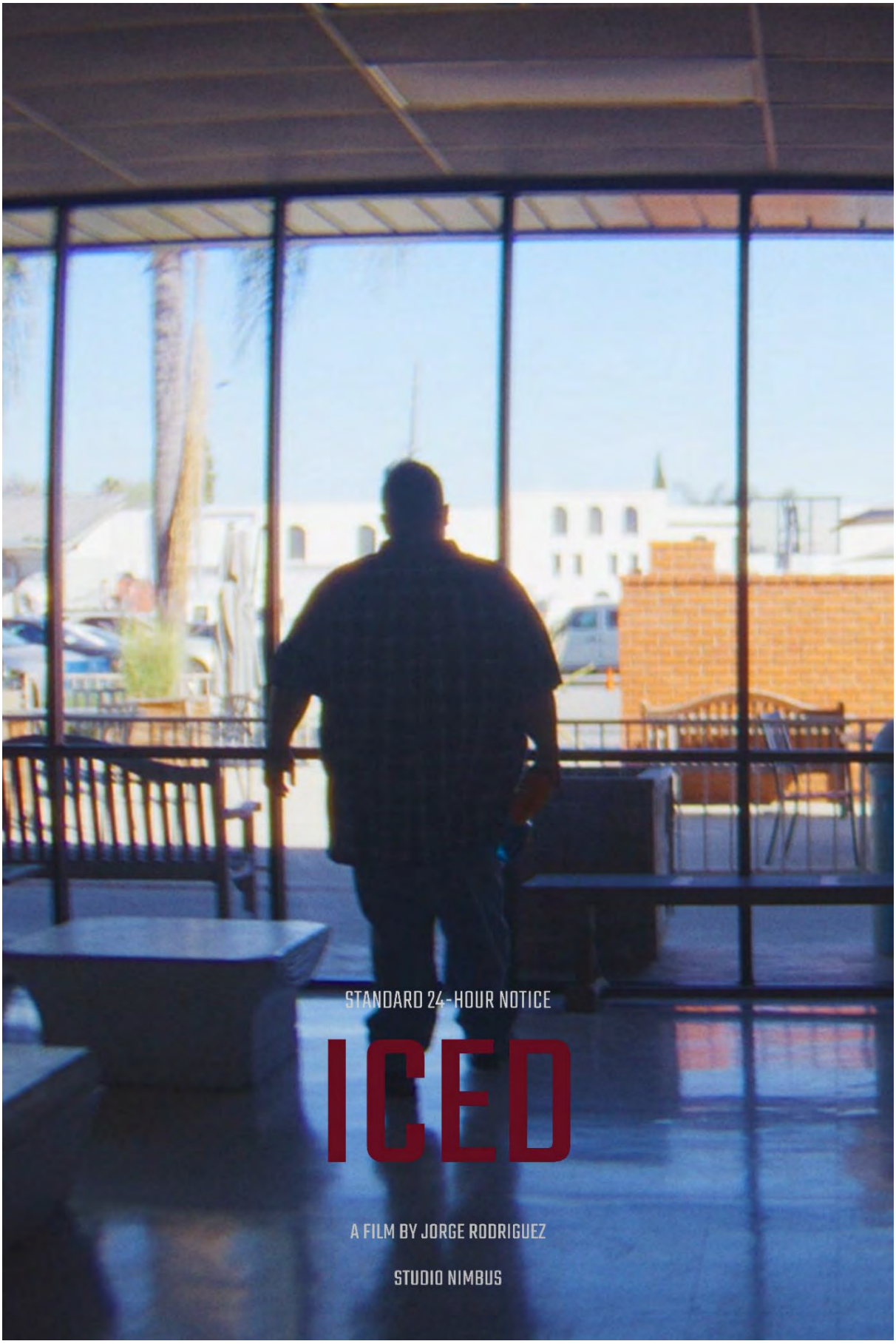
Founding Chair
Janice Pober, (Former) Senior Vice President
Global Corporate Social Responsibility
Sony Pictures Entertainment

