

# BIG THOUGHT, LITTLE BOOK



BIG THOUGHT

# TEACHING ARTISTS

# HOW TO USE YOUR "BIG THOUGHT, LITTLE BOOK"

Welcome to your "Thought Book," your creative companion for the first few weeks as a Teaching Artist! Think of this as your go-to toolkit for working out ideas, strategizing inspiration, and building your network. Here's how to make the most of it:

❖ Explore Your Network 🤝

Start mapping your connections using the "Mapping Your Network" section. This will help you identify key contacts and resources to support your journey.

❖ Get Inspired ✨

Flip through the pages of past projects and "A Day in the Life" stories to spark ideas and see how others bring creativity and connection into their teaching.

❖ Define Your Impact 🧠

Use the "Values and Assets" activity to reflect on your strengths and craft a personal purpose statement. This will help align your teaching goals with the mission of Big Thought.

❖ Plan with Confidence 📅

Follow the lesson planning templates to stay organized, incorporate Social Emotional Learning, and ensure every session leaves an impact.

**This book isn't just a guide; it's a space to brainstorm, adapt, and thrive. Dive in, make it yours, and let it fuel your creativity!**

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# SECTION 1



**WELCOME  
TO  
THE  
PEOPLE**

# PROGRAMS

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## **A LIVE**

(A)LIVE is Big Thought's dynamic after-school and hub-based poetry and performance program designed to enhance students' interpersonal skills, spark creativity, and amplify youth voices. Teaching Artists partner with schools to guide students in exploring poetry in their surroundings, developing personal pieces, and showcasing their work in youth-led poetry slams. This program fosters community, self-expression, and leadership, empowering students to use their voices to create meaningful impact.

## **ARTIVISM**

Born from the social movements of 2016, Artivism is a youth-driven program that blends art and activism to champion social equity. Through collaboration, mentorship, and skill-building, participants create impactful works—from painting and spoken word to digital media and performance—that tell their stories and inspire action. With over 1,000 annual learning hours and an annual showcase, Artivism builds confidence, fosters creativity, and empowers young changemakers to lead with their voices and ideas.

## **CREATIVE SOLUTIONS**

Creative Solutions is a transformative arts-as-workforce program designed to empower justice-involved youth by bridging the opportunity gap and fostering brighter futures. Many of these young individuals face significant challenges, including trauma and systemic barriers, but through Creative Solutions, they gain real-world job experience, develop essential skills, and explore their artistic passions.

For over 30 years, this program has impacted over 15,000 youth, equipping them with the social-emotional and professional tools needed to rebuild their confidence and envision a new path forward. Each summer, youth referred by probation officers participate in weeks of immersive artistic and professional skill-building. The program culminates in a powerful community showcase, where participants proudly present their visual art, musical performances, and spoken word poetry to family, friends, and the public, transforming their stories into inspiration and hope.

# PROGRAMS

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## COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM

Big Thought's Community Action Team (CAT) empowers youth with civic engagement opportunities, career workshops, and relationship-building experiences. Designed for current participants and alumni, CAT connects young leaders to a national network through Opportunity Youth United. As both stakeholders and changemakers, CAT members drive meaningful change within Big Thought, their communities, and their personal growth.

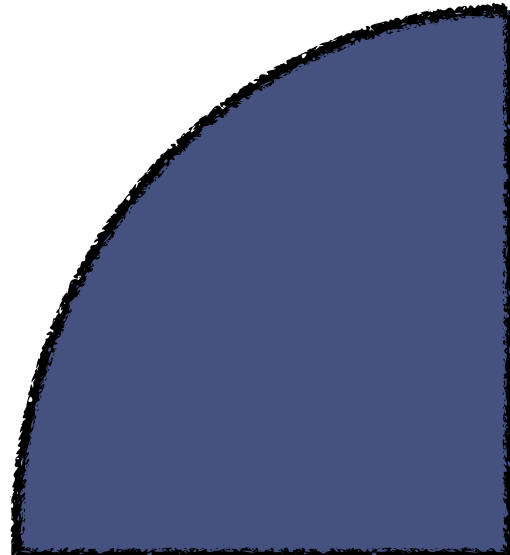
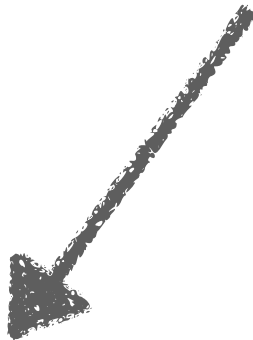
## THRIVING MINDS

