

A photograph of several young students in a school setting, playing acoustic guitars. The students are wearing dark shirts and are focused on their instruments. The lighting is warm and focused on the students, with a dark background. The text 'acg:' is overlaid on the top left of the image.

acg:

austin
classical
guitar

Why Guitar?

Engaging new students in joyful and rigorous performing arts in school.

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WHY GUITAR?

AFFORDABILITY: A class set of 20 guitars typically costs \$3,000-\$5,000.


ACCESSIBILITY: Flexible, multi-level, K-12 curriculum allows for entry points at every grade level.

POPULARITY: Guitar is the most popular instrument in the world.


DIVERSITY: Widely attractive to students, guitar is featured in musical traditions worldwide.

ENROLLMENT: Instantly increase Fine Arts engagement for any school, program, or teacher.

RIGOR: Classical guitar curriculum is literacy-based, TEKS-aligned, and classes are structured similarly to band and orchestra.



RIVER BLUFF HIGH SCHOOL
320 CORLEY MILL ROAD – LEXINGTON, SC 29072
PHONE: 803-821-0700 – FAX: 803-821-0703
HTTP://RBHS.LEXINGTON1.NET



Jacob R. Smith III
 Principal
 Meg Higgins
 Academic Dean
 for Innovation
 Tara Black
 Head of
 School
 Tina Hines
 Assistant
 Principal
 Star Haden
 Athletic Director/
 Head Football
 Coach
 Joe Ben Watson
 Director for
 Counseling and
 Advisement
 Brian Adams
 Aiko Collett
 Guidance Counselor
 Emily McGraw
 Melissa Turner
 Dr. Crystal Virgilio
 School Counselors
 Gray Freburger
 Executive
 Secretary
 Amy Brewer
 Bookkeeper

To Whom It May Concern:

I've been a guitar teacher for four years now. I played a little in high school, but when I got this job I had not picked up this instrument in more than a decade! I was nervous to teach an instrument that I had little experience with, but I learned into it and spent the COVID quarantine times teaching myself as much as I could through online videos and method books.


Through the challenges of COVID and the years since, I have experimented with so many different methods to teach classroom guitar. However, I struggled to find success. My program was growing, sure, but the methods I looked at seemed more geared towards individual lessons and not classroom teaching. Through these old methods, students struggled to stay engaged with the work and didn't retain the music literacy skills I taught. I often resigned myself to just giving them TAB for each piece I wanted them to play as a group, and their sound on these pieces never quite measured up to what I wanted. I kept thinking "WOW there was a guitar curriculum that was truly more ensemble focused and introduced music literacy in a way that was easy to remember and made sense! Oh, and it would be nice if it was actually fun to play, too!" I was tired of teaching notes "one string at a time" and being limited to simple melodies like Ode to Joy or Yankee Doodle for an entire semester.


Then I got connected with you guys at Austin Classical Guitar in the summer of 2022, and it rocked my world!

Finally, a method that actually makes sense to use in the classroom! Here was a sequential, intelligently designed ensemble method for building classical skill and music literacy for students who had never been in a music classroom before, including structures to perform expressive, high-quality music from the very first day of instruction! I was so excited to implement this method with my students this year.

I basically "read" the entire program from level 1 and even walked my more advanced students through the curriculum. I was worried that they would be bored, but after we performed "LoFi" on the first day, one of my 4th year students came up to me and said "That was the best first day of guitar we have ever had!" And it has continued the same ever since. Every day has been an enjoyable music making experience for me and my students, and we haven't looked at TAB even once!

I'm so proud of all the work that we have been able to accomplish using the Austin Classical Guitar curriculum. This year has been the most enjoyable one I've had in my career so far, and I have to give you guys credit for helping to make that a reality! I look forward to challenging my students with the work this curriculum provides and making beautiful music with them for many years to come!

