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Texas Music Educators Association: The Art of Legislating Arts Education



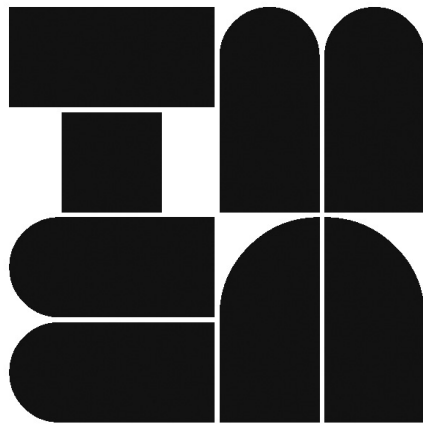
INSTITUTE FOR
MUSIC LEADERSHIP



EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

Texas Music Educators Association: The Art of Legislating Arts Education

How can an arts advocacy organization achieve its goals by shaping legislative and school board policy at the state level? Founded in 1920, the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) serves music educators and students throughout the state, counting political advocacy and lobbying among its principal activities. In 2003, TMEA achieved a meaningful legislative victory—the passage and implementation of Senate Bill 815—through a multi-year struggle to mandate standards-driven music education in all districts. This case describes the journey to pass this legislation, as well as TMEA Executive Director Robert Floyd’s lessons learned through lobbying for arts education. The study highlights the continuing role of TMEA as an advocate for arts education, exploring the possibility of future legislation to further secure a strong position for quality arts curriculum in Texas schools.



This case study was prepared by Phil Pierick. *The Eastman Case Studies* are developed solely as the basis for class discussion. Cases are not intended to serve as endorsements or sources of primary data nor are they to serve as illustrations of effective or ineffective leadership or decision making.

Background

The Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) was founded by amateur bandleader James E. King in 1920 as the Texas Band Teachers Association, acquiring its current title in 1938. What began as a small group of community band directors has grown to an active membership of nearly 12,000 music educators of all stripes a century later. Today, TMEA represents band, orchestra, vocal, elementary, and college music educators from the Lone Star State.

Through its activities, TMEA aims to garner support for music in public and private schools and to provide students with high-level musical experiences, setting the stage for their lifelong involvement in music. The organization offers professional development opportunities for learners and educators alike. Not long after its initial efforts in the service of municipal bands, TMEA assumed a broad educational focus as formal music instruction increased in Texas public schools. One of the country's oldest and most robust state music education associations, TMEA traces its advocacy for music education in the public schools back to the 1930s, when it worked to secure academic credit for students who played in public school bands. Early efforts by the organization to convince the state's department of education to recognize instrumental music as part of the general curriculum were quashed with the rationale that uniform instruction throughout the state was impossible without the use of a textbook for music ensembles.

By 1960, the power and influence of TMEA on music education was on firmer ground. Coinciding with widespread national attention to formalize curriculum matters by the 1960s, TMEA was heavily involved in the development of music education curricula at all levels of education for the next two decades. TMEA worked closely with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and school administrators, undertaking studies of music curricula, teacher load

standards, music teacher education requirements, “non-performance” music education, and revisions of accreditation standards. TMEA ultimately offered numerous recommendations to the TEA and played a large role in crafting music education policy in Texas in the second half of the twentieth century.

Today, TMEA has expanded its advocacy profile even further. It provides scholarships for post-secondary study, supplies pedagogical and activist resources for members, publishes a periodical for its members (*Southwestern Musician*), and oversees Texas All-State and All-Region ensembles, established in 1932. The selection process for Texas All-State begins with more than 64,000 high school students throughout the state who aim for a spot in one of fifteen ensembles (bands, orchestras, or choirs). Approximately 1,700 students are chosen to perform in these ensembles, whose marquee concerts conclude the TMEA Clinic/Convention each February. This annual meeting of music educators in San Antonio is consistently the largest event of its kind in the nation. Each February, nearly 30,000 people attend the TMEA Clinic/Convention, visiting more than 300 workshops, 1,300 exhibit booths, and 100 performances over four days. The event is an indispensable point of exchange for Texas music educators, where continuing education, networking, and new ideas are brought to the forefront of the profession.