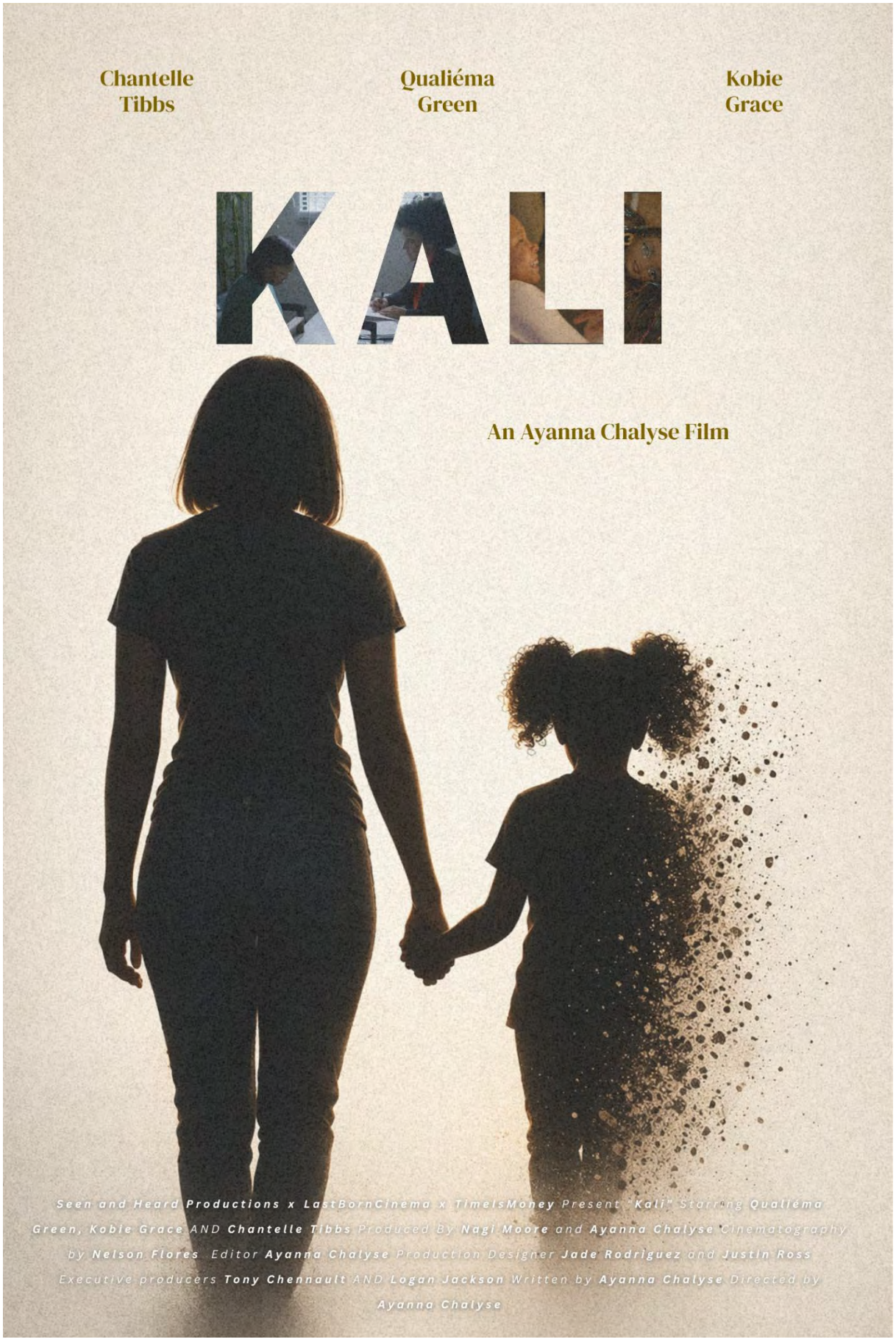
Attachment 2
2025-26 Advancement Grant Recipients

