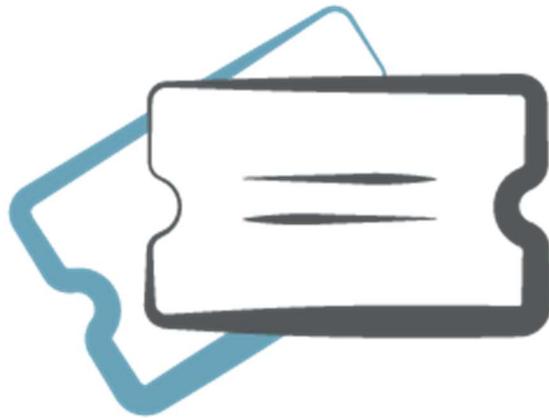


# Arts Experiences: All Fine Arts Disciplines



## HISD Fine Arts Operational Framework



## Table of Contents

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Overview of Arts Experiences	220
Aspects of a Quality Arts Experience	221
Effective Strategies for Supporting Arts Experiences	222
Arts Experiences: Partnership and Collaboration	223
Resources and References	224

**“Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere.”**

**–Albert Einstein**

## Overview of Arts Experiences

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Arts experiences refer to the opportunities where students witness art in action or on display. These experiences often stand alone in the form of an in-school performance or a field trip to a live performance or visual arts exhibition, but they also are necessary components of arts instruction and arts integrated lessons. Regular exposure to a broad range of arts experiences stretches students' minds and is critical to unlocking the depth of possibilities provided by the fine arts. Arts experiences can include but are not limited to:

- Events on or off campus
- Events featuring student or professional artists
- Live or documented experiences (Documented experience include photos and recordings)
- Events in or out of school hours

In addition to having access to performances and showcases by HISD students and teachers, the district is fortunate to be situated within Houston's rich arts community, which provides first-hand, high-quality performing and visual arts experiences right here in the metropolitan area. Bringing these artists and our students together on HISD campuses or in places like the Theater and Museum Districts provide countless learning opportunities and access to experiences that will broaden students' understanding for the cultural tapestry of this region and beyond.

Providing high-quality arts experiences to all students in each of the four fine arts disciplines is an important element of an Arts-Rich Education because they can challenge and inspire students in wide variety of ways. Encountering high-quality art can unlock new paths of creative thought, open doors to examine topics through a new lens, and inspire a student to achieve at a higher level of ability.

Robust access to arts experiences through their school community is particularly critical for students and their families that are at an economic disadvantage and may not otherwise have the means to pay for or travel to experience in these opportunities. Art experiences at school festivals and community events provide occasions to bring a school community together and increase neighborhood engagement.

## Aspects of a Quality Arts Experience

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Students will benefit the most from a diverse set of Arts Experiences that are well chosen to complement each other or draw connections that expand on other learning objectives. A campus inventory of experience by grade level will identify what is available and what holes exist. That inventory should include identifying each experience along these characteristic traits:

- Fine arts discipline: Dance, music, theatre, or visual arts
- Cultural Representation: Artists who represent the student population and those that expand their awareness of other cultural traditions
- Location: On-campus or field lesson
- Artistic Level: Student or professional artists
- Mode: Live (first-hand) or documented (films or photos)
- When: During school hours or events after school
- Audience: Students only or students and the broader community

Providing a range of opportunities at every grade will ensure that students will receive the full benefit from the experiences.

Many aspects of a quality Arts Experience are beyond the control of campus leaders because the performances and exhibitions are provided by outside artists, so care must be given to selecting each artist or arts organization. Many campus leaders may not have the fine arts expertise to evaluate artistic merit, so it is highly recommended to work with fine arts teachers and district administrators with that expertise to assist. Those individuals will know which organizations can meet their needs, have high artistic standards, know how to work with students in the educational setting, are interested in coordinating with teachers before and after the experience to deepen the impact, make compelling connections to the curriculum, and bring professionalism to the experience.

A high-quality experience is also a result of the logistical support the artists receive from the campus so care should be given to the points raised in the “Effective Strategies for Supporting Arts Experiences” section.

## Effective Strategies for Supporting Arts Experiences

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Logistical support from administrators, teachers, and other staff is critical to the successful implementation of arts experiences. The support needed varies depending on the specific event, so it is important for campus leaders to identify an individual that has decision-making authority and can coordinate all the arts experiences to develop the expertise needed for different types of events. Ideally, this coordinator is a staff member and does not teach classes so that they can work on the logistics during the day without taking away directly working with the students. The role of that person may vary between campuses, but examples of success include Assistant Principals, Instructional and Magnet Coordinators, and Wrap Around Service Specialists.

Depending the type of event, here is a list of the types of logistical concerns that arise:

- Buses and transportation (including parking during the event)
- Loading and unloading equipment (navigating arrival and dismissal congestion)
- Sharing of curricular connections and follow up activities
- Parent communication and permission (including media releases)
- Teacher communication (to provide adequate planning and alignment with curriculum)
- Adjustments to the regular schedule, including addressing the possible need for teacher coverage
- Access to appropriate spaces with necessary equipment and space for the students and artists
- Access to sound systems and other equipment and supplies requested
- Coordination with testing schedules to avoid scheduling events on days that guests are not allowed on campus
- Billing (including vendor questions)
- Cancellation policies
- General communication

The HISD Fine Arts Department can help support with the planning and execution of these partnerships. Each discipline-specific curriculum specialist can help with events within their area and the Arts Integration Specialist works broadly with the Houston arts community and can assist with any partnership across all disciplines.

