

MEMORANDUM

October 17, 2017

TO: Jorge Arredondo
Area Superintendent, East Region

FROM: Carla Stevens
Assistant Superintendent, Research and Accountability

SUBJECT: **DISTRICT III – EAST AREA FINE ARTS INITIATIVE, 2016–2017**

CONTACT: Carla Stevens, (713) 556-6700

Attached is the 2016–2017 evaluation of the District III – East Area Fine Arts Initiative. The initiative emphasizes a high-quality fine arts education by expanding students' access to arts partnerships and teacher professional development in East Region neighborhood schools. The program builds on best practices in fine arts to support student engagement and academic success, through student participation in off-campus and in-school arts-related activities and events.

Key findings include:

- A total of 10,104 students had access to the District III – East Area Fine Arts Initiative during the 2016–2017 academic year.
- The first year of the initiative captured baseline needs assessment data from a sample of fine arts teachers in the east area. In general, teachers expressed the need for more professional development, more support, collaboration, and funding for fine arts at their schools.
- Throughout the year, District III – East Area students were exposed to fine arts-related activities and events by organizations, such as the Houston Grand Opera, Houston Symphony, and the Houston Ballet. Students were encouraged to participate in fine arts competitions and perform at district-level events. The culminating event, "A Feast of Art," allowed students to demonstrate their fine arts skills in music, dance, and artistic presentations.
- Staff who helped to plan the initiative expressed benefits of collaborating across east area schools. These benefits were evident in students' work at the fine arts showcase event.

Further distribution of this report is at your discretion. Should you have any questions, please contact me at 713-556-6700.

 CJS

Attachment

cc: Grenita Lathan
Sabrina Nguyen



RESEARCH

Educational Program Report

**DISTRICT III – EAST AREA FINE
ARTS INITIATIVE, 2016–2017**

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EVALUATION REPORT

BUREAU OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

District III - East Area Fine Arts Initiative: Building Capacity for Quality Fine Arts in Schools, 2016–17

Prepared by Venita R. Holmes, Dr.P.H.

Abstract

To support a high-quality fine arts education, the District III - East Area Fine Arts Initiative expanded students' access to teaching and learning through participation in off-campus and in-school arts-related activities and events. The initiative will serve as a blueprint for gradual expansion of the program to the Milby feeder pattern in 2017–2018, and to the Austin feeder pattern in subsequent years. The initiative supported fine arts teachers through professional development and networking opportunities, while building camaraderie with partners across the community. The program builds on best practices in fine arts to support student engagement and academic success, with the intent of keeping students in neighborhood schools by offering more arts programs in the east region. The first year of the initiative captured baseline needs assessment data from a sample of 19 fine arts teachers, who mostly indicated their need for more professional development, support, collaboration, and funding for fine arts at their schools. Efforts to address identified needs resulted in school-based residency programs through the Houston Symphony as well as visits to the Houston Grand Opera and Houston Ballet. The school year culminated with "A Feast of Art," which allowed students to demonstrate their skills and talents learned over the year.

Introduction

Arts participation of students in HISD is being supported through the District III - East Area Fine Arts Initiative (**Figures 1 and 2**). Research has reported the benefits of arts participation toward improving academic and non-academic outcomes for children and youth in schools. Academic benefits include achievement in reading, math, and language (Deasy, 2002; Hattie, 2009), improvements in concentration, motivation to learn (Shernoff & Vandell, 2007), reasoning abilities,

problem solving skills (Catterall, 2007), and educational aspirations (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). Non-academic benefits of arts participation for students have been



Figure 1: "A Feast of Art" Fine Arts Showcase, May 2017



Figure 2: Park Place first-grade students present "Spring Butterfly"

".... As the trustee for District III, I saw the need for a fine arts program that progressively develops our students' artistic abilities from elementary school to middle school and finally to high school.... continuity of instruction is critical to help our students reach their fullest potential."
(Manual Rodriguez, 2017).

