

The More the Better

Texas schools with higher enrollment in fine arts courses have better academic ratings, academic rating growth, and graduation rates.

by Frank Coachman

As part of our ongoing work to substantiate the importance of fine arts education, TMEA leaders recently completed a study of 2006–2010 enrollment data reported by Texas schools. The results clearly demonstrate a correlation between higher fine arts enrollment and higher campus academic ratings and graduation rates. TMEA and the Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education shared this data at the 2011 Arts Education Days at the Capitol. The report, along with other compelling advocacy materials, is available online at www.tmea.org/localadvocacy.

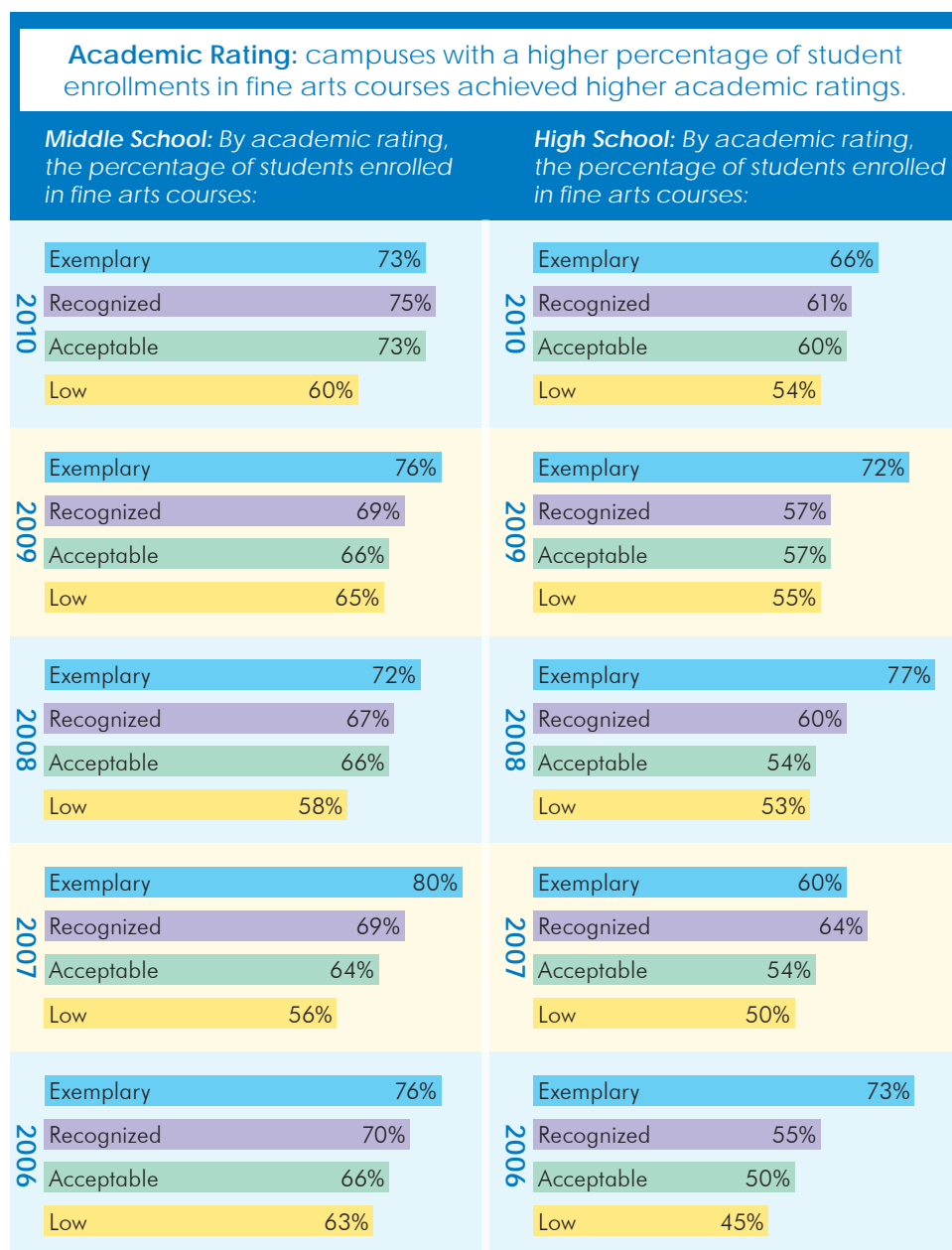
After comparing the yearly data on campus academic ratings, campus rating improvement, and graduation rates to the yearly fine arts course enrollments, the following summary observations were made:

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

Academic Rating Improvement: campuses showing academic rating improvement from 2006 to 2010 reported averaged increases in fine arts course enrollments.

