

## Arts/Music Education, Our Schools, and Our Children

Although a lifelong advocate of Fine Arts Education, which includes Music, Dance, Theater, and 2D-3D arts, unfortunately, I have not readily had a chance to become involved in the [Insert School] School District's Music and Fine Arts Curriculum beyond my attendance at many of the schools public events. While the [Insert School] Schools, on a grander scale, have become/are beginning to become well-known for their academic rigor and excellence, I urge the [Insert School] School Board to continue to keep a STRONG focus on the importance of Arts and Music Education in our children's lives and developmental processes and keeping the districts related programs both viable and strong in this regard.

As a community we MUST continue to provide our kids, not only with some access to Arts and Music Education, but deliberate, functional, and meaningful implementations of it as well. The [Insert School] School District and community is fortunate to have a number of expert and dedicated music and arts educators as teachers of our students. As a community, school board, and administrative body, we must also continue to show that we are dedicated to the sustained support of our *Music/Arts Related School Programs* and take advantage of every opportunity (financial, scheduling, facility, etc.) that arises to make them of the highest quality that we can.

Sincerely,

[Insert Name] – August 1, 2008

What follows is a brief referenced list of information with regard to the importance, advocacy, and need of the continued support of Music, and Fine Arts Education within our school programs:

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1. *"The term 'core academic subjects' means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography." — No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, Title IX, Part A, Sec. 9101 (11)*
2. *One section of the No Child Left Behind Act [the principal Federal law governing education in the United States], Title V, part D, subpart 15, Section 5551, is designed to "support systemic education reform by strengthening arts education as an integral part of the elementary school and secondary school curriculum;" to "help ensure that all students meet challenging State student academic achievement standards in the arts;" and to "support the national effort to enable all students to demonstrate competence in the arts." This section includes money authorized specifically for music teacher professional development. The amounts involved are and have been quite small, but are symbolically important as giving the Federal imprimatur - the one that counts - to education in music and the other arts.*
3. *When a child learns, by experience, that music forges direct links between self and world, self-expression becomes more fluent; the music helps interpret "who I am." The child who is taught how to create music is also learning something significant about his or her innate creativity. As a child begins to understand the connection between hours of practice and the quality of a performance, self-discipline becomes self-reinforcing. It is only a short jump from that realization to making the connection between self-discipline and performance in life. --From Growing up Complete, the 1990 report of the National Commission on Music Education*

4. *Students who participated in arts programs in selected elementary and middle schools in New York City showed significant increases in self-esteem and thinking skills. — National Arts Education Research Center, New York University, 1990*
5. *A research team exploring the link between music and intelligence reported that music training is far superior to computer instruction in dramatically enhancing children's abstract reasoning skills, the skills necessary for learning math and science. — Shaw, Rauscher, Levine, Wright, Dennis and Newcomb, "Music training causes long-term enhancement of preschool children's spatial-temporal reasoning," *Neurological Research*, Vol. 19, February 1997*
6. *“Studying music encourages self-discipline and diligence, traits that carry over into intellectual pursuits and that lead to effective study and work habits. An association of music and math has, in fact, long been noted. Creating and performing music promotes self-expression and provides self-gratification while giving pleasure to others. In medicine, increasing published reports demonstrate that music has a healing effect on patients. For all these reasons, it deserves strong support in our educational system, along with the other arts, the sciences, and athletics.” — Michael E. DeBakey, M.D., Leading Heart Surgeon, Baylor College of Music.*
7. *“Casals says music fills him with the wonder of life and the ‘incredible marvel’ of being a human. Ives says it expands his mind and challenges him to be a true individual. Bernstein says it is enriching and ennobling. To me, that sounds like a good cause for making music and the arts an integral part of every child’s education. Studying music and the arts elevates children’s education, expands students’ horizons, and teaches them to appreciate the wonder of life.” — U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley, July 1999*
8. *“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.” — Gerald Ford, former President, United States of America*
9. *“Music is about communication, creativity, and cooperation, and, by studying music in school, students have the opportunity to build on these skills, enrich their lives, and experience the world from a new perspective.” — Bill Clinton, former President, United States of America*
10. *Physician and biologist Lewis Thomas studied the undergraduate majors of medical school applicants. He found that 66 percent of music majors who applied to medical school were admitted, the highest percentage of any group. 44 percent of biochemistry majors were admitted. (As reported in Phi Delta Kappa.)*
11. *Students who report consistent high levels of involvement in instrumental music over the middle and high school years show significantly higher levels of mathematical proficiency by grade 12. This observation holds both generally and for low socioeconomic status students as a subgroup. In addition, absolute differences in measured mathematics proficiency between students consistently involved versus not involved in instrumental music grew significantly over time. -- James Catterall, Richard Chapleau, and John Iwanaga, "Involvement in the Arts and Human Development."*
12. *According to statistics compiled by the National Data Resource Center, students who can be classified as “disruptive” (based on factors such as frequent skipping of classes, times in trouble, in-school suspensions, disciplinary reasons given, arrests, and drop-outs) total 12.14 percent of the total school population. In contrast, only 8.08 percent of students involved in music classes meet the same criteria as “disruptive.” — Based on data from the NELS:88 (National Education Longitudinal Study), second follow-up, 1992.*