

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

Hearing Date: March 9, 2021 8:00 AM

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COMMENTS FOR: HB 434

Gertrude Miller, Ms

self

Garland, TX

Parents should have all the power to decide about education for students.

Amy Lawhead

Self

Farmersville, TX

Removing the fine arts requirements for high school students will limit their exposure to a wide variety of curriculum. This will inhibit their growth as a student by potentially not allowing them to experience the fine arts field.

Richard Flores

Self-Fine Arts Director

San Antonio, TX

Thank you for your service to our community. I am, as a voting member in your district, writing to inform you of my serious concerns regarding HB 434 and ask that you represent my voice during the 87th Legislative Session.

This bill would remove the requirement for ONE high school fine arts credit and allow students to choose either one fine arts OR one CTE (Career and Technical Education) credit to meet high school graduation requirements. Please understand that CTE and fine arts education are not interchangeable.

The unintended consequences of HB 434 limits a child's access to art education and the opportunity for a well-rounded education. CTE programs across the state have significant support through funding incentives and school accountability ratings. Fine arts education receives none of these incentives. Access to arts education in Texas is already inequitable, especially among rural and low- socioeconomic communities, and removing the one fine arts requirement (while CTE is bolstered by school administration and counselors because of incentives), unintentionally furthers the disparity among students in already marginalized communities.

Building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research from the Texas Cultural Trust has found that fine arts education prepares the 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. Arts education is essential, not because students necessarily plan to have a career in the arts, but because the invaluable skills they learn through the arts will help them be successful in any career path they choose to pursue.

The benefits of arts education are considerable and essential. In addition to preparing a competitive workforce, the arts improve test scores, promote leadership and collaboration, boost school attendance, and double the likelihood of high school graduation.

I urge you to support and protect arts education in our public schools, especially during this pandemic. As you know, isolation and distanced learning due to quarantine provisions has, and will, continue to have an impact on the health and wellbeing of all Texans, including our children. Studies have also shown that access to the arts can have a positive impact on mental health and

strengthen social and emotional learning by providing much needed opportunity for engagement, expression, and comfort.

Thank you for protecting arts education and opportunities for children to experience the arts in our schools. Please continue your commitment to ensure every student in Texas, regardless of their geographic or socioeconomic background, has access to fine arts education.

Respectfully,

Richard Flores

Amanda Garza

Self/Fine Arts

Richmond, TX

Hello to all and thank you for your time in listening for the arts. As you are all probably well aware of by now, this bill threatens myself as well as my choir students in not having to choose only one fine arts elective in high school. In a nation that is more divided than ever, we need to learn compassion, understanding, and empathy. The arts are notorious for teaching these concepts. Arts also help with tested subjects in all four main areas such as math, history, science, and reading/writing. We love our CTE colleagues and encourage to keep CTE as an option. While we understand students could still choose arts, not integrating at least one credit cuts opportunities for those that may not realize they want or need the arts, to which this is cutting opportunities for them. As a teacher, some of my most changed students who never knew they needed the arts in their life were the ones most impacted. Please do not allow this to change. It always affects the kids more than it ever will us, and they deserve expansion if only for one semester. The arts can only help, not hinder, our future generations. I urge you to please re-consider the negative effects this could have on programs and students alike. Thank you for your time.

- Amanda Garza

Jason Terk, Dr.

Self; Pediatrician

Keller, TX

My comments are in opposition to HB 434.

Texas is nationally known as an incubator of incredible fine arts accomplishments and that starts with supporting education in fine arts in middle and high school. As a pediatrician, I am a witness to my patients who find their passion in fine arts and discover that the skills they develop in the arts translate to abilities and capabilities in whatever field they ultimately land in. My own son developed into a highly accomplished All-State trumpet player and is now pursuing a performance major at a top flight music school with a scholarship that covers most of the cost. Even musicians who major in other fields may use their fine arts abilities to earn valuable scholarships to achieve their educational goals.

But, the infrastructure needed to provide valuable fine arts education starts with maintaining an expectation that Texas high school students will be required to have at least one credit in the fine arts. Eliminating that expectation will lead to a withering of that infrastructure that includes fine arts educators, instruments, media for electronic and non-electronic art, competitions, etc. Do not undermine fine arts education in Texas. This bill is a solution in search of a problem!!

Jana Harvey

Self-teacher

Denton, TX

The fine arts are a needed part of society. They culture and cultivate at a time when we need it most. It would be a mistake to lessen or give an “out” to high school students in their graduation requirements. There are more students enrolled in the fine arts programs than any other school activity in the state of Texas.

Thomas Bell

Self

Houston, TX

Do not allow CTE courses to satisfy the Fine Arts credit requirement. They are 2 unique areas of study and should not over lap. Students need the Fine Arts now more than ever to address social emotional learning.

I am strongly against CTE courses being counted towards the Fine Arts requirement.

Melissa Summers

Self- AISD parent and RN

Austin, TX

Do we care more about money than providing quality education to families that choose (or have no other choice but) public education? The arts, extra curriculars and the like are integral to a holistic education. They are not a “side note.” Do we only value education that leads to a “traditional” job? So we not care about the whole student? We are humans are not analytical cogs. We are multifaceted and engaging in our innate creativity is key to good mental health which is vital to a happy, progressive society! Please please please care more about our community than money and do not make these “curriculum requirement” changes that would make these vital parts of education less accessible.

Ruth Lim

self, Band Director

Austin, TX

HB 434 eliminates the fine arts requirement for graduation and replaces it with a choice between a fine arts credit OR a career and technology credit. Please DO NOT eliminate the Fine Arts requirement for graduation.

HB 434 enables school districts (with approval from the commissioner) to allow students to satisfy a fine arts credit by participating in a community-based program not provided by the district, including off-campus and outside of the regular school day programs. Please do not allow this.

Nichole Wells, Mrs.

SELF: Hereford ISD Choral Director

Canyon, TX

Hello to the Public Education Committee:

As a 16 year teaching veteran, having taught 15 years of the 16 as a Junior High/Middle School Choral Director with Assisting the High School Choral Program - I would like to present my opposition to this HB434. Currently, Texas HS students are ALREADY being encouraged to take CTE courses in HS. There is already a PUSH for the students to pick CTE courses over Fine Arts. The presented idea of taking away the 1 Fine Arts Required Course and allowing a CTE course to fulfill that requirement, is taking away the opportunity for students to find a passion in the Fine Arts. Fine Arts are ways that students find a

way to get outside of themselves, to create, to make music, to work with others in making an Art Form come alive. Students who are involved in the Fine Arts have better ACT & SAT scores - consistently. How can we ignore this fact? Texas All-State Musicians have an average of 22% higher scores than the NATIONAL AVERAGE.

<https://www.tmea.org/wp-content/uploads/Advocacy/2018-5YearAll-StateSATState-NationalAverages.pdf>

HB 434 is a bill that is going against the Texas Education foundation - as a STRONG Music and Fine Arts State - we are WELL KNOWN for our dedication to Fine Arts and our Music. We should be leading the pack in encouraging FINE ARTS courses ALONG SIDE CTE courses. We as teachers are already watching the students who barely touch a Fine Arts course walk into adulthood without any appreciation for the Arts, for time commitment nor what it takes to create. We need well-rounded students that have some idea of what it takes to create - to make Art and Music come to life. Students who are in Fine Arts can find a better sense of comfort in being in front of an audience and speaking in front of others. Why should we be taking this option away from the students? I have seen first-hand the students that "Try something new" and when they can't return to the Fine Arts, because of the PUSH they are getting to stay in that Program, they are disappointed in their choice. We see that even the parents wish their child would get back into their Fine Arts Classes.

Please, for the Benefit of the Students in Texas High Schools, WE NEED A VOTE AGAINST HB 434. While I see that an objective for this bill would be to provide the Rural Students an option to complete their Texas Graduation Requirements, especially if they have no Fine Arts in their schools, that is understandable. However, that needs to be the ONLY option - not for any other programs in TX. This needs to be a SPECIFIC bill that covers those in RURAL High Schools but WITHOUT the LOOPHOLE applying to ALL Texas high schools. HB434 as it stands is putting Texas High School Fine Arts programs in serious jeopardy. Texas Music Educators really pride ourselves on helping students to find their passion and their outlet and making lifelong Musicians out of many of our students. Please Vote AGAINST HB 434.

Sincerely,
Nichole Wells
Texas Music Educator

Courtney Aguilar

Self, Choir Director at a public high school

Buda, TX

As a public music educator in the Great State of Texas, I am strongly against the passage of this bill as written. The fine arts do so much for students in high school and have enormous benefits. Expression of creativity, the connection between the right and left hemispheres of the brain, giving them purpose and connection, a place to belong, lessons of discipline, respect, teamwork... the list goes on and on. It has been researched and scientifically proven that the fine arts benefit the cognitive skills of young adults. They perform better in school, they have higher self-esteem, lower rates of depression and higher likelihood of high school graduation. Please do not remove the requirement for fine arts for high school graduation. This is a mistake, and will significantly and negatively affect Texas students for generations to come. Thank you.

Tracy Neef

Self/ teacher

Wimberley, TX

As a fine arts student and now dance teacher, I compel you to reconsider dropping the fine art requirement for high school students. It has been proven that students participating in fine arts programs and activities do better on standardized tests and in their academic courses. Fine arts courses allow students to develop many skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, confidence, goal setting, presentation skills, teamwork, etc. The benefits are endless. Please do not pass HB434 and take the opportunity to experience fine arts away from Texas HS students.

If not for taking dance in high school I would not have found my true passion of teaching dance as I had not taken a class prior to

that time. Many students will find their talent and passion for an area of fine arts by being required to take at least one course.

Max Villaronga, Mr.

Self; President & CEO of TFCU

El Paso, TX

I disagree with the language in HB 434 as it related to removing the requirement for one high school fine arts credit. The fine arts in public education have been under resourced already in Texas schools. Replacing this requirement will further erode a key aspect of creating a well rounded education in Texas public schools. Personally, I am a product of this states school system that enjoyed fine arts throughout middle school and high school. These programs allow our state to attract and retain many gifted students. It also allows us to attract business to the state. I cannot emphasize enough how important a well rounded community and school system is in attracting industry and growing our economy. I encourage this committee to reject this proposal. Let's keep the fine arts in our public schools resourced properly by requiring exposure through a graduation credit.

Kaare Revill

Self homemaker

Dripping Springs, TX

Please do not take away the mandatory requirement for Highschool Fine Arts.

Although many kids do not think they are interested in the arts, this may be their only exposure IN THEIR LIFETIME. Many people can not afford to take outside-of-school classes and the arts are not as valued or seen as a path to financial success. Every kid needs to be able to try the arts, be exposed to these new avenues as part of a really excellent education in order for us as a society to also be the best we can be. Arts are essential to our goals to be the best as individuals and as a society. The only way we lose is by demoting this to non-essential.

I lived in California where in our "excellent" elementary school both art and science were non-essential programs because the money wasn't there and so parents had to fund it or it didn't exist. This created instability for teachers, kids and parents. We DO NOT want to become California.

I don't mind if people who do want something not offered on campus get special permissions to get credit for an off-campus class, but this needs to be the exception, NOT the rule.

KEEP ART ESSENTIAL! A well-rounded education that includes the arts as a requirement in highschool is everyone's best proven path to success.

Katie Jones

Self

Austin, TX

By eliminating fine arts, you will be hurting programs that provide a safe space for so many students that may not fit in other areas. It also is a space where students can be stretched and learn teamwork and community. Please don't pass this bill

Angela Gaston

Self, IT manager

Georgetown, TX

Fine Arts education is vital to our lives. Children in Texas need the arts to become whole individuals living in our society. Fine arts allow us to rise above being basic people into cultured, diversity tolerant, expressive human beings. Without visual art, dance, music, and theatre, what purpose do we really live for? Some students would never be exposed to enriching culture if fine arts were removed from the curriculum. Removing a credit of fine arts takes away the advanced education in their chosen discipline, watering down the effect of learning how to draw, move, play/ sing, or act. Everyone deserves to have a creative outlet that can stay with them a lifetime, and to learn more than just the basics can teach in one year. Please don't remove this additional credit. Thank you for your time.

Timmie Smith, Dr.

self, software development engineer

Dripping Springs, TX

The bill as written eliminates the fine arts requirement for graduation and replaces it with a choice between a fine arts credit OR a career and technology credit, and furthermore enables school districts to allow students to satisfy a fine arts credit by participating in a community-based program not provided by the district and completed outside of school hours. If the bill is passed in this form fine arts programs across the state's school districts will be irreparably harmed as districts cut staff as enrollment in these courses drops. The bill's prioritization of STEM and career preparedness over fine arts is short sighted, and in the long run will harm Texas as the population of the state becomes less well-rounded and less informed about the world around them outside of their career.

I believe the purpose of public primary education is to prepare all students in a well-rounded manner to be productive citizens of the state. Allowing students to skip over their single required opportunity to focus on arts or receive credit for completing an off-campus activity that has no uniform learning requirements or assurance of instructor competence in the subject is doing just the opposite. Secondary education, whether it is trade school, community college, or a four-year university will provide the students ample opportunity to learn their craft in detail. We do not need to push that on them further in high school by allowing them to avoid learning about the broader world when they're at their most impressionable age.

I ask that this bill be amended to strike the language eliminating the fine arts requirement for high school graduation.

Sincerely,

Timmie Smith, Ph.D.

Katherine Green

Self, private music instructor

Austin, TX

There should be MORE fine arts in public schools, not less. Multiple studies have been conducted linking the participation in fine arts programs with higher test scores and greater performance in college. Non-school-curriculum fine arts groups are great enrichment, but they should never take the place of in-school daily instruction, which is held to much higher educational standards! All of our kids deserve quality, funded, IN SCHOOL fine arts programs.

Megan Balsdon

Self/Parent of 3 Texas Public School Students

Austin, TX

I strongly urge the representatives considering HB 434 to keep the Fine Arts credit requirement in place for Texas public high school students. Fine Arts is a crucial part of a well-rounded high school experience and it is critical that our public school

system continue to receive the support needed to keep these programs in place. CTE and Fine Arts programs are not in and of themselves interchangeable. Technology skills are important of course, but fine arts skills/experience are impactful across a multitude of other disciplines, including math, science, and language. If anything, CTE and Fine Arts should be required credits, rather than creating a scenario in which either can be utilized to satisfy the requirements for high school graduation. Thank you for including my comments and thank you for continuing to support Fine Arts education in Texas public high schools.

Elizabeth Baker

Self - owner - Assistance Paralegal Services

Georgetown, TX

Passing any legislation that would impede Fine Arts programs at the high school level is a serious mistake. Fine Arts participation and education is about creating empathetic, kind, confident, hard-working and generous members of our community. It's about building a skill set that can be used across a wide variety of disciplines and numerous situations. Some people may take that and use it to tell stories that influence the way people live their lives - - causing them to love a little harder, listen more intently or be more generous. Others will become community leaders, business tycoons, educators, designers and innovators. Arts education is an interdisciplinary curriculum. It is history, economics, sociology, psychology, health and wellness, math and communication. It is of the utmost importance that we cherish and support fine arts and arts education and to keep them alive and thriving in our public schools.