Shaping Legislation

Apart from the bustle of the annual convention, TMEA has long held the belief that arts education must be protected in state law and rule in order to win advocacy battles at the district and campus level. To this end, TMEA regularly monitors political activity surrounding arts education in the state legislature of Texas and the State Board of Education (SBOE). Building on its long history of shaping curriculum and policy for music education at the state level, TMEA observes and lobbies these organizations on behalf

of Texas music educators and the students they serve. TMEA must choose its battles wisely, knowing when to accept the status quo and when to push for change.

The 181 elected members of the state legislature and 15 elected SBOE members work for their constituents, though they themselves are also private citizens with their own lives, interests, and concerns. Because lawmakers deal with wide-ranging issues from tax policy and regulation to infrastructure and education, the time they have to devote to any one issue is often miniscule. It is rare to find a member who knows much about the inner-workings of music education. The understandable detachment from individual issues demands that lobbyists and advocates clearly explain their position on issues and supply data to support their points of view. Framing issues is an essential lobbying skill. When advocating for education-related issues, lobbyists typically find more success by relaying the importance of an issue as it relates to the schoolchildren in Texas communities rather than by emphasizing the impact of potential legislation on teachers. Through tireless lobbying efforts, TMEA seeks to build relationships with legislators, keeping regular contact with them (and their staffers) about the issues facing arts education in Texas. The hope is that informed legislators who are also sympathetic to positions raised by trusted advocates in the arts may be trusted when difficult decisions face lawmakers.

Robert Floyd, executive director of TMEA and former Texas public school band director, has learned a lot about the “art” of arts advocacy in more than twenty years at the head of the state’s largest association of music educators. Part of his success with TMEA has come through establishing strong working relationships with other arts organizations at the state level. TMEA’s past collaborators have included the Texas Commission on the Arts, the Texas Cultural Trust, the Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts, state-level associations for other

fine arts disciplines (art, theatre, and dance), and Texas associations of choir, band, and orchestra directors. Though these organizations’ priorities and positions may not always align perfectly with those of TMEA, Floyd has nonetheless built alliances and sought common ground among arts advocates to avoid political infighting and conflicting agendas that do no favors for simplifying the legislative process. Shared goals usually far outweigh differences among such groups; a united front will almost always achieve swifter and wider-reaching results. Multiple organizations can further pool financial and human resources, strengthening their power and impact in the eyes of elected state officials. Legislative action is also more likely to occur when representatives and senators see deep institutional and community support for a broad issue. For example, a unified group of organizations large and small arguing for arts education, rather than specifically music education, has proven particularly successful in Texas, in part for this reason.

“Advocacy, that’s where I spend much of my time.”

– Robert Floyd, TMEA Executive Director

Social media and advocacy at the local grass-roots level are “perhaps the most important component of fine arts survival,” according to Floyd. Social media is a crucial platform to showcase the successes and “products” of arts education, while simultaneously increasing awareness and engagement within the community at a negligible cost. Arts booster organizations in communities also increase awareness of—and involvement with—arts education at the local level. Through the dissemination of rationale and data supporting proposed legislation, passionate and interested parents of schoolchildren can quickly turn into effective advocates either within the local community or even at the state level. Local constituents can be a particularly valuable

lobbying tool within a legislator's district. Phone calls to legislators' offices on a certain issue or piece of legislation go far to place matters on their radar.

A TMEA Triumph: Senate Bill 815

TMEA has racked up multiple legislative victories in its history of advocating for arts education in Texas. One such victory is the passage of Senate Bill 815 (SB 815) during the state's 78th legislative session. In June 2003, Governor Rick Perry signed SB 815 into law. The law mandates that school districts base instruction in all subjects of the required curriculum on state standards known as Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Prior to the implementation of SB 815, school districts were legally able to disregard the TEKS in music, art, dance, and theatre instruction—all subjects under the rubric of the “enrichment” curriculum. The legislation upgraded the previously optional TEKS guidelines, mandating that they be taught in a locally developed curriculum as a condition of school accreditation. The goal was to ensure quality and accountability within all required subjects of the curriculum, defined as what all school districts must offer. Providing support for teachers in districts not already utilizing the TEKS, TMEA continues to offer multiple TEKS-related workshops and clinics at both its annual Clinic/Convention and at the regional level. See **Appendix 1** for the full text of SB 815.

