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Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education

Fine arts courses tied to higher academic ratings, lower drop out rates

AUSTIN – Schools that have higher levels of student participation in fine arts receive higher academic ratings and have lower drop out rates, according to a new analysis of Texas high schools and middle schools.

Average student enrollment in fine arts courses is 17 percentage points higher in high schools that are rated “Exemplary” than in those rated “Low Performing,” based on data from the Texas Education Agency on 951 high schools. Schools with the lowest drop out rates on average have 52 percent of their students enrolled in fine arts classes while schools with the highest drop-out rates have only 42 percent of their students in fine arts courses. The data from 864 middle schools followed the same trend as high schools.

The analysis was conducted by the Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education (TCQAE), which includes more than 50 fine arts education organizations, and the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA). The results were released Monday at a news conference at the Capitol.

“There is obviously a connection between involvement in arts courses and higher academic achievement,” said Robert Floyd, chair of the coalition and executive director of TMEA. “These findings are consistent with decades of research revealing that studying music and other arts disciplines improves cognitive abilities that are used in other academic areas such as mathematics, reading and science. Other studies have shown that fine arts courses keep students involved in school, thus reducing the drop out rate, and that is also reflected in this analysis.”

Nationally, students enrolled in fine arts courses score from 6 to 11 percent higher on the SAT than students not enrolled in any fine arts courses, according to the College Entrance Examination Board. In Texas, students selected as All-State musicians have scored on average 238 points (22%) higher than the state average and 206 points (18%) higher than the national average.

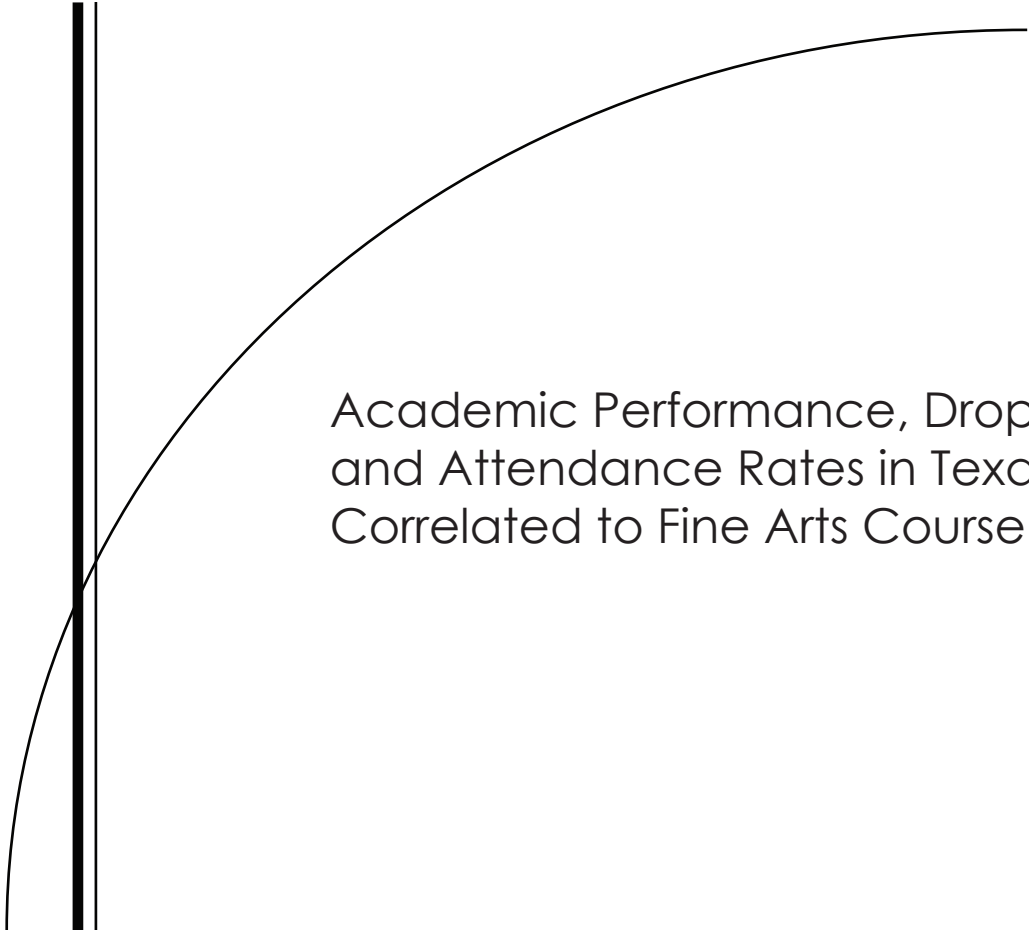
Floyd said that lawmakers and administrators need to be sensitive to the connection between the fine arts and overall academic performance when they consider placing additional course requirements on schools. “If the state mandates that additional