Suzanne Robbins

self

Austin, TX

I am a registered voter in Texas whose two High School age children have benefited greatly from their experiences with the fine arts throughout their school years. The arts are essential. Years of research show that art education is closely linked to almost everything that we as a nation say we want for our children and demand from our schools: academic achievement, social and emotional development, civic engagement, and equitable opportunity.

Involvement in the arts is associated with gains in math, reading, cognitive ability, critical thinking, and verbal skill. Arts learning can also improve motivation, concentration, confidence, and teamwork. I urge you to keep the fine arts requirement for all Texas Middle and High School students, and DO NOT allow students to earn fine arts credit via off campus programs. This is not equitable, as most low income students don't have the opportunity for off-campus programs. Additionally, numerous studies have shown that the arts actually LOWERS drop out rates, as children who are engaged in band, choir, theatre, and other arts programs want to stay in school to continue those activities. PLEASE vote NO on HB 434.

Randall Umstead

National Association of Teachers of Singing

Waco, TX

This bill, while seeming on the surface to be a small adjustment, risks great damage to the great fine arts programs that make the state of Texas a national leader in arts education. That, in turn, would harm all Texans. Many subjects in primary and secondary education are compulsory, and the arts should remain among those subjects. In the past year, we have seen cracks emerge in our society that make it clear that fine arts education and its accompanying goods of:

- 1) the creation of beauty
- 2) a sense of cooperation and community
- 3) the encouragement (and the tools) to see the world from the perspective of another human
- 4) the long-noted improvement of performance in other academic subjects as a result of fine arts study

...have value that should lead to their expansion in the curriculum, and not their reduction. This bill represents a step backward for Texans at a time when our leadership is needed. Education cannot simply be about entry into the workforce, but rather the development of a human being to fulfill ALL of their capacities.

Ian Allen
Hernandez Middle School
Elgin, TX

As a recent college graduate, receiving a degree in music education, this bill would virtually destroy the job market in which I work, and take thousands of jobs from thousands of fantastic educators who have dedicated their lives to this craft. It has been proven time and time again that the fine arts only advance elementary and secondary education, as well as the development of student growth. Taking this away from the students would only stunt growth for students moving forward. Please consider rewriting this bill to find a more equitable outcome for student learning growth through fine arts and music education.

Samuel Caldwell
Self
Dripping Springs, TX

Please don't pass this bill as is. It is important for kids to have a variety of experiences. High school is there to provide a wide range of experiences. This bill would keep many kids from experiencing fun arts that many learn to love. My oldest son, didn't want to do band, but after experiencing four a few years he loves it and would happily play outside of school, etc. Without requiring a range of skills, they won't find additional passions.

Sincerely
Sam

Karl Logue
Austin Center for Musical Excellence
Cedar Park, TX

The unintended consequences of HB 434 limits a child's access to art education and the opportunity for a well-rounded education. CTE programs across the state have significant support through funding incentives and school accountability ratings. Fine arts education receives none of these incentives. Access to arts education in Texas is already inequitable, especially among rural and low- socioeconomic communities, and removing the one fine arts requirement (while CTE is bolstered by school administration and counselors because of incentives), unintentionally furthers the disparity among students in already marginalized communities.

Building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research from the Texas Cultural Trust has found that fine arts education prepares the 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. Arts education is essential, not because students necessarily plan to have a career in the arts, but because the invaluable skills they learn through the arts will help them be successful in any career path they choose to pursue.

The benefits of arts education are considerable and essential. In addition to preparing a competitive workforce, the arts improve test scores, promote leadership and collaboration, boost school attendance, and double the likelihood of high school graduation.

Passage of this bill would not be a good move for Texas students, nor for Texas Arts programs which are among the best in the country. HB434 would destroy that fine legacy.

Amy Petrongelli, Assistant Professor of Voice

Self - voice professor

Waco, TX

This would have a devastating effect on the robust fine arts community across Texas. These curriculum requirement keep our students singing, playing, and creating - an essential part of the whole-hearted growth of every human. It also ensures that the incredible legacy of Texas artists and creatives continues. Do not pass this bill - it will slowly and systematically destroy the fine arts here in Texas.

Lauren Lea Warren

Self

Austin, TX

This is not the best choice for our students all over the state. Many students are introduced to the arts in school because extracurricular opportunities are not available to them. We have to keep all levels of students involved in the arts in our districts because it makes the experience true and well-rounded for the entire school base. If you all allow outside opportunities to count towards fine arts credits, then you are inviting parents to spend their resources (time, money, expertise, etc) elsewhere. This will systematically dismantle the arts programs throughout the state. That would be an extreme shame for the future of our students and their children to come.

Gina Zatylny

Self - Parent of students in DSISD

Dripping Springs, TX

I am opposed to removing the single fine art credit requirement for high school students. I am a parent of 3 high school students, 2 of which were not that interested in fine arts and one who is probably going to be a fine art major in college. I do not feel we need to remove the requirement for graduation as it will negatively affect fine art funding in the future. I do NOT support this bill.

Brian Hairston

Self- Public Fine Arts Educator

Dallas, TX

Texas is currently the number one state in the US for fine arts education. Teachers from all over the country are envious of our situation here in The Great State of Texas. This strong fine arts culture stems from the fact that Texas has fine arts as a required part of the curriculum. Fine arts teaches students so many fundamental skills and traits they need to be successful after high school: including team work, creativity, grit and perseverance. These are not skills or traits you can learn from sitting in a "career" or "technology" class. These are skills you get from bonding and working towards a mutual goal with others like in a school band, choir, or orchestra program. Study after study have shown that universities and businesses want people that can work hard and be creative in their field. That is two more things that being a part of fine arts in high school teaches our students. On top of all of those benefits, fine arts classes are what keeps millions of Texas students engaged and liking school every day of their high school career. Please do not allow Texas students to lose the invaluable opportunities and skills that being in fine arts courses provides.

Sara Moons

Self/ Art Teacher

Montgomery, TX

Dear Mr. Bell,

Thank you for your service to our community. I am, as a voting member in your district, writing to inform you of my serious concerns regarding HB 434 and ask that you represent my voice during the 87th Legislative Session.

I, for one, am a perfect example of why art is so important. I am a high school art teacher. I was also a high school dropout who struggled with many aspects that young adults are still faced with today. Art is what brought me back to life. Art is the reason I got my GED, attended college, and developed a passion for teaching and inspiring students in the art classroom. If it weren't for opportunities provided to me through art, I wouldn't have the successful life I have now. And now, as an art teacher of teens, I observe daily how art continues to save young adults. I see students thrive in art class who are struggling in other subjects, who don't understand math, and who are weak in technical subjects. For some of those students, art is what they look forward to every single day, and it is what keeps them in school.

This bill would remove the requirement for ONE high school fine arts credit and allow students to choose either one fine arts OR one CTE (Career and Technical Education) credit to meet high school graduation requirements. Please understand that CTE and fine arts education are not interchangeable.

The unintended consequences of HB 434 limits a child's access to art education and the opportunity for a well-rounded education. CTE programs across the state have significant support through funding incentives and school accountability ratings. Fine arts education receives none of these incentives. Access to arts education in Texas is already inequitable, especially among rural and low- socioeconomic communities, and removing the one fine arts requirement (while CTE is bolstered by school administration and counselors because of incentives), unintentionally furthers the disparity among students in already marginalized communities.

I urge you to support and protect arts education in our public schools, especially during this pandemic. As you know, isolation and distanced learning due to quarantine provisions has, and will, continue to have an impact on the health and wellbeing of all Texans, including our children. Studies have also shown that access to the arts can have a positive impact on mental health and strengthen social and emotional learning by providing much needed opportunity for engagement, expression, and comfort.

Thank you for protecting arts education and opportunities for children to experience the arts in our schools. Please continue your commitment to ensure every student in Texas, regardless of their geographic or socioeconomic background, has access to fine arts education.

Respectfully,
Sara Moons

Nathan Harper

Self - Assistant Operations Manager, UT Austin Department of Theatre of Dance

Austin, TX

Arts education is essential in so many ways. It provides a place to express oneself and a place of belonging for so many students and is already in jeopardy. My opportunity to participate in theatre shaped who I am today and I was only able to do so because my school emphasized arts in our education and provided the opportunity to further pursue it. Arts education also helps the creativity of students in all other disciplines. Please reconsider the "or" in this bill as it opens the door for the elimination of arts education.

Linda Aguilar

Self, Music Educator

Austin, TX

This not only brings a huge concern to me as a music educator but also as an educator in general. We must educate the WHOLE child. Fine Arts teach students so many skills that are not learned in academic courses. Building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research from the Texas Cultural Trust has found that fine arts education prepares the 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. Arts education is essential, not because students necessarily plan to have a career in the arts, but because the invaluable skills they learn through the arts will help them be successful. CTE does NOT teach these skills and is not interchangeable. There has been so much research that proves the arts are essential. They improve test scores, promote leadership and collaboration, boost school attendance, and double the likelihood of high school graduation. I implore you to keep the fine arts course requirement as is and protect arts education in our public schools. As you know, isolation and distanced learning due to quarantine provisions has, and will, continue to have an impact on the health and wellbeing of all Texans, including our children. Studies have also shown that access to the arts can have a positive impact on mental health and strengthen social and emotional learning by providing much needed opportunity for engagement, expression, and comfort. If it was not for my arts education I would not be where I am today. I would not have attended a university and received scholarships. We all turn to the arts to help us feel connected especially during this time of the pandemic. We've turned to watching art or creating art. Learning artistic things we haven't had time for before. Arts education is already inequitable but giving more support to CTE unintentionally furthers the disparity among students in already marginalized communities.

Shannon Jones

Self, Marketing Manager

AUSTIN, TX

I am a local marketing executive in technology and a mom to a teenager. I am strongly opposed to this bill. Continued support of the arts as a critical part of our children's education is incredibly important. Do not weaken our arts programs in our state, it's a vital part of kids seeing what's possible in this life, brings a passion for dedication and excellence, and makes them into better, more well-rounded leaders. As a citizen, I am proud my property tax dollars go towards funding arts programs for my community's youth. Do not pass this shortsighted legislation. Thank you.

Janette Lindner

Self - parent, spouse, taxpayer, employer, lifelong Texan!

Houston, TX

Esteemed Representatives,

I am a parent and lifelong Texan. I am also a leadership committee member of Arts Connect, dedicated to ensuring quality, equitable arts education is available to all Houston students. I respectfully comment that this bill is well-intended but misguided.

I have been virtually schooling our 2 elementary children since March 2020, and I have the privilege of seeing them work with their teachers and classmates online. I get a first-hand look at the impact of their fine arts classes on their interest in school, their creativity, their learning, and their happiness! Fine Arts classes are their favorite. This passion does not go away when they go to high school.

As an employer, I see the benefit of a broad education that includes Fine Arts. Those that have learned music, dance, language arts, painting, and more, are more creative problem solvers and are more likely to build bridges when there are differences or disagreements between colleagues.

I see the reasoning for offering this change is to focus on building a workforce for our state's future. Dropping the FA requirement works against this goal. We have seen the result of a focus on STEM without the A - ARTS. A lack creativity, problem solving, and joy that our children can bring to problem-solving. Who doesn't benefit from the arts in their daily life? This bill is well-intended but misguided.

For facts to support my position, I share this information from Arts Connect's 2019 State of the Arts Report.

- Across all grade levels, students enrolled in arts courses attend school more regularly. High school students experience the greatest impact with a 3.3% greater attendance rate, the equivalent of an additional week of school each year.
 - Students who complete more arts courses have up to 15% higher pass rates on standardized tests than students with fewer arts courses.
 - Arts education prepares the 21st century workforce by developing critical thinking, communications skills, collaboration, leadership, creativity, and imagination.
 - Districts and campuses with higher enrollment in arts courses are much more likely to meet or exceed Texas Education Agency (TEA) state accountability standards.
 - At-risk students who complete more than one arts course are twice as likely to graduate from high school. Specifically, ninth grade students who completed at least one arts credit are more than two-thirds as likely to stay in school compared to students who did not complete one arts credit.
 - Campuses that meet state accountability standards have:
 - 52% more fine arts offerings
 - 47% higher proportion of fine arts teachers to all teachers
 - 41% fewer high school students per fine arts teacher
 - 36% higher enrollment in fine arts courses
 - Access to arts education improves overall academic performance, which leads to an 11.5% increase in college enrollment immediately following high school graduation, which leads to a better prepared workforce.
- Thank you - Janette Lindner

Kristen Cole

Self

Driftwood, TX

I am firmly against this bill. It will slowly erode fine arts in public schools. My oldest child is in middle school and is loving his theater, band and art classes- they are what make him want to attend school each day. I can't imagine high school without these programs but if HB434 passes that may be the future.

Caleb Cole

Self, Air Traffic Controller

Driftwood, TX

I am firmly against this bill. Fine arts are vital to student's educational experience and will be pushed out of schools if this bill passes.

Jamie Protte

Self

Driftwood, TX

COVID has impacted so many of our children in such a way that we see an increase in depression-the arts are an Avenue to reduce this! Don't take arts away

mary gahr

None

houston, TX

Please do not support this bill H 434

J Fred Lindner

self

Houston, TX

The decision to remove any requirements for fine arts education in Texas public high schools is a poor one. Repeated studies have shown that fine arts improve student outcomes as adults, including greater civic involvement and social engagement, which are critical for a healthy and productive society.

Furthermore, exposure to arts education is associated with higher graduation rates and has been shown to improve achievement in other subjects, including reading in math.

This bill will certainly lead to an under funding in arts education in the state. Creating well rounded young adults improves their performance in all areas, and by reducing the availability and quality of these areas of instruction, as this bill will surely do, we are compromising our students potential to be their best future selves.

It should be noted that private schools including Kinkaid and St. John's have very strong arts programs. We should ask ourselves: why are these programs integral to the highest-quality primary educational experiences in the state, but not to our public schools? Given what we pay for school athletics, we can't honestly say this is solely a budgetary issue.

Jackie deMontmollin

self, Director of Fine Arts, Denton ISD and prior Associate Director of Theatre Education, The University of Houston

Corinth, TX

Dear House Education Committee Members,

HB 434 in its current form eliminates fine arts as a core requirement for graduation from High School. This will cause our current education of the whole child in Texas, which WORKS, to a focus on developing not innovators who CREATE jobs, but instead will shift priority to developing young people trained in finite skills that can become obsolete a decade from now.

