

Integrating Fine Arts Teachers into a Local Designation System

Across Texas, many districts seek to include Fine Arts teachers—Art, Dance, Music, and Theatre—in their Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) Local Designation Systems. TEA allows broad flexibility in system design, so districts can align designation eligibility, student growth, and observation practices to local program models (e.g., ensembles, studio courses, performance-based classes). This guidance complements the [TIA Guidebook](#) and Texas Fine Arts requirements to support districts in developing, expanding, and implementing a local designation system for Fine Arts teachers. Districts should direct Fine Arts content questions to [TEA’s Curriculum Standards and Student Support Division](#). For system design questions, please reference the TIA Guidebook and Student Growth resources.

Best Practices for Expanding Teacher Eligibility to Fine Arts Assignments

- Engage stakeholders early: Convene Fine Arts teachers (by discipline - Art, Dance, Music and Theatre), directors, department chairs, principals, and secondary counselors to define course coverage, fair growth measures by course type, and implications for rehearsal/performance calendars.
- TIA requires districts to define expected growth at the individual-student level using one of the four approved growth models (SLOs, Portfolios, Pre-/Post-Test, VAM). Fine Arts courses—because they are overwhelmingly performance-based—lend themselves naturally to rubric-aligned growth targets, artifact-based progression, and teacher-created diagnostics.
- Start with a course inventory: Map K–12 Fine Arts offerings to TEKS strands (Foundations; Creative Expression; Historical/Cultural Relevance; Critical Evaluation/Response) and identify where performance artifacts or standards-based assessments already exist.
- Select growth measures per course family: TEA/TIA permits [Student Learning Objectives](#) (SLOs), Portfolios, Pre-/Post-Tests, and (where appropriate) Value Added Measures (VAM). Most Fine Arts courses align naturally to Portfolios or SLOs; some HS courses (e.g., AP Art & Design, AP Music Theory) can use third-party assessments with district-set growth targets.
- Observation calibration: Use T-TESS or another approved TIA observation tool with calibration supports for performance-based classrooms and ensemble settings (e.g., rehearsal routines, formative critique, and performance tasks).
- Phase-in approach: Consider phasing (e.g., secondary ensembles first, then K–5 Art, Music, and Theatre) to build reliability in measures and training before scaling districtwide.
- Progress monitoring & PD: Provide discipline-specific training on growth evidence (e.g., scoring student portfolios, SLO body-of-evidence curation) and appraisal look-fors in Fine Arts.

Choosing Student Growth Measures & Setting Expected Growth Targets

- Use TEA’s Student Growth guidance to define expected growth targets at the student level (e.g., rubric-based [Portfolio](#), target skill profiles [\(SLO\)](#) or [setting growth target](#) method for district post-tests).
- Districts using [third-party assessments](#) must document who provides the pre-test, post-test, and growth targets. For AP and other third-party Fine Arts assessments, growth targets are set by the district, not the vendor.

Fine Arts Course Families with Possible Measures

This is not exhaustive; districts choose at least one TIA-recognized growth measure per eligible assignment and may mix measures across courses based on TEKS and local conditions.

Elementary (K–5) Specials

Course Family	Possible Student Growth Measures	Notes
Elementary Art (K–5)	SLOs or Portfolio of student artworks across mediums scored on a TEKS-aligned skills progression rubric	Emphasize Creative Expression & Critical Evaluation strands; calibrate scoring with anchor exemplars.
Elementary Music (K–5)	SLOs or Portfolios (steady beat, pitch matching, rhythm literacy); Pre-/Post for discrete skills	Use developmentally appropriate tasks (echo-singing, rhythm dictation).
Elementary Theatre (K–5)	SLOs; Portfolio (performance clips, ensemble exercises, reflection journals)	Align to TEKS creative expression and Performance strand

Middle School (6–8)

Course Family	Possible Student Growth Measures	Notes
Art MS 1–3	Portfolio; SLOs	Curate BOY/MOY/EOY artifacts across techniques; rubric calibrations by team.
Music Ensembles (e.g., Band, Choir, Orchestra, etc.)	SLOs on tone, intonation, literacy; Portfolio (recordings, sight-reading artifacts)	Use ensemble rubric + individual performance checks; sight-reading artifacts document individual growth.
Theatre MS 1–3;	Portfolio (scene performance, acting journal); SLOs	Evidence = design plates, cue sheets, monologues, peer/teacher critiques.
Dance MS 1–3	Portfolio (videoed technique combos); SLOs	Use progression rubrics for alignment, coordination, and performance quality.

High School (9–12)

Course Family	Possible Student Growth Measures	Notes
Art I–IV	TEKS aligned portfolio using a vertically articulated project sequence across all HS art courses. Students show BOY to EOY growth in foundational skills, creative expression, and critique using rubric scored individual artifacts.	Growth is determined using individual student artifacts scored with a TEKS-aligned rubric comparing BOY and EOY work.
Music Ensembles (e.g., Band, Choir, Orchestra, etc.)	SLOs/Portfolio with individual performance checkpoints (scales, etudes, excerpts, literacy)	UIL rubrics can be used to design Projects but not the UIL performance itself; maintain individual evidence.

Music Theory / AP Music Theory	Pre-/Post (district); or AP exam with district growth targets	Ensure BOY diagnostic covers pitch/tonal skills; link to EOY outcomes.
Theatre I–IV / Musical Theatre / Technical Theatre	Portfolio; SLOs using artifacts from Performances	Include performance/design artifacts, call sheets, prompt books, reflections.
Dance I–IV	Portfolio (technique videos over time); SLOs	Use consistent filming conditions, rubric anchors by level.