time be spent on other subjects, students may not be afforded the opportunity to take fine arts courses. There are only so many hours in the instructional day,” Floyd said. As part of required curriculum in Texas law, all school districts must provide instruction in the fine arts. In addition, high school students must have at least one fine arts credit to graduate under the recommended and distinguished achievement graduation plans. The fine arts, by state board of education rule, include music, art, theatre and dance.

“Fine arts education helps students develop necessary creative skills that can prove to be the cornerstone of success in a variety of professions. Creativity will prove as essential as literacy in preparing students to succeed in the 21st century workforce,” Floyd explained.

“Texas recognizes that the fine arts are a valuable academic discipline contributing to a well-balanced curriculum,” Floyd said. “However, the fact that fine arts education improves academic performance and lowers drop-out rates is an additional benefit and yet another reason why the state must maintain a strong commitment to fine arts education in our schools.”

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Academic Performance, Drop Out Rates
and Attendance Rates in Texas Public Schools
Correlated to Fine Arts Course Enrollment

March 4, 2007

An analysis of 2005-2007 data reported by Texas public school campuses completed by the Texas Music Educators Association and the Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education

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Purpose

Research continues to demonstrate a correlation between the study of fine arts and overall academic achievement—from brain research showing that the same type of cognitive abilities are used in mathematics and fine arts to studies revealing that SAT scores of students who participate in fine arts courses are higher than non-participants. Data from the College Board, Profile of College-Bound Seniors National Report from 2001, 2002, 2004 and 2005 shows that students enrolled in fine arts courses score from 6% to 11% higher than students not enrolled in any fine arts courses. Additionally, since 2000, Texas All-State musicians have scored about 18% higher than the national average and about 22% higher than the Texas average

To further explore this relationship of fine arts participation to academic achievement in Texas schools, the Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education, together with Texas Music Educators Association (a TCQAE participating organization) analyzed academic achievement ratings, drop out rates and fine arts enrollment data reported by public schools across Texas.

Overall Conclusions

After analyzing the data on campus academic ratings, attendance rates, drop out rates and fine arts course enrollment, the following overall conclusions were reached:

Academic Rating: campuses with a higher percentage of student enrollment in fine arts courses achieved higher academic ratings.

Student Drop out: campuses with a higher percentage of student enrollment in fine arts courses report lower drop out rates.

Student Attendance: campuses with a higher percentage of student enrollment in fine arts courses reported higher attendance rates.

Analysis Method

The analysis included data from all “Regular Instructional” campuses for the entire state. Data from high school (grades 9-12) and middle school (grades 6-8) campuses was included in this study. County-District-Campus codes were used to match the data mined from the analysis data sources: campus ratings, total student enrollments, total student enrollments in Fine Arts, drop out rates and attendance rates. The data used in this study

is maintained by TEA on its website: Texas Education Agency Website (www.tea.state.tx.us/) → Data Resources & Research (www.tea.state.tx.us/data.html) → askTED (Texas Education Directory) <http://askted.tea.state.tx.us/> .
The following data was included:

Fine Arts Enrollment Data (requested data):
Grades 6 – 8 (enrolled [2006-2007]) and Levels I – IV (completion [2005-2006])
- Music, Art, Theater, Dance

2006 Accountability Rating System
Ratings by District
Ratings by Campus

Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools
2005 Attendance rates
2005 Drop out rates (7-8 and 7-12)

The analysis consisted of determining the percentage of students at each campus enrolled in fine arts courses and calculating that average for the campuses assigned each academic ranking. This same analysis was completed for campuses within a specified drop out range.