Thriving Minds After School provides elementary and middle school students with a safe, engaging space to learn, create, and grow after the school day ends. The program focuses on academic support, creativity, and social-emotional growth through hands-on activities, homework help, and structured play. Running until 6:00 p.m. at select campuses, it's the perfect environment for students to thrive beyond the classroom.

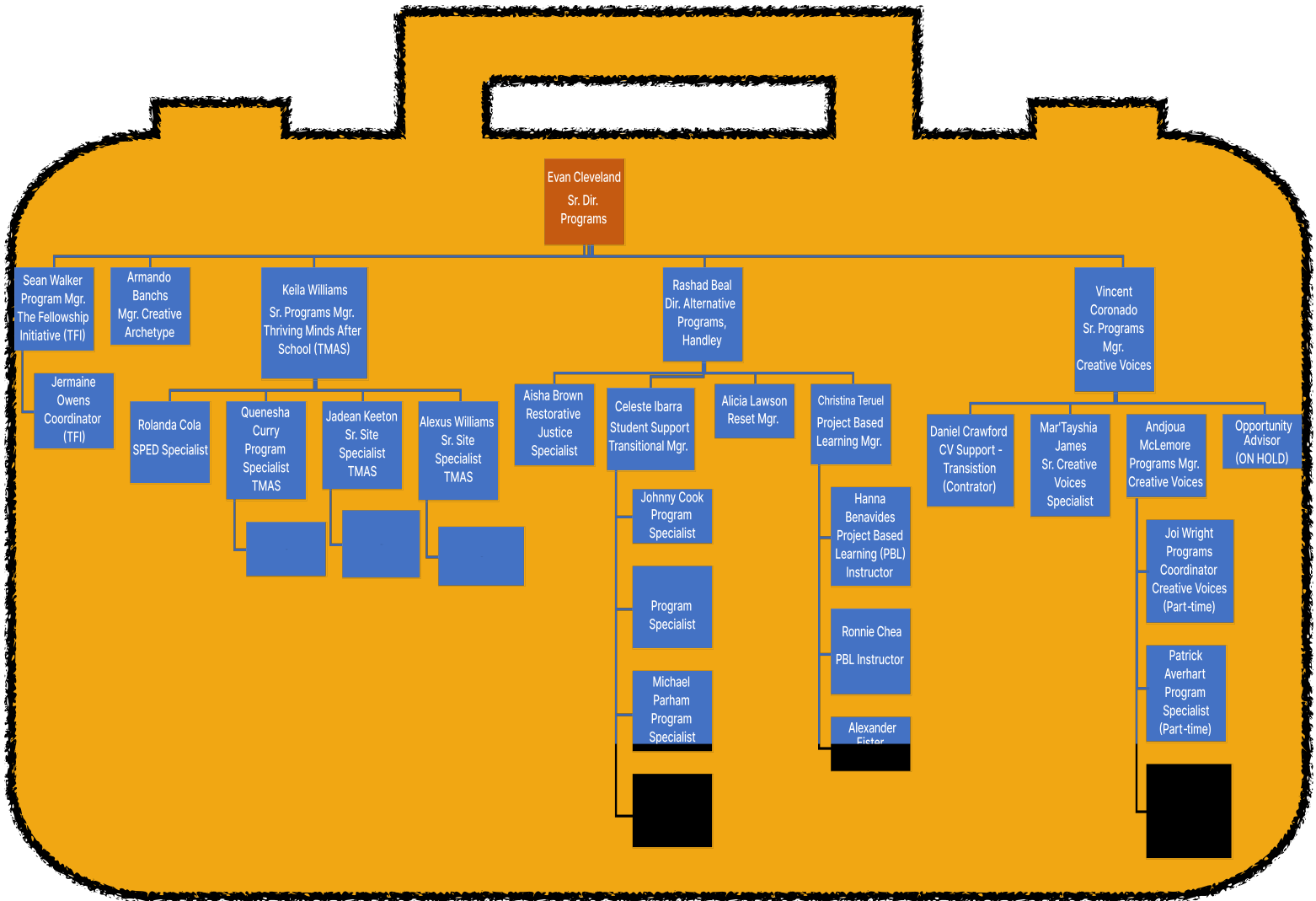
## LET THE BEAT BUILD

Let the Beat Build Foundation empowers youth through music technology, blending creativity with mental wellness and Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Our BUILD IT program teaches students to produce their own music while integrating life coaching, mental health screenings, and academic enrichment. By focusing on music production, we inspire personal expression, creativity, and essential life skills.

# MAP YOUR NETWORK!



# PROGRAMS - ORGANIZATION CHART





*Morning vibes☕: Amy starts her day with coffee in hand and a quick glance at her lesson plan. At school, she sets the tone with a Warm Welcome, greeting each student with energy and positivity.*

*Midday magic🪄: During her art class, she keeps the room buzzing with creativity, encouraging students to express themselves without fear. There's laughter as students experiment with techniques, and a quiet "wow" moment when someone nails a skill they've been practicing.*

*Afternoon impact🎯: The best part? A student recalls something she taught weeks ago, proving her lessons stick beyond the classroom. End of the day glow: As students leave her class smiling and chatting about their projects, Amy reflects: it's not just about teaching art—it's about building confidence, sparking joy, and creating a space where everyone feels they belong.*