Sincerely,

 Mac Cochran



The Travis County Model Court for Children and Families

Lead Judge:
 The Honorable Darlene Byrne
 126th District Court of Travis County
 P.O. Box 1748
 Austin, Texas 78701

Staff Attorney:
 Katy Gallagher Parker

Court Operations Officer:
 Rene Salinas

Judicial Aide:
 Anna Rodriguez

March 20, 2018

Dear Wright Family Foundation:

I am writing to support Austin Classical Guitar's application for funding to support their services for youth in the juvenile justice system.

In 2010, in a partnership with the Austin Independent School District and Travis County, ACG developed an amazing for-credit arts class offered to students that find themselves in residence at the Gardner Betts Juvenile Detention Center, our local juvenile justice facility. I am familiar with the guitar program, which has grown since its inception and has been tremendously successful. I would venture to guess it has exceeded everyone's highest expectations. The participating students perform regularly at concerts in the courthouse during the swearing in ceremonies for Court Appointed Special Advocate Volunteers (CASAs). I have had the pleasure of attending many of the live performances of these young people. I am always awed at their poise, courage, courtesy and talent. I believe this program has inspired in them something that many of them did not know even existed within them. It has also been lovely to see the pride that is apparent in the faces of their parents and family members that attend the concerts as well. The gift of this program allows these young people to see that their life cannot and should not be defined by the bad acts they have committed.

One of the most beautiful experiences I have had with the program was seeing one of the young men actually perform solos in front of a live audience while at the same time displaying a paper and tape, life size, three dimensional rendering of a guitar. It is a remarkable piece of art and yet another expression of what this program can inspire within some of these young folks. This young man took it upon himself to create this piece of art for his instructors while his classes were on pause for the summer. It was a testament to how much passion the program had inspired in his heart.

Mission Statement:
 The Travis County Model Court for Children and Families is a multi-disciplinary effort to make certain every child has a safe, permanent, healthy home in a timely manner and strengthen families, while ensuring fairness and providing protection for individuals.

Contact us at: Ph. (512) 854-0915 Fax (512) 854-9780 Email: Katy.GallagherParker@traviscourttx.gov


Thank you

Dear ACG

As you well know, our boys here at Garcia are so very special. Many of them facing systemic issues such as poverty & homelessness. What a privilege it is to be their teacher & be able to experience their joy through music making.

Austin Classical Guitar has been a profound influence & force here in our classroom. Dr. Tony Mariano brings so much light & insight for both our students & myself every week that he is here. His excellence in teaching through meaningful sequencing and joyful music making has been an honor to work with.

There are not enough thanks in the world for everything that you do for our guitar classrooms here in AISD. More than ever, music education matters so deeply and we are beyond grateful for the staff at ACG.


 Gus Garcia Middle School

"I'm so proud of the all the work we have been able to accomplish using the Austin Classical Guitar Curriculum. This year has been the most enjoyable one I have had in my career so far"

– Mac Cochran, Music Teacher, River Bluff High School

"As a judge, I routinely see young people in my courtroom whose lives have suffered by the effects of abuse and neglect, poverty, mental illness, and addiction. These youth often develop a hard exterior and are not easily reached by individuals in the community who want to engage them in positive programming. Austin Classical Guitar has had a remarkable impact on the students they work with, using a beautiful art form to crack through the hard exterior of some of our community's toughest young people and inspiring in them a sense of beauty, passion, and self-respect."

– Darlene Byrne, Judge, 126th District Court

"Our boys here at Garcia are...facing systemic issues such as poverty and homelessness...Austin Classical Guitar has been a profound influence and force here in our classroom."

– Lauren Gordon, Gus Garcia Middle School



THE GUITAR CLASSROOM

LITERACY: Students learn to read and write standard notation along with theory and historical/cultural context of the repertoire.

EXPRESSION: Students engage in expressive music making from the very first day of instruction.

ENSEMBLE: Students primarily perform in large ensemble with a conductor as well as learn solo guitar repertoire.

