

Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education

Robert Floyd, Chairman
James M. Clarke, Executive Director



Message from law makers to school districts: Don't cut fine arts courses more than other academic subjects

AUSTIN – Fine arts courses are an essential and required part of the curriculum in Texas schools and should not be targeted for a disproportionate share of budget cuts by school districts, according to legislative leaders and fine arts advocates who gathered at the Capitol today along with hundreds of school children from across the state.

“We know that the state and school districts are facing unprecedented budgetary constraints,” said Sen. Florence Shapiro, Chair of the Senate Education Committee. “Fine arts courses are just as essential as every other part of the required curriculum. In fact, fine arts courses are becoming increasingly critical in preparing students for the 21st century workforce.”

House Public Education Committee Chairman Rob Eissler said, “All of the studies show that studying music and the other fine arts improves the academic performance of students, produces higher test scores, increases attendance and reduces the dropout rate. That’s why our schools must maintain strong fine arts programs at every grade level from kindergarten through high school.”

As legislators discussed education funding at a Capitol press conference, choirs, bands, orchestras, ensembles and dance teams from 22 school districts began two days of performances in the Capitol Rotunda and on the Capitol’s south steps for Fine Arts Days at the Capitol. The performances for legislators and Capitol visitors are organized by the Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education every two years during legislative sessions to highlight the importance of arts education. The coalition represents more than 30 arts organizations in the state.

“Unfortunately, many people have the misconception that music courses and other fine arts courses in our schools are an extra-curricular activity or a non-essential part of our education system,” said Robert Floyd, chairman of the Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education. “Nothing could be further from the truth. Fine arts instruction is required in all elementary grades and students must take at least one fine arts course in both middle school and high school. If fine arts courses are singled out for budget cuts, we will be cutting the heart out of our education system.”

Floyd cited an analysis of data from the Texas Education Agency over the past five years. “And the results are clear: Schools with a higher percentage of student enrollments in fine arts courses achieved higher academic ratings and higher graduation rates,” he said.

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