When we walk into a museum we see the arts, from centuries ago, that communicate about society. The works we see reflect on and define culture. The arts have been central to humanity since the beginning of time. Arts are not optional to our existence. Arts are necessary.

We are surrounded by arts every day. The room you are in right now was designed by artists. The clothing you're wearing, designed by artists. The Netflix shows you watch, created by artists. The music you listened to in your car on the way here, the work of artists. Every ad you watch on TV, the work of artists. The arts not only contribute billions to the world economy, the arts define entire societies.

The arts are the one place in a child's education where innovation, creativity, and social emotional learning (SEL) are guaranteed as a requirement of the curriculum. Cutting a required arts experience in high school will cut a crucial element to educating the whole person. Arts are important no matter what the child's future job becomes. Certified welders need not only skill, but also the opportunity to practice innovative thinking and imagination. They may weld as a job for 8 hours a day for some years. They will need to engage connection to others and the world around them as a whole person for their entire lives.

The arts afford high school students the essential opportunity connect learning from all other content areas resulting in

innovation. Innovation is what empowers our nation to be a world leader. The fine arts requirement is as crucial a core requirement as reading, math, science, and history. The arts are the meeting place, the application ground, of all of these content areas, where students learn to connect their learning across disciplines, break down silos, and engage in "daVinci style thinking". This is why fine arts must remain a requirement to graduate from high school. Eliminating this requirement works against the goal of a strong society and economy. Innovation is how jobs, and entire industries are created. We cannot eliminate Arts opportunities from the high school experience, when kids are just on the verge of seeing their futures, and what they might be able to do as adult innovators.

Please maintain fine arts as a core requirement. Fine arts empowers students with tools for adaptability. We don't know what jobs will exist ten years from now. We do know that requiring fine arts in high school guarantees the practicing of innovation and a strong connection to SEL for every Texas student.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jackie deMontmollin, Ed.D.

Ruth Jacobson, Executive Director
El Paso Symphony
El Paso, TX

Arts education makes a huge difference in the lives of students. Every child should have the chance to experience art education. Please keep art education a requirement!

Marise Textor
Self (consultant and Symphony board member, president-elect of El Paso Symphony Orchestra)
El Paso, TX

Please vote against this bill. Musical education is ESSENTIAL for STEM performance by students. Yes, that is right. Numerous studies have shown that students who study music perform better in STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) courses. For me personally, I studied piano when I was growing up and then I went on to get both my BS and MS degrees in chemical engineering from Cornell University. Please vote against HB 434 and do not allow it to advance to the House floor as this will be detrimental to the development of our students in musical education, which in turn will be detrimental to STEM education. Education in the arts is not just fun and games.

Jennifer Kidwell
Self/teacher
League City, TX

The Fine Arts teach so much more than just how to read music and make art. They help give children creative outlets, critical thinking skills, a place to belong and a well rounded education. Please do not take that away. As soon as the requirement goes away so goes the money. Districts are already hurting and unfortunately the Fine Arts are always close to the chopping block.

Teresa Ragland, Ms
self
Palestine, TX

I am a high school theatre teacher, and am deeply concerned about HB 434. Why? Why do I care about CTE replacing Fine Arts?

Well, while I see a place for CTE, it doesn't teach the same things that the arts do: empathy, world view, compassion, and many other things that I consider important in the raising of human beings. I believe it helps teach students to FEEL and then how to express those feelings in a safe way. It also teaches them to work with others to create. The art of creation is something very special, and when paired with music/theatre:"/dance/performance/visual...it just helps that student to come alive and, for many, gives them purpose.

I am sure that you know this: CTE gets the districts money, especially when a student is taking TWO CTE classes. \$50. and while that may not seem like much, in many larger districts, that number adds up quickly. I haven't heard of any special funding coming down for students in the arts. Rather, in the age of deep cuts to school budgets, there are deeper cuts to fine arts programs. I see this being a death knell for Fine Arts teachers as districts with tightened belts see this as a way to get some extra funding in (trust me...every little bit helps).

As an elementary student, my music classes meant the world to me. My parents could not afford for me to take outside piano or voice. In junior high, I was lucky enough to have a piano/voice teacher that would let me take the months my parents could afford it. I took every music class (band and choral) that I could throughout high school. I was in one act play throughout high school. The arts gave me a purpose, and they have shaped my adult life.

Now, I know that not all students have that love that I did. However, I think that music classes in elementary school began that process of working with others towards a common goal:creating music. This is important for ALL students. Many studies have been made about the importance of the arts to students. In junior high and high school, these same fine arts classes also prepare them for the job market by helping them to become better speakers, to think outside of the box, to come up with creative solutions, and to just simply CREATE and FEEL emotions through that process of creating. Many of my students do not have the money to get this from outside dance studios, art classes, theatre classes, or instrumental/vocal instruction. They CAN, however, get this at school.

If this passes and student have the credit requirement removed for Fine Arts, many of our students who need these classes most will not take them. I had much more to say, but 300 characters was not enough. Please vote AGAINST this bill!

antonio ghiselli

nsh

El Paso, TX

arts education is important because it opens a persons creative powers----keep art education a requirement

Victoria Lien

Self--teacher

Plano, TX

The fine arts program has provided me so much as a grew up. It helped form me into the person that I am today and helped me find a community that I could belong in. CTE and fine arts are not interchangeable and there are benefits to both. This year should have proven to everyone that fine arts are not just a graduation requirement or credit. The fine arts programs are a refuge, an escape, therapy and safety for our students. Many of them would not have found this safe space were it not initially for the requirement. Every student should have the opportunity to benefit from a fine arts course. Of course, removing this requirement also insinuates further issues for support in terms of funding, staffing, everything. The fine arts are essential and I do not agree to this proposed bill.

Marley Graham

Self/Teacher

Dallas, TX

I do not support this bill as an educator.

Edward Russell

Self

Denton, TX

The Fine Arts credit requirement for our students in Texas is extremely important and should not be exchanged for a CTE credit. Students should continue to be required to have both a Fine Arts credit AND a CTE credit. The two are not interchangeable. Fine Arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are NOT synonymous with CTE TEKS. Fine Arts and CTE are not comparable and should not be treated as replacement or competitive options - just like Speech, World History, or PE are not interchangeable for CTE. These core curriculum courses, along with the one Fine Arts course credit, have been identified as foundations of knowledge that all children need to have.

Across the state, CTE education programs have significant support through funding incentives and school accountability ratings. Fine arts education receives none of these incentives. Texas school districts include Fine Arts programs in planning their budgets because they value them and understand the importance of Fine Arts in a child's well rounded education and social-emotional learning. Communities, parents, and constituents highly value their schools' Fine Arts programs.

All students deserve an opportunity to have Fine Arts in the school curriculum not because they necessarily plan to have a career in the arts, but because the invaluable skills learned through arts education will help them be successful in any career they choose to pursue. Research by the Texas Cultural Trust shows that fine arts education prepares a 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. Building a competitive workforce requires these skills. Substituting or removing the required Fine Arts credit is unacceptable and a disservice to a child's well-rounded education.

Amy Moore

Self - Teacher

Austin, TX

It may be easy to think the Fine Arts are an unnecessary addition to a student's education, but the reality is that the Fine Arts teach the skills every business and industry is looking for in its employees. As a high school Theatre teacher with 20 years experience, most of which have been in Title 1 schools, I have seen students thrive who might otherwise completely disengage with their education. It wasn't necessarily because they were an amazing performer, destined for stage and screen, it was because they learned what it means to be part of a TEAM, part of a COMMUNITY. They learned how to COMMUNICATE, how to COLLABORATE, how to trust their CREATIVITY. For many of my students, being in a class where they are encouraged to express their ideas, where they can create something that didn't exist before, is empowering and builds confidence. I see this in my Theatre classes and my Technical Theatre classes. For many students Technical Theatre is the first place they learn to use tools, learn how to physically build something, learn about lighting and sound, and an industry that offers solid employment opportunities, not just in the entertainment world, but within the tech industry overall.

Having access to the Arts is vital to our society and culture. Artists show different points of view, they find new ways to see, hear, and experience the world we live in. Having Fine Arts as a graduation requirement allows students to experience a class they may have never considered, but ends up changing their life for the better. For all of these reasons, I request the Fine Arts remain as a graduation requirement in the state of Texas.

William Ludlow

Students and myself

Mansfield, TX

As a resident of Texas, I feel it is vital that all current students and future students have the opportunity to a well-rounded education; which must include fine arts! Other electives in the CTE category of education are not the same as fine arts, and do not provide the many positive and needed skills to ensure a well-rounded education. We need our students to think critically, creatively, and outside the box! We need our society members to learn and practice perseverance, dedication, discipline, and teamwork. We need our future leaders to be well-rounded, knowledgeable, and cultured. All that starts with being required and exposed to the fine arts in the public school system. There is no equivalent to the education students get in the fine arts classroom. Allowing students to have the option to not be exposed to fine arts will be a detriment to not only the student but our future society!!! Any step towards eliminating a fine arts requirement, is a step in the wrong direction.

Rachel Harrah

Self, Director of Theatre/Dance

Plano, TX

This house bill will create a system of privilege of the have and have nots. Creativity is the number one sought after skill in the United States for technology careers. Why would we limit our children? The 14th amendment guarantees each student an opportunity to an equitable education and yet, we suggest removing access to a safe space and creative outlet. Please do not hurt Title I kids who need safe and creative spaces by considering this Bill.

Julie Ryan

Self

Katy, TX

As a theatre and art educator, I am importing you to rethink this bill. Of the 20 years I have been a fine arts educator, I have taught kids who walked in the door thinking they didn't need this class and wondering why they have to take it. These same students learned skills that are hard to teach in another setting. The arts teach empathy that allows for the honest acceptance of things around them that they may not understand. It teaches them that their voice has power and to have faith in that. It teaches how to understand the audience they are talking to and consider what someone needs to hear to sway a thought, opinion, emotion or idea. It teaches that every idea has merit and also requires growth upon it's inception.

My graduates and fire fighters, police officers, doctors, nurses, teachers, lawyers, speech therapists, psychologists and nurses, as well as many others. I have students continue to tell me that the arts programs are what have shaped their future and given them the strength to follow their paths and to reach further than they thought possible.

In this world where listening to each other is hard to find, where empathy and acceptance of those that are different is in crisis, the fine arts is a way to shake this.

The issue with accepting credit from an outside source is this- when you step into an artistic field outside of the classroom, you are learning only from those of similar mind. Those are drawn together by a like passion, instead of those that are incredibly different who are also learning to find their voices. Please do not hurt kids who sometimes have no idea that they need this humanity, empathy and empowerment that will often take them the rest of the way to who they will become.

Cindy Madison, Retired Administrator

Self

Breckenridge, TX

March 8th

Greetings,

Thank you for your dedication to arts education. Below is information for three primary messages to emphasize in your public testimony.

Access to arts education in Texas is not equitable, especially among Title I school districts, minority, and low socioeconomic communities.?

- o New research by the Texas Cultural Trust proves that access is inequitable for students in rural communities and students in high-poverty schools. We must protect and stand up for child in marginalized communities.
- o Removing the fine arts requirement--while CTE is bolstered by school administration and counselors because of incentives--unintentionally furthers the disparity among students in these communities in receiving a quality, equitable, well rounded education.??

· Fine Arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are NOT synonymous with CTE TEKS.?

- o Fine Arts and CTE are not interchangeable or comparable and should not be treated as replacement or competitive options.? Just like Speech, World History, or PE are not interchangeable for CTE. These core curriculum courses, along with the ONE Fine Arts course credit, have been identified as foundations of knowledge that all children need to have.

- o Across the state, CTE education programs have significant support through funding incentives and school accountability ratings. Fine arts education receives none of these incentives.?

· All students deserve an opportunity to be exposed to arts education not because they necessarily plan to have a career in the arts, but because the invaluable skills learned through arts education will help them be successful in any career they choose to pursue.??

- o Building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research by the Texas Cultural Trust shows?that fine arts education prepares 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.??

- o Substituting or removing required learning is unacceptable and a disservice to a child's education. Changing what constitutes a well-rounded education is not the answer.??

Thank you for your service to our children.

Regards,

Cindy Madison

Retired Elementary and Secondary Principal

Ted DuBois, Dr.

Self; retired music professor

Canyon, TX

I am against the elimination of fine arts within the high school curriculum by substituting an alternative CTE credit. A community-based fine arts program is likely not going to follow TEKS or meet those standards.

Fabiola Uffman

Self/Bilingual Teacher

Spring, TX

I dream to see my sons in older grades playing an instrument, painting, loving art, having the knowledge and creativity that only art can develop.

Robert Uffman
self/ Pressman
Spring, TX

No child left behind in art.

Mark Taylor
self / teacher
Navasota, TX

As a middle school history teacher for Cypress-Fairbanks ISD who is also a professional musician and composer and a part-time college instructor for Blinn College, I want to speak in support of maintaining the core requirement for fine arts high school curriculum. As a professional educator, I can personally speak to the value of educating the entire student, and fine arts education is an integral part of that time of whole-child education.

Most will not go into the arts full-time; however, they will not cease to be artistic, nor will their talents go away or cease to exist. The outlet for artistic creativity is a catalyst for other types of creativity, in addition to providing the type of well rounded student we strive for in education. For example, music and mathematics are closely related subjects , as are visual arts and mathematics. Students with artistic abilities utilize arts education to further hone STEM skills in preparation for their careers.

In our efforts to continually “improve” public school education, it’s important that we don’t remove traditional staples of our core curriculum without full consideration of the many benefits of a well-rounded education that includes arts education.

Katherine Wilson
Self
Arlington, TX

Fine Arts and CTE should NOT be made mutually exclusive. They are both important parts of a well rounded education.

Channon Gibson
Self
Whitesboro, TX

If fine arts are not required, most students will not take them. Fine arts are the things that keep us human, empathetic, and teach valuable lessons that can not be taught in a normal classroom. We will be doing future students a disservice by not requiring them to take at least one year of fine arts. I do not approve of this bill. If this is passed, many schools will do away with valuable programs because they cost “too much”. Don’t let children grow up without learning to use creativity or empathy. These children will be our future voters. They will be taught to not think outside the box without fine arts. Also fine arts are an outlet for most students. A class were they can learn a different way and not be forced to take test after test.

Patricia Rougeau
Self
Katy, TX

Good Morning,

As a retired Texas educator, I would like to submit my support for the continuance of Fine Arts education as a curriculum requirement for our high school students. All children benefit from the knowledge and skills they gain in these courses. These courses should be offered so that all of our children have the opportunity to be exposed to the positive and invaluable skills the courses provide. Many children discover they are truly talented and/or gifted in one of the Fine Arts and just needed the encouragement of a dedicated Fine Arts teacher that sees and believes in the student's potential. The skills and the self confidence gained and nurtured carry over into all other subject areas. These courses help develop well rounded individuals who are more ready to enter the work force. The courses need to be offered in our schools to meet the needs of students in rural communities who may not have the opportunity outside of school to develop their talents. This is also true for our students living in low socioeconomic communities.