Table 1: Chavez Feeder Pattern Fine Arts Programs at Baseline, 2016–2017

	Dance	Music	Theatre	Visual Arts	Band	Orchestra
Bellfort ECC						
Bonner ES				√		
Chavez HS	√	√	√	√	√	√
Lewis ES	√	√		√		
Ortiz MS	√	√	√	√	√	√
Park Place ES				√		
Patterson ES			√	√		
Rucker ES				√		
Stevenson MS	√	√		√	√	

associated with enhanced self-worth (Blomfield & Barber, 2011), empathy (Hunter, 2005), well-being, healthy social relationships (Rose-Krasnor et al., 2006), leadership skills (Hancock, Dyk, & Jones, 2012), as well as reduced risky behavior (Miller et al., 1998). The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA, 2012) reports that “At-risk students who have access to the arts tend to have better academic results, better workforce opportunities, and more civic engagement” (p. 1). Students not offered education in the arts lose an opportunity to experience an array of cognitive, social, and emotional dispositions that the arts may foster (Gadsden, 2008; Vandell, Pierce, & Karsh, 2011; Li & Vandell, 2013)

Background

The District III - East Area Fine Arts Initiative is an effort by schools in east Houston (Table 1) to collaborate in a vertical alignment at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The goals of the program are presented in Table 2. These goals were established to provide students fine arts programs of (1) their choice, (2) with continuity, and (3) in their neighborhood schools. Traditionally, students residing in the east area transitioning from one school to another, faced the difficult decision of attending schools outside of their neighborhoods if they wanted to continue developing their fine arts skills of interest.

The District III - East Area Fine Arts Initiative was conceptualized during the 2016–2017 academic year, with plans to extend it to the Milby feeder pattern in 2017–2018, and to the

Table 2: District III - East Region Fine Arts Initiative Goals, 2016–2017 through 2019–2020

Goal 1. Expand student access to fine arts in-school and out-of-school programming, development activities, and performance opportunities.
Goal 2. Support fine arts teachers in their content and discipline area through professional development and fine arts educator networking opportunities.
Goal 3. Enhance collaboration, community, and camaraderie among fine arts teachers and sponsors in the Chavez feeder pattern to build capacity in students, teachers, and schools.



Figure 3: Ortiz MS band students march at community parade

Austin feeder pattern in subsequent years. A five-year expansion of the arts in District III is designed to enhance students’ access to arts education, while building inventory at each of the targeted schools in the area. The fine arts program at participating schools at baseline (2016–2017) can be found in Table 1.

To launch the initiative, meetings were held in early summer 2016 with HISD District III Trustee, Manual Rodriquez, central office administrators, and school principals in the east area to gather information about fine arts infrastructure and other related campus needs. Teachers and school administrators were encouraged to develop partnerships and to collaborate with community arts organizations to support the program’s goals.

Throughout the school year, ideas to develop new performance opportunities for students at schools as well as at community events were explored. Schools shared resources, including splitting teacher salaries, facilities, musical instruments, and costumes. These strategies would help to expose students to high-quality arts programming while strengthening their skills to perform at higher levels (Figures 3 and 4). To that end, this research brief addressed the following questions:

Research Questions:

1. What was the demographic profile of students in the District III - East Area Fine Arts Initiative?
2. What were the perceptions of District III - East Area fine arts teachers regarding their fine arts opportunities, strengths, and needs prior to the initiative?
3. What activities and events were held in the District III - East Area Fine Arts Initiative during the 2016–2017 academic year?



Figure 4: Stevenson students perform at Board auditorian naming



Figure 5: Patterson ES students’ art on display

4. What was the impact of the Fine Arts Initiative on inspiring and motivating collaboration among participating schools?

Review of the Literature

School has been found to be a key environment where students thrive and develop skills through participation in a wide range of activities, including the arts (Farb & Matjasko, 2005; Farb & Matjasko, 2012). Intellectual development through the arts has been linked to Gardner’s (1983, 1999 & 2008) multiple intelligence theory (MI). Gardner proposes the existence of eight autonomous intelligences: (a) linguistic, (b) logical, (c) musical, (d) spatial, (e) bodily kinesthetic, (f) interpersonal, (g) intrapersonal, and (h) naturalistic (National Research Council, 2000). Four of the eight intelligences rely on connections to the arts to develop capacity in those areas (Gardner, 2008). As individuals apply a single intelligence, they move on a continuum from novice to expert (Gardner, 1983). Thus, students who continue to experience, persist, and practice art are building their capacity to learn at high levels of expertise.