The development of SB 815 may be seen in the context of the state legislature's passage of curriculum legislation in 1995 (during the term of Governor George W. Bush), a measure designed to fulfill the governor's “back to basics” education agenda. These ideas were foretastes of President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. An initial State Senate draft of this legislation classified fine arts as a recommended, but not required, part of the curriculum. Through the insistence of TMEA and other organizations, legislators reached a compromise on the language: all curricula were

now to be classified as required, but all subjects were to be categorized as either “foundation” or “enrichment” in nature. Foundation subjects were required to follow the state standards (TEKS), while enrichment subjects—including not only the fine arts but also subjects such as foreign language and physical education—were not. This distinction led some school districts to treat enrichment subjects as less important disciplines. The Texas Education Code jeopardized the quality of content and support for the fine arts at the local level by not requiring standards to be followed. Though the TEKS standards existed for most enrichment subjects, their use was optional and executed unevenly across the state.

TMEA's drafted language to address the standards issue was ultimately sponsored by Texas State Senator Leticia Van de Putte, a member of the Senate Education Committee. While anyone can legally propose the text of a bill, only the elected members of the legislature have the power to introduce legislation. For TMEA, this meant persuading Senator Van de Putte to sponsor the bill, as well as securing Representative Rob Eissler to carry the companion bill in the House. Senator Van de Putte, the highly respected Democratic minority leader, was a key ally for this cause. Her children were all involved in music and other arts and her husband had been a high school band director prior to starting a successful business. Additionally, her legislative director had previously been a band director in a Title I school prior to earning a law degree and entering politics. These personal connections to the issue meant that Senator Van de Putte understood the matter at hand. Her place on the relevant committee also improved the chances of moving the bill forward.

The forerunner to SB 815 was a bill filed by TMEA in 1999 that mandated the use of TEKS in both foundation and enrichment subjects, which was easily passed by the Texas House of Representatives, but failed in the Senate. Bills passed in one house are reported as “engrossed” and sent to the other chamber,

where a virtually identical process begins again. Despite bipartisan support and intense lobbying, the measure was denied a hearing by the chair of the Senate Education Committee, a representative of one of Texas's rural Senate districts. The fear among small school districts was that they might not always have the resources or personnel to offer TEKS-based instruction in all enrichment curricula without impacting foundation courses. The bill met with the same fate in 2001 under similar circumstances and concerns. If proposed legislation is “killed” at the committee level, it can be reintroduced as an amendment to another bill with a larger margin of support—a tactic attempted for a previous version of SB 815 in a session prior to its successful passage.

In 2003, two key factors changed, which paved the way for a much-needed hearing. First, two organizations representing rural and small school districts—the Texas Association of Rural Schools (TARS) and the Texas Association of Community Schools (TACS)—endorsed the bill. Coincidentally, the executive director of TACS was a former band director and superintendent of a rural school. He was able to convince the committee that not supporting the legislation on these grounds represented an affront to rural schools, as it implied that they were incapable of providing a meaningful education in enrichment subjects such as music and the arts. Equally important, the Senate Education Committee had a new chair, who was willing to give the bill a hearing in the light of these endorsements. This support from the rural district associations assuaged the worries among some legislators that SB 815 would adversely affect small school districts.

SB 815 was given a committee hearing on May 6, 2003, with the Senate passing the bill nine days later. The House had already passed an identical bill, HB 2908, but had to pass SB 815 as well. Despite equivalent wording between HB 2908 and SB 815, the same-named bill must pass both houses to continue on the path to becoming law. When both houses

pass the same bill, it is said to become “enrolled.” If the second chamber amends the bill, the originating chamber must approve the amendment, or a conference committee with members from both chambers is appointed to reach a compromise. SB 815 did not require this last step, as both the House and Senate passed the same bill with identical language.

Support from the rural district associations assuaged the worries among some legislators that SB 815 would adversely affect small school districts.

SB 815 sailed through the House and the head of each chamber signed the enrolled bill, which was then sent to the governor. At that point, the governor must choose whether to sign or veto legislation within a certain timeframe. (Signed legislation becomes law, whereas vetoed legislation requires a bicameral two-thirds vote to override. Alternatively, if a governor does nothing within the statutory time, the bill automatically becomes law without a signature.) Governor Rick Perry signed SB 815 into law less than a month after passage in the legislature. The effective start date was September 1, 2003—coinciding with the start of the following school year. In total, the legislative process required 41 steps before passage, a series of bureaucratic hurdles familiar to all lobbyists. The day-to-day timeline of the process is detailed in **Appendix 2**. The battle had lasted nearly a decade, but the TEKS were now legally mandated for both foundation and enrichment subjects, and TMEA celebrated its passage. The law elevated the credibility of all enrichment subjects and sent the message to school districts that a rigorous, standards-based curriculum was important for all subjects taught in Texas Schools.

