

Fighting for Music Education:

Ideas to Help Keep Music Programs Alive in the Face of Deep Budget Cuts

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Introduction

The effects felt by the Great Recession of 2009 continue have a devastating impact on schools in general and arts education in particular. The current version (early 2011) of the national budget that passed the House has unfunded the Arts In Education program and cut the National Endowment for the Arts budget by \$43 million, decimating long established support systems for art and music programs at all levels, but most significantly in disadvantaged areas. Furthermore, broad support for the STEM initiative (science, technology, engineering, math) and increased emphasis on standardized tests that ignore the arts, have given further credence to the viewpoint that the arts and music have no place in the core curriculum.

I. Music has been considered a primary subject since the earliest written history in both western and eastern cultures.

A. Plato's Republic - the two studies, Music (the mind), Gymnastics (the body).

B. Pythagoras - music and physics.

C. Zhou Dynasty, Six Arts (music, ritual, archery, chariot riding, calligraphy, and mathematics).

D. Confucius - from poetry to ceremony to music

II. Testimony from historically important philosophers, scientists, and musicians attest to the significance of music as a fundamental component to a complete education.

A. Galileo - Lute

B. Newton - On Musick

C. Einstein - Violin (many quotes)

D. Beethoven - Composition

E. Longfellow - Quotes

III. Numerous recent experiments clearly show the dramatic impact that studying music has on brain development and student success in other academic areas including languages, math, spatial reasoning, and memory. Music is math, science, and language.

A. Schlaug (The Neuroscientist, 08) - increase in corpus callosum in 1997, further research shows 25% increase with 2.5 hour weekly practice.

B. Schlaug (The Neuroscientist, 10) - music and motor skills increases brain plasticity and helps with developmental disorders in aging patients.

C. Harris (Learning Through the Arts Journal, 07) - Montessori students who received music-enriched math curriculum outscored students two years older (3 year olds did better than 5 year olds).

D. Kraus (Psychologist, 10) - music enhances neuroplasticity and enables the nervous system to provide stable scaffolding of meaningful patterns.

E. Trainor (Oxford University Press, 06) - study of music in young children increases memory performance in tests correlated with literacy, verbal memory, math, and general IQ.

- F. Other studies: Mind Institute's Math+Music (05) using piano with math in California for six years and Texas for two; Psychology of Music Journal (09) study shows a multi-year program of music leads to superior cognitive performance in reading skills.
- IV. The efforts by a variety of companies and organizations have brought attention to the importance of music to a complete education.
 - A. VHI - Save the Music program.
 1. Partners with music programs (elem, middle) - provides \$30,000 in grants for instruments
 2. Fundraising events, success stories, ambassador program
 3. Advocacy, Community, Teacher Toolkits
 4. Poll results (Gallup, Harris - over 95% of Americans support music ed)
 - B. MENC
 1. Resources - articles, webinars, booster/advocate advise, publications
 2. Why Music Education
 - C. NAMM Foundation
 1. Community Action Kit
 2. Music Research - research briefs (older, 90s)
 3. Grants
 - a. Program (community based)
 - b. Research (scientific)
 - c. Learning (effects of learning music)
 4. Music Achievement Council - music ed teaching tools
- V. Tailor your 'plan of action' outline.
 - A. Outreach activities
 1. Benefit concerts
 2. Speak out (NAMM Community Action kit with PDFs, Powerpoint)
 3. Lobby your local leaders (perform for official functions, then let your voice be heard)
 4. Write your representatives
 - B. Partnering opportunities
 1. Local music organizations (orchestras, choirs, bands)
 2. Music stores
 3. Radio stations
 4. Other schools
 - C. Grassroots social networking
 1. Ensemble Facebook Page
 2. Ensemble Twitter Feed
 - D. The Bach Box 501c3 non-profit project (thebachbox.com - under construction)
 1. Membership benefits (web page, access masterclasses and forums)
 2. Interact with colleagues
 3. Help students interact with peers
 4. Live streaming
 5. Fundraising - membership sharing, streaming tickets, distance streaming/collaboration
 6. Support each other and grow live music.