District	2025-26 Project Description
Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District	to support the districtwide expansion of visual and digital arts
Antelope Valley Union High School District	to support districtwide arts coordination
Arcadia Unified School District	to support professional development for visual arts teachers and the purchase of equipment, instruments, technology, and costumes
Azusa Unified School District	to support the expansion of TK-3 grade music and movement instruction through the hiring of music teachers
Baldwin Park Unified School District	to support the purchase and repair of musical instruments for fifth grade
Burbank Unified School District	to support artist residencies, music mentors for secondary instrumental and vocal courses, districtwide arts professional development, and a part-time arts teacher on special assignment (TOSA)
Castaic Union School District	to support the expansion of artist residencies in music for kindergarten and first grade
Centinela Valley Union High School District	to support professional performances, pre-performance teacher professional development, art docent training, and collaboration time with district staff to assess arts outcomes
Claremont Unified School District	to support arts integration professional development for the Arts TOSA and Site Arts Lead Teachers (SALTs); the expansion of secondary and elementary arts connections through performances, family nights, and student mentoring clubs; and the purchase of supplies, equipment and instructional materials
Covina-Valley Unified School District	to support the expansion of the elementary mariachi program into the Spanish Dual Language Program at Las Palmas Middle School
Culver City Unified School District	to support visioning for the Front and Center Theatre Collaborative and elementary theater program pilot
Eastside Union School District	to support culturally relevant arts programming including afterschool arts partnerships; districtwide curriculum development for all art forms; arts integration professional development; and partnerships for creative career pathways
Garvey Elementary School District	to support professional development in the arts standards by the California Arts Project, curriculum development, arts workshops, the district arts showcase, and the purchase of instructional materials and arts supplies
Glendale Unified School District	to support districtwide TK-6 Arts Integration Program and provide professional development to the Arts Learning Leaders
Gorman Joint School District	to support the expansion of afterschool arts programming; arts integration professional development and curriculum development; and the purchase of audio equipment, lighting, and storage
Hacienda La Puente Unified School District	to support theater instruction and field trips for eighth grade districtwide, and the expansion of opportunities for student participation in the annual arts showcase
Hawthorne School District	to support artist residencies; arts integrated professional development and curriculum development for elementary teachers; the expansion of the Arts Docent training program to three remaining sites; and Arts Leads stipends for planning, collaboration, and arts event promotion