## **"A DAY IN THE LIFE" TEACHING ARTIST AMY SCHUETZ**

"Hey there! It's Bianca, and here's a day in my life as a teaching artist! 📝 ✨ I start my day with two hours of creative lesson planning—poetry, SEL, and warm-ups designed to spark imagination. By 3:00 PM, I'm on-site, setting up with music and a welcoming vibe. As students roll in, I greet them by name, chat about their day, and help with homework or life advice. By 4:30, it's go-time: we check in with fun prompts to explore feelings and kickstart today's topic. My warm-ups get the creative cogs turning, leading into our main activity. Before we know it, it's 5:30, and we're wrapping up with free time, clean-up, and goodbyes. The smiles and 'aha!' moments make it all worth it!"



**"A DAY IN THE LIFE"  
TEACHING ARTIST  
BIANCA GREEN**

*"What's up? It's Pakco, here to take you through my day as a teaching artist! 🎵🎸 I start with some morning lesson planning, tailoring music-focused activities to each site. By 3:00 PM, I'm there setting up instruments and making the space welcoming. As students arrive, I'm hyping them up and chatting about their interests—it's all about building that connection. At 4:30, we kick things off with a check-in and creative warm-up, maybe a rhythm challenge or songwriting brainstorm. The main event? Watching students shine as they create something uniquely theirs. By 5:30, we're winding down, and I'm already inspired for the next session. The best part? Seeing the confidence and joy music brings to their lives!"*

**"A DAY IN THE LIFE"  
TEACHING ARTIST  
PAKCO F.**





**PAST PROJECTS:**  
**"WE OUTSIDE" MIXTAPE**  
**- CREATIVE SOLUTIONS**



# SECTION 2

A decorative graphic consisting of three black, hand-drawn style lines forming a staircase shape that descends from the top left towards the middle left of the page.

