

The Texas Fine Arts Education ACCORD

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What is the TCQAE?

The Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education (TCQAE) includes the leadership of fine arts (music, art, theatre, and dance) education and arts organizations from Texas. The TCQAE Member Organizations include the: ArtGives.Org, Association of Texas Small School Bands, BigThought: A Learning Partnership, Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts, Kodaly Educators of Texas, North Texas Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts, Stephen F. Austin University, College of Fine Arts, Texarkana Regional Arts & Humanities Council, Texas Art Education Association, Texas Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance, Texas Choral Directors Association, Texas Dance Educators' Association, Texas Educational Theatre Association, Texas Music Administrators Conference, Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Music Educators Conference, Texas Music Teachers Association, Texas Orchestra Directors Association, Texas Tech University, School of the Visual and Performing Arts, and The Discovery Science Place.

The TCQAE represents all of the students enrolled in the arts in Texas, and the parents, educators, community leaders, and arts advocates involved in and supportive of arts education, both publicly and privately.

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Visit the TCQAE website

<http://www.tcqae.org>



What does TCQAE do?

Members of the **Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education** (TCQAE) work in concert to serve as a common voice for the advancement of quality fine arts education for all students in Texas by:

- articulating the importance of student learning in the fine arts disciplines; and,
- communicating proven standards for quality fine arts programs in our schools.

Quality fine arts programs, beginning in early childhood, will insure that we have future creative and caring citizens. The TCQAE monitors and gives testimony on legislation and state board of education action relevant to fine arts education. We provide speakers on fine arts education, educational materials and consultation on the local and state levels. We coordinate **Arts Education Day at the Capitol**, every Legislative year. Arts Education Day at the Capitol features performances by hundreds of outstanding arts students from throughout Texas in the Capitol Rotunda and on the South Steps. Students deliver arts advocacy packets to state Legislators, the State School Board, and the Texas Education Agency. Our legislative sponsors hold a press conference. Go to www.artseducationday.org to view the video on Arts Education Day at the Capitol.

The TCQAE is dedicated to *Creating a Renaissance in Fine Arts Education in Texas* over the next 5 years.

If you or your organization is interested in participating in and supporting the TCQAE, go to our website (www.tcqae.org) for more information.

Texas Fine Arts Education *ACCORD*

The Member Organizations of the Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education (TCQAE) share the following beliefs about arts education in Texas as declared in the *Texas Fine Arts Education ACCORD*.

Defining the Fine Arts

The Texas Administrative Code, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), and Curriculum Frameworks define the fine arts areas for Grades Pre-K through 12 as music, art, theatre, and dance. The **No Child Left Behind Act** defined the “*core academic subjects*” as the **arts**, English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, history and geography. The *National Standards for Arts Education: What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts* and *National Assessment of Educational Progress* also defined the arts as music, art, theatre, and dance.

What the Law Says

Fine Arts holds its most prominent placement in law and State Board rule that it has enjoyed in recent years. The fine arts are defined in State Board rule as music, art, theatre and dance.

Objective 4 of the **Texas Education Code (TEC)** states: A **well-balanced and appropriate** curriculum will be provided to all students. Chapter 28 of the TEC states, “Each district shall ensure that all children in the district **participate actively in a balanced curriculum designed to meet individual needs.**”

All the courses in the **Required Curriculum**, which includes fine arts, are necessary for a child to receive a well-balanced, meaningful education. The word "Required" in the TEC means "**each school district that offers kindergarten through grade 12 shall offer this curriculum.**"

The State Board of Education will identify the **Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)** for all subjects of the Required Curriculum. The TEKS define what students should know and be able to do in each academic subject area and each grade level. TEKS are currently in place for all fine arts disciplines. As a condition of accreditation, the State Board of Education requires school districts to offer instruction based on the TEKS at appropriate grade levels.

English language arts, math, science, and social studies are called **Foundation courses** because the TEC’s academic objectives identify these courses as the foundation of a well-balanced and appropriate education. These subjects will continue to be assessed on the state level.

Fine arts courses are a part of the **Enrichment Curriculum**, a component of the Required Curriculum. By definition, enrich means "to make richer, to add greater value or significance." It does not mean "extra," "not necessary," "elective," or "optional." These courses are an integral part of the educational process and in many cases are the courses that give meaning and substance to a child's education and to his or her life. **By law, school districts, as a condition of accreditation, must utilize the TEKS in delivering instruction in all subjects of the Required Curriculum - not just in Foundation courses.**

Under state board rule, the Recommended Program, the current default graduation plan, and the Distinguished Achievement Program **require one credit of fine arts for graduation.** Fine Arts are defined as an “academic core component” in each of these plans.

State Board rule (19 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 74, subchapter A) now mandates that school districts provide TEKS-based instruction in all subjects/courses of the Required Curriculum in grades K-5. This requirement includes music, art and theatre at each of these grade levels. School districts may deliver this instruction in a variety of arrangements and settings.