Inglewood Unified School District	to support the establishment of site-based teacher leads and a parent and student ambassador program that will advocate for and advance career-connected arts education through Career Technical Education (CTE) AME pathways
Inner City Education Foundation	to support the purchase of a classroom ukulele set and music field trips; upgrades to the dance room at ICEF View Park K8; and dance instruction and costumes for CTE Drama students
Las Virgenes Unified School District	to support the initiation of districtwide elementary music through curriculum resources, professional development for music specialists, and the purchase of classroom equipment and instructional materials for the improvement of instructional music spaces
Lawndale Elementary School District	to support districtwide professional performances; pre-performance elementary professional development workshops; the expansion of middle school curriculum alignment with high school arts and Career Pathways curricula; and the purchase of instructional software and visual arts curriculum for middle school
Los Angeles Unified School District	to support the expansion of the Monroe Fine Arts Conservatory classes and showcase at CSUN Plaza Del Sol
Los Nietos School District	to support the expansion of music and visual arts programs through the purchase of instruments and equipment, and professional development for arts instructors
Lynwood Unified School District	to support expanded learning and field trips for high school theater students, professional development for the Arts Advocacy Team, and the annual districtwide Arts Festival and District Showcase
Magnolia Educational & Research Foundation	to support the purchase of performing and media arts instruments, equipment, and materials; the hiring of performing arts staff; and arts integration professional development and curriculum development
Montebello Unified School District	to support arts integration teacher professional development and student engagement opportunities through community partnerships
Newhall School District	to support the expansion of elementary arts education through the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program offerings
~~**Norwalk La Mirada Unified School District**~~	~~TBA~~
Pasadena Unified School District	to support the evaluation of the state of arts education at each school site
Rosemead School District	to support districtwide teacher professional development in arts integration and artist residencies by the Music Center
San Gabriel Unified School District	to support the creation of a grade-level and standards-aligned district plan for arts field trips and assemblies
South Pasadena Unified School District	to support the purchase of instruments and supplies for middle school band and orchestra
Sulphur Springs Union School District	to support the districtwide expansion of elementary music instruction through the hiring of a music teacher; professional development for music specialists; and the purchase of instruments, equipment, and supplies
Whittier City School District	to support districtwide performing arts assemblies and arts field trips
Wiseburn School District	to support the districtwide expansion of the musical theater program

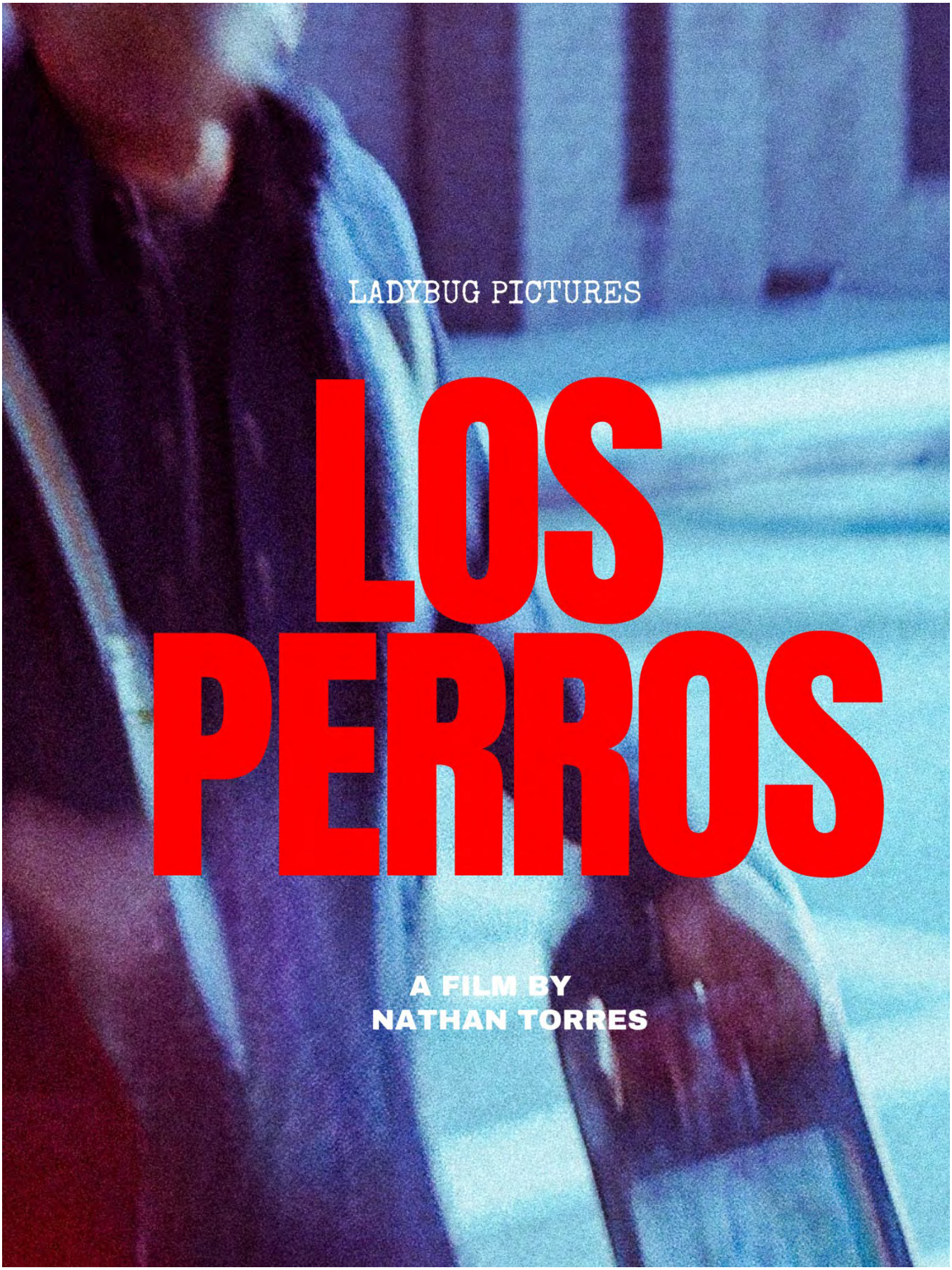
Attachment 3: Media Career Pathways Prototype: Student Film Posters