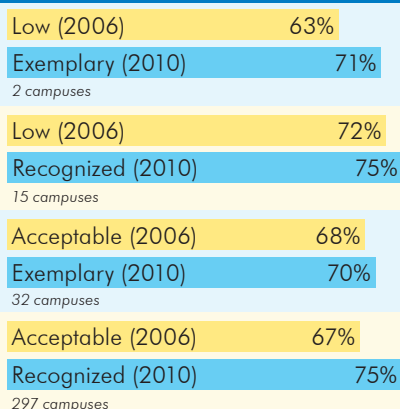
Graduation Rates: campuses with a higher percentage of student enrollments in fine arts courses reported higher graduation rates.

The following tables summarize the results of comparing the mean values of fine arts enrollment, states as percentages, with campus academic rating, improvement in campus academic rating, and graduation rates.

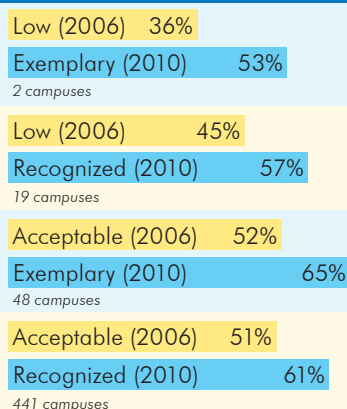


Academic Rating Improvement: campuses with academic rating improvement from 2006 to 2010 reported averaged increases in fine arts course enrollments.

Middle School: By academic rating, the percentage of students enrolled in fine arts courses:



High School: By academic rating, the percentage of students enrolled in fine arts courses:



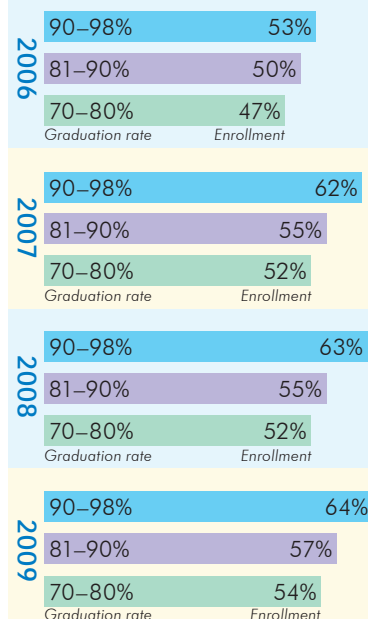
Data Examination

The examination included data from all “Regular Instructional” campuses for the entire state. Data from traditional high school (grades 9–12) and middle school (grades 6–8) campuses were included in this study. County-District-Campus

codes were used to match the data collected from the data sources: campus ratings, total student enrollments, graduation rates, and total student enrollments in Fine Arts. The data used in this study is maintained by Texas Education Agency and available through the TEA website or

Graduation Rates: campuses with a higher percentage of student enrollments in fine arts courses reported higher graduation rates.

By graduation rate percentage, the percentage of students enrolled in fine arts courses:



by specific request. The following data were included:

- Fine Arts Enrollment Data (requested data): Grades 6–8 (enrolled [2005–2010]) and Levels I–IV (completion [2005–2010]): Music, Art, Theater, Dance.
- 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 PIEMS Statewide Campus Level Data: Campus total enrollment, accountability rating, graduation rate.

The examination 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 for each year from 2006 to 2010 and graduation rate range for each year from 2006 to 2009.

If you have any questions about the data collection or synthesis, contact Frank Coachman, TMEA Deputy Director, at fcoachman@tmea.org or by phone at (512) 452-0710, ext. 102.

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