This ultimate success of SB 815, however, was no accident; rather, it was the result of careful stewardship through the legislative branch with buy-in from major constituent groups. In preparing the

bill, Robert Floyd outlined five “critical components” for passage:

- The sponsors of the bill must believe in the cause.
- The committee chairs must be willing to give the bill a hearing.
- The proponents must build positive working relationships with staff members of as many legislators as they can build (especially education committee members).
- The proponents must be willing to commit time to see the bill through its passage. (Action may sometimes come up on a bill in the wee hours of the morning.)
- A significant amount of luck.

In 2003, SB 815 achieved all five items listed, with no shortage of luck. Sponsors in both houses of the legislature were committed to its passage, while a change in Senate committee leadership created a new opening for a hearing of the bill. Advancing the cause were TMEA’s long-term relationships with multiple legislators, with whom it had worked for decades. Senate and House staffers—often more regular points of contact for lobbyists than the legislators themselves—were of particular help in currying favor for SB 815. In many cases, younger

aides understood the situation personally, having been enthusiastic members of well-developed high school music programs. Such staffers were easily persuaded by the argument for the standards mandated by SB 815. In turn, these staffers helped to ensure the support of their individual legislators.

More often than not, proposed legislation does not become law. During the 78th session, less than one in five bills filed even made it to the governor’s desk.

The final passage of SB 815 by the House of Representatives required diligence on the part of

the bill’s sponsor, Senator Van de Putte, and TMEA, which drafted the bill’s language. The bill narrowly made the deadline, making it to the floor late on the final day of the 78th legislative session. As for luck? It may be harder to prove, but a statistic will highlight Floyd’s point: less than 20 percent of bills filed during the 78th session made it to the governor’s desk, and a mere 9 of the 59 curriculum-related education bills filed passed. Persistence, successful lobbying, a network of partners and supporters, and good timing each played a role in the passage of SB 815.

Implementation and Interpretation: An Unintended Consequence of SB 815

The guiding purpose in passing SB 815 was to require existing state standards to be followed when school districts taught enrichment subjects like music. After the passage of the bill, TMEA’s involvement with the issue did not end. It now planned to lobby the State Board of Education, which is tasked with enacting policy that reflects and interprets newly passed legislation. SBOE rules are part of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), a comprehensive compilation of rules that school districts must follow to carry out the law. TMEA wanted to ensure that updates to the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), drafted and approved by the SBOE, complied with the new legislation.

Interpreting law after it is written is sometimes as difficult and unpredictable as the road to codifying it. In an unexpected twist, the TEA interpreted SB 815 in such a way that mandated music, art, and theater be taught at each elementary grade level, rather than leaving this decision up to individual districts—a fortuitous win from TMEA’s perspective. Despite the fact that these requirements were neither the legislative intent of SB 815 nor the explicit goal of TMEA, the TEA attorney’s aggressive interpretation secured a more robust place for the arts in the education of elementary schoolchildren in Texas. To protect

local control, however, the attorney crafted optional TAC language for the SBOE to consider that would keep that authority at the local level. If adopted, this rule would bring to the forefront that teaching the arts in elementary grades was optional. To TMEA this was the wrong message, and with the support of the Commissioner of Education, who demanded that the arts be taught, the SBOE rejected this rule change. In addition to teaching music, art, and theater in grades K-5, later statute and TAC rule changes guided by TMEA now require middle schools to offer three of the four fine arts subjects, from which students must select at least one course. High school students are similarly required to complete one fine arts credit to graduate, while districts must offer at least two subjects from the fine arts category.

Ultimately, SB 815 substantively changed only one word from Governor Bush's 1995 educational legislation—"foundation" to "required"—in mandating TEKS for all required subjects rather than for foundation subjects only. Nevertheless, the passage of the bill and its subsequent interpretation and implementation by the SBOE had dramatic effects on arts education in Texas public schools. New legislation regularly produces unintended consequences. In the case of SB 815, the unforeseen result was a positive one from the point of view of TMEA.