Data Analysis Summary

The following is the summary-level data that supports the overall conclusions in this analysis.

Campus academic rating compared to average fine arts enrollment

The following demonstrates that campuses with higher academic ranking have a higher percentage of students enrolled in fine arts courses.

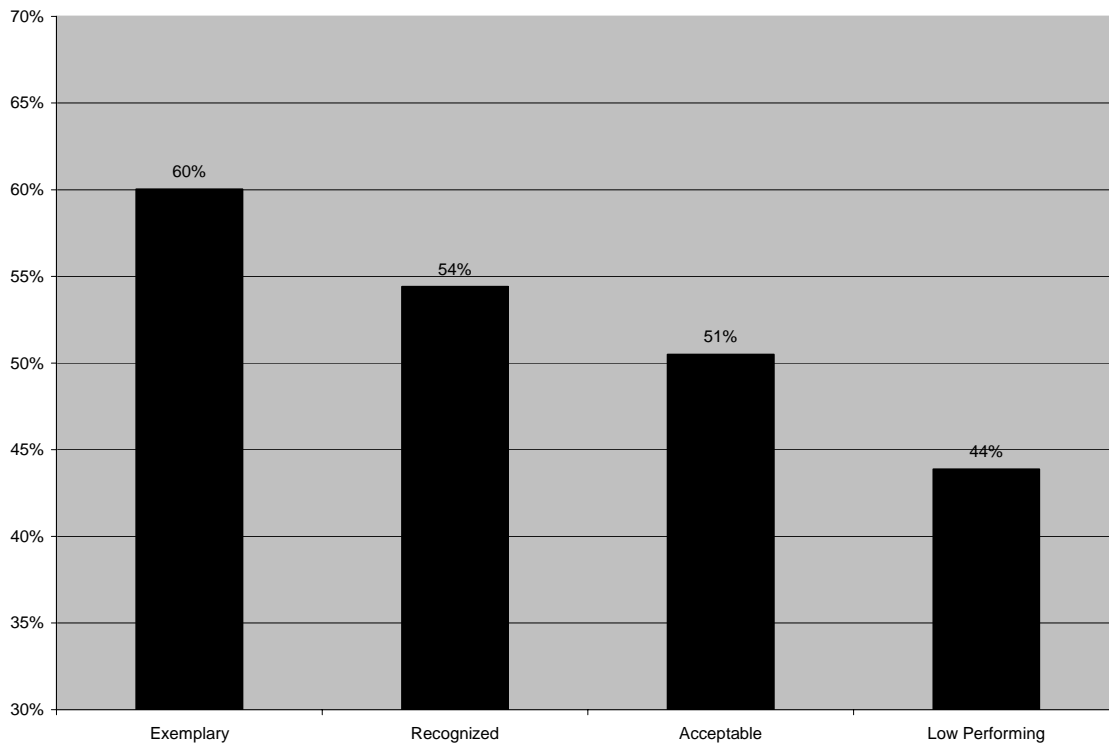
9-12 Campuses

RATING	Number of Campuses	Fine Arts Average Enrollment
Exemplary	8	60.04%
Recognized	123	54.41%
Acceptable	713	50.50%
Low Performing	107	43.88%

6-8 Campuses

RATING	Number of Campuses	Fine Arts Average Enrollment
Exemplary	24	72.63%
Recognized	307	70.19%
Acceptable	481	66.97%
Low Performing	52	66.02%

Fine Arts Course Enrollment in Texas High Schools by Campus Academic Rating:



Campus drop out rates compared to average fine arts enrollment

The following demonstrates that campuses with lower drop out rates have a higher percentage of students enrolled in fine arts courses.

