

## Education

# San Diego school districts open doors for arts education exchange

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School districts in San Diego are making arts education a priority – hiring significant numbers of arts teachers and increasing funding. This week, educators from Los Angeles, the rest of California and as far away as Boston will visit to see what ideas they can take home.

More than 100 educators, administrators and advocates are expected to attend the "Arts Education Learning Exchange" conference. It's presented by the California Alliance for Arts Education, in partnership with two school districts who have put arts education back into the school day.

On Thursday, attendees will observe classes and talk with school leaders and parents in the Chula Vista Elementary School District. Last summer, that district [hired over seventy visual and performing art teachers](#) and now all 30,000 students receive arts instruction.

The district will share how they used the state's new local control accountability plans (LCAP) to invest \$15 million in funding for the arts, over a three year period.

On day two, San Diego Unified School District will be highlighting how they've brought the arts into regular subjects. In that district teaching artists join classroom

teachers once a week in 22 schools and co-teach lessons that weave art into the standard curriculum.

"We're very confident that this is the kind of education that our students need to be successful in the 21st century and we don't just want to keep this to ourselves," said Russ Sperling is the director of visual and performing arts for San Diego Unified.

That district funds its program with Title 1 dollars, which are allocated to help disadvantaged students improve in academics. Officials will offer guidance on designing arts programs that meet Title I academic goals. More and more schools and districts are using this strategy to fund arts instruction.

Sperling says the majority of attendees are coming from outside of the county. He hopes the changes in San Diego will become an example for the nation.

"The things that have been going on here in San Diego County have really attracted quite a bit of national attention to our work in arts education, which we're very proud of," said Sperling. "Because being on the cutting edge of arts education and what it can do for students is very exciting."



Student artwork is displayed at Veterans Elementary School in Chula Vista, California. This year, the school added four visual and performing arts teachers. Many students in the Chula Vista Elementary School District have never had art or music instruction until now.