



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TEXAS CULTURAL TRUST AWARDS \$26,000 TO 10 TEACHERS ACROSS THE STATE TO
IMPLEMENT INNOVATIVE ARTS & DIGITAL LITERACY INITIATIVE

*CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY GRANTS HELPS FINE ARTS TEACHERS MEANINGFULLY
INTEGRATE TECHNOLOGY IN CLASSROOM*

AUSTIN, TX – The Texas Cultural Trust has awarded 10 fine arts teachers across the state a total of \$26,000 to significantly incorporate the use of technology into their artistic classroom. The Trust's Arts & Digital Literacy Initiative, in partnership with the University of Texas at Austin College of Fine Arts is an innovative curriculum that bridges technological instruction with fine arts education. The Arts and Digital Literacy is a series of project based Fine Arts courses for high school students that establish the connection between fine arts education and digital media. The courses count as fine arts credit required for graduation and are available for free download at www.txartandmedia.org. **Since the Classroom Technology Grant's inception in 2015, the Texas Cultural Trust has awarded over \$50,000 to 19 deserving Fine Arts teachers across the state.** Learn more about the Arts & Digital Literacy Initiative by watching [this](#) video.

"The Arts & Digital Literacy Initiative transforms fine arts classrooms into a place where students learn important 21st century technological skills," says Jennifer Ransom Rice, Executive Director of the Texas Cultural Trust. "Despite all of the evidence to the contrary, Fine Arts is still viewed as a non-essential part of our children's education. These courses emphasize the impactful role the arts play in technology for all students. High school students leave these classes better prepared for the modern-day workforce while still gaining all of the benefits of arts education – better attendance, better standardized test scores, and higher rates of enrollment in post-graduation education to name a few."

The 2016 Arts & Digital Literacy Classroom Technology Grantees are:

Dedra K. Espinoza, <i>San Antonio</i> NW Campus	\$4,000
Jenna Stephenson, <i>New Braunfels</i> Canyon High School	\$3,000
Raquel Wiseneke, <i>Fort Worth</i> Western Hills High School	\$2,750
Carrie Johnson, <i>Irving</i> Universal Academy LTTTS Charter School Irving	\$2,750
Brittany Skillern, <i>Round Rock</i> Westwood High School	\$2,500
Jennifer Nowzardan, <i>Austin</i>	\$2,500

Crockett High School

Brian Cheslik, *Austin* \$2,500
Texas School for the Deaf

Anna Macias, *Austin* \$2,000
Lake Travis High School

Laura Castaneda, *Brownsville* \$2,000
Raul Yzaguirre School for Success

Theresa Sneed-Hardy, *Dallas* \$2,000
Pinkston High School

House Bill 5 requires schools *teach 21st century learning skills, develop community partnerships, and focus on digital learning*. The Arts & Digital Literacy Initiative addresses all of these requirements while keeping students fully engaged in school. The Trust's own research shows that **students who are enrolled in the arts have up to 15 percent higher pass rates on standardized test scores, are 50 percent less likely to drop out, and have greater rates of enrollment in higher education in Texas than students who are not**. The Arts & Digital Literacy Initiative is based on a combined set of fine arts and technology standards, providing integrated, relevant skills that will prepare students for the 21st century workplace.

The grantees and other Fine Arts teachers will be attending our upcoming professional development Institute, Digital Pioneers, August 1 – 3, 2016 at the AISD Performing Arts Center. Exciting, hands-on instruction will be offered to high school fine arts teachers interested in meaningfully integrating technology in their classroom using the Arts & Digital Literacy Curricula. An opening reception will feature keynote speaker, Dr. Bob Duke of KUT's *Two Guys on Your Head*, on August 1st, 5:00-6:30 pm. Media is invited to attend.

For more information about the Texas Cultural Trust and Arts & Digital Literacy Initiative, visit www.txculturaltrust.org. To download the curricula for *free*, visit www.txartandmedia.org.

ABOUT THE TEXAS CULTURAL TRUST

The Texas Cultural Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to be the leading voice for the arts in education, advocacy, and economic impact in Texas, spotlighting the artistic excellence of our state. Programs of the Texas Cultural Trust include the biennial Texas Medal of Arts Awards, Texas Women for the Arts, the Texas Young Masters Program, the Arts & Digital Literacy Initiative, and the *Invest in the Arts. The Arts Perform* Advocacy Campaign, as well as support for programs of the Texas Commission on the Arts and other qualifying state agencies. For more information on TCT, please visit www.txculturaltrust.org.

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