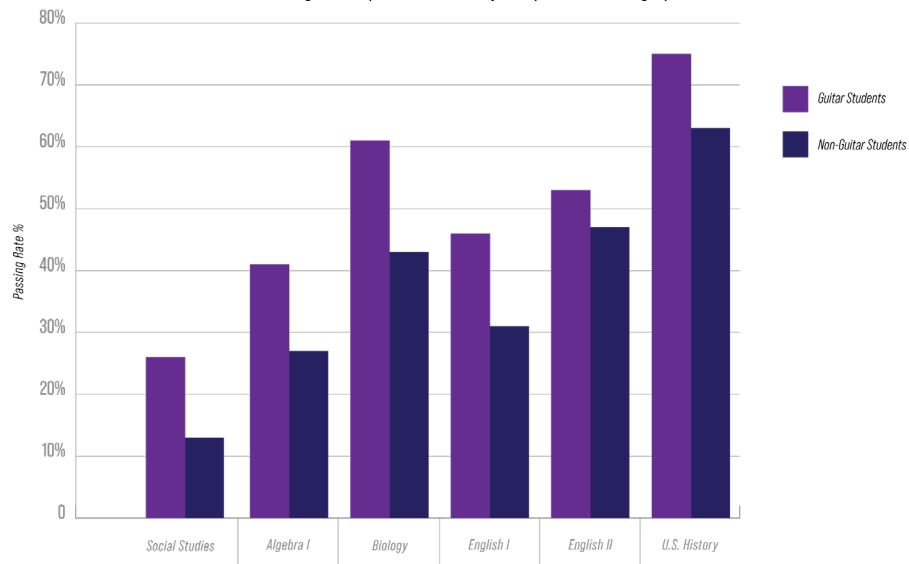
PERFORMANCE: Guitars ensembles and soloists perform all year long.

ASSESSMENT: Large-ensemble Concert & Sight Reading assessments available throughout Texas, as well as UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest for solo and small ensembles.



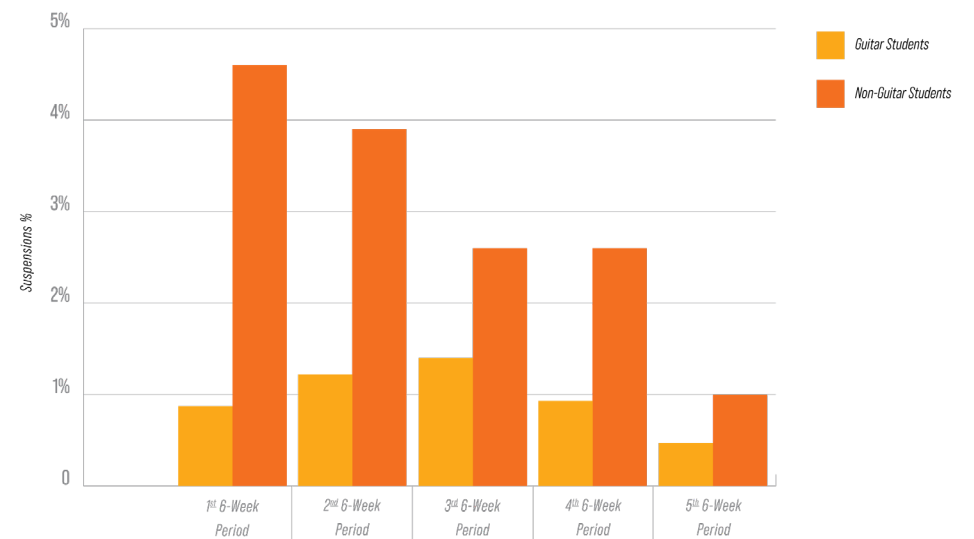
2023 STAAR Test Results in Austin ISD*

* District data from 21 campuses, about 1,700 guitar students, compared with non-guitarist peers matched by campus and demographic.



