

# ARTS CONNECT HOUSTON

**The arts are the key to a well-rounded, transformative education.**

Arts Connect Houston believes that the arts **ARE** education. Rather than approaching the arts as ancillary or supplemental to conventionally foundational coursework, Arts Connect fights for a future where all Houston ISD students, regardless of background, have access to an arts-rich education. We are a collective impact organization bringing together stakeholders from Houston ISD, over 80 partner organizations, funders, and the Houston community.

"The arts, in general, create an outlet – an outlet for feelings, ideas and creativity. But more than that, there's 21st century skills embedded in the arts... Every child should be face to face with an arts teacher on every level – from elementary to high school."

**Lauren Anderson**

**Ballerina with Houston Ballet from 1983 to 2006;  
Associate Director, Education & Community  
Engagement, Houston Ballet; Arts Connect Board  
Member**

Despite the well-researched benefits of arts education and gains in recent years, Houston continues to struggle with inequities in arts access. It's time to change that.

## Academics

Houston is driving arts-education research. The Texas Cultural Trust reports that students who complete arts courses have **15% higher pass rates on standardized tests**. In 2019, a randomized control trial was conducted by Rice University within Houston ISD showed elementary school students who received fine arts instruction saw **statistically significant gains in STAAR writing scores**. These gains were **largest for students on free and reduced lunch programs**. Another study in Minnesota showed that arts integration practices **increased math and reading proficiency**.



## College and Career Readiness

The arts prepare students for life beyond Houston ISD. **71% of students in schools with high levels of fine arts enrolled in college**, compared to only 48% of students in schools with low or no arts. Once enrolled, **3 times as many students from arts-rich schools completed their degree**. In fact, students who complete more arts courses in Texas are **22% more likely to attend college**.



## Social Emotional Learning

As Houston ISD prioritizes Social Emotional Learning (SEL) investment post-pandemic, it is important to understand how the arts directly improve SEL outcomes. Students who participate in the arts show **increased engagement** in school, higher levels of **compassion, adaptability**, greater **empathy**, improved **perspective taking**, and stronger **collaboration** skills.



## Mental Health

Arts participation can help educators **strengthen their self-efficacy, supporting positive personal transformations**. Music instruction has been shown to **improve both self-esteem and how students perceive themselves**. The American Art Therapy Association also notes that artistic expression may **decrease anxiety, feelings of anger, and depression**.



## Texans Agree: The Arts Matter

**84%** of voters agree that the arts are an important part of a student's education.  
**73%** of voters favor increased state funding for arts education.  
**89%** of parents believe art and music are just as important as athletics.  
**95%** of parents believe the arts should be taught in Texas.

*Did you know?*

High Schoolers taking arts heavy course loads have **3.5% higher attendance rates...** meaning more money for their schools!

## Exploring Inequities in Arts Access

### Low Income Students Disproportionately Have Less Arts Access

Historically, access to the arts in school has been linked to factors such as race and socioeconomic status. Low-income students have less access and fewer artistic opportunities than middle- and high-income students, even though gains from access are the most pronounced for these students.

### 15 Houston ISD Elementary Schools Do Not Have a Certified Fine Arts Teacher.

- Moreno ES
- Frost ES
- Henderson, J.P. ES
- Franklin ES
- Shadydale ES
- Energized ES
- Hobby ES
- Law ES
- Tijerina ES
- Gregg ES
- Davila ES
- Stevens ES
- Highland Heights ES
- Lockhart ES
- Field ES
- Bell ES

### Houston is actively collecting data to combat arts education inequities

Arts Connect operates a state-of-the-art mapping tool called

**artlook**

You can use this tool to visually see what the arts look like within your district. You can also share it with principals at those schools and encourage them to complete their yearly survey so we can continue to effectively monitor arts access.

# ARTS CONNECT HOUSTON

## Our Leadership

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## Our Partners

### District

Houston ISD

### State and National Partners

Arts Education Partnership  
Ingenuity, Inc.  
The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts  
MINDPOP  
Texas Cultural Trust  
Texans for the Arts

### City of Houston

Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs  
Mayor's Office of Education

### Funders

Houston Endowment  
National Endowment for the Arts  
The Powell Foundation  
Texas Women for the Arts at Texas Cultural Trust

## Arts and Culture Partners

Ad Deum Dance Company  
AFA  
A.I.R. Project  
Alley Theatre  
Alta Arts  
Aperio, Music of the Americas  
Apollo Chamber Players  
Ars Lyrica  
Art League Houston  
Arte Público Press  
ARTreach  
Asia Society Texas Center  
Aurora Picture Show  
Bay Area Houston Ballet & Theatre  
Campbell Learning Center  
Carya String Quartet  
Community Artists' Collective  
Community Music Center of Houston  
Contemporary Arts Museum Houston  
Culture Arts Initiative, Inc.  
Da Camera of Houston  
Dance the Dream  
Diversity in the Arts and Entertainment  
Edison Arts Foundation  
EnActe Arts Inc.  
The Ensemble Theatre  
Exalted Arts  
Express Children's Theatre  
Fashion Museum of Texas  
FotoFest Inc.  
Foundation for Modern Music  
Frame Dance Productions  
Friends of Africa  
Hearts In Motion  
Heritage Society  
HITS Theatre  
The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts  
Hope Stone

Houston Ballet  
Houston Boy Choir  
Houston Center for Photography  
Houston Chamber Choir  
Houston Children's Chorus  
Houston Contemporary Dance Company  
Houston Grand Opera  
Houston Healthy Hip Hop  
Houston Masterworks Chorus  
Houston METdance  
Houston School of Arts and Design  
Houston Symphony  
Houston Viola Society  
Houston Youth Symphony  
Main Street Theater  
MECA  
Mercury Chamber Orchestra  
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston  
Musiqua  
Nameless Sound  
Open Dance Project  
Opera in the Heights  
Orange Show Center for Visionary Arts  
Partnerschools  
Prelude Music Foundation  
The Printing Museum  
Rising Arts Academy of Dance & Performing Arts  
Rothko Chapel  
Silabam Houston  
Social Movement Contemporary Dance  
Society for the Performing Arts  
Take the Stage  
Texan French Alliance for the Arts  
Theatre Under The Stars  
UNICEF USA  
Urban Souls Dance Company  
WindSync  
Workshop Houston  
Writers in the Schools

## SOURCES

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For more information, contact Deborah Lugo, Executive Director, at [deborah@artsconnecthouston.org](mailto:deborah@artsconnecthouston.org).