There have been several research studies that examined the link between exposure to the arts and intellectual development. A correlational, retrospective study conducted by Doyle (2013) found that quality fine arts instruction was a viable means to student achievement. This finding was evident, after controlling for socioeconomic status, school size, special education status, and English language-leamer status. However, the study did not control for quality fine arts, the number of arts disciplines offered, and the numbers of certified arts teachers.

Omstein & Hunkins (2009) demonstrated that the traditional school setting can play a viable role toward strengthening students’ intellectual capacity, not only through established reading and mathematics programs, but also through quality arts education programs. For example, see Figure 5.

Methods

A qualitative study design incorporated descriptive measures of the targeted student population. In addition, data related to activities, events, and teacher and administrators’ perceptions of the District III - East Area Fine Arts Initiative during the 2016–2017 academic year were presented. These data will be used to identify trends in program development and to determine whether the program met its goals over the five-year program implementation period.

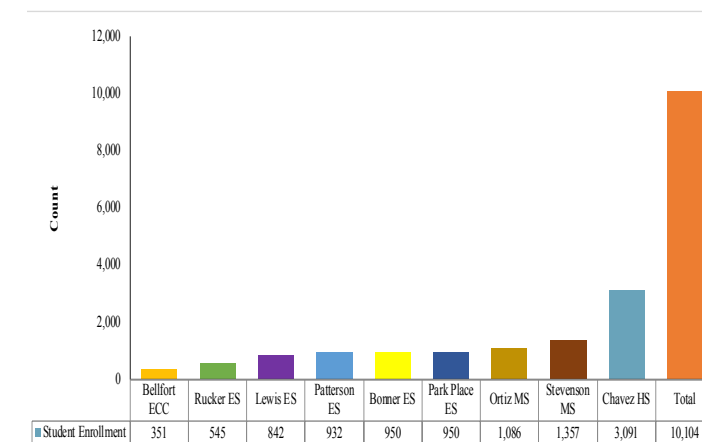


Figure 6: Student enrollment at District III-East Region Fine Arts Initiative schools

Data Collection

Student enrollment and demographic characteristics were extracted from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) for the 2016–2017 academic year. A website was developed on the HISD HUB to gather meeting notes and share information about events. Teacher survey data were collected in fall 2016 via SurveyMonkey as part of a needs assessment at baseline. A total of 19 teachers in Chavez feeder schools participated in the survey. Data were gathered from the coordinator describing activities conducted over the 2016–2017 academic year. A purposive post-survey was administered to fine arts teachers and administrators in spring 2017 to assess the impact of the initiative on motivating and inspiring collaboration among participating schools. There were 20 respondents to the post-survey.

Results

What was the demographic profile of students in the District III - East Area Fine Arts Initiative?

A profile of students who had access to the District III - East Area Fine Arts Initiative, based on school enrollment during the 2016–2017 academic year, is depicted in Figure 6. A total of 10,104 students attended targeted schools. Chavez High School had the highest enrollment (n = 3,091), followed by Stevenson Middle School (n = 1,357), and Ortiz Middle School (n = 1,086). Bonner and Park Place had the highest enrollment among the five elementary schools (n = 950 for both schools).

Demographic characteristics of students at targeted schools can be found in Table 3, Appendix A. The majority of students in the targeted schools were economically disadvantaged (between 77% and 94%) as well as at risk of dropping out of school (between 58% and 90%). Further, at least 50% of the students at Bonner, Lewis, Park Place, Patterson, Bellfort, and Rucker were limited English proficient (LEP). The highest percentage of gifted/talented students at the elementary-school level was at Park Place (21%), and at the middle-school level was at Stevenson Middle School (27%). At the high-school level, Chavez had 11% of the students identified as gifted/talented. Further, the highest percentage of students identified as special education were enrolled at Ortiz Middle School (12%), followed by Rucker Elementary School (9%), and Chavez High School (8%).