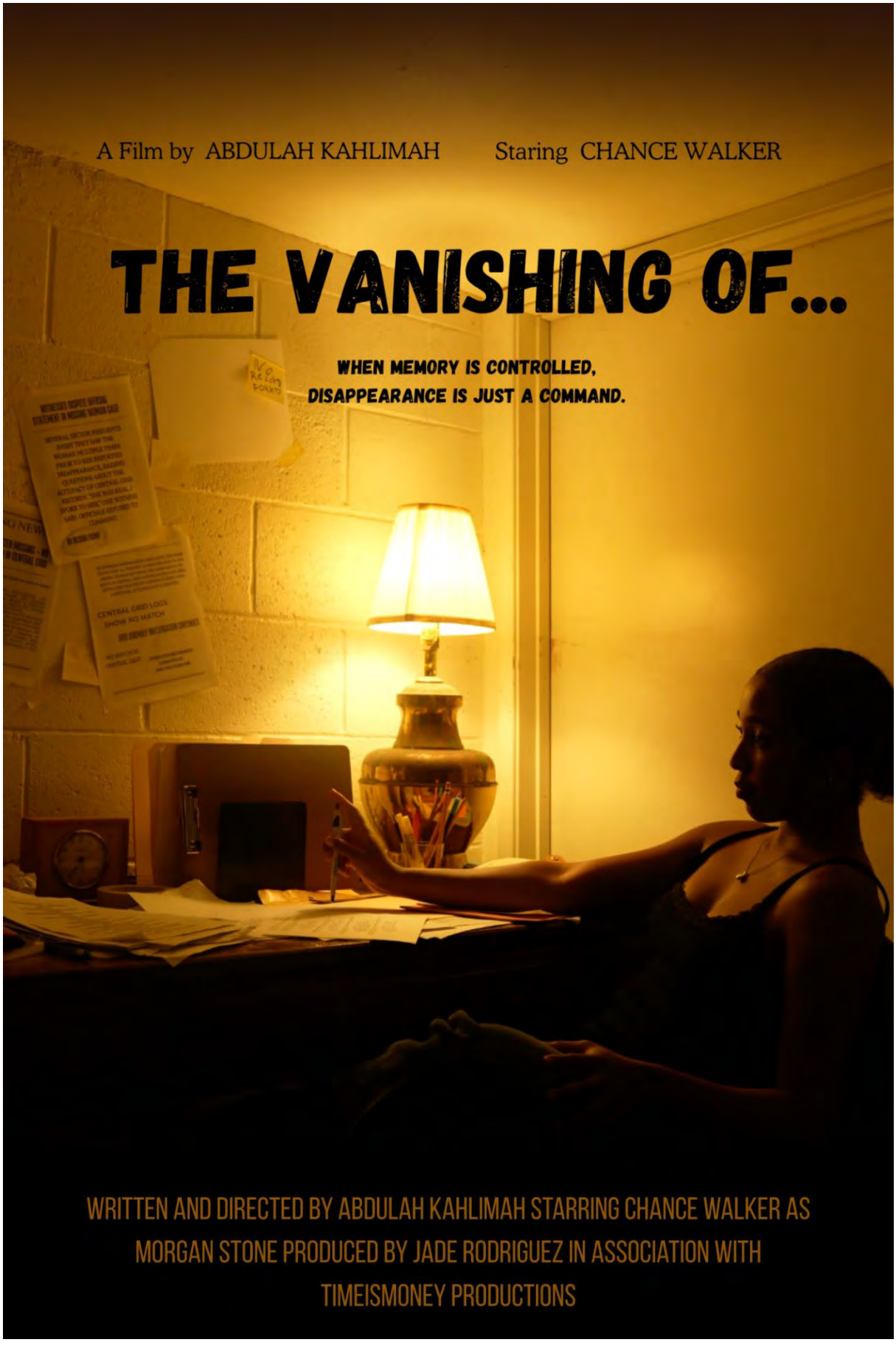



STANDARD 24-HOUR NOTICE
ICED
A FILM BY JORGE RODRIGUEZ
STUDIO NIMBUS


Chantelle Tibbs
Qualiéma Green
Kobie Grace
KALI
An Ayanna Chalyse Film
Seen and Heard Productions x LastBornCinema x TimeIsMoney Present "Kali" Starring Qualiéma Green, Kobie Grace AND Chantelle Tibbs Produced By Nagi Moore and Ayanna Chalyse Cinematography by Nelson Flores Editor Ayanna Chalyse Production Designer Jade Rodriguez and Justin Ross Executive producers Tony Chennault AND Logan Jackson Written by Ayanna Chalyse Directed by Ayanna Chalyse


A LADYBUG PICTURE
LITTLE
LIAM
A FILM BY BRANDON HERRERA


LADYBUG PICTURES
LOS PERROS
A FILM BY
NATHAN TORRES


A Film by ABDULAH KAHLIMAH
Staring CHANCE WALKER
THE VANISHING OF...
WHEN MEMORY IS CONTROLLED,
DISAPPEARANCE IS JUST A COMMAND.
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ABDULAH KAHLIMAH STARRING CHANCE WALKER AS
MORGAN STONE PRODUCED BY JADE RODRIGUEZ IN ASSOCIATION WITH
TIMEISMONEY PRODUCTIONS


BROOKLYN REIGNN
DAVYD MARKOVICH
WANTED MEMORIES
A FILM BY JADE RODRIGUEZ
THE HARDEST WORDS ARE THE ONES LEFT UNSPOKEN


from the ones who brought you FAULTY KISSES & A "HEIST"
Happy Medium
a film by Jabrodrick
"BEST PICTURE OF THE YEAR"
TYREH PARISH
TIGER RAY
FLOATING ACHIEVER AND JARZ PRODUCTIONS PRESENT A JABRODMEDIA PRODUCTION A DRAKE STOKES FILM 'HAPPY MEDIUM' TY PARISH TIGER RAY BROOKLYNN REIGNN EDITED BY JABRODRICK DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY RAS PROD. DESIGN JADE RODRIGUEZ PRODUCTION MANAGER ALYSSA RODRIGUEZ CO-PRODUCERS DRAKE STOKES & JADE RODRIGUEZ EXEC-PRODUCERS TONY CHENNAULT & LOGAN JACKSON WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY DRAKE STOKES
IN CINEMAS APRIL 16TH