Foundation versus Enrichment

One area that SB 815 did not address was the bifurcated curriculum categories of "foundation" and "enrichment" established by Governor Bush's 1995 education legislation. Foundation curriculum covers four subject areas: English Language Arts and Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Enrichment curriculum includes Career and Technical Education, Fine Arts, Health Education, Languages other than English, Physical Education, and Technology. Economics was originally part of Texas' enrichment curriculum, though it was

later reclassified as a foundation subject under the umbrella of Social Studies.

This division of the curriculum into two categories was the result of a compromise between those in Governor Bush's camp, who preferred to leave subjects other than Mathematics, Science, Language Arts, and Social Studies to local district discretion, and arts education advocates, who sought to require standards-based fine arts curriculum statewide for all students. Given the updates and amendments to the Texas Education Code since 1995, this bifurcation now clouds the fact that state law requires that both categories of the curriculum be taught and that instruction cover all TEKS standards. While SB 815 blurred the distinction, the two categories remain, perpetuating the notion that enrichment courses constitute secondary or less important topics. For TMEA and arts advocates, "enrichment" should not connote something extra, optional, or unnecessary. In an era where both foundation and enrichment courses are now subject to TEKS, Floyd and his team believe this distinction has outlived its usefulness.

The Next Legislative Battle: Tearing Down the Wall

You have been hired by TMEA as an Educational Policy Monitor. Using what you have learned from the passage of SB 815, you are asked to strategize regarding the task of "tearing down the wall" between foundation and enrichment subjects in Texas schools, enshrined in the Texas Education Code since 1995. A bill to tear down the wall was drafted by the legislative council in the most recent legislative session, but was never filed due to calendar limitations. Building on

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the success of SB 815, which legally changed only one word of a previous law, this newly drafted bill simply removes the lexical distinction between “foundation” and “enrichment” subjects in Texas’ bifurcated curriculum, labeling all curriculum as “required.” Your task is to make a recommendation to TMEA regarding how to proceed as an advocate for removing this vestigial curricular distinction.

Historically, the Texas Education Code is rewritten and authorized by the legislature every 10-15 years, though that has not occurred for 21 years. It is possible to wait until the “rewrite” to lobby for this change instead of pursuing this agenda in the next legislative session, but Executive Director Floyd has determined that the battle is worth pursuing now. It is particularly timely in light of the fact that four of the five new Texas “endorsements”—optional high school graduation tracks—are anchored in enrichment subjects, and multiple enrichment courses are now graduation requirements for all Texas students.

What are the potential benefits and drawbacks to maintaining the status quo? Identify the potential risks and possible unintended negative consequences of lobbying for this change. Explain the many hurdles to overcome in successfully passing new legislation. Consider whether it is appropriate to seek legislative change in this case, or whether a new rule by the SBOE could accomplish the same result. Does tearing down the wall go far enough, or should TMEA’s lobbying efforts and resources be redirected elsewhere to impact curricular reform? Will the change really make a difference, and to what degree? Should TMEA simply lobby to move fine arts from enrichment to foundation curriculum?

Floyd pushes for legislative action and asks you to formulate arguments you will make for this agenda. How will you gain supporters of the bill in the House and Senate of the Texas legislature? Some legislators are concerned that removing the distinction between

foundation and enrichment subjects will signal a reduced importance of Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Language Arts to the public, the SBOE, and/or local districts. See **Appendix 3** for Floyd’s re-recommendations for impacting policy at the state level.

Which types of organizations would you identify as potential partners with which to strategize and consult on this issue? How will you ensure continued cooperation with these partners and avoid infighting over divergent interests? Consider who has a stake in this decision. Will teachers, students, parents, and the media care about the bifurcation of subjects? What role could community members play in your strategy to achieve this change? Describe what a successful social media campaign for this issue would look like.

Robert Floyd has advised you as you make recommendations on this process: “Try to put yourself in a position where you don’t have to be reactive.”

