

# Fine Arts Education: What the Law Says

*Fine Arts holds its most prominent placement in law and State Board rule that it has enjoyed in recent years. Fine arts is defined in State Board rule as music, art, theatre and dance.*

## **Mission and Objectives**

Objective 4 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) states: A well-balanced and appropriate curriculum will be provided to all students. Chapter 28 of the TEC states, “Each district shall ensure that all children in the district participate actively in a balanced curriculum designed to meet individual needs.”

## **Required Curriculum**

All the courses in the Required Curriculum, which includes Fine Arts, are necessary for a child to receive a well-balanced, meaningful education. The word “Required” in the TEC means that “each school district that offers kindergarten through grade 12 shall offer this curriculum.”

## **Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills**

The State Board of Education will identify the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for all subjects of the Required Curriculum. The TEKS define what students should know and be able to do in each academic subject area and each grade level. TEKS are currently in place for all Fine Arts disciplines. As a condition of accreditation, the State Board of Education requires school districts to offer instruction based on the TEKS at appropriate grade levels.

## **Foundation Courses**

English language arts, math, science, and social studies are called Foundation courses because the TEC’s academic objectives identify these courses as the foundation of a well-balanced and appropriate education. These subjects will continue to be assessed on the state level.

## **Enrichment Courses**

Fine Arts courses are a part of the Enrichment Curriculum, a component of the Required Curriculum. By definition, enrich means “to make richer, to add greater value or significance.” It does not mean “extra,” “not necessary,” “elective,” or “optional.”

These courses are an integral part of the educational process and in many cases are the courses that give meaning and substance to a child’s education and to his or her life. By law, school districts, as a condition of accreditation, must utilize the TEKS in delivering instruction in all subjects of the Required Curriculum - not just in Foundation courses.

## **Graduation Requirements**

Under state law, all three graduation plans require one credit of fine arts for graduation. Fine Arts is defined as an “academic core component” in each of these plans.

## **Elementary Requirements**

State Board rule (19 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 74, subchapter A) now mandates that school districts provide TEKS-based instruction in all subjects/courses of the Required Curriculum in grades K-5. This requirement includes music, art and theatre at each of these grade levels. School districts may deliver this instruction in a variety of arrangements and settings.

## **Middle School Requirements**

Beginning with students who enter grade 6 in the 2010–2011 school year, each student must complete one fine arts course in grades 6, 7, or 8.

## **High School Required Course Offerings**

High schools must offer at least two of the four state-approved fine arts subjects (art, dance, music, theatre).

## **No Child Left Behind**

The federal legislation, No Child Left Behind, includes fine arts as a part of the academic core curriculum.