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Sequential Fine Arts

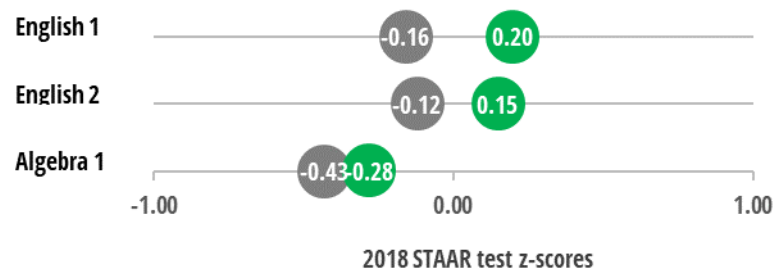
In 2017-2018 greater participation in sequential fine arts was related to better school attendance and better test scores.

The fine arts are essential in a well-rounded education. To ensure that all students have access to high-quality instruction in a variety of art forms, leaders of the Creative Learning Initiative (CLI) and AISD's Fine Arts Department promote access to sustained learning for all prekindergarten through 12th-grade in music, visual art, drama, and dance. This report discusses the relationship between sequential fine arts participation and student outcomes for the school year 2017–2018 and how the relationships differed based on student characteristics (i.e. race, ethnicity, special education status and limited English speaking status).

Highlights of Findings and Recommendations

Fine arts course enrollment and academic achievement were positively related in both reading and math for all secondary students. Overall, we strongly recommend district leaders promote the positive association of participation in the fine arts during course scheduling. However, because when we looked into this relationship by different student characteristics, there was no evidence to show that this positive relationship extended to special education or LEP students, we recommend exploring instructional differentiation for special education and LEP students in their fine arts classes.

Figure 1.



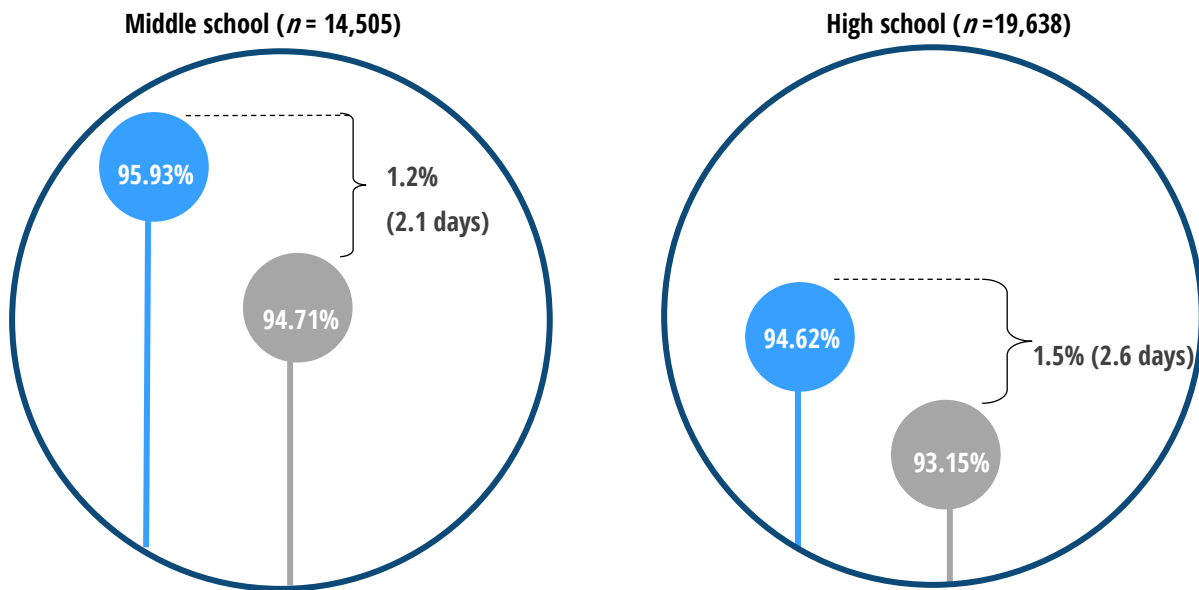
High school students who enrolled in more arts classes had better academic outcomes than did students who enrolled in fewer arts classes in English 1, English 2, and algebra 1.

Source. 2018 STAAR, AISD course schedule records.

Note: Z-scores are used in this report to transform students' STAAR scale scores into a standard score across grade levels. English 1 $n = 5,580$, English 2 $n = 5,686$, and algebra 1 $n = 2,985$. The p-value for each analysis was $p < .001$. See full report for notes on methodology.

The number of fine arts courses that students took during the 2017–2018 school year was positively related to students’ school attendance rates at both the middle and high school levels (Figure 2). This finding has been consistent over the years of CLI evaluation and we continue to make the recommendation that district officials consider financial expenditures into fine arts courses as secure investments, since a large sum of the districts’ money results from student attendance. We also found that the positive relationship between attendance and fine arts participation was even stronger for Hispanic students than for non-Hispanic students. Further inquiry needs to be done to understand the process by which Hispanic students might be especially advantaged by taking fine arts courses in secondary school.

Figure 2.
Attendance was greater for secondary students who took more fine arts courses than for secondary students who took fewer fine arts courses.



Source: AISD student attendance records, AISD course records
Note: See full report for notes on methodology.

For more information on this subject, use the interactive report or read the full report online. The interactive report offers detailed information on student access to fine arts across all levels and all campuses. Viewers can filter to individual schools or do searches based on art form, campus factors, and student factors. The full report offers detailed information on the findings summarized here. Methodological details are provided in side bars for those with technical interests, while findings are summarized in the main text. Both can be found at www.austin.org/dre/publications (search for “fine arts”).

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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