

Advocacy Tips

All politics are local and your parents are the best source of help for you. Do not go it alone. Get the information to them and let them go to the board at the official meetings and also at the coffee shop etc. Contact outside help through the professional organizations of which you belong. IBA, IAAE, IMEA, ICDA, ISTA etc. Make sure that your local Education Association is aware of the proposed cuts.

Use all the information you can find that show the impact of the arts on students. Get information from neighboring districts and also from districts your size but since time is always a factor make the facts personal by pointing out specific examples that pertain to your students! Do you have the yearbook editor/top football player etc. in a performing arts group? Did you have a former art student who has gone on in the visual arts? List who would be hurt by these cuts and be specific ... name names!

Remember you were hired to be an advocate for your teaching assignment and discipline. Let the Administration and the Board know that you are advocating for their students in their district. Otherwise it is easy to get sidetracked into making it look like you are only interested in preserving your job. Remember (but don't say) that this is an administrative choice to make and you should not get pressured into making that choice for them. Do not allow the divide and conquer technique to be used to the detriment of your students. The administrators are paid (more than you are) to make these hard decisions and you should not let them off the hook by taking any responsibility for making their decisions easier.

Campaign, campaign, campaign as much as possible but always turn it toward the needs and benefits of the students in ***your*** district.

Remain as positive as possible (wear your game face) as this not only makes you appear more professional but also can make your day go a little smoother in the face of adversity.

Profile of SAT and Achievement Test Takers, the College Board, compiled by music Educators National Conference, 1998, 1996.

Music students enjoy greater college success.

"The Case for Music in the Schools," Phi Delta Kappan, February, 1994.

Substance abuse lowest in music students.

Huston Chronicle, January 11, 1998

Talking Points for the Arts:

Use the following points as needed:

If the choice at this point is eliminating the elementary art program or cutting back on elementary music then this is a devastating position to be in and the Superintendent has succeeded if he gets the fine arts supporters to divide and choose one content area over the other and not stand together. Neither content area offers the students less than the

other and neither offers more than the other. They offer different things. This is not about one program being better than the other or winning more awards than the other, this is about educating students for their life times. This is about giving them the skills they need for the 21st Century. We have to look at the unique skills both of these content areas teach. Those skills that can not be taught by the other or taught in the "Core of Four". Visual art teaches the valuable 21st Century skills of problem solving, innovation, creativity, originality, multiple solutions to one problem, persistence, flexibility, interpretation, analysis, synthesis and on and on. When students passionately say they need elementary art, they need to vocalize those things that a good elementary art program teaches. Not the act of making art, but the perception skills, the reflection skills and the process skills. The same is true of music. Music teaches similar skills such as persistence and also entirely different skills that are also valuable and unique to music education. Skills of logic, team work, sequence, and so on.

Please do not make a choice, do not make this about the staff or saving positions, make this about saving a quality 21st Century Education. Demand that the board and the superintendent see the unique skills that each of these areas teach that are necessary for career survival for students of the next generation.

Daniel Pink, talks about the jobs that are being replaced by computers and developing nations. Careers like doctors, lawyers, and accountants are being replaced by online sites such as, ask a doctor, divorce.com, turbo tax, etc. As we all know, many computer jobs and many jobs related to customer service are being outsourced to workers in countries like India. To assure our students of meaningful careers, we need to give them those skills that will keep them viable, some of which I've listed above. This is no longer the Information Age, it is the Conceptual Age. Information can be gathered via the internet. We need to teach our kids how to take that information and use it, utilizing those skills of using their senses and their minds to look, listen, analyze, think and feel. One of my parents was recently written about in the local paper in reference to his work with new mapping processes of the Milky Way. At the end of the article he addressed the shortcomings k-12 education that come to him. He commented that students come "expecting to be able to plug in a number and formula and do some rote memorizations," but that the scientific process is more like, "What is an idea that someone proposes, how is it tested and if that's true, what's the consequences and then lets see if one of the consequences can be disproved and what does that do to the premise?" He challenges schools to teach students that process. Not the information. Earlier in the year, I've written some articles to the Alliance membership about not stopping at teaching the students to "Solve Problems" but teaching them to identify the problem to solve. This is what the business world identified as the number one skills schools can teach. That is what we in the fine arts do. We don't do the thinking for the students, we require them to do the thinking. We don't give them the information to use, we have them find information and use it in unique ways.

Please do not "draw a line". This is a not a time to make a choice. To choose to eliminate a content area that fosters that innovation and creativity, that teaches students that there is more than one solution to a problem, and in fact requires every student to have a different solution when no other content area teaches that, is not where we want to take our kids. This is a time to put our heads together, as the creative individuals we are

and find a solution. As you stated early on, a solution of cuts that is the farthest from the students.

Adolescents Involved With Music Do Better In School

ScienceDaily (Feb. 11, 2009) — A new study in the journal *Social Science Quarterly* reveals that music participation, defined as music lessons taken in or out of school and parents attending concerts with their children, has a positive effect on reading and mathematic achievement in early childhood and adolescence. Additionally, socioeconomic status and ethnicity affect music participation.

See also:

Mind & Brain

- * Child Psychology
- * Educational Psychology
- * Child Development
- * Perception
- * Racial Issues
- * Social Psychology

Reference

- * Peripheral vision
- * Tinnitus
- * Special education
- * Perfectionism (psychology)

Darby E. Southgate, MA, and Vincent Roscigno, Ph.D., of The Ohio State University reviewed two nationally representative data sources to analyze patterns of music involvement and possible effects on math and reading performance for both elementary and high school students.

Music is positively associated with academic achievement, especially during the high school years.

However, not all adolescents participate in music equally, and certain groups are disadvantaged in access to music education. Families with high socioeconomic status participate more in music than do families with lower socioeconomic status. In addition to social class as a predictor of music participation, ethnicity is also a factor. Asians and Whites are more likely to participate in music than are Hispanics. While young Black children attended concerts with their parents, they were less likely to take music lessons.

“This topic becomes an issue of equity at both the family and school levels,” the authors conclude. “This has major policy implications for federal, state, and local agencies, as

well as knowledge that can help families allocate resources that are most beneficial to children.”

Journal reference:

1. Southgate et al. The Impact of Music on Childhood and Adolescent Achievement. *Social Science Quarterly*, 2009; 90 (1): 4 DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-6237.2009.00598.x

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