

Impacting State Education Policy
It Can Be Done!

"If your program is not supported in law and rule then you have nothing to stand upon at the local level."

"Legislation is decided by those who show up." – Joe Gagen

What the Law Says in Texas – all a direct result of TMEA lobbying efforts

- A. Fine Arts is a part of the Required Curriculum which all school districts must offer
- B. All fine arts instruction must be standards-based
- C. Music, art and theatre must be taught in grades K-5
- D. ISDs must offer three of the four fine arts areas (music, art, theatre, or dance) in grades 6, 7, or 8 and, in addition, every student in middle school must take one fine arts course in grades 6, 7, or 8
- E. One credit of fine arts is required for graduation in all graduation programs
- F. Arts and Humanities endorsement is now a graduation program available to all Texas high school students
- G. High schools (grades 9-12) must offer courses in two of the four fine arts areas
- H. No Pass No Play waiver for UIL Concert and Sightreading Evaluation
- I. School Districts are extremely limited in removing students from our classes for state assessment remediation

Understand the total process of establishing educational policy

- A. Know what is in law and what is in rule in your state
- B. Know when to fall on your sword on an issue and when to accept status quo
- C. Utilize the whole system to get what you want – will a state board rule accomplish your purpose rather than trying to change law?
- D. Lobby for fine arts – not just music
- E. Always be leery of unintended consequences

Local Advocacy

- A. Perhaps the most important component of fine arts survival
- B. Provide materials – printed and/or on website
- C. Inspire and train your members and parents on how to be effective lobbyists
- D. Organize presidents of arts booster organizations in your district (COPS)
- E. Sell your programs on their curricular nature – not the extracurricular components or activities

Networking with other educational associations

- A. Administrator associations, PTA and teacher associations – get them on your side
- B. Most educational groups believe in educating the whole child
- C. Get other organizations to make it a priority on their agenda
- D. Get them to support your bill by submitting a card of support at the hearing
- E. If they won't support, try to get them to stay silent on the bill or issue
- F. Maintain your own identity for times when you disagree on an issue

Networking with other state arts organizations – TCQAE, TCA, TCT, TAEA, TETA, TDEA

- A. Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education
- B. Texas Cultural Trust
- C. Other music organizations – TBA, TCDA, TODA

- D. Why arts coalitions sometimes fail – political in-fighting and disagreement on philosophy

About legislators

- A. Legislators work for you
- B. They are real people – treat them that way
- C. They wear lots of hats – parents, candidates, legislators, sometimes arts supporters, and we have to communicate in different ways
- D. Ninety-nine percent of time they want to help, understand the issue, and do the right thing
- E. Their time is short and they deal with a myriad of issues, so don't overwhelm them, but do strive to get into their heads
- F. Do not overlook their staffs as key contacts

What you should be doing now

- A. It is not too early to educate your members on candidates
- B. Invite candidates to your school to see what arts education really is so that they can recall “why” when a vote comes up
- C. Attend coffees, host forums
- D. Survey the candidates prior to the November election and distribute the results
- E. They need you now; they do not need you after the November election
- F. Identify your supporters through your members

Communication Tools

- A. Understand the most effective means of sharing public sentiment – letters, phone calls, personal contacts, and social media
- B. GoArts.org
- C. Arts Education Day at the Capitol
- D. Other capitol performances
- E. Work to get the media on your side – utilize op eds

Our Responsibility

- A. “No one has to do everything but everyone has to do something.”
- B. For our constituents, we have a unique obligation and must make an investment.
- C. Help advocates understand why it is their duty to be involved.
- D. Do not wait until they have to be told to do something – they will push back.
- E. I am their leader – where did they go?

Social media

- A. Utilize to the fullest
- B. Way to get others to sign up to support
- C. Reach out multiple times
- D. Post concerts and send out pictures
- E. Sometimes a bright student can drive the process
- F. Newspapers are still good, but social media critical

Is Anybody Listening?

- A. Dan Pink message – clear and succinct
- B. Establishing a connection with your audience will allow you to communicate successfully with them
- C. Focus on similarities and mutual goals and the curricular nature of music
- D. Advocate for the arts rather than against something else – John Benham
- E. Do your best to determine what is most important to your audience

- F. Must work from a platform of a high standard of excellence

What if I have no budget?

- A. Monitor your state's legislative website
- B. Seek a volunteer – a retired teacher
- C. Subscribe to political newsletters
- D. Rely on business and arts contacts to assist you
- E. Identify members who have personal contacts with legislators
- F. Align with other associations with whom you can partner that are most similar to you - TASA, TASB, Raise Your Hand Texas, Friends of Texas Public Schools, principals associations, Texas Cultural Trust, PTA, TAMSA, etc.
- G. Get involved in the political/election process

Hints to passing a bill in the legislature

- A. Know what you want in law or rule
- B. Select supportive bill sponsors and start early
- C. Be patient and persistent – it quite often takes more than one session
- D. Identify your allies early on
- E. Know the key players and focus your lobbying efforts on them initially
- F. Respect the power of the chairs
- G. If your bill fails, try to amend to another
- H. It takes 48 steps for a bill to become law

Further hints for success

- A. Fine tune your message that what you are seeking is important for kids
- B. Legislators may know the process but know little about arts education – be ready to clearly articulate
- C. Don't assume all is good – Everyone wants to talk about accountability and assessment, but no one is going to talk about the arts without encouragement and education
- D. Line up your votes in advance of the hearing and/or vote
- E. Do not try to develop a relationship with your legislator the night before a key vote

Effective Testimony

- A. Be brief but make it clear what you want
- B. Try not to read
- C. Limit the number of people testifying saying the same thing
- D. Try to anticipate questions, but do not be afraid to say “I don't know but I will get back to you.”
- E. Provide written copy and make sure it includes the bill number.
- F. Tell a story but also have an arsenal of data available to back up your claims
- G. Have someone testify whose legislator sits on the committee and give them advance notice so they can *claim* the testifier – lots of political posturing
- H. Be polite

The role of a governmental relations consultant

- A. An added benefit because of the doors he or she may open
- B. Hired primarily for information and advice – not to do all the work
- C. Helps you understand the process
- D. If possible find a consultant who is passionate about music and fine arts
- E. Fees are more reasonable if a person believes in arts education
- F. Gives contributions to candidates

G. TMEA does not endorse political candidates nor does it have a political action committee

Coda

- It's all about relationships – and there are no better relationships than those built by constituents.
- Decide what you want and get started now
- If your program is not supported in state law and rule you have nothing to stand upon
- We still have work to do – CTE and physical activity challenges
- Legislators do not know for sure how big or large arts education organizations are, and they do not want to find out
- You CAN do it – think positive!

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This handout available on Midwest website; PowerPoint available at www.tmea.org/midwest2018

Business Leaders Champion Fine Arts Education to State Board of Education

http://www.tmea.org/assets/pdf/southwestern_musician/Jan2009_BusinessLeadersChampionFineArts.pdf

Legislative Candidate Survey Reveals They Support Fine Arts

https://www.tmea.org/assets/pdf/southwestern_musician/StateCandidateSupportFAed-Nov2018.pdf

Is Anybody Listening: Being An Effective Advocate

http://www.tmea.org/assets/pdf/southwestern_musician/May2009_IsAnybodyListening.pdf

Do You Know the Candidates? Learning More about the Candidates and Getting Your Voice Heard

http://www.tmea.org/assets/pdf/southwestern_musician/Oct2008_DoYouKnowtheCandidates.pdf

The Time Is Now

https://www.tmea.org/assets/pdf/southwestern_musician/TheTimeIsNow-Oct-2018.pdf