What were the perceptions of District III - East Area fine arts teachers regarding their fine arts opportunities, strengths, and needs prior to the initiative?

During the initial phases of program development, fine arts teachers in Chavez feeder schools were surveyed to gather information about fine arts opportunities, strengths, and needs. The most prevalent responses are summarized below.

Teachers' perceptions of fine arts opportunities

Teachers indicated having a variety of showcase opportunities for students that included national competitions as well as district and school-level music and art performances. Examples of these opportunities were Rodeo Art, HISD Holiday card contest, HISD District Art Show, Adopt a Beach, Treasures of the Texas Coast Art competition, Dental Health poster contest, Art Auction, Christmas concert, and Black History Month. Students also participated in class projects, displayed art in school hallways, while school bands performed at competitive sports and community events.

Fine arts teachers who responded to the survey also indicated their perceptions of program strengths. The strengths included administrative support, enthusiastic students, teachers who are industry professionals, the ability to see all students which allowed them to build on material covered in the previous course rotation, as well as a flexible curriculum.

Teachers in the targeted schools were also surveyed about their fine arts needs. The most prevalent issues are reflected in the word cloud shown in **Figure 7**. The larger the font, the more frequent the response. In general, teachers expressed the need for more professional development, collaboration, access, support (e.g., administrative, equipment), and funding for fine arts.

Teachers' perceptions of future goals for fine arts

Teacher survey respondents articulated future goals for the fine arts program. In general, teachers noted interests to:

- expose students to a wide range of activities that enhance their creativity and build on their knowledge and skills in the arts;
- help students develop a love and appreciation for the arts;
- provide students with a quality education;
- provide students with a solid foundation in the arts;
- help students develop their talents;
- help students become lifelong learners and consumers of the arts;



Figure 7: District III - East Area teachers' perceptions of fine arts needs, fall 2016

- create students who are critical thinkers, prepared for the 21st century; and
- educate students about careers in the arts.

What activities and events were held in the District III - East Area Fine Arts Initiative during the 2016–2017 academic year?

Students in District III - East Area schools were exposed to a variety of activities and events during the 2016–2017 academic year that are depicted as three phases of accomplishments (**Figure 8**).

Phase 1 (Tables 4a and 4b) exposed students to quality fine arts through partners, such as the Houston Symphony and the Houston Ballet through residency programs. Residency



Figure 8: Three phases of fine arts accomplishments, 2016–2017

Table 4a: Phase I "Exposure" Accomplishments, 2016–2017		
2016 – 2017 Houston Symphony Residency Program at Patterson	2016 – 2017 Houston Symphony Residency Program at Ortiz	2016 – 2017 Residency Program at Chavez
2 pre-concert classroom visits	4 ensemble workshops for orchestra students	4 sectionals with a pair of Community-Embedded Musicians
In-school chamber concert	Chamber Music Performance for band, orchestra, and choir students	2 clinics/workshops with Musical Ambassador & Assistant Conductor, Carlos Boter
1 post-concert classroom visit	Clinic with Musical Ambassador & Assistant Conductor for orchestra students	2 Chamber Music performances
2nd-grade students attended Houston Symphony Lower Elementary concert at Jones Hall	Houston Symphony classical subscription concert attendance	2 concert attendance
2nd-grade students/families attended Houston Symphony		
Clinic/workshop with Guest Conductor Robert Ranz to write poetry based on Saint-Saenz "The Carnival of the Animals"		
Students completed artwork to accompany their poetry, displayed at the hall for a weekend		
26 poems selected and read by an actor from the Alley Theater during the Family Concert at Jones Hall		