# WELCOME TO THE PURPOSE

# **WARM WELCOME: BIG THOUGHT VIBE “CHECK IN/CHECK OUT”**

The purpose of this is to create a unifying and energizing start to each session, reinforcing a sense of belonging and cultural identity within the Big Thought family.

## **1. SET THE SCENE**

- Begin by gathering everyone in a circle, creating a safe and welcoming space.

## **2. LEAD THE CALL**

- With enthusiasm, initiate the call:  
Call: “Are you checked in?”  
[Have students talk about and through their day]  
Response: “Im checked in!”

## **3. BUILD THE ENERGY**

- Encourage participants to add their own flair—claps, stomps, or dance moves—to amplify the collective energy.

## **4. CUSTOMIZE THE FLOW**

- Adapt the language and rhythm to resonate with your group’s unique vibe and the specific goals of your program.

# EFFECTIVE ATTENTION SIGNALS

Name	Description	How-to Steps
Voice Check	Voice Check is used to change the volume of the student voices in the classroom.	Teacher says, "Voice Check" in the tone and level of volume they want. Students respond, "1-2, 1-2."
Holla Back	Teacher calls out a phrase from a popular song, and students respond with the second word.	Teacher says, "Holla." Students respond, "Back."
Student Call	Teacher calls the name of the class, and students respond with "Woo! Woo!" or "That's Who We Are."	Teacher and class decide on the response together for buy-in. This can also be done with school names and mascots.
When I Move, You Move	This can be used as a transition for students who are getting materials or moving to another place.	Teacher calls or raps, "When I Move, You Move," and the students respond, "Just like that."
Peace Sign (Deuces)	Used to signal students to quiet down and listen.	Teacher raises a peace sign (deuces) to indicate silence. Students respond by quieting down and returning the peace sign.
Rhythmic Clap	A rhythmic clap initiated by the teacher that students clap back in response, building engagement.	Teacher starts a rhythmic clap pattern. Students repeat the same pattern back. Example: Clap, clap, clap-clap-clap.
Waterfall	Used to quickly gain attention; students mimic the sound of a waterfall with a "shhhh" sound.	Teacher says, "Waterfall!" and students respond by making a continuous "shhhh" sound, simulating the sound of water flowing.
Thumbs Up	A quick visual cue to check for understanding or agreement.	Teacher asks a question or gives a direction. Students show a thumbs up if they understand or agree.
Clap Once, Clap Twice	Used to regain student attention and refocus the group.	Teacher says, "If you can hear me, clap once." Students clap once. Then teacher says, "Clap twice," and students clap twice.

# TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

## 1. Identify Your Core Values

What are the principles that guide your work and interactions as a teaching artist?

- Example: Creativity, empathy, collaboration, adaptability.

**List your top three values:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Define Your Unique Assets

What strengths, skills, or talents make you unique as a teaching artist?

- Example: Storytelling, graphic design, facilitating group discussions, creating safe spaces.

**List your top three assets:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Your Purpose Statement

Create your personal teaching artist philosophy by filling in the blanks below.

Use your identified values and assets to craft a meaningful statement that reflects your mission and motivation.

*"As a teaching artist, I aim to [verb + action/impact] by using my [value 1] and [value 2], and drawing on my [asset 1] and [asset 2]."*

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# SIX DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY TEACHING & LEARNING

## CLIMATE THAT SUPPORTS LEARNING

### Classroom climate in which educator supports learning through

- Managing the classroom in a way that is consistent with focused and productive work in the discipline
- Using physical space conducive to learning in the discipline
- Using clear rituals and routines matched to the discipline (e.g., warm-ups, focusing exercises, strategies for taking care of tools)
- Creating a climate of mutual respect between the instructor and the students

## ENGAGEMENT & INVESTMENT IN LEARNING

### Educator and students build a community of learners by

- Sharing and responding to clear expectations
- Presenting and engaging in tasks/projects that are relevant to students and adapted to different learning styles
- Providing students with clear entry points to demanding assignments
- Helping students to synthesize complex processes; work on sustained projects
- Motivating work to reach high standards
- Inspiring: Hard work, Trying new things, Risk-taking

