

Frequently Asked Questions

United I.S.D. Fine Arts Department

1. What are the main functions of the Fine Arts Department?

Promote Student Participation in Fine Arts Program within United I.S.D.
Coordinate & promote Fine Arts events district wide and within our community
Evaluation of Fine Arts Programs Provide educational, professional and program support to fine arts
Assist district and campus principals with recruitment of fine arts personnel
Develop and conduct staff development for fine arts personnel
Promote Curriculum Development for Art, Band, Choir, Elementary Music and Orchestra
Fiscal Management of Band & Choir Budgets

2. What instructional areas comprise the Fine Arts Department? The Fine Arts Department provides support to the following areas:

Art 6-12
Band 6-12
Choir 6-12
Cheerleading K-12
Dance Team 6-12
Drama(Theatre Arts) 6-12
Orchestra 6-8

3. If my son or daughter decides to enroll in band or orchestra, do we have to purchase the instrument?

There are specific band and orchestra instruments available for student use. Depending on which instrument the student has selected, a purchase or rental may be required. An instrument usage fee may also be charged for maintenance of each band and orchestra instrument. In addition, there may be fees required to cover the cost of certain competitive events.

4. Can a student join the band, choir or orchestra at any grade level?

It is preferred that students joining these organizations do so by the 6th grade. Students are encouraged to sign up in 7th grade and in some cases up to 8th grade. Most of our high schools in UISD do not start beginning students on any musical instrument.

5. If my son or daughter joins the band, choir or orchestra, can they still participate in sports or other activities?

Yes. Students can participate in sports or other activities provided there is no conflict with the main activity itself.

6. Do students in band, choir or orchestra have to attend after school practice sessions and performances and competitions?

After school practice sessions are not held every day, and students are required to attend these sessions as they enhance the skills learned in the classroom. Middle schools may have one day that they require 7th and 8th graders to attend an after school practice session while high schools may have after school rehearsals two or more times a week depending on whether it is Marching or Concert season. Students that enroll in band are expected to participate in extracurricular activities as part of the class requirements. Therefore it is a reasonable expectation that enrolling in band will require attendance in the activities prescribed for each group.

7. Do the United I.S.D. Mariachi Groups hire out for private parties, weddings, or quinceañeras?

The Mariachi groups in UISD do not hire out for private parties or social functions. They do perform for community related events such as dedications, grand openings, school functions, and district wide events. The mariachi groups do hire out for Mother's Day serenatas and the funds go the band department for each respective school. Persons interested in having a mariachi group perform for an approved function can call the high school band director at any United I.S.D. high school. As much as possible, we avoid pulling students out of academic classes for the purpose of a performance. Donations are accepted (and in some cases required) to cover the cost of transporting these groups.

9. How can I determine if my son or daughter is eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities?

Eligibility requirements can be fairly simple yet complex. As long as students pass all of their courses, they are eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities. It is only when a student fails a course that many questions arise as to when the student can regain their eligibility. Parents are encouraged to call the director of each organization with specific questions, the fine arts department at 473-7121, or visit the U.I.L. website that has a document called TEA & UIL Side by Side, which explains in detail eligibility requirements. The website address is: www.uil.utexas.edu

10. Can I transfer my daughter to another school for the purpose of being on a cheerleader or dance team squad?

No. Transfer requests for the purpose of participation in a school spirit organization at another school will not be approved.

11. My family currently resides out-of-district but will be moving to United I.S.D. My daughter missed the tryouts for spirit organizations, can she still tryout?

A student transferring from an out-of-district school will be given the opportunity to tryout only on the day of the original tryouts. If a student has missed the original tryout date, he/she must wait and tryout for the following year. Please note that some schools begin their tryout processes as early as March but most tryouts are held during the months of April and May. Please contact the school sponsor to keep abreast of your own school's calendar.

12. Since cheerleader and dance team groups do not come under UIL rules, do they still have to follow the eligibility requirements of no pass no play?

ALL extracurricular activities, including UIL activities, must adhere to the State Law of No-Pass/No-Play. Since cheerleading and drill team activities are extracurricular, they fall under State Law and not under UIL rule; therefore, they must follow the No-Pass/No-Play rules and the 8-hour practice rule.

13. My daughter has an injury and cannot perform the required routines for cheer or dance team Tryouts. Can she submit a video tape of what she can do?

No. A student that wishes to tryout for either cheer or dance must be present the day of tryouts and perform for a panel of judges.