Table 4b: Phase I - "Exposure" Accomplishments, 2016–2017		
Arts Partner	Activity	Schools
Houston Grand Opera – Opera to Go (In-house Performances)	The Princess and the Pea	Bonner, Lewis, Park Place, Patterson, Rucker, Ortiz, Stevenson, Bellfort
	The Barber of Seville A bilingual (English/Spanish) adaptation	Bonner, Lewis, Park Place, Patterson, Rucker
Houston Symphony	Field Trip to the Students Concert Series	Bonner, Lewis, Park Place, Patterson, Rucker, Ortiz, Stevenson, Chavez



Figure 9: Chavez guitar ensemble performance, spring 2017

programs are, typically, structured around lessons, instrument demonstrations, and performances using musicians and teaching artists who are embedded within communities (**Figure 9**). Further, well-known plays and operas were performed in targeted east area schools by the Houston Grand Opera, such as "The Princess and the Pea" and "The Barber of Seville."

Phase 2 supported active learning through community embedded musicians and teaching artists to build on students' learning art forms, such as poetry, music, and dance. These musicians and artists modeled lessons for students and allowed students to demonstrate what they learned during class instruction (**Figure 10**).

Phase 3 was comprised of five components: (1) collaboration (2) coaching, (3) community outreach, (4) donations, and (5) performing off-campus. Specifically, HISD fine arts specialists



Figure 10: Park Place fourth grade students' submission in holiday card contest



Figure 11: Ortiz students perform at district-level ceremony, August 2017

from the community coached and modeled instructional practices in choir classes at Chavez, Ortiz, and Rucker and in general music classes at Lewis. The visual arts teachers at Bonner and Lewis collaborated on visual arts projects. These teachers returned to their schools to work on the projects. Co-teaching occurred in the dance program at Chavez and Ortiz. To strengthen alignment of their instructional program across academic levels, orchestra teachers at Chavez and Ortiz met and observed each others' classrooms in spring 2017. Chavez, Park Place, and Bonner shared a band teacher in spring 2017. Band teachers from Stevenson, Ortiz, and Chavez joined together to plan collaboration for the 2017–2018 school year. Students at Ortiz participated in the band camp. Plans to hold



Figure 12: Display of students' art in District - III - East Area, 2017

a summer camp for band students at Ortiz, Stevenson, and Chavez in the future were initiated by fine arts teachers at the schools.

Off campus, live choir, dance, and band performances were demonstrated by students at Chavez, Ortiz, Rucker and Stevenson (**Figure 11**). Sponsoring organizations included the HISD Foundation, Houston Community College, and HISD State of the Schools. A Patterson students' poetry was selected by the Houston Symphony and was presented at the family concert "Carnival of the Animals" (**Appendix B**). Culminating performances for the District III - East Area Initiative was "A Feast of Art" (**Figure 12**). A description of "A Feast of Art" can be found in **Appendix C** and follows.



Figure 13: Audience celebrate students' live performances

- **A Feast of Art:** Performances were presented by each school in the initiative (Figures 13 and 14). Specifically, the fine arts showcase featured visual artwork created by students from Bellfort Early Childhood Center; Bonner, Lewis, Patterson, Park Place, and Rucker elementary schools; Ortiz and Stevenson middle schools; and Chavez High School. Each school had their best visual art on display for the community. Park Place had sculptures, and Bellfort ECC, Bonner, Lewis, Rucker, and Stevenson provided paintings, drawings, and collages. In addition, Lewis presented fiber arts and sculpture. Patterson provided collaboration and canvas arts. Chavez featured 2D and 3D works, a live potter's wheel, and sculptures. Hundreds of student-made art pieces decorated the walls and lined the aisles of the school. Middle school drum lines performed along with dance and martial arts teams. The Chavez band closed out the show. A closer look at "A Feast of Art,"



Play "Feast of Art" Video

captured through video, can be viewed by clicking the picture to the left or retrieved from HISD (Houston Independent School District, 2017).

Finally, the "Fine Arts Teachers Appreciation Luncheon" was held to celebrate achievements among collaborating schools in the east area during spring 2017. Guest speakers were from the Houston Community College, Center of Excellence for Visual and Performing Arts and the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston. Speakers shared their personal experiences and their teaching philosophy as artists.