## CLASSROOM DIALOGUE & SHARING

### Educator and students work together to

- Ensure that students' contributions and discussions form an integral part of the class
- Clarify and develop powerful ideas and big questions in the discipline
- Learn key vocabulary and concepts in order to better understand how to communicate about and through the discipline
- Construct explanations based on evidence and examples
- Share, criticize, and discuss ideas, works and performances with the goal of improving and extending work
- Note: All evidence in this dimension must be verbalized.

## SKILLS, TECHNIQUE & KNOWLEDGE OF THE DISCIPLINE

### Educator and students develop skills, technique and knowledge by

- Modeling or demonstrating skills and techniques to build mastery and expressive power for making meaning
- Focusing on powerful ideas and concepts in the discipline
- Applying and extending familiar practices and approaches in ways that solve problems and generate original possibilities
- Actively exploring historical and contemporary as well as cross-cultural works in a discipline to broaden or deepen the choices students can make

## CREATIVE CHOICES

### Educator and students collaborate on

- Using their imaginations and expressing themselves and their unique interests and experiences
- Making creative choices that are warranted and that inform the product or performance
- Anchoring choices in focused inquiry and exploration of the materials, the genre and the discipline
- Creating distinct and original works or generating new interpretations that develop or extend existing works

## EXPECTATIONS, ASSESSMENT & RECOGNITION

### Educator works with students to think about issues of quality by offering useful and timeline feedback

- Using rubrics that students contribute to and understand for discussing and assessing student work
- Teaching students to assess their own work and activity and/or providing students with opportunities to self-assess
- Facilitating respectful response and reflection among students that opens up new approaches or ideas for next steps or new works
- Providing students with opportunities to revise or revisit work in light of evaluations
- Supporting students in settings where their work will be evaluated using high, external standards

Bullets illustrate examples of observable evidence for each dimension. Bullets are not meant as a checklist. It is doubtful that an observer will see so many types of evidence in one 45-minute session. Also, know that a variety of evidence is not better than a singular example explored in a deep, rich way.

## Day at a glance lesson plan

<b>Instructor Name(s):</b>	
<b>Site:</b>	
<b>Grade Level(s):</b>	
<b>Learning:</b>	Asynchronous                      Synchronous Virtual Synchronous in person
<b>Topic:</b>	
<b>Creator Archetype Domain:</b>	SEL Foundations    Academics and Artistry    Design Thinking    Civics & Service Digital Fluency

Objectives(Content that will be learned) <small>**Note- If using BT Curriculum, reference BT library in objectives and materials section</small>	Which describes the primary purpose of the lessons?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teach new knowledge to remember</li> <li>● Develop/build on existing/prior knowledge to understand</li> <li>● Practice/apply knowledge</li> <li>● Experimenting (a.k.a., analyzing and evaluating) with knowledge</li> <li>● Performing/creating new/original knowledge (e.g., performance, game, writing original work)</li> <li>● Other: (please describe) _____ _____</li> </ul>
Materials (Supplies, Texts, Virtual Tools, Platforms)	6DQ Focus
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Climate that supports Learning</li> <li>● Engagement and Investment in Learning</li> <li>● Dialogue and Sharing</li> <li>● Skills, Techniques, and Knowledge of the Discipline</li> <li>● Creative Choices</li> <li>● Expectations, Assessment, and Recognition</li> </ul>

SEL Connection (Circle all that apply)				
Self-Management	Self-Awareness	Social Awareness Decision-Making	Relationship Skills	Responsible
How do I plan to engage youth voice?				
What transferable skill will student (s) name they have learned as it relates to the Creator Archetype?				

