

Advocating for Arts Education

Parental Toolkit

As a parent, your number one priority is ensuring your child has access to the strongest educational opportunities possible. So there is no one better to advocate for your student's education, particularly the benefits of an arts-rich education, than YOU.

As an arts-education parent advocate, there are limitless ways for you to have an impact and make sure that every student in Houston has access to an arts-rich education. Whether you decide to participate at the school level through parent groups or meeting with administrative staff, or you decide to get involved in school board elections and other "big picture" initiatives, there is no wrong way to advocate for your child.

The only mistake you could possibly make when advocating for your child is simply not advocating at all! Below, we highlight some resources, data, and tips for ensuring your voice has maximum impact in Houston.

"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

Getting Started: The Basics

Solutions? No Problem

People are more likely to respond positively when given solutions. Rather than simply creating a list of issues at your child's campus, think about how they could be solved. Meeting decisionmakers halfway shows just how invested you are in finding a solution, and takes some of the pressure off of them to have all the answers.

Your Child Should Take Center Stage

It is always best to find ways to personalize your advocacy. When advocating for the arts at your school, try to incorporate stories about what the arts mean to your child. Narratives make it easier to talk about complex issues, and help decisionmakers better understand how expanded arts access benefits students.

Houston Loves Data

There is no better way to advocate for the benefits of an arts-rich education than with cold hard facts. Tons of incredible organizations like [Arts Connect Houston](#) and the [Texas Cultural Trust](#) provide data-driven resources that you can use to best position your advocacy asks!

Houston is also one of the nation's leading cities in collecting arts education data through the [artlook](#)® platform.

Arts Education: a Lever for Student Learning and Wellbeing

2x

Greater Improvement
in Math Proficiency

15%

Higher Pass Rate on
Standardized Tests

3.3%

Higher
Attendance Rate

22%

More Likely to
Attend College

Data from: State of the Arts 2021, Texas Cultural Trust

Support Your School

- **Get Involved.** Join parental organizations on your child's campus that benefit the arts, like a booster club. Spending time with other parents who are passionate about the arts and arts education can lead to a greater understanding what your child's campus needs, and how the arts can support those needs!
- **Attend events on campus.** Attending a student production or event at a school shows campus and district administrators and decision makers that the arts are valued and an important part of a campus ecosystem.
- **Get chatty.** When you choose to strike up a conversation with a principal, administrator, or teacher, be sure to mention how the arts impact both you and your child. This is a great time to incorporate data from the [artlook®](#) map!
- **Join the PTA.** Taking the leap and becoming a part of your school's PTA ensures that your voice, and the needs of arts education, are heard as funds are allocated at your child's campus.
- **Befriend your Child's Teachers.** Teachers can be incredible allies and advocates for their students. Communicate with them often about how the arts are positioned on campus so both you, and they, are best prepared to tackle any issues that might arise!

Support Houston ISD

- **Vote.** HISD Board of Education trustees serve staggered, four-year terms. This means that school board elections happen often! As the policy-making arm of HISD, make sure to research who is up for election in your district...and of course vote! See if your registered to vote [here](#).
- **Get to know your school board representative.** The HISD Board of Education plays a huge role in determining the future of arts education in Houston. Learn which trustee represents you, where they stand on issues surrounding the arts, and push them to expand access.
- **Attend school board meetings.** Giving a face to your advocacy is powerful. Getting in front of trustees and the Houston community to advocate for expanded arts access is one of the most effective ways of bringing about meaningful change.
- **Spread the love.** When you see an HISD administrator, school board member, principal, or other Houston decision makers uplift the arts, make sure to tell them in-person, by writing a letter, or if it's on social media, like and repost it!

91%

of Americans believe that the arts are vital to providing a well-rounded education

Americans for the Arts

Additional Resources

[Arts Connect Houston](#)

[Texas Cultural Trust](#)

[Texas Education Association-Fine Arts](#)

[Americans for the Arts](#)

[Arts ARE Education](#)

[Arts Education Partnership](#)

[Arts Ed Search](#)