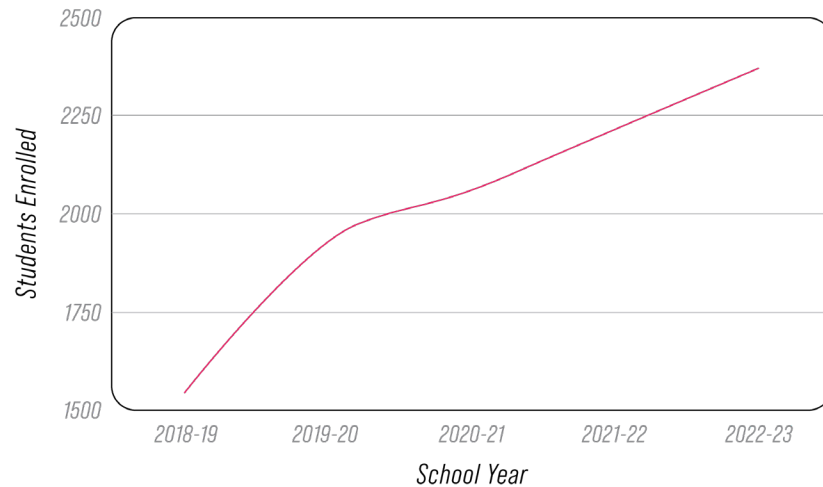
23-24 BEHAVIORAL REFERRALS IN AUSTIN ISD*

* District data from 21 campuses, about 1,700 guitar students, compared with non-guitarist peers matched by campus and demographic.



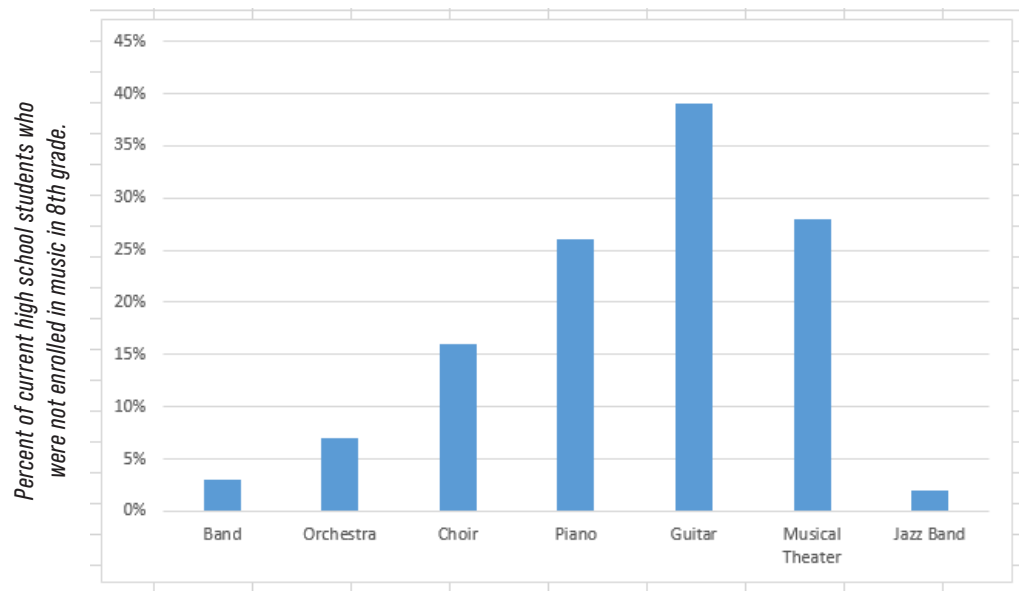
INCREASING FINE ARTS ENROLLMENT

AISD Guitar Enrollment 2018-2023



Guitar Engages New Students in Fine Arts

Data from AISD's 2021 study: *New Discoveries in High School Arts Participation and the implications for Equity.*



"Guitar is now the second largest music program in Austin ISD high school and middle school campuses... partnership between AISD and Austin Classical Guitar has closed the access gap for our most marginalized students and teachers."

