

Why Music

by Charles Osgood

It has often been said that "All the smart kids are in music." What we now find is that it is actually the music programs that are helping to make smarter students.

Did you know that students who participate in music programs in schools score 45 points higher on the verbal and 37 points higher on the math portions of the SAT tests than students who do not? The gap in scores between music and non-music students widens with the length of time students study music.

Even very young children benefit from music education. Researchers today at the University of California at Irvine have established the first cause and effect link between music making in three-year-olds and higher brain function. Children who study music benefit from enhanced spatial and abstract reasoning skills, which means children who study music will perform better in other core subjects, such as math and science.

Not only does participation in music help a child's overall intellectual development, which corresponds to higher grades and better test scores, but music teaches a child critical skills that are important in today's workforce: self discipline, teamwork, problem solving skills, self-esteem and self-expression.

If participation in music making will provide your son or daughter with increased knowledge, improved intellectual development, and higher test scores and grades, and if learning how to play a musical instrument or sing in a choir will teach them many of the critical skills demanded in today's workforce...it seems logical to me that we insist on a sequential music program in all of our schools for all of our children. And most Americans agree. In a recent Gallup survey, a full 93 percent of Americans feel that music is part of a well-rounded education and that communities should provide the financial resources to support these programs in the schools.

As citizens, parents, and teachers, we want our children to receive the best education possible. We want decisions to be made that are in the best educational interest of our children.

Many of today's finer schools already know that music is an irreplaceable part of a balanced education. And as part of our national educational goals, music and the other arts are recognized as a core subject—equal partners with English, math and science. There is every educationally sound reason to keep music programs in our schools.

Shouldn't the children of your community have access to the same high quality of education as other schools across this state and across the nation? The choice is yours. I am sure that you will agree with me that based on the facts, music is necessary for a sound education.

I urge you to get involved in your community. Contact your local school board and let them know how important music programs are to your children's education. Insist that your children have the quality education they deserve.

Music...for a sound education.

I'm Charles Osgood.