

HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR THE ARTS AND ARTS EDUCATION

WHY SHOULD TEACHERS ADVOCATE FOR THE ARTS AND ARTS EDUCATION?

You are the arts expert on your campus and it is your responsibility to advocate for students' access to the arts, your program, and the arts in general. It is critical that you serve your classroom, campus, and community as the leader in arts advocacy.

- Use quantitative data from the Texas Cultural Trust's State of the Arts Report at ArtCanTexas.org.
- Compare arts access in Texas schools by using the [Art Can Map](#)

PLEASE NOTE: The following information is meant to inspire ways in which teachers can advocate for the arts. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that you follow health safety guidelines and adapt any in-person experiences to accommodate social distancing or virtual experiences, when possible.

DEVELOP CAMPUS SUPPORT

- Invite your campus, during the morning announcements, to view your students' exhibits or upcoming performances. Include a fact about the importance of the arts in every announcement.
- Include information about the depth of learning from your lesson objectives in a monthly newsletter to campus staff and parents.
- Circulate a weekly newsletter or email highlighting students' work. Encourage students to submit their work.
- Use the facts from the State of the Arts Report. Include the data on the impact of arts education with every art display, exhibit, or performance.
- Teach your students about the importance of arts education and the arts in our culture during your lesson warm-ups. Foster deep thinking that empowers your students to become informed arts advocates.
- Create a school-based blog where students can contribute their thoughts. This is a great opportunity for the students' perspectives to shine through.
- Work in interdisciplinary teams to support consistent quality in arts curriculum across all arts disciplines. Work towards a unified message in support of all arts disciplines.
- Support arts projects, events, and performances that are inclusive and diverse.

ARTS EDUCATION & SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING SKILLS:



Increase the likelihood of high school graduation



Improve readiness for postsecondary education



Directly impact career success



Positively impact family and work relationships



Improve mental health



Reduce criminal behavior



Produce more engaged citizens

DEVELOP CAMPUS SUPPORT

- Establish a collaborative relationship with administration.
- Approach administration with solution-based responses to issues at the school. Instead of asking, “how will you fix this?” think about the ways that you would, from the perspective of a teacher in the classroom.
- When submitting budget requests, field trip forms, or permission slips, add a fact about how arts education supports students.
- Send a personal invitation to your principal, fine arts director, and superintendent to exhibitions and performances.
- Write a thank you letter to your principal and evaluating administrator for supporting arts education on your campus. Include success stories about how you have witnessed the impact of the arts in your students.
- Be vocal and unflinching. Your students may need for you to be their voice. Make sure you amplify their stories and unique needs.
- Work with administrators to ensure that all children have access to the arts, regardless of race, economic status, or physical, mental, or emotional differences.

DEVELOP DISTRICT SUPPORT

- Schedule student performances and arts exhibitions for monthly district board meetings.
- Invite students, parents, and local celebrities to speak to your school board about the importance of supporting arts education for children. Prime them with the facts from the State of the Arts Report.
- Deliver personalized student artwork to your district administrators and school board members.
- Take your choir students caroling through the district administrative offices. This can be done virtually, through a recorded link or live video call.
- Create a fine arts day or evening event that showcases all the arts programs on your campus, every year.
- Write a thank you letter to your superintendent and school board members for supporting arts education in your district. Include success stories about how you have witnessed the impact of the arts in your students.
- Work in vertical teams to support a consistent arts curriculum from Pre-K to grade 12. Work towards a unified message in support of arts for all children.
- Celebrate arts achievements on the district level, not just on individual campuses.

DEVELOP COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- Invite your entire community to attend a district-wide fine arts day where all arts programs, from all campuses, are showcased.
- Combine programs and performances to gain a larger audience.
 - *Have an art exhibition on display where guests are buying their theatre performance tickets.*
 - *Have your jazz band perform as guests enter a dance performance.*
 - *Have an arts presence at sports events with the school song and national anthem. Apply this not only to football, but all sporting events.*
- Invite your elected officials, superintendent, and principal to make a special appearance in your performance.
 - *They could play an instrument with the band or join the choir for a performance.*
 - *Invite them to speak to your audience and share how the arts impacted their life and why they believe arts are important to every child’s education. Provide them with the facts about the impact of the arts to help prepare their talking points. See ArtCanTexas.org for key figures.*

- Showcase your students' talents in the community.
 - *Hold art exhibitions at local restaurants, libraries, banks, and elected officials' offices.*
 - *Perform at local businesses, nursing homes, retirement communities, and senior centers.*
 - *Create camp opportunities for low-income areas where students can create art. As an example, a holiday bazaar in which kids create gifts or learn a musical piece.*
 - *Have your fine arts department volunteer at community events – not only performing, but volunteering as part of the event.*
- Capitalize on the digital stage.
 - *Host a Zoom art exhibition featuring students' art, in all forms.*
 - *Create a page on Facebook, Instagram, or Pinterest to showcase you students' artwork.*
 - *Host a virtual concert and invite community leaders to attend.*
- Consider approaching allies to support your work. Widen your coalition to those outside of the art world. Think about business leaders, retired educators (both in the arts and in other content areas), print and broadcast media, and even higher education faculty.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. Reaching out to your local newspaper editor is a powerful way to raise awareness about the value of the arts to your community.
- Seek support from like-minded advocacy groups. You don't need to start advocacy work completely from scratch - there are many organizations, national or local, that offer advocacy research, resources, or partnerships. The Texas Cultural Trust is a perfect example as the work of the Trust is fundamentally concerned with increasing students' access to quality arts education.
- Connect with other teachers and parents online via social media or other online forums. Use this space to share stories, share advocacy resources, and align interests, while establishing new community ties.
- Follow the Texas Cultural Trust on social media and use the hashtag #ArtCanTexas to share how the arts impact your life and community.

**“ Teachers providing regular access to the arts
reported a more positive and cohesive learning environment,
citing increased peer collaboration
and improved social skills in the classroom. ”**

– Study by the John F. Kennedy Center's
Changing Education Through the Arts Program

BE AWARE OF LEGISLATIVE POLICES. Understand education policy at the campus, district, and state, level. Go to your local school district website and find out who is on the school board, their history in policy decisions, and the school board calendar. The Texas legislature makes many decisions that revolve around education and may greatly impact support for art education. Use the Texas Cultural Trust's Legislation Tracker to stay informed about any legislation that may impact the arts and arts education.

ESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS. Once the public officials representing your state house and senate districts are sworn in, send them a note to congratulate them on their election success. The note can be brief and it need not ask for anything. Instead, your goal is to establish contact and show that the arts are important to their constituents.




GET OUT AND VOTE! Conduct research on who is running for education related seats in the state, local, and district elections and make your voice heard.



While there are many areas of opportunity for Texas, there are also many areas for needed improvement in arts access. Help ensure equitable access to the arts for all Texans by joining the Texas Cultural Trust as a Partner in the Arts and invite your family and friends to do the same.

Together we are shaping the future of our state through increased access to the arts for all Texans, including our children!

Learn more about how to promote and support the arts in Texas by visiting ArtCanTexas.org or contacting the Texas Cultural Trust directly.

-  facebook.com/txculturaltrust
-  twitter.com/txculturaltrust
-  instagram.com/txculturaltrust



The Texas Cultural Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to be the leading voice for the arts in education, advocacy, and economic impact in Texas, while spotlighting the artistic excellence of our state. Programs of the Texas Cultural Trust include the Texas Medal of Arts Awards, Art Can, Texas Young Masters, Texas Women for the Arts, Partners in the Arts, and Arts Access. Together with our partners we are shaping the cultural, educational, and economic future of Texas.