What was the impact of the Fine Arts Initiative on inspiring and motivating collaboration among participating schools?

A purposive sample of 20 teachers and administrators who helped to plan the District III - East Area Fine Arts initiative were asked what worked and which program components needed im-

Table 5a: Teacher and administrators' perceptions at end-of-year
".....Along with the growth in understanding from teachers, there has also been significant growth in the students involved with the arts....without this initiative I think a lot of the non-arts teachers would not have had the opportunity to see the impact that the arts can have on our students.....I look forward to being a part of the continuous growth in a project designed to better our students." - Ortiz Teacher
"....The Fine Arts Initiative was beneficial because it allowed time for teachers to network with other Fine Art teachers and principals which made a great impact on carrying out a successful art show. It was evident to see that we all had a collaborative role in the decision-making process and all the contributions from teachers, principals, and most importantly the students. Having the principals was also key because any issues with funding, support, and participation were resolved and carried out before the show during the Art committee meetings." - Park Place Teacher

provement. Some comments are presented in Tables 5a and 5b. In general, survey respondents emphasized benefits of the initiative related to collaboration and administrative support. A teacher noted new networking opportunities with other fine arts teachers in the east area. Other respondents perceived growth in students' fine arts abilities and opportunities to engage in different types of fine art activities. A teacher stated being a part of the decision-making process to increase fine arts access for students. Another teacher expressed a sense of value as a fine arts teacher, considering the expanded communication among teachers of core content areas at the school.



Figure 14: Administrators and trustee from Chavez feeder schools, and superintendent culminating "A Feast of Art" event, spring 2017

Table 5b: Teacher and administrators' perceptions at end-of-year
".....Being a part of the fine arts initiative has allowed me to meet and network with the colleagues that work in schools right next door to me! In the past month Ms. X and I have visited each other's classrooms multiple times, we have talked about our lesson plans for next year, we've shared resources and become friends." - Bonner Teacher
"....Just at our campus alone, the courses in Fine Arts that are now available have increased dramatically. Moreover, our school and other schools in our area are now collaborating with the Houston Symphony and with the Houston Ballet. All these new choices were not available to students in our area prior to the Fine Arts initiative." - Ortiz Administrator
".....The "core subjects" have been more open to allowing the students to participate in different activities and communication between the arts teachers and STAAR testing teachers [has] grown significantly. For once I am beginning to feel as an equal to the other teachers as opposed to being just an elective class." - Ortiz Teacher

Discussion

The District III - East Region Fine Arts Initiative was launched during the 2016–2017 academic year, with plans to extend the initiative to the Milby feeder pattern during the 2017-2018 school year, and to the Austin feeder pattern in subsequent years. The program was designed to increase students' access to a high-quality fine arts education by building arts inventory at all schools in District III. Students had additional learning opportunities through participation in out-of-school and in-school arts-related activities. The initiative also supported fine arts teachers through professional development and networking opportunities, while strengthening collaboration with partners throughout the community. The program thrives to increase student engagement and academic success by providing students with more arts-education choices and access in order to build on their fine arts interests in east area neighborhood schools.

The first year of the initiative captured baseline needs assessment data from a sample of fine arts teachers. In general, teachers expressed the need for more professional development, more support, collaboration, and funding for fine arts at their schools. Teachers' perspectives were taken into account throughout the school year as students were exposed to fine arts-related activities and events through organizations, such as the Houston Grand Opera, Houston Symphony, and the Houston Ballet. Students were encouraged to participate in fine arts competitions and perform at district-level events. The culminating event, "A Feast of Art," allowed students to demonstrate their fine arts skills in music, dance, and artistic presentations. Staff who helped to plan the initiative expressed benefits of collaborating across east area schools. These benefits were evident in students' work at the fine arts showcase event.

A recommendation is to continue the initiative, considering the positive feedback of District III - East Area staff. Building on the work of collaboration with available local arts resources and potential corporate partners, will help to improve fine arts access for students, professional development opportunities for teachers, and the availability of fine arts programs of interest throughout the east area so that students may remain in their neighborhood schools of choice.