Middle schools must offer art, music, and/or theatre in grades 6, 7, and/or 8.

High schools must offer at least two of the four state-approved fine arts subjects (art, dance, music, theatre).

Though not a part of Texas law, the federal legislation, No Child Left Behind, includes fine arts as a part of the academic core curriculum.

Basic Education and the Fine Arts

The members of TCQAE believe that the fine arts should be an integral part of basic education for all students. We support responsible efforts to improve the quality of education in Texas at all levels and in every aspect of the curriculum.

Class sizes in the fine arts should not exceed what is normal for other academic disciplines, except in the case of performance groups such as choir, band, and orchestra.

Fine arts education programs should be designed to produce individuals who:

- have a background in all of the fine arts and advanced knowledge and skill in at least one fine arts discipline;
- exercise their creative abilities through the fine arts;
- use the vocabulary of the fine arts;
- respond to the fine arts aesthetically, intellectually, and emotionally;
- are acquainted with a wide variety of art forms, including diverse styles and genres;
- understand the role the fine arts have played and continue to play in the lives of human beings;
- make aesthetic judgments based on critical perception and analysis;
- are committed to the value of fine arts in society;
- support the artistic life of the community and encourage others to do so; and,
- continue their learning in the fine arts independently.

We believe that, when appropriate, instruction in the fine arts should be used to facilitate and enrich the teaching of other subject matter; however, the fine arts must maintain their integrity in the curriculum and be taught for their own sake as well.

We embrace the importance of literacy in every child's education. Each of the fine arts disciplines inherently includes literacy components that should be directly addressed in fine arts classrooms.

Strong programs in the fine arts address student needs in that they:

- strengthen problem-solving and higher order thinking skills of all students;
- identify and develop the artistic skills of students;
- enhance students' sense of personal worth;
- provide opportunities for students to experience success in ways other than those typically offered in other academic areas; and,
- bring joy and beauty into the lives of students and teachers and thereby make schools more enjoyable and stimulating places in which to learn.

Curricular Issues in Fine Arts Education

Members of the TCQAE believe that:

- no less than fifteen percent of the instructional program of every student in every elementary school should be devoted to the study of music, art, theatre, and dance;
- at least fifteen percent of the instructional program of every student in every middle school and/or junior high school should be devoted to the study of a fine arts discipline and the opportunity should exist for students to take additional arts courses if they choose to do so;
- every school district should require at least one credit in music, art, theatre, and dance for graduation and should provide and encourage additional study in the fine arts;
- every middle, junior, and high school should be responsive to the requirements of a diverse student population by providing a wide variety of music, art, theatre, and dance course offerings chosen from those listed in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS); and,
- all advanced achievement programs (IB, AP, DAP, etc.) should include opportunities in the fine arts disciplines.

We also believe that education in the fine arts can benefit from utilizing the full range of cultural institutions in the local community and visiting artists to enhance and strengthen a school's fine arts

curriculum and the lives of those in the community. We encourage schools to initiate collaborations with cultural organizations and artists when those collaborations support balanced, comprehensive, sequential and rigorous fine arts programs which:

- suit the needs of the individual students;
- reflect the multicultural nature of our pluralistic American society;
- incorporate the most current forms, media, and technology into fine arts instruction; and,
- include diverse experiences with arts and cultural institutions and artists within the community.

We recognize that religion and the fine arts are culturally connected. The study of aesthetic qualities of religious art forms is, therefore, appropriate for the development of artistic and cultural literacy.

Access to Arts Education

Members of the TCQAE believe that all students at every level, early childhood through high school, should be provided with a balanced, comprehensive, sequential, and rigorous program of instruction in each of the fine arts disciplines in their schools. These programs should be taught by certified music, art, theatre, and dance specialists and should include experiences provided by the cultural community.

We believe that the best possible education in the fine arts should be available to all students and that every student should have an equal opportunity to study the fine arts. The quality and quantity of fine arts programs should not be limited by geographic location, racial or ethnic status, urban/suburban/rural status, socioeconomic status, disability, or parental or community wealth.

We further believe that academic credit should be awarded for study in the fine arts on the same basis as for other courses in the secondary school. Advanced level course work (honors, AP, IB, etc.) should be available to students in the fine arts disciplines. Grades earned in music, art, theatre, and dance should be considered in determining the grade- point averages and class rankings of students on the same basis as grades in other courses.

Scheduling School Arts Programs

Members of the TCQAE believe that music, art, theatre, and dance should be taught during the school day as integral parts of the total school program rather than as after school extracurricular activities. Students should not be pulled from fine arts classes for remediation in other academic disciplines. All schools should offer:

- developmentally appropriate fine arts experiences for all early childhood students;
- daily fine arts classes for all elementary school students;
- sufficient flexibility to ensure that all middle school, junior high, and high school students have the opportunity to enroll in fine arts courses; and,
- class sizes in the fine arts should not exceed what is normal for other academic disciplines, except in the case of performance groups such as choir, band, and orchestra.

