



ICONOCLAST

A R T I S T S

CREATIVE WRITING & LITERACY PROGRAM

Creative writing strengthens academic learning and personal growth.

Iconoclast Artists is a free creative writing and poetry program for students in grades 6–12 in Houston and Galveston. Established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2016, we bring high-quality literacy instruction during the school day to strengthen students' reading, writing, vocabulary, communication, and critical thinking.

Our S.W.A.P. program (Students With Amazing Potential) offers additional opportunities for creative expression through after-school, weekend, and summer programming.

Through creative expression, our students gain confidence, build resilience, and develop the skills and habits they need to succeed in school and beyond.



Supporting Student Success

Many students served by Iconoclast Artists face barriers outside the classroom, including food insecurity, housing instability, and family financial hardship. These circumstances often contribute to chronic absenteeism, lower reading and writing achievement, and lower STAAR scores.

By coupling standards-based academic learning with the development of core competencies, Iconoclast Artists strengthens students' literacy skills while helping them building habits and interpersonal skills that support their success in school and beyond.

Recent data have shown measurable improvement across many areas for our students.

Core Competencies

Self-awareness

Confidence

Emotional regulation

Resilience

Critical thinking

Communication

Empathy

Respectful collaboration

Healthy relationships

Writing Curriculum

Iconoclast Artists' unique curriculum aligns with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), integrating creative writing with standards-based ELA instruction. Students explore works by diverse writers and analyze, discuss, create, and revise original writing and poetry that encourages reflection, curiosity, empathy, and authentic self-expression.

Areas of TEKS alignment include:

- Reading comprehension
- Literary analysis
- Author's purpose and craft
- Vocabulary development
- Writing process
- Revision and editing
- Oral communication and discussion
- Critical thinking and evidence-based reasoning
- Poetry and other literary composition
- Narrative writing

Note: Detailed TEKS alignment information is available upon request.

Scheduling

Creative writing sessions are led by an Iconoclast Artists teaching fellow and are tailored to the needs of each campus. Weekly sessions take the place of an existing class period during the school day, such as English Language Arts, Theatre Arts, an ancillary class, or a designated free period.

Schools typically schedule one class period per group of students per week, while some choose longer class blocks. Classes consist of about 15-25 students each and are held in a classroom or instructional space provided by the campus. Iconoclast Artists' schedules are designed to complement each school's calendar and minimize disruption to core instruction.

Teaching Fellows

Iconoclast Artists' Teaching Fellows are experienced educators, writers, and mentors who hold master's degrees in English and have extensive experience working in under-resourced communities.

In addition to their expertise in English Language Arts, Teaching Fellows receive ongoing professional development in trauma-informed instruction and positive youth development. Their ability to build authentic relationships with students is central to our success and creates learning environments where students feel safe taking academic and creative risks.



Our Partners

Over the past ten years, Iconoclast Artists has partnered with schools throughout the region, including Spring Branch, Aldine, Houston, and Galveston ISDs. After-school, weekend, and summer programs are also offered in partnership with community organizations throughout Houston and Galveston.

Measuring Student Outcomes

Student progress is evaluated through a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collected during the school year, including pre- and post-assessments, literacy benchmarks, behavioral data, student surveys, classroom observations, and administrator feedback.

31% → 10%

EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

33% → 65%

CLASSWORK
COMPLETION

52% → 20%

STUDENT WORRY &
NERVOUSNESS

+20%

SELF-AWARENESS

School administrators consistently report:

- Improved reading, writing, and vocabulary
- Higher student attendance rates
- Fewer disciplinary incidents
- Greater classroom participation
- Increased collaboration among peers
- Improved confidence and willingness to share writing

ANNUAL STUDENT SHOWCASE & POETRY ANTHOLOGY

THEY SAY

Every spring, Iconoclast Artists honors all students at a special event: THEY SAY. This moving celebration gives students the opportunity to perform their original work, as published authors, for a large and diverse audience.

In Houston and Galveston, hundreds of supporters attend THEY SAY at the Museum of Fine Arts and the Bryan Museum to applaud the students' courage and creativity, and to celebrate the publication of their poetry anthology. The event also features a live DJ, keynote speaker, and opportunities for families, friends, and community partners to connect and support one another.

Proceeds from book sales fund scholarships for students to pursue higher education or career training. This year, 10 students were presented scholarships at VIP receptions before both THEY SAY events.



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CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE

Claudia Crane Shuford | Executive Director | claudia.crane@iconoclastartists.org

Susan Ferrer | Program Director | susan.ferrer@iconoclastartists.org



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