

Music Education Philosophy Paper

“Funding for the arts in public schools was cut by 68% between 2012-2013. This equates to \$7.2 million lost in funding for music programs.” – ABC News

By October of 2014, over 294,000 jobs in the education sector had been lost since 2010, including those in higher education. It appears that our government has their priorities out of whack and doesn't believe that music courses are beneficial to the children of the U.S., when in reality, music is one of the most crucial components to a child's education and development. To take away these music classes from our schools would be a detriment to children. Music programs are so vital for our teens because they require students to think both creatively and analytically, they provide teenagers a sense of family, and they better our kids in all other academic areas.

Being enrolled in a music class is so essential for our kids because music is one of the few activities that forces students to be creative and analytical. When playing an instrument, the left side of your brain is accomplishing all of the technical tasks of music. You relentlessly have to divide and use mathematical skills to determine note lengths and durations. Along with this, is the aspect of the instrument you are playing. “Do I have the correct fingers down? Is my embouchure correct? Am I playing in time? Am I playing in the style? Am I playing the correct volume, articulation, and dynamics?” These are all questions that you have to actively ask yourself when playing music. Reading music is very similar to reading a foreign language. All that being said, music isn't just about being right and wrong. It incorporates emotion, whether that is excitement, fear, anger, hilarity, or sorrow. This is why the right side of the brain is

engaged while playing music. The right side of the brain is what triggers the emotion in the player and the listener. Without the emotion behind the music, it is just black and white notes on a piece of paper, but when the musician adds their passion to the music, it transforms this black and white page into beautiful colors.

The transition to high school can be a very frightening rite of passage. It can be hard to make friends with people that you don't know and everything is so much bigger, confusing, and even overwhelming. That is, unless you are involved in the marching band, which meets for rehearsals during the summer before school starts. If you are a part of the band, then you are a part of their family and you immediately gain 50 friends just by signing up. When the kid who joined band shows up on the first day and doesn't know where his class is, or has any questions, or doesn't have someone to sit with at lunch, he can just talk to a fellow band member. Teens really need a strong support group to help them get through high school and nothing equates to the support you get from a community of 50 giving you unconditional love and guidance. Not only does being involved with music programs give the child a sense of family at school, but it also helps create a stronger family at home. Nine out of ten adults and teenagers who play instruments agree that music making brings the family closer together according to the Music Making and Our Schools at the American Music Conference in 2000.

Some people believe that music classes are a waste of time and merely take away attention and energy from the classes that actually matter. This statement is entirely false. According to National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988, high school music students have been shown to hold higher grade point averages (GPA) than non-musicians in the same school. Music is one of the only activities in schools that instills in kids that they must always strive to come close to perfection. Try to imagine what an orchestra would sound like if everyone played

90% of the correct notes. It would be agonizing to listen to, but according to our school policies, it would give the students an A. 90% is unacceptable for musicians and they learn this right away. Students will strive to reach flawlessness in their music because the listeners will expect it from them and the players will do their best to deliver. Teaching kids this concept of doing the best they can possibly do applies to every single thing they do for the rest of their lives. In music classes, kids are taught that the more they give, the more they get. The more you practice, the better parts you get to play. Music teachers are always raising the bar for their students. For example, “Join band. Ok you are in band, now learn this song. Ok you learned that song, now become the section leader. Ok you are now the section leader, now do Honor Band...” No matter what, there will always be another achievement to be achieved for music students. It seems that schools are teaching us the opposite. In school, the less you give, the more you get. For example, “Oh no. You didn’t finish your essay on time, you can turn it in tomorrow. Oh no. That isn’t helping so we will put you in a class where you can do better. Oh no. You still didn’t pass your class. Don’t worry you can take summer school. Oh no. You didn’t pass it at summer school either. Don’t worry, you can take it online...” We are giving more to the kids who are doing less. This is not how the real world is and we are only hindering our students by making them think that it is. Rewarding kids for doing well encourages them to do well while rewarding kids for doing poorly encourages them to do poorly. Music students understand that they need to give as much as they can to all of their duties in life including school work. At the “Arts within the Brain in Mind” conference in 2001, Eric Jensen said, “Teaching through the arts motivates children and increases their aptitude for learning.” Teens who are in music classes care about going to school. They are the ones who really enjoy learning. Lastly, according to Music Education Statistics and Facts, “Students who participate in school band or orchestra have the lowest levels

of current and lifelong use of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs among any group in our society.” This proves that music students are spending more time on academics and less time on unhealthy afterschool activities.

It is extremely important that kids have access to music programs. If we keep going the direction we are now, there will be no music in any schools across the United States. Some people do not understand the importance of music. “You can’t let someone who doesn’t know about music take it away from schools.” –Jack Stamp