Instructional Issues

Members of the TCQAE believe that every school district should appoint qualified administrators or supervisors to provide instructional leadership for each fine arts discipline. These persons should be

employed full-time when the district includes fifteen or more fine arts teachers.

We believe that the professional staff of the state department of education should include a director of fine arts with subordinate personnel specializing in each fine arts discipline.

We believe that representatives from the field of fine arts education should be appointed to national, state and local boards, committees and panels of arts organizations whose actions bear upon fine arts education in the schools.

We believe that every music, art, theatre, and dance teacher should be allowed the greatest possible discretionary authority to use his or her professional judgment in selecting the most appropriate instructional materials for use with specific courses or students. Teachers should be involved in all aspects of technology utilization in the fine arts, including planning, implementation, and evaluation.

We believe the daily schedule of every teacher of music, art, theatre, and dance should allow at least sixty minutes for preparation time during the instructional day to:

- plan for classroom and after school activities;
- evaluate student learning;
- set up performances/exhibitions; and,
- manage inventories of supplies, materials, and equipment.

Sufficient travel time should be computed in the teaching load of teachers of the fine arts who must travel from school to school or room to room, and fine arts teachers should receive extra compensation for time spent outside the instructional day supervising student activities that are part of their programs.

Professional Development for Fine Arts Teachers

Members of the TCQAE believe that every teacher of the fine arts should be encouraged to develop professionally by:

- taking advantage of all research findings that can make their instruction more effective;
- attending professional meetings and fulfilling leadership responsibilities on behalf of their respective local, state and national organizations;
- taking at least two days each year of paid professional leave to attend staff development opportunities in the field of fine arts education designed to meet individual needs;
- participating in mentoring programs to develop and enhance professional expertise during, but not limited to, the first years of teaching;
- collaborating with appropriate administrators in planning and implementing any program which is used to evaluate the effectiveness of fine arts educators or to assess their competence; and,
- acquainting themselves with the provisions of copyright laws and guarding against the production, use, and/or storage of any materials produced in violation of the law.

College Preparation and Teacher Education in the Fine Arts

Members of the TCQAE believe that every college and university should require at least one year of study in music, art, theatre, or dance for admission and should credit prospective students for additional study of the fine arts. Every college and university should require study in at least one fine arts discipline for graduation and encourage study in two or more fine arts disciplines.

We believe that standards for entrance into the teaching professions in the fine arts should be rigorous and based upon personal, intellectual, artistic, and instructional qualifications.

Students with Disabilities

Members of the TCQAE recognize that increased staff and resources are necessary to meet the artistic requirements of students with special needs and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. When appropriate, students with disabilities should have the opportunity to participate in the fine arts on the same basis as other students. Arts therapists' services should be made available to students who cannot be successfully included in regular fine arts classes.

We believe that when students with disabilities are included in regular fine arts classes:

- arts educators should be involved in the placement decisions and be fully informed about the needs of each student;
- placement should not result in a disproportionate number of students with disabilities in any class; and,
- arts educators working with students with disabilities should have access to appropriate professional development.

Gifted and Talented/Magnet Schools

Members of the TCQAE believe that Gifted and Talented programs in schools should include the fine arts, and that extraordinary opportunities should be provided for students who are gifted in music, art, theatre, or dance, which will allow them to develop their skills to the highest possible degree. We support the National Alliance of State Associations for the Gifted and the Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented definition of "gifted and talented individuals" as "those who excel or have the potential to excel in any of the following areas: general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership, and visual or performing arts."

Members of the TCQAE believe that the establishment of fine arts magnet schools should not result in a reduction in the quantity or quality of fine arts instruction in other area schools. We strongly support arts-centered schools where the fine arts are taught for their own sake and serve as vehicles for delivery of instruction in other curricular areas.

Financial Support for Fine Arts Programs

Members of the TCQAE believe that in order to achieve our state and national commitment of equal educational opportunity for all students, every school district and the state should provide adequate financial resources to support the fine arts programs as outlined in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. This support must be included as an integral part of the operating budget of every school system in order to:

- provide adequate teaching and administrative staff to offer students access to fine arts education as outlined in this document;
- provide teachers of music, art, theatre, and dance with sufficient teaching materials, textbooks, resources and the appropriate classroom equipment with which to teach that is high quality,

- current, and in good condition;
- provide adequate teaching/learning facilities which are large enough to safely and comfortably accommodate the largest group taught and suitable with respect to temperature, humidity, lighting, acoustical properties, ventilation, and all applicable safety issues;
 - provide adequate secured storage space for instructional materials, work in progress, and equipment;
 - cover expenses for at least two days per year for every fine arts teacher to attend at least one professional conference in his/her field;
 - provide every fine arts teacher access to appropriate educational technology and the opportunity to explore its potential; and,
 - provide every student access to technological tools that enhance learning of the fine arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

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