

Fine Arts Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Which disciplines are included within fine arts?

Fine arts includes four disciplines: Dance (grades 6-12), Music (Kindergarten-grade 12), Theatre (Kindergarten-grade 12), and Visual arts (Kindergarten-grade 12),

Q: Are there Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for fine arts disciplines?

Yes. The fine arts TEKS can be accessed in [Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\), Chapter 117](#).

The fine arts TEKS describe what every student should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level or course and are organized into strands of learning: foundations; creative expression; historical and cultural relevance; and critical evaluation and response.

Q: Are school districts required to offer fine arts?

Yes. A school district that offers kindergarten-grade 12 must offer an enrichment curriculum that includes fine arts ([TAC §74.1](#)). School districts must ensure that sufficient time is provided for teachers to teach and for students to learn all of the required learning standards, including fine arts ([TAC §74.2](#) and [§74.3](#)).

Q: What are the fine arts requirements for elementary, middle, and high school?

Elementary (Kindergarten-grade 5)

Fine arts at the elementary level includes music, theatre, and visual arts.

- Elementary schools must provide TEKS-based instruction to all students in art, music, and theatre at each grade level (Kindergarten-grade 5).
- Elementary students are required to demonstrate proficiency in all fine arts disciplines at the appropriate grade levels.
- Time requirement: School districts must ensure that sufficient time is provided for teachers to teach and for students to learn all of the required grade-level learning standards.

Middle school (grades 6-8)

Fine arts at the middle school level include dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.

- Districts must ensure that students have the opportunity to take courses in at least three of the four disciplines in fine arts.*
- A school district that provides instruction for Grade 6 in a self-contained elementary class as part of elementary school shall provide instruction for students in Grade 6 in all of the Middle School 1 courses for all four disciplines.
- Middle school students must complete one fine arts course (e.g. Theatre, Middle School 1) during grades 6, 7, or 8. Students are required to demonstrate proficiency in the course.

- Time requirement: School districts must ensure that sufficient time is provided for teachers to teach and for students to learn the required learning standards for at least one fine arts course.

*The requirement to offer three of the four disciplines in fine arts may be reduced to two by the commissioner of education. A school district with a total middle school enrollment of less than 250 students ([TAC §74.3\(a\)](#)) may submit an application to the Texas Education Agency.

High school (grades 9-12)

Fine arts at the high school level include courses in visual arts, dance, music, music studies, theatre, musical theatre, and technical theatre.

- High schools must offer TEKS-based instruction in at least two of the four fine arts disciplines of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. ([TAC §74.3\(b\)\(2\)\(F\)](#)).
- High school students must complete one credit of fine arts to graduate from high school under any high school graduation program.
- Time requirement: School districts must ensure that sufficient time is provided for teachers to teach and for students to learn the required learning standards for at least one fine arts course.

Graduation Requirements & Substitutions:

Q: Can the fine arts graduation requirement be fulfilled by combining half credits of different courses?

Yes. The TAC allows the proportional award of credit. A student may satisfy a graduation requirement for which there are multiple options with one-half credit of one option and one-half credit of a second option, unless otherwise specified by TAC or local district policy ([§74.26\(d\)](#)). For example, a district may allow a student to satisfy the one-credit fine arts graduation requirement by combining a half credit for a Music course with a half credit of a Theatre course.

Q: What is a community-based fine arts program?

A community based fine arts program ([TAC §74.1030](#)) is

- provided on or off a school campus and outside the regular school day; and
- not provided by a school district or charter school.

With the commissioner's approval, a school district or charter school may allow a student completing the Foundation High School Program to satisfy the fine arts credit requirement by participating in a community-based fine arts program, if the district certifies that the program provides instruction in the TEKS for a fine arts course. Refer to the [Fine Arts webpage](#) for further information.

Q: Can a student's participation in University Interscholastic League (UIL) One-Act Play Contest count for the one-credit fine arts high school graduation requirement?