Attachment 4: 2025-26 Stakeholder Convenings

Event Name	# of events	Attend -ance	Key Audience	Objective
Arts-Based Healing-Centered Engagement for County Departments	**95**	**525**	County Staff	Staff and contractors from Probation, DCFS, DHS, and DMH participated in arts-based healing-centered engagement workshops. Trainings focused on weaving together healing-centered arts, youth development, and mental health promotion concepts.
Arts Education Forum	**1**	**81**	Philanthropic Representatives, Nonprofit Representatives, County Staff	Co-presented by the Department of Arts and Culture, Arts Ed Collective Funders Council, and SoCal Grantmakers, the "Arts Education Forum: Preparing Youth for the New Creative Economy" raised awareness about how entertainment industry, nonprofit, and education sectors are preparing the next generation of young creative workers while calling for the expansion of paid internships, wellness resources, and support for neurodiversity.
CA Arts Ed Landscape 2025 Report presentation by SRI	**1**	**121**	School District Partners; Community Arts Partners	Arts providers, educators, and advocates from LA County and across California joined a webinar on SRI's CA Arts Education Landscape 2025 report (commissioned by the Hewlett Foundation). The landscape scan examines arts education across the state amid new funding and policy shifts, including Prop 28, and identifies seven essential levers for change: Data, Accountability, Research, Advocacy, Policy, Planning, and Resource & Capacity Building. Attendees underscored opportunities for LA County to strengthen arts education via strategic planning, workforce capacity-building, and advocacy for funding streams beyond Prop 28.
Creative Wellbeing Caregiver and Parent Engagement	**131**	**511**	Parents and Caregivers	Community sessions and workshops for families and caregivers to nurture intergenerational bonds, peer support, and protective factors, and reduce mental health stigma.
Creative Wellbeing School District Workshops	**64**	**733**	School District Partners	Creative Wellbeing provided professional development for adults who support systems-involved young people or young people at heightened risk of systems involvement. The training focused on weaving together healing-centered arts engagement, culturally relevant/sustaining pedagogy, self-care, and mental health promotion concepts. Participants included educators, school administrators and support staff, mental health clinicians, social workers and support staff, school counselors, and foster youth congregate care site staff.
Creative Wellbeing Self and Community Care Sessions	**286**	**5,976**	Youth-Supporting Adults	In partnership with the UCLA Prevention Center of Excellence and the Wellbeing4LA Learning Center, self- and community-care open sessions are open to adults who support young people in LA County. These one-hour sessions featured experiential, healing-centered arts activities and resources led by teaching artists contracted under Creative Wellbeing. Additionally, the Wellbeing4LA Learning Center hosted two-hour community gatherings, where teaching artists shared subject matter expertise and strategies for the implementation of the Creative Wellbeing approach across various contexts.
Creative Wellbeing Special Events	**71**	**6,327**	Nonprofit Representatives, Philanthropic Representatives, County Staff, Youth and Families	Creative Wellbeing workshops were embedded throughout various partner events in LA County, including (but not limited to) the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Network Annual Summit, Aviva Family & Children Services' caregiver events, an LA Opera simulcast event at Loma Alta Park, Arts and Health Week Summit, and the Penny Lane Centers' EDGY Conference.
Creative Wellbeing In-Person Gatherings	**3**	**186**	Community Arts Partners, School District Partners, County Staff	Quarterly Creative Wellbeing gatherings convened community-based arts providers, County partners, education partners, and other implementation site partners to strengthen cross sector collaboration in support of systems impacted youth across LA County. Attendees engaged in arts based practices and community learning sessions that highlight trauma informed, culturally responsive, and relationship centered approaches to fostering youth and community wellbeing. By convening practitioners from mental health, child welfare, education, and the arts, these gatherings created intentional spaces for shared learning and strategic alignment. Collectively, these gatherings advanced Creative Wellbeing's long term goal of building a more coordinated, holistic infrastructure of care for young people and the adults who serve them. These convenings also reinforced the County's commitment to integrating arts, mental health, and education as essential pathways to healing, belonging, and resilience.
Creativity Can't Wait: Maximizing Arts & Music in Schools Act Funds	**1**	**135**	School District Partners; Community Arts Partners; Philanthropic Partners	Participants joined Create CA, CA PTA, CA County Superintendents Arts Initiative, and Mt. Diablo Unified (Contra Costa County) for a practical briefing on effective and equitable Prop 28 spending. This webinar included a clear overview of Prop 28 deadlines and spending requirements; insights from parents, advocates, and district leaders on local strategies; a case study of a district waiver request; and concrete action steps for districts, families, and community advocates.
Fulfilling the Promise of Prop 28	**1**	**56**	School District Partners	This LACOE–hosted event held at the Huntington Library included presentations by Create CA and other experts. The workshop was designed to support local education agencies that have not yet spent year-one (2023-24) Prop 28 funds. Participants received hands-on guidance to identify allowable expenses, craft waiver language, and develop concrete implementation plans to spend their first year allocations by June 30, 2026, ensuring funds will not be reclaimed by the state.
Funders Council	**9**	**79**	Philanthropic Partners	Quarterly meetings of the full membership as well as subcommittee meetings provided forums for funders to expand their knowledge and provide strategic guidance. During this period, the Steering Committee as well as Advancement Grants and Planning & Evaluation subcommittees convened.
Leadership Circle Quarterly Meetings	**4**	**49**	Community Advisors	Leadership Circle members participated in quarterly convenings focused on key topics/themes from the Arts Ed Blueprint. Through facilitated discussions, members shared perspective and experience, deepened understanding of the needs of young people and the adults who support them, and identified opportunities and resources available across the field.
Measure What You Treasure Workshop	**1**	**74**	School District Partners, Nonprofit Partners	On January 14, Department of Arts and Culture staff supported LACOE and the Greater LA Education Foundation in convening school district administrators, educators, arts administrators, and teaching artists at The Ebell of Los Angeles for a half-day workshop focused on strengthening assessment strategies in arts education. Participants explored practical tools for evaluating and reporting on arts education programs, with an emphasis on transparency and impact for funding sources like Prop 28 and the Advancement Grant Program. The session featured case studies from LA County school districts and hands-on activities using logic models, rubrics, and assessment tools to define program goals, activities, and outcomes. This collaborative event provided actionable frameworks for planning and assessment that enable arts organizations and educators to communicate effectively with their funders, boards of education, and communities about utilization of funding for program design, implementation, and impact.
Nurturing Wellbeing Through Arts and Culture	**1**	**49**	Youth-Supporting Adults	The Department of Arts and Culture hosted a virtual program to recognize May as Mental Health Month. The event highlighted the essential role that arts, culture, and cross-sector partnership play in supporting individual and community wellbeing. Participants learned about current mental health resources available to youth and the adults who support them, including Soluna, a free, state-supported digital behavioral health platform for young people ages 13-25. Soluna is a core component of the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) and was launched in partnership with the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). The platform is fully funded by the State of California to support prevention, early intervention, and access to behavioral health resources for youth and young adults statewide. The program also featured a healing arts experience through Creative Wellbeing and a curated selection of healing arts resources.
School District Arts Coordinator Network	**3**	**72**	School District Partners	The School District Arts Coordinator Network gathered to network, share strategies, and hear updates from the field.
School District Arts Leadership Teams*	**84**	**1,067**	School District Partners, Community Members	Strategic Planning Coaches convened school district planning teams to develop a five-year strategic arts plan or support implementation of an existing plan.
School District Site Visit	**1**	**20**	Philanthropic Partners, County Staff	A site visit to Azusa Unified School District took place at Azusa High School (East Campus) to showcase the impact of strategic planning support and Advancement Grant Program investments from the Arts Education Collective.
Strategic Planning Coaches Professional Learning Community	**4**	**12**	Strategic Planning Coaches	Strategic Planning Coaches engaged in co-learning and collaboration by sharing field experiences and receiving training and mentorship.
Youth Development Professional Development Workshops	**3**	**140**	Youth-Supporting Adults	Professional development sessions led by the Boyle Heights Arts Conservatory, Homeboy Art Academy, and Spirit Awakening Foundation featured experiential healing-centered arts activities and resources for adults who support young people in settings including, but not limited to, juvenile detention sites, secure youth treatment facilities, and continuation high schools.
Total	**764**	**16,213**		