– Phillip Taylor, AISD Director of Fine Arts



WHAT TEACHERS ARE SAYING

May 23, 2017

To Whom in May Concern,

Austin Classical Guitar and classical guitar education programming has affected me and my students in a profound ways. We have been using livelymiddle.com for seven years. In that time I have seen this curriculum not only serve as a very solid foundation for musicianship, but it has ignited a real love for the instrument, and a desire to achieve an extremely high level of artistry. I have been a classroom music educator for 23 years. In that time, I have taught orchestra, choir, band, music theory, and musical theatre. Never in my career have I seen students so on fire for music as I have seen with my students studying classical guitar.

The effect this has had on my students is nothing short of amazing. Students in the program show improved time management skills, increased self-esteem, improved problem solving skills, improved self-discipline, improved classroom discipline, and an overall improvement in all of their academic subjects in order to be eligible to perform with the guitar ensemble. Guitar students tell me that learning classical guitar inspires them to listen to new and different music and it can be a huge help in distracting them from some of the negatives in life. A freshman student, "Josh" has been undergoing chemo-therapy and he states, "Practicing guitar takes my mind off my illness and the discomfort and pain of my chemo." "Destiny" said, "it actually makes me want to listen and learn in both guitar class and all of my other classes." Students who would never even consider going to college before are now planning on pursuing a music education degree with classical guitar as their primary instrument. During the course of the last two years, I have seen students suffering from depression, bullying, and peer pressure do a 180 degree turn around and become happy, productive students with goals and plans for the future. Students who have difficulty achieving in other subjects often change their whole way of thinking about school while members of the guitar ensemble. It has become 'cool' to play classical guitar and I now have a waiting list to enroll in guitar class.

This spring, my advanced guitar ensemble competed at The UT-Rio Grande Valley Guitar Ensemble Competition. This is a national competition, attracting the best student guitar ensembles in the country. We came in second place, a half point behind the winners. This was a giant accomplishment for my students who play almost entirely on school instruments, and who are all on free or reduced lunch. My students know that great things are possible with enough hard work, and guitar has given them that belief.

As an educator, I appreciate the feedback I get from ACG instructors. It helps me to be the best educator I can be and to set a positive tone for my classes. I get to go to work every day. I never feel as though I have to. Teaching guitar is a gift. I know that every day, I get to make a positive change in the world, one student at a time.

Sincerely,

Susan Rozanc, Guitar Director
William B. Travis High School
1211 East Otter St.
Austin, Texas 78704

11/29/2013

Dear Dr. Hinsley,

The guitar program at Fulmore Middle School is now in its fifth year and flourishing. Fulmore Middle School is an inner city Title I school that is also a magnet school for the study of law and the humanities. Approximately 70% of the school population is at or below the poverty level, and 73% of Fulmore's population is Hispanic. As a cellist and orchestra director, I felt that there were a significant number of students that were not involved in any of the performing arts, but who could potentially be reached if a guitar program was offered. I had become aware that the Austin Classical Guitar Society had a high quality guitar education program that was offered in a few high schools and middle schools; I requested to have that program in my own school, and in the fall of 2009, through the auspices of Austin Classical Guitar, the Austin Independent School District, and under the mentorship of Jeremy Osborne, who is one of ACG's educational outreach specialists, a classical guitar program was born at Fulmore.

That first year I became a student as well, and spent a great deal of time working with Jeremy to learn the ins and outs of teaching and playing classical guitar. Due to the outstanding curriculum and mentorship that is available through Austin Classical Guitar, this was not as difficult as it might seem. The second year the program more than doubled in size, and with Jeremy's continued mentorship and co-teaching, Fulmore's advanced guitar ensemble of six second-year players and two who had a few years more of playing experience won the middle school ensemble top prize in the UT Brownsville Guitar Competition - the only competition of its kind in the United States.

