

# CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

2025-2026 Artist-in-the-Schools Program Announcement



## Kindergarten to Fifth Grade Art-based Inquiry Program



**Creative Connections** is an art-based inquiry program that brings a teaching artist to your classroom and uses the visual arts to enhance language arts, social studies, and science curricula. An experienced teaching artist will join your classroom for five hands-on, art-based inquiry lessons. The teaching artist will bring all art supplies and all classroom teachers and students will receive a research journal for their creative explorations.

### TIMELINE

#### September 2025:

Apply for the Creative Connections program. Application deadline is September 22.

#### October 2025:

Teacher Kickoff Meeting is on October 14 (Tuesday). Classroom teachers and teaching artists will coordinate curricular plans and teaching schedules.

#### November 2025–April 2026:

Art-based inquiry lessons will be delivered.

#### May 2026:

Creative Connections Art Show at the Palo Alto Art Center, Field Trip to the Art Center, Program Evaluation



### Duration:

Ten 60-minute in-classroom sessions with a teaching artist, plus a 75-minute fieldtrip to the Art Center to see the Creative Connections exhibition in May.

### Cost:

Creative Connections is offered at no cost thanks to the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation.

### Questions?

Email [Heewon.Park@PaloAlto.gov](mailto:Heewon.Park@PaloAlto.gov)

### To apply:

Please fill out this form to apply for Creative Connections:



### **How is Creative Connections different than your regular art lessons?**

Creative Connections Teaching Artists use curricula designed by arts integration specialist Julia Marshall. The emphasis is on exploration and learning about meaningful ideas and concepts, not solely on making art objects or practicing techniques. These art-based inquiry lessons are integrated with social studies, natural science and language arts.

### **What is art-based inquiry?**

Art-based inquiry is an approach to art education that frames art making as a form of inquiry—a way of exploring and learning about ideas, ourselves, and the world. The goals of art-based inquiry are understanding important topics, imagining possibilities, and inventing new realities. Students create art in order to meet those goals and they do it with a teacher's guidance.

### **What type of art will the students make?**

Depending on the grade level and the subjects, students will make 2D or 3D art using various materials and art skills. Construction of artworks (using materials and techniques) plays a supportive role to learning about concepts and playing with ideas. Creative interpretation, imagination, and invention are included in every project.

### **What are the research journals for?**

Research journals are an important part of creative art inquiry. These journals are more than sketchbooks. The research journal is a place to record information, brainstorm ideas, express visually and verbally, experiment and to reflect. The journal also promotes creative inquiry—a shift away from making isolated hands-on art projects toward constructing conceptual threads among art activities and projects (a trail). Furthermore, it encourages learners to see themselves as artist-researchers and scholars. Above all, research journals can integrate learning across the curriculum—building literacy skills and making cross-disciplinary connections.

### **What and when is the final fieldtrip to the Art Center?**

Every student will have an artwork in the Creative Connections exhibition that opens in May at the Art Center. All participating classes are expected to come to see their art on display. Transportation will need to be organized by the teacher.

### **What will the fieldtrip be like?**

Students will have a 30-minute interactive gallery tour led by a docent to see the Creative Connections exhibition followed by a 45-minute hands-on art project led by an art educator.

### **How do I participate?**

Thanks to the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation, we are able to offer this program free of charge to 10 classrooms for the 2025–26 school year. We strive to engage classrooms from each school in the district and across a wide range of grade levels. We encourage new teachers to apply, as well as those who have participated in the past. We encourage grade-level teams to apply together.

### **TEACHER TESTIMONIALS**

■ I have participated in this program for many, many years. It has definitely evolved over the years. My students loved the weekly lessons and I know they were proud of the art they created!

■ It has helped me see each student as unique and capable with different strengths. It reminds me of the importance of allowing students to express their new understandings in various way-with artistic expression. It makes me want to continue to teach the content more via the arts.

■ I appreciate the arts integration and the interdisciplinarity of the program.

