

Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education
Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

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, theater, 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.

Please answer yes, no, undecided, or need more information:

1. Do you believe that studying music and other fine arts helps improve student performance in other academic courses?

Yes, studies have proved so. Music is mathematically organized. The visual arts help understand concepts abstractly and to grasp spatial relationships.

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, because music and the arts stimulate interest in students. Student interest is what motivates academic participation.

3. Do you believe that instruction in music and other fine arts provides students with learning skills that enhance college preparedness?

Yes, arts and music study help students solve problems creatively and through reasoned thought.

4. Do you believe that creativity fostered by a fine arts education is a trait highly valued by employers in building a 21st century workforce?

Yes, I believe that creative problem solving is a critical skill for jobs of the future.

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 art 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 schools grades, music education is often sacrificed to prepare for TAKS tests.

Please answer support, oppose, undecided, or need more information:

5. Do you support or oppose making fine arts courses part of the core curriculum for Texas schools?

I support because fine arts study gives a student a more rounded education.

6. Do you support or oppose removing students from music and other fine arts courses for TAKS preparation drills?

I believe that the emphasis placed on the TAKS test comes at the cost of teaching students how to read, write, understand math concepts, and think critically.

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?

Yes, but I would like to see an effort where such a task force's recommendations would actually be implemented.

Opportunities to Study Fine Arts:

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

Please answer support, oppose, undecided, or need more information:

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

The question is vague as to which requirements are referenced. For instance, I would support requirements that teachers be certified. I would support flexibility around requirements that are obsolete.

Questionnaire results will be posted on www.GoArts.org.