Thank you for your time and attention,
Patricia Rougeau

Charles Cooper
Self/ University Theatre Professor
Spring, TX

Arts are a vital part of a well rounded education. They are as essential as English, History , Math and Science. Arts courses are not interchangeable with CTE courses and should not be pitted against one another. Arts classes teach communication, collaboration, and creativity. The very things that most Fortune 500 corporations say they want their employees to have. My wife, my children and I are better people because the arts were offered in school and we were exposed to them in k-12th grade. It literally changed the trajectory of my wife's and my life. Very few of the students my wife and I teach will become professionals in an art field, but a majority of them will become independent thinkerse, collaborators and be able to communicate effectively in the field they go into. And, this is because of the arts classes they took. Give future generations of Texas students this same opportunity by voting against HB 434.

Sincerely- Charles Cooper

Darrell Vinson
Merkel High School
Abilene, TX

This is a horrible idea. It is imperative that students are exposed to fine arts. The ability to appreciate the arts is what makes us human. Without the arts we will have an entire generation devoid of compassion.

Diana Cooper, Mrs.
Self, elementary music teacher
Spring, TX

Fine Arts are a vital part of every student's education and are not interchangeable with CTE curriculum and credits. The arts classes teach students creative thinking, independent thinking skills, public speaking through public performance, and working as a team through ensemble performances. Students who are involved in the arts are more likely to graduate high school because they have "family" of other fine arts students and of fine arts teachers that support them. Please vote against HB434 so that all students will receive the benefits of the Fine Arts.

Jennifer Barker
"Self" Theatre Teacher
Wills Point, TX

Career and technology courses are an amazing path for students who aren't looking for a typical 4 year university after high school, however, students should also have exposure the the arts. I have had many students "forced" into my class for a fine arts credit who leave with a broader more empathetic view of the world. Some find a love of the arts and some just find a place to belong and share themselves. The arts contribute so much more than what's produced on a stage or in an art gallery. The arts create free thinkers, problem solvers, empaths, creative minds. Taking away the fine arts requirement takes the the salt from life. What if a welder in high school is exposed to the arts for a credit and becomes a famous artist or gains the courage in himself to be one. As a theatre teacher I can freely connect with students of all races, sexual orientations, learning disabilities and there are no barriers for me to help them. I can find a place for them to be at home and in a safe space. They can express themselves for who they are and its amazing to see. I pray that you do not take away the fine arts requirement. I've taught CTE courses and theatre classes for 10 years and I have a great respect for all of it, but one shouldn't exist at the expense of another. What kind of education system would we be if we only created flat students instead of beautifully rounded individuals. Instead we should include technical theatre as a CTE pathway and get these students working in a great career that blends art and technologies.

Pam Wilson, Retired KATYISD Fine Arts Chair

TXETA

Katy, TX

I appeared in the 1980's supporting the fine arts 1 credit for students in our high schools . It was eventually endorsed and passed. It acknowledges that student flourish and saved by fine arts curriculum whether making music, dance, art or theatre! It promotes individuality, clarity and connectivity to other curricula. IT IS ESSENTIAL ! Please keep the ONE Fine arts credit requirement in our statewide curriculum !

Autumn Kirkpatrick

Self

Spring, TX

As a constituent of Harris County, I strongly oppose HB 343. Arts education is essential in providing a well-rounded education and prepares the 21st century workforce by developing critical thinking, communications skills, collaboration, leadership, creativity, and imagination. By removing it as a required elective you are robbing the students of opportunities and costing tons of educators their jobs. I urge you to vote against it. As an educator myself, I expect you to represent us and fight for us.

Michelle DeVall

Self, Austin ISD Music Educator

Austin, TX

I am writing in opposition to HB 434. CTE courses already have bills supporting their funding and increased access to students (see HB 5). The fine arts will be placed in competition for funding with CTE courses because of graduation requirements. With districts already facing cuts for the next school year, fine arts courses will be placed at risk. For me personally, it has been an extreme challenge teaching both online and in person band classes. Students miss being a part of a strong community, and that is something that can only be found in group activities like theater and music ensembles. It would be extremely unfortunate if students did have have access to those programs, especially when districts may have to choose between funding a new tuba versus a school set of chromebooks. Please protect the arts in Texas and vote no on HB 434. Thank you.

Mellessa Denny

Self

Amarillo, TX

Access to arts education in the state of Texas is not equitable. Many times, these programs are some of the first to be cut. However, these are programs and often times what keeps a kid engaged in school. Additionally, arts education supports not only academic growth but also social and emotional growth. The TEKS are not synonymous with those of CTE courses. CTE courses should not be allowed to count as a graduation requirement in lieu of fine arts. Removing the fine arts requirement--while CTE is bolstered by school administration and counselors because of incentives--unintentionally furthers the disparity among students in Title I schools and low socioeconomic communities in receiving a quality, equitable, well-rounded education.? ?? Fine Arts and CTE are not interchangeable or comparable and should not be treated as replacement or competitive options.?Just like Speech, World History, or PE are not interchangeable for CTE. These core curriculum courses, along with the ONE Fine Arts course credit, have been identified as foundations of knowledge that all children need to All students deserve an opportunity to be exposed to arts education not because they necessarily plan to have a career in the arts, but because the invaluable skills learned through arts education will help them be successful in any career they choose to pursue.?? Additionally, building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research by the Texas Cultural Trust shows?that fine arts education prepares 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. These are what are crucial for all jobs in the 21st century ?? Removing the required fine arts learning is unacceptable and a disservice to a child's education. Changing what constitutes a well-rounded education is not the answer, EVEN if it is a financial benefit. We should not put money above what is right for kids.

Kelsey Lowe

Self special education teacher

Richmond, TX

Representative Dutton, as a teacher, former student, and member of the community, I urge you to please oppose HB 434! Removing fine arts requirements would also remove an important part of becoming a well rounded student and person. Through fine arts I, like many other students, learned perseverance, teamwork, musicality, and a deep appreciation for culture and arts. This encourages creativity, perspective taking, and individuality which are traits that are desperately needed in our society today. Please protect the arts and the development of future students into well rounded adults.

Dorothy Wilson

Self - Choir Director

Katy, TX

Fine Arts is an essential part of the education for all children. Fine Arts classes offer an opportunity for students to connect, create and collaborate with their peers. Fine Arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are NOT synonymous with CTE TEKS. Fine Arts and CTE are not interchangeable or comparable and should not be treated as replacement or competitive options. Just like Speech, World History or PE are not interchangeable with CTE. The core curriculum courses along with one Fine Arts course credit , have identified as foundations of knowledge that all children need to have.

Access to arts education in Texas is not equitable, especially among Title I school districts, minority and low socioeconomic communities. New research by the Texas Cultural Trust proves that access is inequitable for students in rural communities and students in high-poverty schools. We must protect and stand up for children in marginalized communities.

Removing the Fine Arts requirement-while CTE is bolstered by school administration because of incentives - will result in disparity of a well-rounded education for all students.

Across the state, CTE education programs have significant support through funding incentives and school accountability ratings. Fine Arts receives none of these incentives. All students deserve an opportunity to be exposed to arts education not because they

plan to have a career in the arts, but because the invaluable skills learned through arts education will help them be successful in any career they choose to pursue. A competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research by the Texas Cultural Trust shows that fine arts education prepares students for the 21st century by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.

Do not change the current curriculum requirements for high school students. Substituting or removing required learning in fine arts classes is not an option.

Loren Welles

Self - Graduate Student

Austin, TX

Dear Public Education Committee,

Substituting or removing Fine Arts from required learning is a disservice to a student's education. We must preserve activities that create a sense of community for our students and rebuild what we have lost through the pandemic by increasing support for the arts in our local schools. A CTE credit and a Fine Arts credit do not have interchangeable TEKS. Fine Arts courses prepare the 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. These skills are irreplaceable. Data from the 2019 State of the Arts Report shows that students enrolled in arts courses have better attendance and have higher pass rates on tests compared to students with fewer arts courses. Simply put, access to arts education improves overall academic performance. Further, arts courses teach empathy, increase self-esteem, teamwork, and make us all into better, more considerate human beings. One required course at the high school level could be the gateway to an undiscovered passion that positively changes a student's life. If you take it away, their interests and talents may never come to fruition.

A community-based fine arts program is also not a substitute for school-based fine arts programming. Our school-based programs have qualified, trained educators, and our public schools are free and open to all. We know and have the ability to ensure that our public school programs are high quality and accountable to the communities they serve. This part of the bill is simply a way to chip away at arts programming and begin to privatize arts education under the seductive veil of providing more choices for those who can afford it. It is unethical to subtract from school-based programming in this way. It will eventually destroy our thriving public school programs in Texas that receive national attention for excellence. Please do not consider this bill for our Texas students.

Sincerely,

Loren Welles

Graduate Student, Educational Policy and Planning

Former Public School Music Educator

Laura Haden

Self- public school teacher- jr. high

Barry, TX

Fine Arts are an imperative in public schools. For many, this will be their only exposure to art, theater, choir, Or band/ orchestra. It not only exposes students to a world beyond their own, but also opens up a place for relationships and talent that may be otherwise undiscovered. It has been shown that students that take a combination of arts programs demonstrate improved verbal, reading, and math skills, and also show a greater capacity for higher-ordered thinking skills such as analyzing and problem-solving.

John Ogden

Self

Porter, TX

I opposed the bill that removes the requirement for a fine arts course for graduation. Arts are a vital part of our society and teaches students to be creative, critical thinkers and how to work with others. I am not opposed to CTE courses but they are not a replacement for fine arts courses. I think students should have to take both types of classes.

Gerry Goodwin

Self - Texas High School Theatre Educator

Palestine, TX

As an artist and an educator I feel strongly that this bill is a death sentence to arts education in the state of Texas. While fine arts funding is shrinking across the nation and arts venues around the world are shuttered, so many of our students only have access to the fine arts via the classroom. While it is true that those students who love the arts will still be able to take classes in a best case scenario - one that doesn't lead to the complete eradication of arts programs (at a time when the shortage of devoted teachers should be staggering to this body) - passage of this Bill will rob future students of discovering their passion for the arts. Consider the sixth grader who falls in love with Greensleeves at a Christmas concert, the eighth grader who discovers that perspective brings her drawings to life, of the sophomore who sees his own family's struggles in August Wilson's Fences. CTE courses certainly have an important place in our schools, but the arts have an important place in our world, be it our national identity, our personal experiences, or a broader understanding of those around us who live different experiences. It is no secret that districts get funding for students enrolled in CTE classes. How long might it take for the students (like I was 20-some-odd years ago) who get up and get themselves to school so that they can go to theatre or art or band, find themselves not in their first choice, but in a second or third because the district will get more funding if they're placed in welding instead of the thing they love? The arts have existed since the dawn of man, and they will survive the passage of this bill. But there are students who will lose opportunity, growth, stimulation, and the chance to discover a passion that might otherwise lie dormant. I urge you to vote against HB 434, not at the expense of CTE courses, but for the benefit of the students who might yet discover the magic of playing Mozart, the poetry of reciting Shakespeare, or the beauty of a brushstroke.

Lindsay Conner

Self-public school educator

Kerens, TX

Substituting CTE courses for a fine arts course does not provide students with a comprehensive public education allowing exposure to varying areas of potential future interest. It is crucial that we continue to help foster future generations with a love of the fine arts, and while that love may not grow into a career, it just might provide for them an emotional outlet that is therapeutic and beneficial in so many other ways. I know that it sounds like a stretch, but our students are taught practical skills all day and those things are wonderful...but we live in a world where our students are experiencing more anxiety and depression than ever before. It is important that public schools help to provide students with healthy ways to handle the stresses of life and that is exactly what fine arts do...it provides students with the opportunity to release frustrations and fears in a creative manner. A better challenge might be in addition to art, music, and theater, developing more CTE courses that extend to the fine arts, such as floral design and interior design.

Shellie O'Neal, Dr.

Self, College Professor

Corsicana, TX

I have been a college theatre professor for 23 years, and it has been my privilege to teach students of varied backgrounds and

socioeconomic statuses. In one of the classes I teach every semester, I require the students to view a live performance of a play and write a review of the show. With every passing year, the number of students who have attended a live performance of a stage play becomes smaller. This semester, only a handful of my students have actually seen a live play. There is a direct correlation between the students who have experienced live theatre and their ability to think outside the box and to problem solve. I have witnessed this again and again. Another phenomenon which has presented itself throughout my career is that students who do not major in theatre return to me either in person or on Facebook and tell me that they use the skills they learned in Theatre classes in their line of work frequently. They say it makes them better communicators and stronger thinkers. The arts strengthen students in immeasurable ways.

Jose De Hoyos, Mr

Self/Education

San Antonio, TX

Access to arts education in Texas is not equitable, especially among Title I school districts, minority, and low socioeconomic communities.?

- o New research by the Texas Cultural Trust proves that access is inequitable for students in rural communities and students in high-poverty schools. We must protect and stand up for child in marginalized communities.

- o Removing the fine arts requirement--while CTE is bolstered by school administration and counselors because of incentives--unintentionally furthers the disparity among students in these communities in receiving a quality, equitable, well rounded education.??

- Fine Arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are NOT synonymous with CTE TEKS.?

- o Fine Arts and CTE are not interchangeable or comparable and should not be treated as replacement or competitive options.? Just like Speech, World History, or PE are not interchangeable for CTE. These core curriculum courses, along with the ONE Fine Arts course credit, have been identified as foundations of knowledge that all children need to have.

- o Across the state, CTE education programs have significant support through funding incentives and school accountability ratings. Fine arts education receives none of these incentives.?

- All students deserve an opportunity to be exposed to arts education not because they necessarily plan to have a career in the arts, but because the invaluable skills learned through arts education will help them be successful in any career they choose to pursue.??

- o Building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research by the Texas Cultural Trust shows?that fine arts education prepares 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.??

- o Substituting or removing required learning is unacceptable and a disservice to a child's education. Changing what constitutes a well-rounded education is not the answer.??

Thank you,

J. DeHoyos

Carla Schumann

Texas Theatre Administrators

San Marcos, TX

I am adamantly opposed to this bill. Fine arts education creates the most well rounded student possible. CTE already receives special funding that Fine Arts does not. There is no public education group supporting this bill including the CTE organization. Fine Arts is core, it is essential and needs to be available to reach every student.

Rebecca Walters

Self- retired theatre teacher and director; mother of 3 fine arts students

Richmond, TX

Fine Arts is a life saving and enriching curricula for many students. Technology is also vital. They are not mutually exclusive. All students within the state of Texas deserve to be able to take both. Also, "allowing" students to get credit for Fine Arts outside of the school days has two direct effects: (1) Wealthy and middle class students may be able to have transportation to classes and tuition to pay it. Lower income students would not have equal opportunity and access to Fine Arts. (2). When students perform in outside Fine Arts events, students may be subjected to much longer than the 8 hour rule, and subsequently risk failure in other classes and burn out.