*Attendance is estimated

Attachment 5: Arts Ed Collective Leadership Circle, 2025-27

Arts Ed Collective Leadership Circle

FIRST SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT

Cristine Briskie-Wood



Cristine Briskie-Wood has 14+ years of experience in fundraising and resource development for education and youth development, including her current role as Director of Development for Western Justice Center. She previously worked with organizations including Heart of Los Angeles; The Time In Children's Arts Initiative; ABC No Rio; The Museum of Modern Art, New York City; and Iowa Arts Festival. Cristine also a member of the PLUS ME Project's Board of Directors, focusing on helping youth harness the art of personal storytelling to build confidence and create connections.

Jennifer Carroll



Jennifer Carroll is the Associate Director of Education at Inner-City Arts, where she has served since 2006 and currently specializes in educational theater and professional development facilitation. Her experience is broad: she has been a professional actor, artist in school-day residencies, after-school enrichment teacher, day-to-day classroom teacher, audience enrichment facilitator for professional theaters, manager of teaching artist staff, and program creator. She is currently earning her certification as an Arts Integration Specialist.

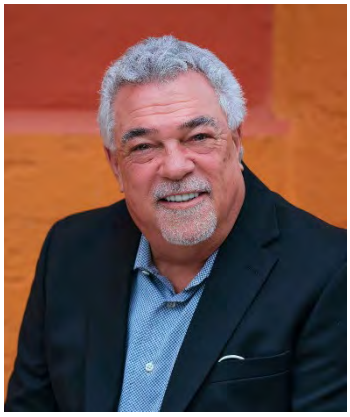
Nathalie Sánchez



Nathalie Sánchez (she/her) is a Los Angeles-based interdisciplinary artist, social justice arts educator, museum worker, and arts advocate. As an arts leader, she firmly believes in the transformative power of arts education, community, and mentorship. Over the past two decades, Nathalie has designed, developed, and led visual arts, museum education, and professional development programs at artworxLA; Fowler Museum at UCLA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA); P.S. ARTS; Vincent Price Art Museum, and more. She graduated with her BA in Art History and Studio Arts, with an emphasis in education from Loyola Marymount University, and received her MFA in Public Practice from Otis College of Art and Design.

SECOND SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT

Albert Lord III



Albert Lord is committed to building awareness of the contributions African Americans have made to cultural, political and entertainment fields. He brings a broad background in entertainment, including radio programming like the PSA "Dictionary Rap" for First Lady Barbara Bush's National Young Readers Day. While his work expanded to include music, film and television—receiving an Emmy award and several nominations—Albert led a mentorship program in South Africa teaching young adults postproduction for *34 South*, the first feature film directed by a Black South African woman after more than 100 years of apartheid. From 2006 through 2020, Albert produced and curated poster art exhibits created for youth and young adults (12–24 years old) on display during African American Heritage Month for the City of Los Angeles. Through his role as Vice President of Government Relations and Arts Programs for Community Build, Inc., Albert has led the organization in facilitating tours and events for low-income Black and Brown families with the Los Angeles Zoo, Grammy Museum and the Getty Center.

Giovanna Federico



Giovanna has been working in art education for 21 years. During that time, she has worked with underserved and English Language Learner (ELL) youth developing plays and films based on their personal stories. She is currently the Executive Director of Enrichment Works, which performs professional plays for youth connected to their curriculum. The plays are often centered around social justice.

Lingaire Ofosuhene



As an emerging artist, Lingaire Ofosuhene seeks to explore the human condition by reconnecting with childhood play, drawing attention to the impacts of climate change and the parallel loss between nature and our fading sense of wonder. Thus, her work utilizes abstract environmental landscapes and storybook silhouettes to reconnect with the rudimentary perspective of a child, in which exploration overcomes ignorance, and existence feels like a series of interesting guesses. Lingaire believes that through art we can maintain our curiosity for the world; this is an act of radical resistance against a society that demands we sacrifice this in the name of productivity.

THIRD SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT

Jonathan Bijur



Jonathan Bijur has worked in arts education for over 20 years, in museums, libraries, and community organizations. He is a passionate advocate for art-first STEAM education, particularly around the links between art and engineering, the importance of risk-taking in childhood, and open-ended play and exploration for all ages. As executive director of Rediscover Center, Los Angeles' leading sustainable maker education organization, he helps to serve 14,000 youth per year with hands-on creativity education.