No. Although the [UIL One-Act Play Contest](#) can serve as a beneficial experience for students and as an effective instructional strategy for teaching certain components of the Theatre TEKS, students may not receive fine arts credit for participating in UIL One-Act Play Contest or in a school theatrical production.

Q: Can courses in other academic content areas be used to meet the one-credit fine arts requirement for graduation?

Yes. The following career and technical education (CTE) and technology applications courses are approved for the one-credit fine arts graduation requirement:

- Principles and Elements of Floral Design
- Digital Art and Animation
- 3-D Modeling and Animation

Q: Can fine arts courses or activities serve as a substitute for the physical education high school graduation requirement?

Yes. A student who successfully completes a state-approved, TEKS-based fine arts course, such as Dance I-IV or Band I-IV receives a fine arts credit. A student who participates in extracurricular activities, such as drill team, marching band, or color guard, is eligible to receive a physical education substitution credit.

If a student participates in an approved substitution activity as a component of a fine arts course, the student may receive the fine arts credit and up to one physical education credit for participation in the approved activity. Please note that all substitution activities must meet the moderate to vigorous physical activity requirement. ([TAC, Chapter 74, Subchapters F and G](#)).

For students following the Minimum High School Program, Recommended High School Program, or the Distinguished Achievement Program:

It is possible for a student who receives credit for a fine arts course, such as Dance I-IV, to also receive physical education credit, such as Aerobic Activities, if all of the TEKS for both courses are taught. Districts are responsible for ensuring that the instructors are appropriately certified.

For students following the Foundation High School Program:

A student may earn the required physical education credit through completion of any TEKS-based course that meets the moderate to vigorous physical activity requirement and that is not being used to satisfy another specific graduation requirement. For example, a student who takes Dance I may use the credit to satisfy either the physical education credit or the fine arts credit, but not both ([§74.12\(b\)\(6\)\(B\)](#)).

Q: How do districts document the use of a fine arts course to meet the PE credit requirement on the foundation high school program?

Beginning with the 2015–2016 school year, special explanations codes were added to the Texas Records Exchange (TREx) system to identify allowable substitutions and courses taken as a part of the foundation high school program. Districts must use the special explanation code “7” to indicate a TEKS-based course that includes 100 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per five-day school week taken to satisfy the physical education requirement on the foundation high school program ([TAC §74.12\(b\)\(6\)\(B\)](#)).

Districts will use the PEIMS ID for the fine arts course and add the special explanation code, “7,” as directed by the local student information system (SIS) vendor.

Other related questions:

Q: Can middle school dance courses also satisfy the middle school physical education curriculum requirement?

Yes. A school district may provide instruction in a variety of arrangements and settings ([TAC §74.3\(a\)\(1\)](#)). A student who takes Dance, Middle School 1-3 may meet the fine arts course requirement as well as fulfill the physical education (PE) curriculum requirement, if the student receives instruction and demonstrates mastery in all of the TEKS for both content areas. Districts must ensure that instructors using this arrangement are appropriately certified in PE and dance. Please note that while the new TEKS for middle school dance are based on proficiency level, the physical education TEKS are grade-level specific.

Middle School Dance may be considered as part of the four-semester moderate or vigorous daily physical activity requirement ([TEC §28.002\(l\)](#)). This is a local district decision.

Q. Can private music lessons be offered to students during the school day?

Local school districts may offer private study programs and have the authority to administer these programs ([TAC §74.22](#)) in accordance with the following guidelines:

- A private study program cannot be required of students as part of the curriculum and instruction of a course or for participation in any school activity.
- The use of school facilities for private study is in accordance with local school district policy.
- The school district and students must benefit from the private study program.
- There must be adequate safeguards in place to ensure that the school district and students receive the full range of the intended benefits of the private study program.
- Although a school district, as an entity, may not charge students a fee for participation in a private study program, a private teacher may charge a fee in a manner approved by the local school board of trustees.