

Are fine arts doomed?

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It's August 20, and you're sitting on the new stadium seats at your school's first football game of the season. The air is fresh, the crowd is cheering, and your team is crushing the competition. Yet among all this normal game-day excitement, something is missing. You look around and suddenly realize there's no band. Where are the thudding drums? The sharp trills of the trumpets? The deafening clashes of the cymbals? They vanished when the soccer team received new equipment and the football stadium was rebuilt.

These "essential" updates come at the cost of not only the band but your school's chorus, drama, and visual arts programs. Now this story may sound exaggerated. What school is completely void of music and art? Unfortunately this situation is fast becoming the reality at schools across the nation.

According to scholastic.com, if a school system is forced to reduce spending, "Arts programs are nearly always the first to go" – not sports.

Why is this? Research illustrates that students who participate in fine arts programs are more likely to succeed academically. Although athletics allow students to receive scholarships based on their performance (as do the fine arts), schedules full of practices and games limit the time that a student has to study. Dr. E. Culpepper Clark, Dean of the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia, strongly supports the fine arts.

He stated that students who participate in the programs have "a strong background that strengthens" their scholastic performance. When asked if he believes that sports take precedence even at a college level, Dr. Clark replied that there is no one who could deny that they do. So how does this

scale, which seems to permanently tip in the favor of athletes, affect the students who are losing out? Nicole, an orchestra and drama student, said that drama was cut two years ago because the school just didn't " have the resources." She went on to say that the focus on sports is " not fair. All students should have the same opportunities.

" Michael Duncan, a superintendent, explained that funding for the fine arts is " based on the number of students in each class." However, he added that the money for these classes comes from taxes while the sports teams raise their funds through booster clubs. If this is so, where is all this tax money? The fine arts sure are not seeing it. According to a report from insidehighered.com, Ohio University gave 75 percent of its budget to intercollegiate sports teams last year, so obviously this issue is not confined to elementary and high schools. So how do we make this phenomenon end? Fund the fine arts, they fund our future.