Gustavo Garcia



Gustavo Alberto Garcia Vaca is an interdisciplinary visual artist/writer and arts educator. His artwork is in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York City; LACMA; and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. As an arts educator, Gustavo creates art experiences for museums and arts organizations including LACMA, The Museum of Contemporary Art, California African American Museum, Self Help Graphics, and artworxLA. Gustavo holds a BA from Hampshire College, certificate from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, certificate from Cal State Los Angeles, and certificates from the Architectural Association London. He recently completed his MA graduate studies in diverse community development leadership at Cal State Northridge. Gustavo's website is chamanvision.com.

FOURTH SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT

Ifunanya Nweke



Dr. Ifunanya Nweke, Ed.D., is an Empowerment Engineer and a leading advocate at the intersection of entertainment, education, workforce development, and disability advocacy. As the founder and executive director of Jazz Hands For Autism, she has pioneered tech-enabled pathways for neurodivergent musicians, fostering access to arts education, employment, and industry opportunities. Under her leadership, Jazz Hands For Autism has served hundreds of neurodivergent individuals nationwide, creating employment pathways and generating over $50,000 in earnings for neurodivergent creatives. A sought-after speaker and thought leader, Dr. Nweke has lent her expertise to institutions worldwide, including the GRAMMY Museum, the Vancouver International Film Festival, the USC Price School of Public Policy, and the LA County Department of Arts and Culture. Holding degrees from UCLA and USC, she is a recognized civic leader honored by California lawmakers and the Empowerment Congress for her transformative work in inclusive arts education.

Joshua J. Ramirez



Joshua Ramirez is a brown-indigenous social practice artist, curator, and cultural practitioner that works and resides in LA County. Using his own mental Illness and disability as a platform for systemic change, he has successfully started his own non-profit (501c3) that merges advocacy and art. Saint Remy Arts & Culture provides transformative and cultural spaces for individuals with mental illness, PTSD, and suicidal thoughts through the creative process of art and creation. By leading through the lens of authenticity and empathy, he continues to use his unique experience to mentor at-risk youth, advocate for artists with disabilities, and create social impact programming for traditionally underrepresented communities. He currently sits on the board of NAMI Pomona Valley and advises national and local organizations such as Americans for the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, The Museum of Modern Art, Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, California Arts Council, and Tri-City Mental Health. He has a BA in art from USC and an MA in art education. He is currently an associate professor at USC Dornsife and receiving his second MA in Curation in the Public Sphere.

Nancy Lynée Woo



Nancy Woo has worked with the Long Beach Public Library for many years, and since January 2024, has had the pleasure of designing the Long Beach Youth Poet Laureate program and mentoring a cohort of talented poets. She has also led a STEAM summer program, taught poetry to fifth graders with Angels Gate Cultural Center, led an after-school poetry class with the nonprofit Strength-Based Community Change (SBCC), and been a guest teacher to various high school English classes. She is a certified California Poets in the Schools poet-teacher, and in addition to poetry, has taught a smattering of visual art classes. She's been teaching adult poetry since 2017 through her organization Surprise the Line, as well as in collaboration with other arts organizations.

FIFTH SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT

Melanie Buttarazzi



Melanie Buttarazzi is a professional dancer, choreographer, and arts educator with over a decade of experience in arts-based youth development. As the founder and executive director of Fostering Dreams Project, she has designed and led dance programs that empower foster and system-impacted youth across LA County. Her work integrates trauma-informed arts education to promote social-emotional growth, healing, and self-expression. With a background in performing alongside artists like Jennifer Lopez and Pitbull, Melanie brings industry expertise to underserved communities, using dance as a tool for transformation and resilience.

Jantré Christian



Jantré Christian is a community-engaged, culturally responsive artist educator and public-school administrator. She leads arts education instructional programs and initiatives for the Los Angeles Unified School District and previously served as the principal of Grand Arts High School (Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts) in Downtown LA. As a certificated theater teacher, Jantré has taught elementary, middle, and high school students and coordinated district-wide theater, film, and music programming with creative industry partners. A practicing musician and theater artist, she has worked as a session singer and live venue performer at cultural institutions including the Hollywood Bowl, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Musical Theatre West, The Wallis, and Mark Taper Forum.

Veronica Popovic



Veronica Popovic is a Chicana/Latina arts advocate and scholarships expert, born and raised in LA County, and dedicated to expanding access to arts education for underserved communities. For over 19 years, she has helped first-generation, low-income students secure scholarships for college. She managed scholarship programs at multiple universities in Southern California and currently serves as a Special Consultant for the Scholarships Office at Cal State Fullerton. She has also served on national scholarship selection committees, including the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation and the Gilman International Scholarship, a congressionally funded program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the US Department of State. Additionally, she serves as an Education and Career Counselor for California Lawyers for the Arts' Designing Creative Futures, a paid internship program for formerly incarcerated adults pursuing careers in the arts.



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