Please vote NO to HB 434.

Beverly Murray, Retired Texas Arts Educator

Self - retired public school theatre teacher

Saginaw, TX

@txculturaltrust.org>

Subject: Texas Cultural Trust: HB434 Public Education Hearing Tuesday, March 9th

Good Evening

Thank you for your dedication to arts education.

Access to arts education in Texas is not equitable, especially among Title I school districts, minority, and low socioeconomic communities.?

- o New research by the Texas Cultural Trust proves that access is inequitable for students in rural communities and students in high-poverty schools. We must protect and stand up for child in marginalized communities.

- o Removing the fine arts requirement--while CTE is bolstered by school administration and counselors because of incentives--unintentionally furthers the disparity among students in these communities in receiving a quality, equitable, well rounded education.? ??

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- o Across the state, CTE education programs have significant support through funding incentives and school accountability ratings. Fine arts education receives none of these incentives.?

- All students deserve an opportunity to be exposed to arts education not because they necessarily plan to have a career in the arts, but because the invaluable skills learned through arts education will help them be successful in any career they choose to pursue.??

- o Building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research by the Texas Cultural Trust shows?that fine arts education prepares 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.??

- o Substituting or removing required learning is unacceptable and a disservice to a child's education. Changing what constitutes a well-rounded education is not the answer.??

- o

COMMITTEE:??? Public Education??

TIME & DATE:? 8:00 AM, Tuesday, March 9, 2021??

PLACE:?????? Capitol Extension Auditorium, E1.004??

CHAIR:?????? Rep. Harold V. Dutton, Jr.?

HB 434???????? Bell, Keith

Relating to the curriculum requirements for public high school

A live video broadcast of this hearing will be available here:

<https://house.texas.gov/video-audio/>

Instructions related to public access to the meeting location and health and safety protocols for attending this meeting are available here:

<https://house.texas.gov/committees/public-access-house-committee-meetings/>

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Thomas Sturdivant

Self-Non-Profit Executive

Montgomery, TX

Representative Bell,

I have the unfortunate opportunity today to write you regarding the potential change to the credit requirement within the Texas school system. HB 434 is a bill that strong implications for the future of our students and the great state of Texas. HB 434 is dangerous, and should immediately be cast down.

The world is growing smaller. The world is growing uglier. The world is changing. To dispute any of those things would likely garner a chuckle. To dispute them is ludicrous. We exist in a world whose values have changed. Gone are the days where beauty, artistry, and time were placed at the top of the pedestal. Instead we value wealth, innovation, and instantaneous gratification.

Rather than give our children an education that will benefit them for life; rather than teach them how to think critically and problem solve, to create and nourish, we be-little their intelligence and their potential. We strive to create gears instead of creating clocks. We seek to remove the arts from their education. The arts we so diligently praise when we quote the founding fathers, or say that we “really love van Gogh”. We have exhibited only a surface level commitment to these as they can only exist when convenient. We don’t seek to create the next Picasso, Twain, or Rodin. We only seek to create the next Jobs, Gates, or Musk. Those names are sexy. Those names make money-even at their utterance. Surely their contributions should not be ignored, not at all. But we must not stifle the creativity of this generation and future generations by defunding their potential. Shame on this bill for attempting to do so because it is more convenient for your bottom line!

This is not to say that CTE is not a valuable and necessary resource. It is! But we should seek to educate our children. We should prepare them in multiple ways. We should give them the best of both worlds. Let them choose their field after they have been presented with their possibilities. Give them the option to choose their own future, by actually educating them. Not allowing them to blindly choose when they have no understanding of what impact these choices have on their futures.

I urge you to re-consider HB 434. The removal of a mandatory fine-arts credit is at best an easy way to save money. At worst (which is my greatest fear if this were to pass) it is the attempt to castrate a generation of thinkers and dreamers. I ask that you cast any potential bias aside and look toward the potential of those youth that this bill truly effects.

Thank you for your consideration and taking the time to read this plea. I pray that you think of your grandchildren and the potential that they have, as well as all of those young Texans we entrust our future.

Sincerely,

Thomas Sturdivant

Baldomero Betancourt, Sr

Independiente

Houston, TX

Necesitamos que nuestros hijos tengan arte y música en la escuela para ayudarlos a relajarse y convivir en armonia

Kelli Ryno

Self

Corsicana, TX

CTE TEKS and Fine Arts TEKS are not the same and should not be considered interchangeable. Fine Arts education has been proven invaluable in helping students learn creativity, collaboration and a multitude of other skills. All of these skills can be used in any future career. In addition, high school is the place for students to discover the topics that interest them, choosing to allow CTE credits to replace Fine Arts will limit the exposure that students will have to topics that they might not have chosen, but for the ONE credit fine arts requirement. High school is the place for students to try new things and experience a variety of core content as well as elective credits that can open life long interest or career opportunities. Rather than allow students to substitute CTE credit for Fine Arts credit I propose adding a ONE CTE credit requirement be added to graduation plans. This route would allow students the chance to be exposed to invaluable possible interests so that they will be more well rounded as well as more focused on their future interests and goals as they transition to high education or the workforce.

Luis Munoz

SELF - Educator and retired UIL Theatre Director

Austin, TX

Good Evening -

Thank you for your dedication to arts education.

We live in a world where the arts are an integral part of everyone's life. We watch television, we listen to music, and most importantly our business world relies on training in creative thinking to prepare the young mind for the demands in business for invention and design. Unfortunately, access to arts education in Texas is not equitable, especially among Title I school districts, minority, and low socioeconomic communities.

?

- o New research by the Texas Cultural Trust proves that access is inequitable for students in rural communities and students in high-poverty schools. We must protect and stand up for children in marginalized communities.

- o Removing the fine arts requirement--while CTE is bolstered by school administration and counselors because of incentives--unintentionally furthers the disparity among students in these communities in receiving a quality, equitable, well-rounded education.?

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o Building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research by the Texas Cultural Trust shows that fine arts education prepares the 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills.??

o Substituting or removing required learning is unacceptable and a disservice to a child's education. Changing what constitutes a well-rounded education is not the answer.

This single required course has set Texas apart from the other 49 states in positive ways. Let's keep it that way.

Luis Muñoz
Retired State Theatre Director - UIL

Carter Ridge
Self/ theatre teacher
Cibolo, TX

CTE and Fine Arts are not interchangeable. CTE is an important part of curriculum but Fine Arts is also incredibly needed in our young men and women. Fine Arts has brought out punctuality, responsibility, respect, team work, good attitude, dedication, and being able to take and apply critiques. It also opens doors to social and emotional aspects that CTE can not provide. It's teaches a history that CTE can not provide.

Please do not pass this House Bill. Students NEED to try the minimum that is 1 credit of fine arts. We need well rounded individuals coming out of our education system, not just workers.

Ronda Craig
Self/Theatre Teacher
Plano, TX

First I'd like to say thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak in opposition HB 434. Although I have been a Theatre teacher and director for 20+ years, I have also worked in the corporate sector and have a unique perspective regarding the issue at hand. I have a degree in Communications/Public Relations, worked in marketing and PR, been a marketing consultant, and have seen significant success in Texas UIL and in many other theatre organizations and programs. Since my passion is theatre and the arts, it may seem odd that my degree is business related. The simple explanation is that my parents forbid me from majoring in the arts as they were convinced I could not live a successful life in the arts. My 3 state championships, numerous state medals, and national honors would beg to differ. Most importantly, however, the thousands of young performers and artists would disagree as well. Yes. I've used my marketing and business skill set in my theatre career, but it is the HS arts education that has allowed me to be successful in the business world, not the other way around! I'm sure you'll hear from many arts educators who will tell you how the arts kept at risk students in school and gave them meaning and purpose. There are THOUSANDS of people who will agree. However, please understand that my belief is that theatre taught in school is designed to fulfill 4 basic purposes: THEATRE AS THERAPY- to enhance students' personal growth and development, and self-discovery, developing self-confidence, teaching group work, etc.; THEATRE AS LIFE ENRICHMENT - produce aesthetically responsive citizens with life-long interest in the arts; THEATRE AS SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY - Giving the student a break from academic activities, fulfilling the same needs of a sports activity; THEATRE AS TRAINING - As preparation for continued and future studies in the field. CTE courses are good and are certainly valuable - yet it is undeniable that the overall goal is for monetary gain. These classes CANNOT begin to meet all the needs the arts courses fulfill such as creating empathy within society and the intrinsic value to creating arts that is able to transcend time, socioeconomic status, the ability to find one's voice, and the edification of mankind. I urge you, my students beg of you, and our growth as a society implores you to vote AGAINST HB 434! Thank you!

Luther Steele

Self - High School Theatre Teacher

Abbott, TX

Frankly, I find this piece of legislation reprehensible. Although I do support freedom of choice in young people, I believe it would be a gross misuse of our educational system to not allow children to, at the very least, be exposed to some of these courses. In doing so, students will be exposed to potentially new interests and career paths; not to mention the fact that skills taught in fine arts courses carry on into the professional world.

But yet again, our government wants to put even more limitations on education that requires students to think critically. After all, courses in theatre, film, and art teach critical thinking more than math or biology - let alone welding. It's almost as if y'all are scared of young people thinking for themselves?

David Yates

Self

Plano, TX

I am opposed to this Bill. CTE is a great program, but nothing can replace the neural pathways that are created by learning a fine art, not to mention the lifelong love that may be created. I urge you to vote against this bill.

maria medina

Self

humble Texas, TX

Yes to Arts

Veronica Monarch

Self

Spring, TX

I ask that you do not remove the requirements for Fine Arts classes for the youth of Texas. Fine Arts are critical for all kids. It helps their brain develop and encourages growth in all subjects, not only the art form they are studying. This is a direct quote from an article done by the APA: "Students who participated in music, who had higher achievement in music, and who were highly engaged in music had higher exam scores across all subjects, while these associations were more pronounced for those who took instrumental music rather than vocal music," This, among countless other studies have proven that the arts nurture the learning environment for all students that participate.

In addition to test scores, Fine Arts is a way for all students and adults to express themselves. I highly believe there would be an increase in mental health issues, if the Fine Arts are cut from schools. I hope you consider what could happen to our schools and students if you do away with the Arts.

<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2019/06/music-students-score-better>

Venessa Sloan, Ms.

Self/Music Educator

San Antonio, TX

HB 434, Music Education is of vital importance. It must be kept in the curriculum without a doubt. Life long skills are learned and diverse interests gain successful adults. Students thrive and express themselves through the arts. The arts HAVE NO BENCH WARMERS! Everyone participates and there is a home for EVERY CHILD. Imagine a football game WITHOUT the band! Without the countless supportive parents, without the passion, amazing performances, district pride and revenue they bring to the district. Children find a place to belong! They find a place to THRIVE! In today's world the ARTS are of GRAVE importance. DON'T TAKE THIS AWAY FROM OUR COMMUNITIES!!!!

Karla Cruz

Public school fine arts teacher

San Marcos, TX

Fine arts is what makes us well-rounded humans. Taking away Fine Arts is taking away creativity, culture, color.

Marilyn Ocker

self / Theatre teacher

Spring, TX

As a fine arts teacher, I can tell you that fine arts is vital for all students to experience. It gives them a deeper understanding of the human condition. Substituting CTE course for fine arts, doesn't give students the the knowledge to understand how to communicate with others, how to experience empathy, and understanding. Please do not vote to substitute these courses.

Jill Wilkinson

Self

Woodway, TX

I believe that all students benefit from having exposure to Fine Arts and ask that you continue to make having a Fine Art class a graduation requirement. I do not believe that a CTE class can and should take the place of a Fine Arts class. They are different and students need a place to express themselves, discover new things about themselves, work together, etc and that happens in the Fine Arts classrooms. I have witnessed how Fine a arts have impacted my children and am thankful for benefits the Arts provided. Students are pushed so hard already with testing requirements and the stress and pressures of growing up too soon. The Arts provided a safe place, a chance to explore, a chance to discover new things, and a place to learn to use their voice. For my High School graduate and 5th grader Theatre and Art have provided all of these things. I believe that the Arts create well rounded individuals and help prepare them for the future. Please, continue to support Texas students and keep the Fine Arts graduation requirements.

I have been proud of how Texas has recognized the importance of Fine Arts in school and ask that you continue to protect student's ability to grow and be well rounded by keeping the FA requirement.

Please oppose HB 434 and continue helping students by keeping the Fine Art graduation requirement.

Brandon Barrett

Self, teacher

Bedford, TX

Keep fine arts as a requirement for high school. Access to arts education in Texas is not equitable, especially among Title I school districts, minority, and low socioeconomic communities.?

o New research by the Texas Cultural Trust proves that access is inequitable for students in rural communities and students in

high-poverty schools. We must protect and stand up for child in marginalized communities.

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- o Substituting or removing required learning is unacceptable and a disservice to a child's education. Changing what constitutes a well-rounded education is not the answer.??

Lisa Cockerell, MS.

Self/Teacher

Weatherford, TX

Hey friends!

Can you submit public comment on HB 434 before the hearing ends tomorrow?

This bill would allow students to choose CTE credit rather than the required fine art credit for graduation.

(It starts at 8am)

The link for public comment is below and talking points that you can amend to submit are here too!

@txculturaltrust.org>

Subject: Texas Cultural Trust: HB434 Public Education Hearing Tuesday, March 9th

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- o

Julio Morales, Mr.

Self

Houston, TX

Every student deserves quality fine arts instruction. Fine Arts and CTE should be a requirement for graduation, not either/or. This bill will harm many low income communities and deny quality education for our students.

Nancy Gibson

High School Fine Arts

Richardson, TX

The arts are so important for our youth. It teaches them organization skills and how to relate to others. In this world, our students are developing anxiety and are beginning to lack social skills. If you vote to remove the arts, you are setting them up for another chance to fail.. We MUST keep the arts in the our schools!!!

John Grimmett

Self - Educator

Pearland, TX

I am writing to you this evening in opposition to HB 434, not because of its reach but because of its lack of vision in a post-pandemic public education system. My name is John Grimmett, and I am an artist and theatre educator in a public high school in Pearland, Texas. Last year, I was one of five finalists for Region IV Teacher of the Year, an honor that distinguishes me from 99,000 other colleagues in the Houston area.

The young people I serve every day are proof of why the arts matter in our public schools. We cannot teach empathy, understanding, and compassion without the visual, musical, and theatrical arts. That is what this world needs more of in a time of isolation and disconnectedness. HB 434 will allow CTE courses to satisfy the current Fine Arts credit requirement for high school students. While CTE courses may provide skills and certifications for students to enter professional industries, it fails to provide them with the cultural context that allows people to interpret, problem solve, think critically, and respond compassionately. Emotions — like people — are not tasks or skills or certifications. Complexity in the arts reflects the complexity in our humanity, and our children deserve to learn about what makes us most human.