APPENDIX 1

Text of SB 815

S.B. No. 815

AN ACT

relating to the development of essential knowledge and skills for subjects in the enrichment curriculum.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 28.002, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsection (c) and adding Subsection (c-1) to read as follows:

(c) The State Board of Education, with the direct participation of educators, parents, business and industry representatives, and employers shall by rule identify the essential knowledge and skills of each subject of the required ~~[foundation]~~ curriculum that all students should be able to demonstrate and that will be used in evaluating textbooks under Chapter 31 and addressed on the assessment instruments required under Subchapter B, Chapter 39. As a condition of accreditation, the board shall require each district to provide instruction in the essential knowledge and skills at appropriate grade levels.

(c-1) A district may apply to the commissioner for an extension in complying with the rules adopted by the State Board of Education under Subsection (c), as amended by Senate Bill No. 815, Acts of the 78th Legislature, Regular Session, 2003. The commissioner may adopt rules as necessary for the implementation of this subsection. This subsection expires September 1, 2005.

SECTION 2. Subsection (d), Section 28.002, Education Code, is repealed.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2003.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 815 passed the Senate on May 15, 2003, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.B. No. 815 passed the House on May 28, 2003, by a non-record vote.

Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

Date

Governor

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center S.B. 815
By: Van de Putte
Education

6/13/2003
Enrolled

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Currently, a school district is required to offer both foundation and enrichment curricula. However, as a condition of accreditation, a school district is required to provide instruction using the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in the foundation curriculum, whereas in the enrichment curriculum, the TEKS standards are only required to be used as guidelines. S.B. 815 repeals language describing the requirements for the enrichment curriculum and provides that a school district must provide instruction of certain essential knowledge and skills in the enrichment curriculum as a condition of accreditation.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 1 (Section 28.002, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 28.002, Education Code, by amending Subsection (c) and adding Subsection (c-1), as follows:

(c) Amends a reference to the Afoundation curriculum@ to read Arequired curriculum.@

(c-1) Authorizes a district to apply to the commissioner of education (commissioner) for an extension in complying with the rules adopted by the State Board of Education (SBOE) under Subsection (c), as amended by this Act. Authorizes the commissioner to adopt rules as necessary for the implementation of this subsection. Provides that this subsection expires September 1, 2005.

SECTION 2. Repealer: Section 28.002(d), Education Code (requiring SBOE to identify essential knowledge and skills of each subject of the enrichment curriculum, and requiring each district to use the knowledge and skills identified SBOE as instructional guidelines).

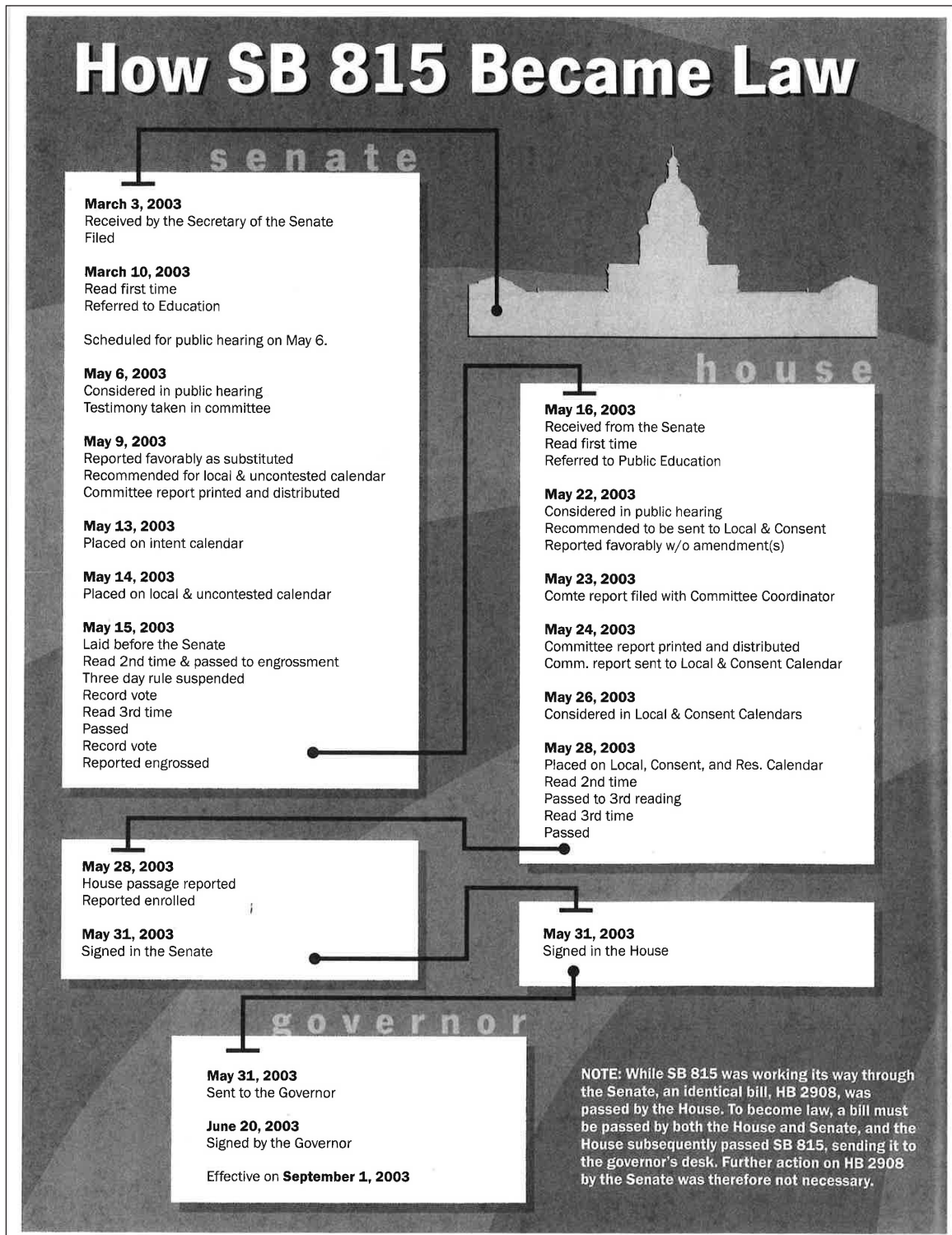
SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2003.

