

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 Arthur M Thomas IV District Tx House 121

Returning the Questionnaire: Return this questionnaire either in the included envelope by October 5, or fax both sides to (512) 451-9213.

Benefits of Music Education

In 2010–2011, 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 from 2006 to 2011 was significantly 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 400 points higher than the state average and over 360 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 21st 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 arts courses has been limited and participation in elementary grades sacrificed to prepare for STAAR 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 STAAR preparation drills?
 Support Oppose Undecided Would like more info

Legislative Support for Fine Arts

During the 82nd legislative session, Senator Leticia Van de Putte and Representative Mark Shelton cosponsored the creation of a fine arts caucus to share the importance of a well-balanced education that includes the arts.

7. Would you be willing to become a member of such a caucus during the 83rd session?
 Yes No 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 by October 5.*

Questionnaire results will be posted on www.GoArts.org



Mark Shelton

Thank you for sending the survey and allowing my position on this issue to be known.

I chose undecided on making fine arts a mandatory part of the core curriculum because I believe that it is good for students, but they must be free to choose their educational path, as much as possible. Making a class or classes mandatory is not a guarantee of success.

As a libertarian I avoid coercion wherever possible, even if I do personally believe in the great benefits of a fine arts education.

Thank You,



9/28/2012