**Note on UIL: UIL ratings do not meet TIA’s requirement for individual, student level growth. UIL rubrics may be used to inform locally developed classroom portfolio rubrics, but only for classroom performances; student growth cannot be captured from a UIL event.*

Student Growth Evidence and Planning Examples

Student Performances as Growth Evidence

Districts can use performances as part of growth measurement if:

1. The evidence is individual (e.g., recorded individual lines, spotlighted choreography, solo or small-group passages).
2. Rubric is applied to the individual’s performance.
3. The performance artifact is included in the Portfolio or SLO body of evidence.
4. Ensemble ratings alone (UIL) **cannot** serve as the growth measure—they can only used to inform Portfolio and SLO scoring rubrics.

Below are ready-to-use examples per discipline that show how districts can operationalize expected growth while preserving TEKS alignment and meeting TIA requirements.

Choir Example (Tone & Posture Progression)

Planning	Example
Course / Assignment	High School Music; Choir I (Beginner)
Preferred Growth Model	SLO or Portfolio
BOY Diagnostic (Initial Skill Profile)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student sings a simple melodic pattern • Tone: breathy, unsupported • Pitch accuracy: ~60% • Diction/Text Clarity: lyrics or syllables not clearly distinguishable • Posture: collapsed chest, knees locked • Evidence: short individual video excerpt + quick rubric (TEKS-aligned)
Expected Growth Target (EOY Skill Profile)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported, clearer resonant tone on simple melodic lines • ≥80% pitch accuracy on comparable BOY etude • Consistent singer’s stance (aligned spine, soft knees, lifted chest)
Evidence Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EOY individual recording • Teacher rubric scoring tone, pitch, posture
Determining Met / Exceeded Growth	<p>Met: ≥1 full rubric level improvement in tone and ≥20% pitch accuracy gain</p> <p>Exceeded: Consistent resonant tone and ≥30% pitch gain and posture maintained across two excerpts</p>

Band / Orchestra Example (Tone + Literacy Skills)

Planning	Example
Course	High School Music; Band I
Growth Model	Portfolio or SLO
BOY Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concert tuning test • Concert scale sheet performance • Rhythm sight-reading excerpt • Teacher rubric scores tone, intonation, articulation, literacy
Expected Growth Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tone improves one rubric level • Increased intonation stability (fewer center deviations on tuner graph) • Rhythm accuracy increases by ≥ 20 percentage points
Allowable Artifacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair test recordings • Sectional check-ins • Individual excerpts from concerts • Sight-reading recordings
Growth Determination	Growth is met or exceeded based on documented rubric score improvements and accuracy gains. Evidence must be attributable to the individual student (not ensemble composite ratings).

Theatre Example (Characterization + Vocal Projection)

Planning	Example
Course	Theatre I
BOY Diagnostic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30–60 second monologue • BOY rubric scores vocal clarity, projection, characterization, physicality
Expected Growth Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One full rubric level improvement in at least two strands (diction, projection, characterization, physicality)
Evidence Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehearsal clips • In-class performance tasks • Performance nights (with rubric isolating individual student work)
Growth Determination	Met: One rubric level improvement in ≥ 2 strands Exceeded: Sustained rubric level gains across multiple performance contexts

Visual Arts Example (Technique + Creative Decision-Making)

Planning	Example
Course	High School Visual Arts; Art I
BOY Diagnostic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple still-life drawing • Rubric scores proportion, value rendering, composition, creative decision-making
Expected Growth Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10–20% reduction in proportion distortion • Stronger blending in value scales • More intentional composition choices
Evidence Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOY vs EOY artwork artifacts • Progress sketches • Critique reflections
Growth Determination	Portfolio rubric determines Met vs Exceeded based on documented technical and creative growth

Dance Example (Technique + Execution)

Category	Description
Course	High School Dance; Dance II
BOY Diagnostic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technique combination (pliés, tendu, turns, traveling sequence)• Rubric scores alignment, balance, control, performance quality
Expected Growth Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One rubric level improvement in alignment and control• Fewer balance breaks• More consistent energy and performance quality
Evidence Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Class recordings• Rehearsals• Concert pieces (when the individual student is assessed using a rubric)
Growth Determination	Growth status is based on rubric score improvements and consistency of technique execution

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. How do we measure growth in ensemble settings where performance is collective?**
Use individual evidence inside an SLO or Portfolio (e.g., chair tests, solo passages, etudes, sight-reading samples, sectional recordings) so growth can be linked to each student and teacher.
- 2. Can we include K–5 Fine Arts in year one?**
Yes. Many districts begin with secondary and add elementary later, but K–5 can be included using SLOs/Portfolios with simple, high reliability rubrics and anchor exemplars.
- 3. Are there minimum student counts?**
No statutory minimum. Districts may set local thresholds in their system. For very small classes (e.g., advanced levels), use individualized growth targets supported by portfolio evidence.
- 4. What about uncertified Fine Arts teachers under District of Innovation permits?**
All teachers with PEIMS code 087 are eligible for TIA, including district of innovation teachers.
- 5. How do AP courses fit?**
AP Art & Design (portfolio) and AP Music Theory (exam) can serve as third-party assessments with district-defined growth targets. Document the BOY diagnostic, target setting method, and how AP outcomes are translated into met/exceeded growth.
- 6. Can UIL assessments be the growth measure?**
No. UIL participation is not eligible for TIA. Eligibility is limited to regular school day instructional assignments; UIL requirements are distinct from classroom instruction.

Resources

- [TIA Guidebook](#) – Design, eligibility, measures, statewide standards, timelines.
- [Student Growth](#) (TIA site) – Definitions, performance standards, and measure options.
- [Third-Party Assessment Options](#) (TIA) – Vendor options & system planning