SRC-JEC, MSY S.B. 815 78(R)

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APPENDIX 2

Timeline of SB 815



APPENDIX 3

Impacting State Education Policy It Can Be Done!

Robert Floyd - Executive Director, Texas Music Educators Association
Chair, Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education

“Legislation is decided by those who show up.” – Joe Gagen

What the Law Says in Texas is all a direct result of TMEA lobbying efforts.

- A. Fine Arts is a part of the Required Curriculum which all school districts must offer.
- B. All fine arts instruction must be standards-based.
- C. Music, art and theatre must be taught in grades K-5.
- D. ISDs must offer three of the four fine arts areas (music, art, theatre, or dance) in grades 6, 7, or 8 and, in addition, every student in middle school must take one fine arts course in grades 6, 7, or 8.
- E. One credit of fine arts is required for graduation in all graduation programs.
- F. Arts and Humanities endorsement is now a graduation program available to all Texas high school students.
- G. High schools (grades 9-12) must offer courses in two of the four fine arts areas.
- H. Arts education is gaining ground as a part of the accountability system – community and student engagement.

Understand the total process of establishing educational policy.

- A. Know what is in law and what is in rule in your state.
- B. Know when to fall on your sword on an issue and when to accept status quo.
- C. Utilize the whole system to get what you want – will a state board rule accomplish your purpose rather than trying to change law?
- D. Lobby for fine arts – not just music.
- E. Always be leery of unintended consequences.

About legislators

- A. Legislators work for you.
- B. They are real people – treat them that way.
- C. They wear lots of hats – parents, candidates, legislators, sometimes arts supporters, and we have to communicate in different ways.
- D. Ninety-nine percent of time they want to help, understand the issue, and do the right thing.
- E. Their time is short and they deal with a myriad of issues, so don't overwhelm them, but do strive to get into their heads.
- F. Do not overlook their staffs as key contacts.

Local Advocacy

- A. Perhaps the most important component of fine arts survival.
- B. Provide materials – printed and/or on website.
- C. Inspire and train your members and parents on how to be effective lobbyists.
- D. Organize presidents of arts booster organizations in your district (COPS).
- E. Sell your programs on their curricular nature – not the extracurricular components or activities.

Is Anybody Listening?

- A. Clear and succinct.
- B. Establishing a connection with your audience will allow you to communicate successfully with them.
- C. Focus on similarities and mutual goals and the curricular nature of music.
- D. Advocate for the arts rather than against something else. – John Benham
- E. Do your best to determine what is most important to your audience.
- F. Must work from a platform of a high standard of excellence.