The writer Philip Pullman says: “The effects of cultural starvation are not dramatic and swift. They’re not so easily visible.... We say, correctly, that every child has a right to food and shelter, to education, to medical treatment, and so on. We must understand that every child has a right to the experience of culture. We must fully understand that without stories and poems and pictures and music, children will starve.”

This bill is bad for Texas students because it makes them choose between two different fields instead of allowing them to explore both. And if competent arts educators cannot be found within a community, then the community should take responsibility for bringing the arts and culture to their young people. All too often, the arts have been a casualty to commerce, and we are now seeing generations of public school students who are not well read, who have never been to a live performance, and who do not see value in dance or going to a museum. The cultural detritus in our society does not allow our young people to see beauty

beyond “how does it make me money or bring me fame,” and yet we wonder why so many young people face feelings of worthlessness, helplessness, and a yearning for more than what they are experiencing. Perhaps if they participated in the arts they would know the value of self-expression and the poetry of living within a moment. Participating in the arts is probably the most palpable solution to the burgeoning mental health crisis our country faces today, and it is our duty to our students to support them, nurture them, and make sure they are happy and healthy and well.

Elizabeth wilborn

Self/ teacher

Chillicothe, TX

I am a special ed teacher at a 1A school. We have some fine CTE teachers. We have one fine art course. Art and only seniors get to take it. The students learn so much co curricular material in art. Please dont take it away. To be really well rounded they need some fine art. It soothes the beast within us all. Please i beg you leave fine arts in the Texas education system. We are all better for it.

Manuel Arambula, Director of Orchestras

Self

Kirby, TX

Fine arts education is essential to the development of a well rounded human being. I don't believe that asking students one year of fine arts is much too ask in the grand scheme of things. On the other hand, there is much to be gained. A young person will understand the value and beauty of what makes us human. Creative and self expression will yield a lifelong appreciation for the very thing that makes us humans. Nothing can replace the value that art can bring to a human being. One year of fine arts is not much to ask to keep in place. For many of our students, the fine arts is the reason they show up to school. It brings pride to our schools and it creates a well rounded society. I ask that our curriculum is not changed and that fine arts continues to be part of the core curriculum. It has worked for many years and there is no reason or excuse to believe it has hindered our society.

Denis Thompson

self. Computer Programmer

Austin, TX

This is a horrible bill. Let's support the arts, not attack the arts. Let's let our professional school teachers teach, rather than "outsource" their students to who knows where. Thank you for your consideration.

Andrea Grapko, Dr.

self

Austin, TX

There is an overwhelming amount of evidence to support the crucial role of the arts in education; removing the one and only Fine Arts requirement would do students in Texas a great disservice and put them at a disadvantage nationally. This bill has the potential to have a much more far-reaching negative impact than perhaps this bill's sponsor realizes, this isn't just about choice, this bill has the potential to reap unforeseen damage on arts programs across the state by making it much easier for schools and districts to completely eliminate the fine arts as an option whenever budgets are tight. Through the arts, students develop skills like resilience, grit, and a growth mindset as well as learn to collaborate, think critically and solve problems creatively, all things employers overwhelmingly want and that serve students well regardless of their path after high school. As a parent of a student entering high school next year, I'm shocked this is even being considered. I am a Texas resident and I vote in every election, this

is very important to me and I would view this as moving the Texas High School curriculum backward. Please do not vote to pass this bill.

Felicia Miller, 20+ year veteran Theatre Educator,/Director, Houston & New Braunfels, TX. President of the Greater New Braunfels Arts Council.

Greater New Braunfels Arts Council, Comal ISD.

New Braunfels, TX

This last year, especially, has proven how vital the Arts are to a maturing adolescent's mental and emotional development, not to mention coping skills. Arts electives and arts activities at the high school level have never been more crucial. For example, in a high school theatre department, students find a refuge and a necessary creative outlet--a place to be themselves and not be judged--a second family for most. Theatre is a collaboration and much like a sports team, students work together with one common goal. This includes that "misunderstood" student who prefers to sew costumes, work a light or sound board, paint a set piece, or act on stage. Throughout my blessed career as a high school Theatre Educator, I have witnessed beautiful moments of transformation in endless students. Creative outlets and the opportunity to express one's emotions is crucial to a student's well-being. Finding your "peers" in a challenging high school environment can make or break a student's overall experience and set the foundation of their future careers. Many physicians and attorneys will tell you that their experience in the arts left them grounded and confident to pursue those careers because it taught them how to utilize creative expression to their advantage. It teaches them teamwork, collaboration, problem-solving and reasoning skills you can't experience anywhere else. Half the world's population are Right-Brainers! Public schools MUST continue to require the Arts. High school is the last chance our students have to determine where their individual strengths lie to determine their futures. Otherwise, you are depriving young adults the opportunity for overall well-being by not requiring an Arts education. This is about encouraging healthy leaders and parents of tomorrow. Making the Arts a requirement is the right thing to do. Thank you for your time.
-Felicia Miller, MA Theatre Education.

Stephanie Bogue, Ms.

Self

San Antonio, TX

Building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research by the Texas Cultural Trust shows that fine arts education prepares 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.

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High schoolers who take music courses score significantly better on exams in certain other subjects, including math and science, than their nonmusical peers, according to a study published by the American Psychological Association. Article: <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2019/06/music-students-score-better>

Deborah Garrett

Lufkin High School Theatre Dept.

Lufkin, TX

As a teacher of Technical Theatre and the Technical Director of our department, I have seen students come to life in the theatre! I have seen students who would never have chosen to take a theatre course voluntarily find joy and fulfillment at being part of creating a new world on our stage. I've seen the looks on the faces of thousands of kids when they realized that they could do something so creative. At this very moment, there is a student at the University of Texas in Austin who entered my class as a

tennis player but later quit the tennis team and chose theatre as his career because he fell in love with what he could do with light! Please do not deprive the students of Texas of the opportunity to reveal their powers of creativity, an opportunity that comes when they walk into a Fine Arts class only to fulfill a graduation requirement and find something that brings enrichment to their lives.

Lisa Russell

Self

Houston, TX

Keep the fine arts requirement for HS kids. HS kids already have room for career related courses. many of these courses being taught poorly by teachers who are not experts in the field.

Ed Gonzales

Self

San Antonio, TX

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Building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research by the Texas Cultural Trust shows?that fine arts education prepares 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.??

Substituting or removing required learning will only further the inequity of access to arts education, especially for students in Title I school districts.

Children need the arts now more than ever before in these pandemic times when social and emotional learning is so important. Please vote no on this bill.

Melissa Lacy

Self- Fine Arts Teacher

New Braunfels, TX

Subject: Texas Cultural Trust: HB434 Public Education Hearing Tuesday, March 9th

Good Morning,

Thank you for your dedication to arts education.

Access to arts education in Texas is not equitable, especially among Title I school districts, minority, and low socioeconomic communities.?

- o New research by the Texas Cultural Trust proves that access is inequitable for students in rural communities and students in high-poverty schools. We must protect and stand up for child in marginalized communities.

- o Removing the fine arts requirement--while CTE is bolstered by school administration and counselors because of incentives--unintentionally furthers the disparity among students in these communities in receiving a quality, equitable, well rounded education.? ??

- Fine Arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are NOT synonymous with CTE TEKS.?

- o Fine Arts and CTE are not interchangeable or comparable and should not be treated as replacement or competitive options.? Just like Speech, World History, or PE are not interchangeable for CTE. These core curriculum courses, along with the ONE Fine Arts course credit, have been identified as foundations of knowledge that all children need to have.

- o Across the state, CTE education programs have significant support through funding incentives and school accountability ratings. Fine arts education receives none of these incentives.?

- All students deserve an opportunity to be exposed to arts education not because they necessarily plan to have a career in the arts, but because the invaluable skills learned through arts education will help them be successful in any career they choose to pursue.??

- o Building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research by the Texas Cultural Trust shows?that fine arts education prepares 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.??

- o Substituting or removing required learning is unacceptable and a disservice to a child's education. Changing what constitutes a well-rounded education is not the answer.??

During a time where the world turned to the Fine Arts for comfort and support, please help to persevere an equitable Fine Arts opportunity for all Texas students.

Paula Rodriguez Rodriguez

Self

Austin, TX

Students should not be forced to choose. We need the arts and CTE.

Michael Childress

COMAL ISD

San Antonio, TX

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Across the state, CTE education programs have significant support through funding incentives and school accountability ratings. Fine arts education receives none of these incentives.

All students deserve an opportunity to be exposed to arts education not because they necessarily plan to have a career in the arts, but because the invaluable skills learned through arts education will help them be successful in any career they choose to pursue.

Building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research by the Texas Cultural Trust shows that fine arts education prepares 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.

Substituting or removing required learning is unacceptable and a disservice to a child's education. Changing what constitutes a well-rounded education is not the answer.

Alexandra Martinez

Self

Corsicana, TX

Access to arts education in Texas is not equitable, especially among Title I school districts, minority, and low socioeconomic communities.

- o New research by the Texas Cultural Trust proves that access is inequitable for students in rural communities and students in high-poverty schools. We must protect and stand up for child in marginalized communities.
- o Removing the fine arts requirement--while CTE is bolstered by school administration and counselors because of incentives--unintentionally furthers the disparity among students in these communities in receiving a quality, equitable, well rounded education. ? ?

As a fine arts teacher, the need that our student body has for the fine arts is incredible. We put our students and the school population needs first. Removing the requirement of one fine arts credit would negatively impact the students and also fine art teachers. Please consider keeping the fine arts credit a requirement for the sake of students and fine arts educators.

Phillip Keltner

Self - Social Studies Dept Chair/AP Teacher

Corsicana, TX

As a 30 year veteran educator in the state of Texas, one of the things I have learned..... high school students (outside the top academic sphere) and their parents rarely make informed choices when scheduling classes. Requiring a fine arts credit forcefully guides these students into taking classes which make them educationally well rounded. It also introduces them to activities they might otherwise have avoided. There are plenty of credit opportunities built into a high school graduation plan for students to take extra CTE classes without removing the Fine Arts requirement. As a core academic instructor, I am highly opposed to HB 434. Music and art have proven to be a major influence on positive academic outcomes (just like physical activity). Please do not reduce the arts (like has been done with PE) with this bill. Help core academics by leaving high school credit options regarding fine arts alone.

Phillip Morgan, Dr.

Self / School Administrator

Waxahachie, TX

I urge you to vote 'No' on HB434 due to serious concerns it poses to fine arts education, and represent my voice during the 87th Legislative Session.

This bill would remove the requirement for ONE high school fine arts credit and allow students to choose either one fine arts OR one CTE (Career and Technical Education) credit to meet high school graduation requirements. Please understand that CTE and fine arts education are not interchangeable, nor equally weighted in terms of state accountability.

The unintended consequences of HB 434 limits a child's access to fine arts education and the opportunity for a well-rounded education. CTE programs across the state have significant support already in place through funding incentives and school accountability ratings. Fine arts education in our state ISD's receive none of these incentives. Access to arts education in Texas is already inequitable, especially among rural and low- socioeconomic communities, and removing the one fine arts requirement (while CTE is bolstered by school administration and counselors because of incentives), unintentionally furthers the disparity among students in already marginalized communities. As a graduate of Yantis ISD (small 1A), I have seen first-hand the damaging effects that a lack of fine arts resources and faculty can have. I was not afforded the opportunity to be in a band program or a theatre program – because it was not required and thus, eliminated.

Building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research from the Texas Cultural Trust has found that fine arts education prepares the 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. Arts education is essential, not because students necessarily plan to have a career in the arts, but because the invaluable skills they learn through the arts will help them be successful in any career path they choose to pursue. The benefits of arts education are considerable and essential. In addition to preparing a competitive workforce, the arts improve test scores, promote leadership and collaboration, boost school attendance, and double the likelihood of high school graduation.

I urge you to support and protect arts education in our public schools by voting 'No' to HB434. By voting against this legislation and preserving the current legal language for fine arts education in our great State of Texas. As you know, isolation and distanced learning due to quarantine provisions has, and will, continue to have an impact on the health and wellbeing of all Texans, including our children. Studies have also shown that access to the arts can have a positive impact on mental health and strengthen social and emotional learning by providing much needed opportunity for engagement, expression, and comfort.

Thank you for protecting arts education and opportunities for children to experience the arts in our schools.

Dr. Phillip Morgan
Waxahachie, TX

Amy Medina
Self/Teacher
Magnoila, TX

Please do not eliminate the Fine Arts requirement for our students. The arts are a necessary part of our society. Students learn so much about themselves and the world around them via the arts. So many of my students have found their passion for Theatre by taking my class for the required credit. Students who would have never taken the class otherwise. The arts are important and every child should be exposed to them at least once in their HS career.

Linda Russell
Self
INGRAM, TX

The arts are an important part of students learning. It affords a group activity to learn how to work together.

Esperanza Nemec

Self

Austin, TX

Forcing a student to do something is one of the ways you come by those who don't want to even try that anymore. Therefore, this bill helps to highly encourage CTE, which is more likely to get a chance at having involved students than a forced credit. I've seen this multiple times and because of the beauty of fine arts and CTE type courses, it sad to see how many are turned away from it. I say pass!

Sherri Cooper

Self secretary

Waxahachie, TX

Please keep as is...Fine Arts is so important...our kids need this in their lives. Music helped my boys so much during school and after graduation. Instilled great values that they will carry on through life.

Gina Middleton

Self/Local community theater/local arts district

Corsicana, TX

Taking the Fine Arts requirement out of public school curriculum would take away a significant part of our children's' well-rounded education. Fine Arts programs are already suffering in many districts and they risk disappearing all together. CTE is so important, but it's importance shouldn't diminish the importance of our youth being exposed to the arts. We cannot risk losing this crucial facet to a child's development and education. Young people need to continue to have this option available to them in rounding out their education. Without a Fine Arts requirement, they may never be exposed to something that could alter their lives in a positive and meaningful manner. Thank you.

Meghan Cantrell, Mrs

Self teacher

Trinidad, TX

I am both a CTE and a Fine Arts teacher. I can tell you 100% that the skills learned in Fine Arts are not learned within the CTE courses. Fine arts especially subjects like theater teach kids how to communicate in the outside world. It gives them confidence and culture. It promotes learning after they leave the world of public schools. I am seeing a major impact on students and the world in general because of the diminishing push for the arts.

Sara Brumfield

self

AUSTIN, TX

Ok, this is a weird comment, but I've come to understand over the years that Texas has *excellent* music programs (the other arts

count, too, but I'm going to focus on music here), possibly because of football culture in Texas highschools leading to a large investment in marching bands. What this ends up meaning is that Texas and Texans show every well when it comes to performing careers and cultural events. Did you know you can make a living as a musician in Texas easier than many other states because there are opportunities to teach lessons as well as perform? What this means for us as a state is vibrant arts and culture that many other states don't get.

