

## Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for taking your time to answer the following brief questionnaire. This information will be shared with arts education supporters as they prepare to vote in the upcoming election. If you have any questions about the content or would like more information, please contact Robert Floyd, TCQAE Chair, at (512) 452-0710, ext. 101.

Name Rep. Ellen Cohen District 134

**Returning the Questionnaire:** Return this questionnaire either in the included envelope, or by fax to (512) 451-9213.

### Benefits of Music Education

Last year, the Texas Music Educators Association conducted an analysis of student enrollment in Texas middle school and high school fine arts courses (music, theatre, art, and dance). The analysis found that student enrollment in fine arts courses was 36 percent higher in schools rated "exemplary" than in schools rated "low performing." Also, schools with higher student involvement in fine arts had better student attendance records. In addition, students selected as Texas All-State musicians have SAT scores over 300 points higher than the state average and over 200 points higher than the national average.

1. Do you believe that studying music and other fine arts helps improve student performance in other academic courses?  
 Yes    No    Undecided    Would like more information
2. Do you believe that student involvement in music and other fine arts reduces the drop out rate by keeping some at-risk students interested in school?  
 Yes    No    Undecided    Would like more information
3. Do you believe that instruction in music and other fine arts provides students with learning skills that enhance college preparedness?  
 Yes    No    Undecided    Would like more information
4. Do you believe that creativity fostered by a fine arts education is a trait highly valued by employers in building a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce?  
 Yes    No    Undecided    Would like more information

### Education Priorities

Many believe that being in a school band, orchestra, or choir is an extracurricular activity, yet these are standards-based academic courses for which students receive course credits. State law requires every high school student to have at least one fine arts credit to graduate. However, student enrollment in high school and middle school music courses has been steadily declining for the past 10 years and, in elementary grades, music education is often sacrificed to prepare for TAKS tests.

5. Do you support or oppose making fine arts courses part of the core curriculum for Texas schools?
- Support     Oppose     Undecided     Would like more info
6. Do you support or oppose removing students from music and other fine arts courses for TAKS preparation drills?
- Support     Oppose     Undecided     Would like more info
7. Do you support or oppose a legislatively-created blue ribbon task force, appointed by the governor, to recommend ways to increase opportunities for students to study music and other fine arts in our schools?
- Support     Oppose     Undecided     Would like more info

### Opportunities to Study Fine Arts

During the 81<sup>st</sup> legislative session, new high school graduation programs were voted into law that provide students more flexibility to take academic courses they value.

8. Would you support or oppose legislation that would add more requirements and thus take away the flexibility added during the last session?
- Support     Oppose     Undecided     Would like more info

*Thank you for completing this questionnaire.  
Please return it in the envelope provided, or fax it to (512) 451-9213*

**Questionnaire results will be posted on [www.GoArts.org](http://www.GoArts.org)**