Lesson Progression Break down the lesson into a series of activities that enhance SEL, content and virtual learning practices.
Warm Welcome:
Engaging Practices:
Optimistic Closing:

Family Engagement Strategies How do I plan to engage families through this lesson?

Diversity and Equity Considerations What aspects of this lesson plan celebrate diversity and enhance equity within my site?

## SAG (semester at a glance) lesson plan

<b>Instructor Name(s):</b>			
<b>Site:</b>			
<b>Grade Level(s):</b>			
<b>Learning:</b>	Asynchronous Person	Synchronous Virtual	Synchronous In
<b>Topic:</b>			
<b>Creator Archetype Domain:</b>	SEL Foundations Digital Fluency	Academics and Artistry	Design Thinking Civics & Service

### SEL Connection (Circle all that apply)

Self-Management
Self-Awareness
Social Awareness  
Decision-Making
Relationship Skills
Responsible

**How do I plan to engage youth voice?**

### Lesson Progression

Break down the lesson into a series of months that build upon each other for best retention

Month 1

Month 2

Month 3

Month 4

Month 5

# 2024-2025 Calendar/Calendario

## JULY | JULIO 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

## AUGUST | AGOSTO 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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## SEPTEMBER | SEPTIEMBRE 2024

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## OCTOBER | OCTUBRE 2024

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## NOVEMBER | NOVIEMBRE 2024

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## DECEMBER | DICIEMBRE 2024

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### FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL / PRIMER DÍA DE CLASES

August/Agosto 12

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT / CAPACITACIÓN PROFESIONAL

August/Agosto 1, 5, 6, 7  
 October/Octubre 14  
 November/Noviembre 5  
 January/Enero 6 (½)  
 February/Febrero 17

### TEACHER WORKDAYS / DÍAS LABORALES PARA MAESTROS

August/Agosto 2, 8, 9  
 January/Enero 6 (½)

### STAFF/STUDENT HOLIDAY / DÍA FESTIVO PERSONAL/ESTUDIANTES

July/Julio 1-5:  
 (July 4 – Independence Day / Día de la Independencia)

### September/Septiembre 2:

Labor Day / Día del trabajo

### November/Noviembre 25-29:

Thanksgiving Break / Vacaciones del día de acción de gracias

### December 23-January 3 / 23 de diciembre al 3 de enero:

Winter Break / Vacaciones de invierno

### January/Enero 20:

Martin Luther King Jr. Day / Día de Martin Luther King Jr.

### March/Marzo 10-14:

Spring Break / Vacaciones de primavera

### April/Abril 18

### May/Mayo 26:

Memorial Day / Día de los Caídos

### June/Junio 19:

Juneteenth

### FALL BREAK/FAIR DAYS / DÍAS PARA LA FERIA

October/Octubre 10-11  
 (for students and campus team members / para estudiantes y personal escolar)

### EARLY RELEASE DAYS / DÍAS DE SALIDA TEMPRANA

### December/Diciembre 17-19:

Secondary only / Secundarias y preparatorias

### December/Diciembre 20:

All schools / Todas las escuelas

### May/Mayo 20-22:

Secondary only / Secundarias y preparatorias

### May/Mayo 23:

All schools / Todas las escuelas  
 (Last day of school / Último día de clases)

### INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS / DÍA PARA TIEMPO INCLEMENTE

April/Abril 21

May/Mayo 2

[ Begin Nine Weeks

] End Nine Weeks

## JANUARY | ENERO 2025

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## FEBRUARY | FEBRERO 2025

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## APRIL | ABRIL 2025

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## MAY | MAYO 2025

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## JUNE | JUNIO 2025

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# DECEMBER / 2024

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# JANUARY / 2025

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# FEBRUARY / 2025

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# MARCH / 2025

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# APRIL / 2025

IMPORTANT DATES: \_\_\_\_\_



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# MAY / 2025

IMPORTANT DATES: \_\_\_\_\_



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# BIG THOUGHT CONNECT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE

Email

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notes

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# notes

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