The guitar program at Fulmore has multiple benefits. It has drawn students into the Fine Arts program that might not otherwise have participated, and has drawn in and involved their families as well. Because of the relative affordability and accessibility of the guitar, parents are able and willing to invest in an instrument where they might not have been able to otherwise. Having a child in a performing arts program also draws these same parents into the life of the Fulmore community, where they might otherwise have remained in the background. Students in any performing ensemble in AISD must be passing all classes to participate in outside performances, and being in guitar ensemble has helped many of my students work hard to pull grades up. Interestingly, having a guitar class has not hurt other Fulmore performing ensembles in terms of numbers, as I have guitar students who participate in band, orchestra and choir also. Classical guitar at Fulmore has been a unifying force, as students from across all ethnic and socio-economic levels participate in the classical guitar program. These students perform in many guitar events as a part of the Austin Independent School District and the Austin Classical Guitar Educational Outreach program, and through traveling together and getting to know each other, they also learn to understand each other better.

Although as a fifth year classical guitar teacher in AISD I am mainly teaching on my own, I still have the full support and mentorship of Austin Classical Guitar, and am always able to have Jeremy or one of their other specialists come in to work with my class and give me advice. There are more and more performing opportunities available to these young guitarists, and I have seen more than half of the members of Fulmore's guitar ensembles continue on with guitar into high school, as this wonderful program becomes available in more and more schools each year. As a cellist and teacher learning a new instrument (and needing to stay at least one step ahead of my students!) teaching a guitar ensemble has reminded what it is like to learn a new instrument - and has benefitted not only me, but those who I am teaching.

But above all else, I think that Bill Evans - the great jazz pianist and composer - said it best: "When you play music you discover a part of yourself that you never knew existed." Austin Classical Guitar has made available to countless students a new means of self-expression and discovery.

Meredith McAlmon, Director of Orchestra and Guitar
Fulmore Middle School



Katie Landolt
Lively Middle School
July 12, 2022

To whom it may concern:

I have taught classical guitar in Austin ISD for three years with the support of ACG. The resources and encouragement I have received have truly made this career possible for me. When I first started teaching guitar in 2019 I was very apprehensive. I was a first-year teacher and had never taught or played the guitar as I'm a Violist originally. ACG was incredibly helpful and supportive. They offered me private lessons, individual coaching, mentorship, and help in the classroom, without which I'm not sure I would have lasted! As my experience and confidence grew so did my appreciation and love for teaching guitar.

ACG offers many enriching experiences for my students. My students love participating in community performances, ACG's Concert and Sight Reading, and having wonderful performers like Joseph Palmer perform for them. These opportunities would not be possible without ACG.

I have really enjoyed and learned so much from the professional development that is provided through ACG. Without their support I wouldn't have the knowledge or training required to make my guitar program successful. I am encouraging support for ACG, an organization that has made such a positive impact for my students and myself.

Sincerely,

Katie Landolt
Director of Guitar
Lively Middle School

"I have been a classroom music educator for 23 years. In that time, I have taught orchestra, choir, band, music theory, and musical theatre. Never in my career have I seen students so on fire for music as I have seen with my students studying classical guitar."

– Susan Rozanc, Guitar Director, William B. Travis High School

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Classical guitar at Fulmore has been a unifying force, as students from across all ethnic and socio-economic levels participate in the classical guitar program."

– Meredith McAlmon, Director of Orchestra and Guitar,
Fulmore Middle School

"I have taught classical guitar in Austin ISD for three years with the support of ACG. The resources and encouragement I have received have truly made this career possible for me."

– Katie Cohen Landolt, Music Teacher, Lively Middle School

PROGRAM SUPPORT

CURRICULUM: Used in 45 Texas school districts and 40 US states, Austin Classical Guitar's GuitarCurriculum has been a leading classroom guitar resource with comprehensive instructional materials and teaching support for guitar directors since 2008.

TRAINING: Our team has supported the development of hundreds of school-based guitar programs across the nation. Each year ACG Education provides national training summits in multiple locations, school in-service training, direct consultation, and remote support.

ASSESSMENT: In 2014 ACG developed the Large Guitar Ensemble Concert & Sight-Reading Contest for Austin ISD based on UIL rules and procedures. We have since assisted with development of similar contests in Houston, Corpus Christie, Brownsville, and El Paso.





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