Arts education should not be limited to college going students, else we won't have a lively and diverse music scene made up of students from a broad range of backgrounds in in poorer school districts.

Janna Condor
self, child care
Waxahachie, TX

Passing HB 434 could potentially cause Title I school districts and schools in minority, and low socioeconomic communities to lose their fine arts programs, preventing those children from receiving a quality, well rounded education! Limiting ANY child's opportunity to receive a well-rounded education is unacceptable!
CTE education programs have significant support through funding incentives and school accountability ratings, Fine Arts education does receives none of those, please DO NOT pass HB 434!

Sandy Miles
Self, teacher
Corsicana, TX

This should be BOTH/and CTE and fine arts! Students should be well rounded and be exposed to BOTH fine arts and CTE!!!

Margaret Mizell
Self retired teacher
Trinidad, TX

Fine Arts are the soul of our society. Title 1 students do not have regular access to culture such as theatre, art, and music in their everyday lives. Do not take away this vital part of a student's education just to bolster funds for CTE programs.

John Kaiser
Self - Executive Director of a Community Theatre
Corsicana, TX

Access to arts education in Texas is not equitable, especially among Title I school districts, minority, and low socioeconomic communities.?

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- o Building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research by the Texas Cultural Trust shows?that fine arts education prepares 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.??
- o Substituting or removing required learning is unacceptable and a disservice to a child's education. Changing what constitutes a well-rounded education is not the answer.?

As a personal note, I would not be in the position I am in today, nor have had the career I have had throughout life, if it were not for being introduced to the arts through schools growing up. Passing of this bill would be a mistake and is not representative of the wants and needs of all the people you were elected to represent. Thank you.

John White

Waxahachie band Boosters

Waxahachie, TX

I think that this is a bad idea in that studies have continuously shown the value of fine arts in improving the education of our youth. Statistics show that students involved in Fine Arts perform better in schools of learning than students without Fine Arts. I see this being no different than a student athlete learning to perform, cooperate and achieve common goals. Students must learn to work with other people and develop those coping skills if they are going to be successful in whatever career that they choose. Not everyone plays sports. I think that this is a failure in many systems and institutions. I, for one, started at center on the football team in a 4A high school for two years. What i have witnessed with my children being involved in Fine Arts is that they far exceed the dedication and effort that is required of a normal student athlete.

I encourage you to vote NO to HB 434.

Carrie Forehand

Self Music Parent

Waxahachie, TX

Please vote no on this bill. Fine Arts Education is so important for so many of our students, it cannot and should not be replaced with a CTE course. If this bill is passed this could potentially mean the end to fine arts in many smaller communities. Every child deserves the right to have a fine arts education.

Katrese Skinner

self teacher at El Campo High School

Wharton, TX

Dear esteemed representatives of the great state of Texas,

I am writing to express my great concern over HB434. I have been an educator in rural South Texas for the past 22 years. I can tell you that supporting HB434 will do a disservice to the educational welfare of students across our great state and ultimately, have a detrimental impact on the workforce for which this bill is supposedly intended to strengthen.

Examine the design of the bill, to allow any CTE course to fulfill a fine arts requirement. When you look at the TEKS requirements for courses like theater, art, or music do not share the same objectives with courses like welding, agricultural science, or health science. Why would legislators support legislation that is basically calling circles squares? The philosophy behind this law is just wrong. What is the end goal or desired outcome? Is the objective to create a shortcut so that school districts can undercut other educational opportunities for students in the area of fine arts and develop a better skill set as individuals? Building a strong workforce requires more than just one skill set. Research shows that fine arts education prepares the 21 Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Rural or impoverished school districts would suffer the most from this proposal. Ultimately schools short on funds would use this shortcut to justify cutting fine arts programs, cutting courses in order to add more CTE so they may receive more federal funding, and eliminating fine arts educators from their staff. As a result, what they would do is limit a student's exposure to a well-rounded education which is what Texas has been producing. Why would you change that? Aren't our young people deserving of the most opportunity they can get from a diploma offered by their public school? Would Texas really be satisfied with sending people into the workforce that was not encouraged to tap into creativity, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities that playing in a band, performing in a play, creating a piece of artwork, or finding their note in a chorus can provide?

Currently, our graduation requirements give our students a great gift. It gives them an opportunity to discover who they are as people by requiring fine arts credits and allowing for a vast variety of electives. By allowing CTE courses to substitute for those fine arts credits, you would take away that gift. We are better than that as a state. Our workforce deserves better than that. Our students deserve better than a shortcut!

Reject this bill.

Susan Borenstein

Self - parent

Cedar Park, TX

I am a parent of three sons, all of whom have benefited greatly by their participation in the fine arts curriculum offered at their middle and high schools. If Fine Arts had not been a requirement, I would not have considered enrolling my sons in band and now I am so thankful that I did. All three of my sons have thrived in their involvement with the band programs and have learned incredibly valuable skills other than just music education, such as leadership, responsibility and teamwork. I believe strongly that being part of the band program enabled my oldest son to get accepted in his top choice of college. Please DO NOT make any changes to the current education curriculum requirements and enable all students to get to experience Fine Arts in some form or another.

Kelley Masters

Self - Self employed

Cedar Park, TX

This is a well-intentioned bill that will have devastating effects on Fine Arts in Texas schools. By removing the requirement for Fine Arts as a graduation credit, many school districts will continue along the current path of erasing Fine Arts from our schools. Fine arts make well-rounded students and adults. My children are both in band, currently at the middle school and high school level. In addition to being physically rigorous, band teaches teamwork, discipline, commitment, and so much more. Career and technology classes are also important, but not at the expense of Fine Arts. Please vote no on this bill.

Adrian Saenz, Music Teacher

Self Music Teacher

El Paso, TX

I oppose HB 434

The music classroom is where all subjects can be taught inclusively and the learning experience can be enriched through music. Many studies have shown that children learn better through connections between music and other areas of study. Music is ideal for multicultural learning environments. According to the National Association for Music Education, on the 2012 SAT, Students who participated in music scored an average of 31 points above reading, 23 points above average in Math, and 31 points above average in writing. Music improves memory, sharpens concentration, reinforces cognitive development, enhances coordination through multitasking, teaches discipline, teaches time management and organization skills, increases responsibility, boosts team skills and social skills, relieves stress, and promotes happiness.

The 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act reauthorized the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Acts enacted in 1965. The law provides that music and arts education be included as part of a well rounded education. To many studies have shown the benefits of music education and it is imperative that Music education remain as part of a well rounded education and retain the required fine arts credit.

Respectfully,

Adrian Saenz (Music Educator)

Frank Coachman

Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Arts Education Campaign, Self

Salado, TX

Opposed to the bill. CTE courses should not be allowed to substitute for fine arts credit. All students should be allowed and required to participate in a true fine arts course at all levels; elementary, middle school, and high school. Fine Arts courses have embedded social emotional learning and foster team building and creativity skills not found in other courses. These skills are essential to students for college and workplace readiness.

Respectfully,

Frank Coachman

Phillip Taylor, Mr.

Personal - Fine Arts Education - Fine Arts Educator and Administrator

Austin, TX

Good Morning

Thank you for your dedication to arts education. Access to arts education in Texas is not equitable, especially among Title I school districts, minority, and low socioeconomic communities.?

New research by the Texas Cultural Trust proves that access is inequitable for students in rural communities and students in high-poverty schools. We must protect and stand up for child in marginalized communities.

Removing the fine arts requirement--while CTE is bolstered by school administration and counselors because of incentives--unintentionally furthers the disparity among students in these communities in receiving a quality, equitable, well rounded education.? ??

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All students deserve an opportunity to be exposed to arts education not because they necessarily plan to have a career in the arts, but because the invaluable skills learned through arts education will help them be successful in any career they choose to pursue.??

Building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research by the Texas Cultural Trust shows that fine arts education prepares 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.?

Substituting or removing required learning is unacceptable and a disservice to a child's education. Changing what constitutes a well-rounded education is not the answer.?

Additionally, this bill could heavily impact teacher job-loss at the local level.

Please, we ask that you do not support HB 434.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phillip Taylor
Personal
Public School District Fine Arts Educator/Administrator

Paul Fletes
Self; High School Band Director
Houston, TX

Members of the House Public Education Committee,

My name is Paul Fletes, and I serve as a high school band director in the north Houston area. I am speaking in opposition to HB 434.

House Bill 5 (2013/Aycock) moved Texas education forward by establishing meaningful pathways for students. The preservation of one fine arts credit within every graduation plan was a deliberate statement that all students benefit from exposure to the arts.

Students already have many opportunities to enroll in CTE courses. Current high school graduation requirements allow plenty of room and flexibility in schedules for students to complete full programs of study in CTE. E.g. 5 electives= 3 CTE pathway courses+2 credits for a practicum or internship

If class scheduling is challenged by the required learning, it is the responsibility of each district (school administration, counselors, teachers) to coordinate a master schedule that will accommodate each student's needs.

Substituting or removing required learning is unacceptable and a disservice to a child's education. Changing what constitutes a well-rounded education is not the answer.

Currently, CTE programs across the state have significant support through funding incentives and school accountability ratings. Fine arts education receives none of these incentives.

The arts bring our students to school and bring our communities together. Now, more than ever, we must preserve activities that create a sense of community for our students and rebuild what we have lost through the pandemic.

The 2021 Raise Your Hand Texas Foundation Public Perceptions Poll found that what parents miss most for their students are:
Missing social interactions at school or with friends
Missing a personal connection with their teachers
Missing sports, music, arts or other after-school activities

Access to arts education in Texas is not equitable especially among Title I school districts, minority, and low socioeconomic communities. Removing the fine arts requirement while CTE is bolstered by school administration and counselors because of incentives, unintentionally furthers the disparity among students in these communities in receiving a quality, equitable, well rounded education.

Arts education is essential in providing a well-rounded education and prepares the 21st century workforce by developing critical thinking, communications skills, collaboration, leadership, creativity, and imagination.

In turn, students who participate in the arts are better prepared to succeed in their careers and contribute to the Texas economy.

The Trust's research shows that academic achievement, attendance, and graduation rates are significantly higher when students are engaged in the arts.

In summary, HB 434 would have disastrous unintended consequences for Texas high school students, and must not move forward.

Thank you committee members for your time and for your consideration of this testimony in opposition to HB 434.

Natalie Nelson

Self, teacher

Lorena, TX

Students need a well-rounded education. Allowing this substitution will rob our students of the education they deserve! The TEKS are not the same and therefore are not providing our students with the opportunity for artistic expression. Research has shown how the arts greatly impact a child's education. Why would we be willing to accept anything less than what is best for our students?

Cheri Jay-Wienecke

Self- teacher

Lometa, TX

This legislation gives districts the option to deprive our state's students of classes that grant them the ability to communicate with others on a professional level and to express themselves through their talents. Every student isn't an athlete or a candidate for a CTE Program. However, they are, each and every one, in need of the benefits brought about by fine arts programs. This legislation only serves to give districts the opportunity to cut the programs our students so badly need while prioritizing money over the needs of our students.

laura briseno

Self

Ennis, TX

The hearing on HB 434 has JUST started. If you care about the arts in your schools, please join in to watch and leave your comments. Link in the message below.

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- o

COMMITTEE: Public Education

TIME & DATE: 8:00 AM, Tuesday, March 9, 2021

PLACE: Capitol Extension Auditorium, E1.004

CHAIR: Rep. Harold V. Dutton, Jr.

HB 434 Bell, Keith

Relating to the curriculum requirements for public high school

A live video broadcast of this hearing will be available here:

<https://house.texas.gov/video-audio/>

Instructions related to public access to the meeting location and health and safety protocols for attending this meeting are available here:

<https://house.texas.gov/committees/public-access-house-committee-meetings/>

Texas residents who wish to electronically submit comments related to agenda items on this notice without testifying in person can do so until the hearing is adjourned by visiting: <https://comments.house.texas.gov/home?c=c400>

Emily Sawyer

self/ homemaker

Austin, TX

I am urging members to vote against HB 434 because I am concerned that this bill would further decrease opportunities for fine arts education in our Texas schools. I fear this bill would incentivize schools and school districts to decrease fine arts offerings and outsource these offerings to outside providers. This will disproportionately harm students living in poverty, Black students and other students of color, and students who are English language learners. These students are most unlikely to be able to access fine arts instruction outside of the school day, or provided by outside providers. These students are also most likely to attend a school where there is already a lack of funding, time, and staff to offer robust fine arts curriculum, and where STAAR performance pressure already means fine arts are pushed to the edges of the school day or skipped altogether for test prep and other interventions.

Workforce development is not the most important consideration when choosing curriculum priorities, and fine arts careers are important, too. Choice is fine, but in this case "choice" incentivizes further cuts to fine arts curriculum and teaching. We need to be doing EVERYTHING we can to SUPPORT the arts. CTE has all kinds of buy in and investment in Texas. The arts do not. This bill perpetuates the status quo of de-prioritizing arts education. Please vote against HB 434.

John Adams, in a letter to his wife: "The science of government it is my duty to study, more than all other sciences; the arts of legislation and administration and negotiation ought to take the place of, indeed exclude, in a manner, all other arts. I must study politics and war, that our sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. Our sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain."

Janette Lindner

Self - parent, spouse, taxpayer, employer, lifelong Texan!

Houston, TX

I am concerned that Rep. Bell thinks he is speaking for the state when he talks about the art experience he has and how he is a "big arts guy". His comments show that school-to-work program worked for him, but that doesn't mean we look to his experience and history as the path forward for our kids future development. the testimony from him and others shows that the lens they use for decision-making is what worked for them when they were kids. What I hear is these board members do not understand the value of a complete education including the Fine Arts, for future careers in technology and other careers they haven't even heard of. Decisions on education issues should be informed by evidence of what works based on studies and facts, not a romantic memory of what school was liked and worked for Rep. Bell when he was a kid. Focus on CTE without exposing kids to other subjects keeps them from learning about things they would not otherwise consider. This CTE focus is too narrow and shortchanges kids, especially in rural and low income areas, from getting a rich educational experience that prepares them for a future that is evolving before our eyes.

Lisa Flores

self

Austin, TX

My name is Lisa Flores. I am representing myself. I am opposed to this bill. CTE often excludes students with disabilities and access to CTE and to fine arts is extremely diminished for students with disabilities. Fine arts organizations outside of schools are also less likely to include students with disabilities or they cost money families may not have. My student was placed in CTE classes despite having no interest in the subjects but I suspect for financial reasons. Unfortunately, many CTE courses are not modified or inclusive of students with disabilities. CTE classes in middle school in AISD are delivered via electives. The more academically behind a student is, the less electives they are granted. It isn't equitable to have CTE classes that are not modified or inclusive of students with disabilities, that still generate funding for the schools. It also presents more barriers in IEP/ARD meetings because it requires the presence of the CTE teachers.

