**Classroom Tree Ceiling Murals Provide Stress Relief at Cesar Chavez Academy**

**28 April 2022, Corona, CA –** Following the installation of a tree canopy ceiling in their wellness room, a place for students to decompress and experience calmness, Cesar Chavez Academy welcomed back Nature In The Classroom. “After teachers and staff witnessed the immediate benefits to students under high-stress situations, often due to pandemic anxiety, they invited us back to add six additional ceilings in middle school classrooms,” stated Ernesto Rodriguez, Founder and ED of [Nature in the Classroom](https://www.natureintheclassroom.org/).

The original tree canopy installed featured a MacDonald Oak located on Catalina Island while the other six canopies included Tipu, Coral and Eucalyptus trees photographed in Los Angeles County. “The ceilings were placed in classrooms, and with the rotating schedules at the middle school, 400 students will experience the ceilings during their day,” added Rodriguez.

Backed by [forty years of peer-reviewed research](https://www.natureintheclassroom.org/research.html), one of the positive effects of viewing nature is nurturing socio-emotional development by placing students in a calming environment. This research also finds photographic images of nature improve learning outcomes, resulting in higher test scores and grade point averages and increased attention spans with more time on task.

After experiencing trees in the classrooms for a week, teachers and students shared their impressions: “The students were excited to see the tree ceiling in their classroom. I can already tell that by having the tree ceiling it has brought a sense of calmness and peace to the students seated underneath them.” Karyn Smolic, 7th/8th grade Math. Students were excited, "I like sitting under the trees. I really like the sunshine peeking through". Another added, “The trees are so beautiful and peaceful!”.

To achieve the effects of being outdoors, high resolution images are printed onto 2’x4’ ceiling tiles and pieced together to complete the ceiling canopy. All tiles meet national building fire codes and are produced with non-toxic inks on recycled plastic.

“After hearing the feedback about the original ceiling, we are excited to further expand into the classroom so students can regularly encounter the benefits these ceilings provide.” said Rodriguez. “My students are seated on the perimeter of the classroom. I have a handful of seats in the middle of the room, directly underneath the trees. I have students asking me to sit there so they can see the trees better,” added Shelley Bellew, 8th grade Science.