

Music education: a necessity

[Business](#)



“ What a tragedy it would be if we lived in a world where music was not taught to children.” General H.

Norman Schwarzkopf proclaimed after describing his love of music, even in the midst of the Gulf War. I agree with him. In my own experience, music has proven to be a priceless gift to those involved. Even so, in some schools this tragedy, getting rid of arts programs and teachers, is occurring. As educators are facing budget cuts and an increasing pressure to do well on standardized tests, “ less important” subjects such as music education are being cast aside. This is a very grave mistake.

Music and the arts improve academic achievement and teach valuable skills; school administrators should not cut these programs. Students involved in the arts improve their academic progress substantially. At my own school, many senior band members are among the top twenty-five, some are even in contention for valedictorian. Researchers from the U. S.

Department of Education found that in a study of 25, 000 students revealed that those consistently involved in music “ show significantly higher levels of mathematics proficiency by grade twelve.” This isn’t just a high school band director talking in order to increase interest in his program. Another study by Social Science Quarterly showed taking lessons in music has a positive effect on student math achievement. Math isn’t the only subject improved by music; critical thinking, reading, and study skills are all improved by participation in the arts. Students of the arts also score better on standardized tests.

The College Entrance Examination Board of 2001 stated “ students in music appreciation scored 63 points higher on verbal and 44 points higher on the math [portion of the SAT], than students with no arts participation.” The arts are not a hindrance to education, taking precious time that could be used for core subjects; but an amplifier of students’ academic skills. Music also teaches valuable life skills, extending far beyond classroom walls. As a squad leader in the marching band, I have learned to be responsible not only for myself, but for my squad as well. I have to make sure they all know their drills and music, sometimes staying after school to work on it with them. Former president Gerald Ford declared “ Music education opens doors that help children pass from school into the world around them, a world of work, culture, intellectual activity, and human involvement. The future of our nation depends on providing our children with a complete education that includes music.” Skills learned from music include self-discipline, multi-tasking, decision-making, and organization, all essential when studying notes, rhythms, tempo, and style. Principal Helen Nolen of Sellwood Middle School in Portland Oregon believes that participation in the arts is one of the best ways to learn leadership qualities, and therefore makes music and art education a priority. Cutting music and art education is not only undesirable; it is also preventable.

Many other schools have found solutions to the ever-present problems of not enough time or money to include music and art with “ core subjects”. In fact, according to the Government Accountability office, many schools have found ways to keep their arts programs. Solutions include finding creative ways to move around schedules, even extending them by using block scheduling or

other adding another period. If making the school day longer is out of the question, consider Arizona's Tuscon Unified School district. They are currently involved in a program called Opening Minds through the Arts.

OMA integrates the arts into other subjects, "improving and overcoming challenges faced in education". With a little bit of research and ingenuity, administrators can stretch time and budgets to accommodate both music and math classes. Music and the arts are an important part of education. They encourage academic proficiency, and teach skills that will be useful long after high school. As important as they are to students and society alike, schools are still cutting these programs, even when alternatives exist. "We the People...promote the general welfare".

Are not the arts apart of the welfare of our children? School administrators and parents alike need to be educated on the values of the arts, for as many leading world figures have stated, they are not only wanted, but necessary. Not everyone can be great at sports. For some music is like their bread and water, which we do not have the right to deny anyone.