## Arts Experiences: Partnership and Collaboration

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Arts Experiences are supported through collaboration with other schools or arts organizations. Developing relationships through the fine arts creates opportunities to expand the campus community and bring guests into the students' lives in order to make them feel seen and admired.

### Inter-Campus Partnerships

Creating opportunities for schools to share their talents with others provides performance experience and builds confidence for student artists, allows students to see their peers achieving at a high level, and can highlight programs that students can strive to participate in at higher grade levels (through feeder campuses or magnet programs).

### Arts Organization Partnerships

Partnerships with organizations expand the diversity of fine arts offerings on a campus. HISD is fortunate to be located within one of the nation's cultural centers, where artists across genres in all four fine arts disciplines are available to engage and enrich the HISD community. The HISD Fine Arts Department is committed to expanding access to these partnerships with all HISD campuses and is working collectively with the arts community to 1) identify where these partnerships currently take place, 2) lower the barriers that prevent some campuses from reaping their benefits, and 3) ensure that we create feedback channels to create better alignment between the programming and the needs of our students. Historically, these programs may have been seen through the narrow lens a vendor relationship, but the district will benefit by developing true relationships with these arts organizations and working together with them in a mutually beneficial manner. Through that effort, we hope to increase equitable access to these programs on all campuses and raise the overall quality of the programs being offered.

## Resources and References

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AFA. ([www.afatexas.org/educators](http://www.afatexas.org/educators))

Alley Theatre. ([www.alleytheatre.org/education](http://www.alleytheatre.org/education))

Aperio, Music of the Americas. ([www.aperioamericas.org/about](http://www.aperioamericas.org/about))

Ars Lyrica. ([www.arslyricahouston.org/home](http://www.arslyricahouston.org/home))

Arts Connect Houston. ([www.artconnecthouston.org](http://www.artconnecthouston.org))

Art League Houston. ([www.artleaguehouston.org/community](http://www.artleaguehouston.org/community))

Arte Publico Press. (<https://artepublicopress.com>)

Bowen, D. H., Greene, J. P., & Kisida, B. (2014). *Learning to think critically: A visual art experiment. Educational Researcher*, 43(1), 37–44.

City Art Works. ([www.cityartworks.org/art-after-school](http://www.cityartworks.org/art-after-school))

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. (<https://camh.org/visit/group-visits>)

Da Camera of Houston. ([www.dacamera.com/learn/educational-programs/da-camera-music-encounters](http://www.dacamera.com/learn/educational-programs/da-camera-music-encounters))

The Ensemble Theatre. ([www.ensemblehouston.com/programs/programs.html](http://www.ensemblehouston.com/programs/programs.html))

Express Children's Theatre. (<http://expresstheatre.com/>)

FotoFest Inc. ([www.literacythroughphotography.org/](http://www.literacythroughphotography.org/))

The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. ([www.thehobbycenter.org/index.php?q=node/95](http://www.thehobbycenter.org/index.php?q=node/95))

Hope Stone, Inc. ([www.hopestoneinc.org](http://www.hopestoneinc.org))

Houston Ballet. ([www.houstonballet.org/about/ece](http://www.houstonballet.org/about/ece))

Houston Center for Photography. (<https://hcponline.org>)

Houston Chamber Choir. (<https://houstonchamberchoir.org/rise-up-singing>)

Houston Children's Chorus. ([www.artconnecthouston.org](http://www.artconnecthouston.org))

Houston Grand Opera. ([www.houstongrandopera.org/community-programs](http://www.houstongrandopera.org/community-programs))

Houston Symphony. ([www.houstonsymphony.org/community/education](http://www.houstonsymphony.org/community/education))

Houston Youth Symphony. ([www.houstonyouthsymphony.com/comm/melodyPgm.php](http://www.houstonyouthsymphony.com/comm/melodyPgm.php))

Main Street Theater. ([www.mainstreettheater.com/youththeater/schoolgroups.html](http://www.mainstreettheater.com/youththeater/schoolgroups.html))

MECA. ([www.meca-houston.org/in-school--outreach-programs.html](http://www.meca-houston.org/in-school--outreach-programs.html))

Mercury. ([www.mercuryhouston.org/life-long-learning](http://www.mercuryhouston.org/life-long-learning))

METdance. ([www.metdance.org/educational-outreach](http://www.metdance.org/educational-outreach))

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. ([www.mfah.org/programs/educators-school-groups](http://www.mfah.org/programs/educators-school-groups))

Musiq. (<http://musiqahouston.org/education-programs/book-your-school>)

Nameless Sound. ([www.namelesssound.org/workshops.html](http://www.namelesssound.org/workshops.html))

Prelude Music Foundation. (<https://preludemusicfoundation.org/Program.html>)

Society for the Performing Arts. ([www.spahouston.org/education-community](http://www.spahouston.org/education-community))

Take the Stage. ([www.gordoneducation.org/tv-project-take-the-stage](http://www.gordoneducation.org/tv-project-take-the-stage))

Texan French Alliance for the Arts. (<http://texanfrenchalliance.org/open-the-door>)

Theatre Under the Stars. ([www.tuts.com](http://www.tuts.com))

Writers in the Schools. (<http://witshouston.org>)

Young Audiences of Houston. ([www.yahouston.org](http://www.yahouston.org))