Jacob Reach

Austin ISD

Austin, TX

Austin ISD appreciates bills that support local control and flexibility, recognizing public schools are governed by locally elected school board members who are most responsive to the individual needs of their local taxpayers and families. We appreciate the aspects of this bill that allow local districts to best determine required courses for graduation that provide the greatest amount of flexibility for students. Thank you

Jon Ingham

Self - television production

Corsicana, TX

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the parent of high school, intermediate, and elementary school children, and though I value Career and Technology Education, I do not feel CTE either can or should take the place of what is already only a one-credit requirement for fine arts. In fact, my choice would be for students to be required both/and rather than one or the other.

Arts education took a place next to my own academic and sports education to make me a more well-rounded adult. Arts education has been proven to strengthen all parts of most students' quantifiable parts of education, such as test scores, attendance, and general achievement. Arts teach human and soft skills such as interpersonal communication, empathy, and pushes talents to the surface that some students already are aware of but those who aren't wouldn't have the chance to explore otherwise, as well.

Since CTE is federally funded and bolster the schools' AEIS District Report Cards automatically, while Fine Arts do not, though they DO provide important educational value. This fact could easily incentivize districts to remove expensive but important Fine Arts programs. My sister has taught in, administrated, and participated in a number of Fine Arts programs for a long time at a number of different districts. She has had to make a case more than once in small districts as to why costly fine arts programs should be kept in schools. Please do not double-incentivize them to remove them, anyway.

Thank you for your time and considering a NO vote to HB 434.

Sean Powell

self, professor

Denton, TX

Access to arts education in Texas is not equitable, especially among Title I school districts, minority, and low socioeconomic communities.?

- o New research by the Texas Cultural Trust proves that access is inequitable for students in rural communities and students in high-poverty schools. We must protect and stand up for child in marginalized communities.

- o Removing the fine arts requirement--while CTE is bolstered by school administration and counselors because of incentives--unintentionally furthers the disparity among students in these communities in receiving a quality, equitable, well rounded education.? ??

- Fine Arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are NOT synonymous with CTE TEKS.?

- o Fine Arts and CTE are not interchangeable or comparable and should not be treated as replacement or competitive options.? Just like Speech, World History, or PE are not interchangeable for CTE. These core curriculum courses, along with the ONE Fine Arts course credit, have been identified as foundations of knowledge that all children need to have.

- o Across the state, CTE education programs have significant support through funding incentives and school accountability ratings. Fine arts education receives none of these incentives.?

- All students deserve an opportunity to be exposed to arts education not because they necessarily plan to have a career in the

arts, but because the invaluable skills learned through arts education will help them be successful in any career they choose to pursue.??

- o Building a competitive workforce requires more than one skill set. Research by the Texas Cultural Trust shows?that fine arts education prepares 21st Century workforce by developing creativity, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.??
- o Substituting or removing required learning is unacceptable and a disservice to a child's education. Changing what constitutes a well-rounded education is not the answer.??

Barbara Kelley

Self and work as a Lead Police Telecommunicator

Corsicana, TX

Please don't reduce the hours to the fine arts curriculum.

Gonzalo Bazan, Retired Theatre Teacher

Self

Garciasville, TX

Students need fine arts as part of education. It is essential and beneficial in every aspect of their lives. Please do not make the mistake of removing it from the curriculum.

Amanda Ransom

Self

Leander, TX

HB 434 has the potential to do great harm to the arts in Texas. Our students deserve a well rounded education. CTE courses are valuable but so are the fine arts. This bill could effect future funding and staffing of our fine arts programs throughout the state. Please vote NO on this bill. Protect the arts for our future students.

Janette Lindner

Self - parent, spouse, taxpayer, employer, lifelong Texan!

Houston, TX

to the comments I am hearing from the teacher testifying...that arts are integrated into education K-8, that is NOT true. In Houston we have strived to even get arts teachers into schools. This argument assumes arts education is already INTEGRATED in our kids' education and it is not. it is less so in schools that are low-income or rural. The more affluent the school, the more opportunities for learning, and better informed choices kids can make.

Jessica Ferrarone

Self: Professor

Montgomery, TX

The fine arts is culture. MIT and Cal Tech are incorporating arts training into their engineering curricula because fostering a

creative mind is imperative to critical problem solving. Devaluing this would be an epic error. My question relates to School Boards being allowed to make unique determinations between Fine Arts and CTE when we KNOW CTE is a money-making endeavor with political bias built-in! How will you ENSURE this never happens? Because it most certainly will and that's a massive disservice to Texas students.

Caroline Hernandez

Self-Parent

Cedar Park, TX

My daughter has been in dance throughout her middle school and recently made the high school dance team. Please do not remove fine arts from the high school requirements. She has been taught by the most experienced and professional dance teachers in her district (Leander ISD) and not only does she get to dance, but she has learned organizational skills, communication skills, teamwork, and many other life skills than any parent will tell you are necessary in today's world. Many children, not just my daughter, look forward to participating in their schools fine arts program. Without the support of my home state of Texas, you will not only be hurting our educators, but our children. I urge you to please not remove fine arts from the high school requirements. Thank you for your time.

Maria Choi

Self, teacher

Dallas, TX

ALL STUDENTS need music and art. It is not the same as CTE. The bill should not use the word "or". Fine Arts is necessary for child development. Please do not lump together other electives with Fine Arts as a graduation requisite.

Jessica Ferrarone

Self: professor

Montgomery, TX

This is for the gentleman who spoke about his daughter being better served by participating in OCPE for dance, rather than taking PE: what about our marginalized students?!? You paid for your daughter to have access to her passion. Moreover, you lived in an area with access to a dance studio. Please think of ALL Texans when making this decision and not just relating it to your personal experience.

Martin Klein

Self - Teacher

Humble, TX

Every student should have exposure to the fine arts while in high school. Permitting a CTE credit to substitute for the fine arts credit is a terrible idea. Our students need more fine arts education, not less. If you want to require students to use one of their 5.5 elective credits on a CTE course, that's fine. However, it should not trade off with fine arts. Scientific research proves fine arts education is associated with the development of higher order and critical thinking. Effective communication includes the ability to express artistically. The future of American society and culture depends upon raising children who can carry on our art forms.

Lynnette Houchell

Self - CPA

Eules, TX

My children have been and are in choir. Fine arts are important to our children. The kids need to be well rounded. I know from personal experiences my kids have grown and tried things that they never would have tried if it wasn't for the fine art programs. Please don't take fine arts out of the curriculum requirements.

Robert Allen, Principal

Self/Arts Educator

Highlands, TX

The arts teach a different lesson. Their goal is to connect person and experience directly, to build the bridge between verbal and nonverbal, between the strictly logical and the emotional—the better to gain an understanding of the whole. (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 2005, p. 6-7) Still, the arts are not consistently accepted as essential subjects in schools. Thus, a conflict exists between the recognition of the value and beauty of the arts, and the need for justification of the arts as important subjects in the core curriculum (CNAEA).

Fine arts classes have value and career technology education courses do as well. Texas high school students benefit from both experiences. The arts teach a completely difference skill set and not requiring our students in Texas to complete one credit during high school would be a mistake.

Based on the results of a study for my dissertation of 3 suburban school districts in Texas, the results suggested that there are student perceptions that all students would benefit academically if they were required to take at least 3 years of fine arts classes to graduate. There would seem to be a connection between the language arts portion of the STAAR test and participation in fine arts. It could be assumed that students who consistently participated in fine arts classes may have developed better verbal and linguistic skills than students not enrolled in fine arts classes. The nature of fine arts classes was to help students better demonstrate ideas, feelings, and emotions through expressive use of their body and creative skills. This training could be beneficial to students in the form of written expression through EOC writing and help students in the reading portion of the exams.

The data obtained in focus groups comprised of high school juniors and senior and surveys completed by those same students indicated a perception that participation in fine arts during high school benefited students academically. High school counselor perceptions of the academic benefits gained by the students they served who participated in fine arts activities and courses were positive. The data gathered from the TAKS, STAAR, ACT, and SAT tests further validated the information gathered from students and counselors.

Had I not taken that required Theatre I course my first year in high school, I never would have fallen in love with the art form and ended up being a Texas educator and now principal of one of our nation's premier fine arts magnet high schools. I urge the Education Committee to continue to require all Texas students to earn one credit of fine arts in high school. The benefits of those classes are numerous in their everyday life as students, in college, and the work force as the enter adulthood.

Consortium of National Arts Education Associations. (2005). Dance, music, theatre, visual arts: What every young American should know and be able to do in the arts. Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference,

Richard Beaulé

Self - Teacher of Music

Harker Heights, TX

Among the concerns that I have as an educator regarding HB 434, many of whom have been so ably stated by others, is a concern regarding the quality of education that students receive should this bill pass. As it currently stands this bill provides no provisions to ensure that the quality of instruction a student could use to participate in a Fine Arts course actually aligns with Texas Fine Arts TEKS. This alone would undermine the quality of instruction required by the education code.

Location matters. I have taught in a rural area for half of my teaching career. Rural areas simply lack the arts opportunities that urban areas inherently have. For many students in rural areas without additional opportunities the experiences they are exposed to in their high school careers represent the sum total of their exposure to arts. This bill would jeopardize that, stunting emotional growth that gives them the ability to express themselves.

While the aim of the bill is an understandable attempt to give Texas students options in their courses there are many negative impacts that have been caused in the name of flexibility. You will have, no doubt, already seen many examples of individuals representing their fields arguing for or against the bill. I remind the committee that the charge provided for all educators under education law is for a "well-rounded" student, not a flexible one. That exposure is what gives those students the foundation to make informed decisions. The only way to achieve that well-rounded status to make those decisions is through exposure. By eliminating that well-rounded exposure you jeopardize their ability to make well-rounded decisions.

Janette Lindner

Self - parent, spouse, taxpayer, employer, lifelong Texan!

Houston, TX

to the question on how we can encourage CTE and Fine Arts:

Currently, CTE programs across the state have significant support through funding incentives and school accountability ratings. Fine arts education receives none of these incentives.

Students already have many opportunities to enroll in CTE courses. Current high school graduation requirements allow plenty of room and flexibility in schedules for students to complete full programs of study in CTE. E.g. 5 electives= 3 CTE pathway courses+2 credits for a practicum or internship

House Bill 5 (2013/Aycock) moved Texas education forward by establishing meaningful pathways for students. The preservation of one fine arts credit within every graduation plan was a deliberate statement that all students benefit from exposure to the arts.

If class scheduling is challenged by the required learning, it is the responsibility of each district (school administration, counselors, teachers) to coordinate a master schedule that will accommodate each student's needs.

Substituting or removing required learning is unacceptable and a disservice to a child's education. Changing what constitutes a well-rounded education is not the answer. Thank you.

Carolyn Somes

Self

Austin, TX

I oppose HB434. Fine Arts access is not equitable as it is. Wealthy white students will not lose access to fine arts. BIPOC and poor children will.

David Wellbaum

Self, teacher

Hewitt, TX

I do not feel that adding CTE classes to the Fine Arts requirements for graduation will benefit students. The goals and skills taught from FA classes are not equivalent to CTE requirements. Also, while CTE classes already benefit from government grants and funding, FA programs tend to lack in support in many districts. Adding CTE to the Fine Arts requirements for graduation would further push FA programs down in the list for support from struggling districts. Please do not hamstring FA programs by adding CTE classes to the FA credit requirement.

Kate Schulle

Self, student

Cedar Park, TX

While I understand the intentions behind HB 434, there is a blatant failure to consider the detrimental effect HB 434 has on our students. In the current path of public education, we're seeing a shift to a culture where school is merely a path to another degree. What's forgotten is that many students find families within school when they do not have stable families at home. By keeping the Fine Arts requirement, we are providing the path for these students to find such family. At my high school, the retention rate of a Freshman year student in my choir is incredibly high. Had many of those Freshman not taken choir, they wouldn't have known their passion for music. The current push for specialization from our students is incredibly dangerous, creates a homogeneous student population, and often stifles Fine Arts. Please vote in opposition to HB 434.

Gladys Keeton, Professor

Self/ National

Denton, TX

The arts contribute to a holistic education for students . They allow students an opportunity to express their emotions especially those in low economic areas. The arts teach 21st century skills that support them in their prospective careers. The arts teach leadership skills that encourage young people to attend college applying knowledge learned in the arts to other career choices. There are many scientists that used their art skills to invent heart valves and other health needs. ART is not just performing but skills we use everyday!!!

Charlotte Newman

Self

Cedar Park, TX

The arts is such a necessary part of life and not making it mandatory can take away the potential of a person. There are so many people who are "forced" to take a fine art credit and never leave because they found their passion. I have been in choir for 6 years now and the lifelong friendships and memories I have made in it are extremely precious and irreplaceable. Taking away the requirement would cause funding to go down which could mean less opportunities for the students and the arts as a whole. I beg you to realize the circumstances of this and know that this would do way more harm than good.

Sandra Dwyer

Self

Houston, TX

Do not make fine arts come eye with career tech.

Lora Plemons

self

Blooming Grove, TX

Unfortunately, the fine arts are already disgracefully underserved in many parts of Texas. Removing the fine arts requirement will only further the disparity among already-underserved communities. The fine arts are NOT synonymous with CTE...not even close. They are not interchangeable. They aren't even very good friends. I'm astonished that the legislature would consider removing the ONE fine arts credit that's currently required; I would ardently argue in favor of increasing the required number of fine arts credits, never for removing altogether. The benefits of quality fine arts instruction are literally legion, and well-documented. As a voice teacher, piano player, choral director, performer, and former public school music teacher, with over 40 years of experience and a masters degree in music, I strongly urge you to KEEP the fine arts credit requirement. I could write a book about how quality arts instruction shaped and altered the course of my life, always in positive and uplifting ways. There is absolutely no substitute for it. And with the decline in private instruction availability, millions of children have only the slimmest, most meager access to some bare thread of fine arts through the public school system. You cannot take that from them and honestly tell yourself that you have served them for the better. Thank you for your time.

Brittany Baugh

Self

Kingwood, TX

Fine Arts are fundamental to the mental development of appreciation. The work that goes into the fine arts translates to dedication and determination in life. Students NEED fine arts. This should not pass. Every student should take fine arts credit for graduation.

Amanda Miyamoto

self

Austin, TX

I am against the elimination of the Fine Arts Credit from the graduation requirements. If passed, it would cripple public education fine arts programs across the state as funding would disappear without the credit requirement. At a time when fine arts are sorely underfunded already, this would be devastating to many smaller high school and school district programs. Exposure to at least one credit of a fine art is essential to a well-rounded education.