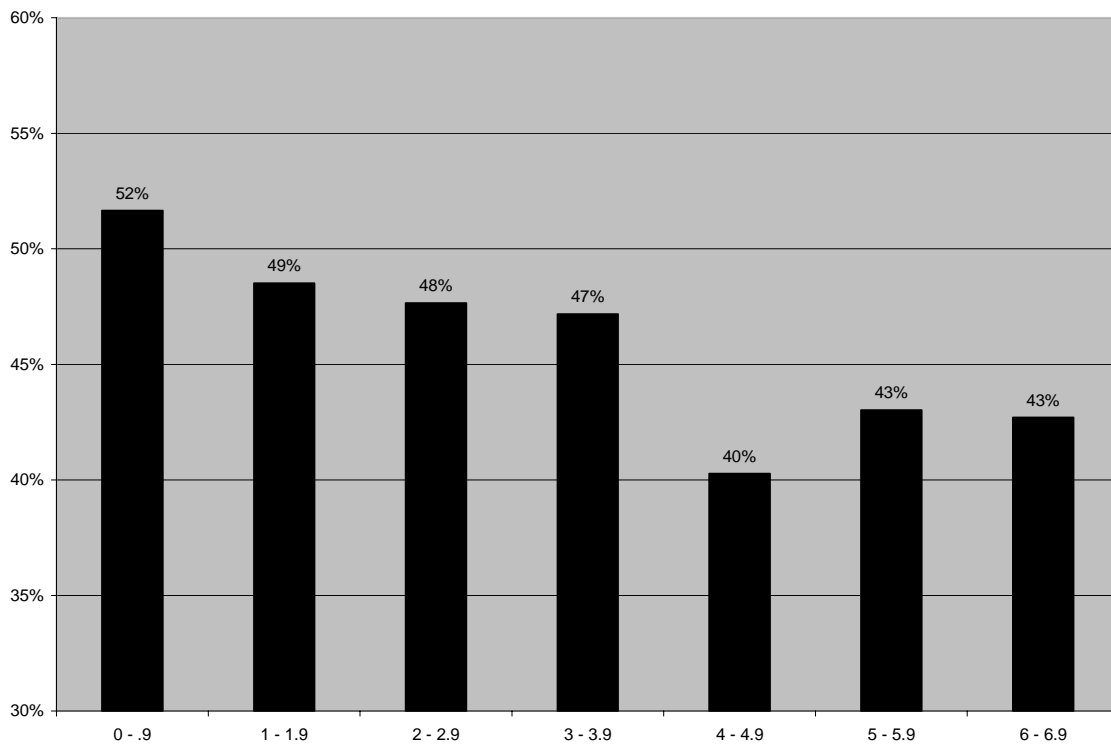
9-12 CAMPUSES

Drop out Rate	Number of Campuses	Fine Arts Avg Enrollment
0 - .9	617	51.66%
1 - 1.9	207	48.52%
2 - 2.9	77	47.65%
3 - 3.9	30	47.18%
4 - 4.9	19	40.28%
5 - 5.9	4	43.03%
6 - 6.9	4	42.70%

6-8 CAMPUSES

Drop out Rate	Number of Campuses	Fine Arts Avg Enrollment
0 - .9	836	67.58%
1 - 1.9	18	60.29%

Fine Arts Course Enrollment and Drop Out Rates in Texas High Schools



Student attendance compared to average fine arts enrollment

The following demonstrates that campuses with higher attendance rates also have a higher percentage of students enrolled in fine arts courses:

9-12 CAMPUSES

Attendance Rate	Number of Campuses	Fine Arts Avg Enrollment
98 th Percentile	6	51.02%*
97 th	40	52.59%
96 th	150	54.44%
95 th	254	50.54%
94 th	249	50.45%
93 rd	117	48.40%
92 nd	59	46.80%
91 st	29	48.91%
90 th	20	44.43%
89 th	8	40.29%

**Trend exception based on a single-campus anomaly*

6 - 8 CAMPUSES

Attendance Rate	Number of Campuses	Fine Arts Avg Enrollment
98 th	6	63.77%*
97 th	97	74.94%
96 th	364	70.49%
95 th	261	66.20%
94 th	95	60.60%
93 rd	16	54.33%
92 nd	25	59.10%

**Trend exception based on a single-campus anomaly*