Networking with other educational associations

- A. Administrator associations, PTA and teacher associations – get them on your side.
- B. Most educational groups believe in educating the whole child.
- C. Get other organizations to make it a priority on their agenda.
- D. Get them to support your bill by submitting a card of support at the hearing.
- E. If they won't support, try to get them to stay silent on the bill or issue.
- F. Maintain your own identity for times when you disagree on an issue.

Networking with other state arts organizations – TCQAE, TCA, PTA, TAEA, TETA, TDEA

- A. Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education.
- B. Texas Cultural Trust.
- C. Other music organizations – TBA, TCDA, TODA
- D. Why arts coalitions sometimes fail – political in-fighting and disagreement on philosophy.

What you should be doing now

- A. It is not too early to educate your members on candidates.
- B. Invite candidates to your school to see what arts education really is so that they can recall “why” when a vote comes up.
- C. Attend coffees, host forums.
- D. Survey the candidates prior to the November election and distribute the results.
- E. They need you now; they do not need you after the November election.
- F. Identify your supporters through your members.

Communication

- A. Understand the most effective means of sharing public sentiment – letters, phone calls, personal contacts, and social media.
- B. GoArts.org
- C. Stay informed through legislative newsletters.
- D. Work to get the media on your side – utilize op eds.
- E. “I am their leader – where did they go?”
- F. Know your audience.
- G. “No one has to do everything but everyone has to do something.” For our constituents, we have a unique obligation and must make an investment. Help advocates understand why it is their duty to be involved. Do not wait until they have to be told to do something – they will push back.
- H. Arts Education Day at the Capitol.
- I. Other Capitol Performances.

Social media

- A. Utilize to the fullest.
- B. Way to get others to sign up to support.
- C. Reach out multiple times.
- D. Post concerts and send out pictures.
- E. Sometimes a bright student can drive the process.
- F. Newspapers are still good, but social media critical.

What if I have no budget?

- A. Monitor your state’s legislative website.
- B. Seek a volunteer – a retired teacher.
- C. Subscribe to political newsletters.
- D. Rely on business and arts contacts to assist you.
- E. Identify members who have personal contacts with legislators.
- F. Align with other associations with whom you can partner that are most similar to you - TASA, TASB, Raise Your Hand Texas, Friends of Texas Public Schools, principal associations, Texas Cultural Trust, PTA, TAM-SA, etc.
- G. Get involved in the political/election process.

Hints to passing a bill in the legislature

- A. Know what you want in law or rule.
- B. Select supportive bill sponsors and start early.
- C. Be patient and persistent – it quite often takes more than one session.
- D. Identify your allies early on.

- E. Know the key players and focus your lobbying efforts on them initially.
- F. Respect the power of the chairs.
- G. If your bill fails, try to amend to another.
- H. It takes 48 steps for a bill to become law.

Further hints for success

- A. Fine tune your message that what you are seeking is important for kids.
- B. Legislators may know the process but know little about arts education – be ready to clearly articulate.
- C. Don't assume all is good. Everyone wants to talk about accountability and assessment, but no one is going to talk about the arts without encouragement and education.
- D. Line up your votes in advance of the hearing and/or vote.
- E. Do not try to develop a relationship with your legislator the night before a key vote.

Effective Testimony

- A. Be brief but make it clear what you want.
- B. Try not to read.
- C. Limit the number of people testifying saying the same thing.
- D. Try to anticipate questions, but do not be afraid to say "I don't know but I will get back to you."
- E. Provide written copy and make sure it includes the bill number.
- F. Tell a story but also have an arsenal of data available to back up your claims.
- G. Have someone testify whose legislator sits on the committee and give them advance notice so they can claim the testifier – lots of political posturing.
- F. Be polite.

The role of a governmental relations consultant

- A. An added benefit because of the doors he or she may open.
- B. Hired primarily for information and advice – not to do all the work.
- C. Helps you understand the process.
- D. If possible find a consultant who is passionate about music and fine arts.
- E. Fees are more reasonable if a person believes in arts education.
- F. Gives contributions to candidates.
- G. TMEA does not endorse political candidates nor does it have a political action committee.

Coda

- A. It's all about relationships – and there are no better relationships than those built by constituents.
- B. Decide what you want and get started now.
- C. If your program is not supported in state law and rule, you have nothing to stand upon
- D. You CAN do it – think positively!



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