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Appendix A

Table 3: Profile of East Region									
	Enrollment	% Male	% Female	% Bilingual	% Gifted/ Talented	% Special Ed.	% Eco. Disadv.	% LEP	% At Risk
Chavez HS	3,091	54	46	<1	11	8	81	15	78
Bonner ES	950	49	51	57	9	7	90	63	80
Lewis ES	842	48	52	54	13	6	77	57	77
Park Place ES	950	54	46	53	21	5	94	63	77
Patterson ES	932	52	48	54	15	6	90	51	73
Ortiz MS	1,086	53	47	0	6	12	91	32	79
Bellfort ECC	351	54	46	60	2	7	91	59	90
Rucker ES	545	57	43	47	12	9	90	56	81
Stevenson MS	1,357	50	50	0	27	7	92	25	58

Appendix B

HOUSTON SYMPHONY
PATTERSON DUAL LANGUAGE LITERATURE MAGNET
Houston Symphony Family Concert, February 18, 2017
Student Poetry, selected by Robert Franz
10:00 Concert



LION by Julibeth C.

A. The lion is the king
and raids in a swing.
He ate a sheep
in a little jeep.

HENS AND ROOSTERS by Carlos Z.

A. Roosters bawk really loud
and hens go in the barn to hatch eggs.
I own the barn
and do a lot of work.
The roosters are trouble-makers.
When I sleep
the roosters wake me up
in the middle of the night
but the hens
are still in the barn
complaining about the roosters
and trying to go to sleep
I will sell the roosters to someone else.

Appendix C

A FEAST OF ARTS

By Layla McAfee
Stevenson MS Theater and Step Coach

In the olden days, kings would gather their subjects together to partake in a feast after a particularly amazing victory. Much in the same way, the schools in District III (Chavez feeder pattern) gathered this past Saturday to celebrate all of the artistic successes achieved by our students in the 2016-2017 school year. Patrons were promised a feast of art, and indeed, our attendees left full of inspiration and admiration.

The appetizers were presented as soon as you entered the Chavez commons. Each school, from Patterson ES to Rucker ES, had their very best visual art on display. Park Place ES had sculptures galore and Belfort ECC provided abundant paintings, drawings and collages.

Chavez HS even featured a live potter's wheel; I watched in awe as a student shaped and molded clay. Hundreds of student-made art pieces decorated the walls and lined the aisles. The vibrancy of the displays made everyone's mouth water, desiring even more art.

After a brief opening ceremony, attendees were served their main course: plenty of performances from cheer to digital media. Middle school drumlines showcased their ability to do tricks and dance moves, all while keeping in time to the beat. Cymbals crashed and the snare drums rat-at-tat-tattered as the rich sound of percussion echoed throughout the auditorium.

One by one, almost a dozen dance teams commanded the stage, exacting the choreography taught to them with precision and focus. Like a fruit tray, there was quite a selection, but each piece performed was fresh and flavorful. Stevenson MS even featured their Kickstart Karate demo team; how amazing to see dozens of students executing martial arts moves to music!

The Ortiz band, led by Roderick Kennedy, then played several catchy tunes, and finally, the Chavez band took to the stage and closed out the show with sounds to savor like a slowcooked steak. Down the hall in the Mini Theatre, Bonner ES served us with the beautiful sounds of their choir. Patterson ES, Lewis ES, and Chavez fed us snippets of plays for the thespianlovers in attendance.

But what is a feast without a sweet treat or two? Dessert was served in the form of the concessions area, where patrons could buy nachos, pizza, cupcakes, or lemonade amongst other things. Even the Chavez orchestra found its way onto the menu. Their light and flavorful tunes swirled around the commons area like the aroma of fresh baked bread as people purchased popcorn or viewed the visual art.

When parents and students had taken their fill of what we had to offer, it was time to go home. The richness of the FEAST of art had guaranteed that all artistic appetites would be appeased; everyone in attendance walked away full and fat from a feast fit for kings!