

Rationale for Including the Arts in a Basic Quality Education

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SENATE EDUCATION

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•QUALITY IS WHAT THE ARTS ARE ABOUT

Arts are judged on quality, and they teach students to recognize and value quality, something very few other academic areas do.

•SUCCESS

Several studies show students who actively pursue studies in the arts do better in school, have fewer emotional problems, and are more likely to succeed in a career than students with no arts. They are also more likely to have good attendance in school and later at work. Often times the arts class is the highlight of their school day. For some, their music, drama or art class may be the only subject in school in which they realize success. It is essential that every student enjoys success in school.

•CULTURAL HERITAGE

An important purpose of schools is to transmit our cultural heritage to succeeding generations, and the arts are one of the most glorious manifestations of our culture. Most parents want their children to know about Michelangelo, Beethoven, and Shakespeare as well as Galileo, Newton and Einstein. The arts allow students not only to learn about famous composers, playwrights and artists, but also to experience their works when recreating them on the stage or in the concert hall.

•DISCIPLINE

The arts demand self-discipline, focus and cooperation. In a music or drama class, the quality of the learning experience is dependent upon all class members--much as society depends upon citizens exercising self-discipline and cooperation.

•INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE

The arts reach learners in different ways from other academics. They challenge students to use higher level thinking, motor skills, creativity, and analysis, among others, and activate more areas of the brain than other subjects. The best students usually seek the most challenging classes, and the arts often provide those challenges.

•ENHANCED INTELLECT

Numerous studies during the past decade have shown that music study raises I.Q. Not surprising if one understands the intense concentration necessary to perform music, portray a character or sculpt a statue.

•EMOTIONAL CHALLENGE

Few subjects outside the arts involve emotional application or responses. Emotional intelligence is one of the greatest assets a person can possess to be successful in life.

•CREATIVITY

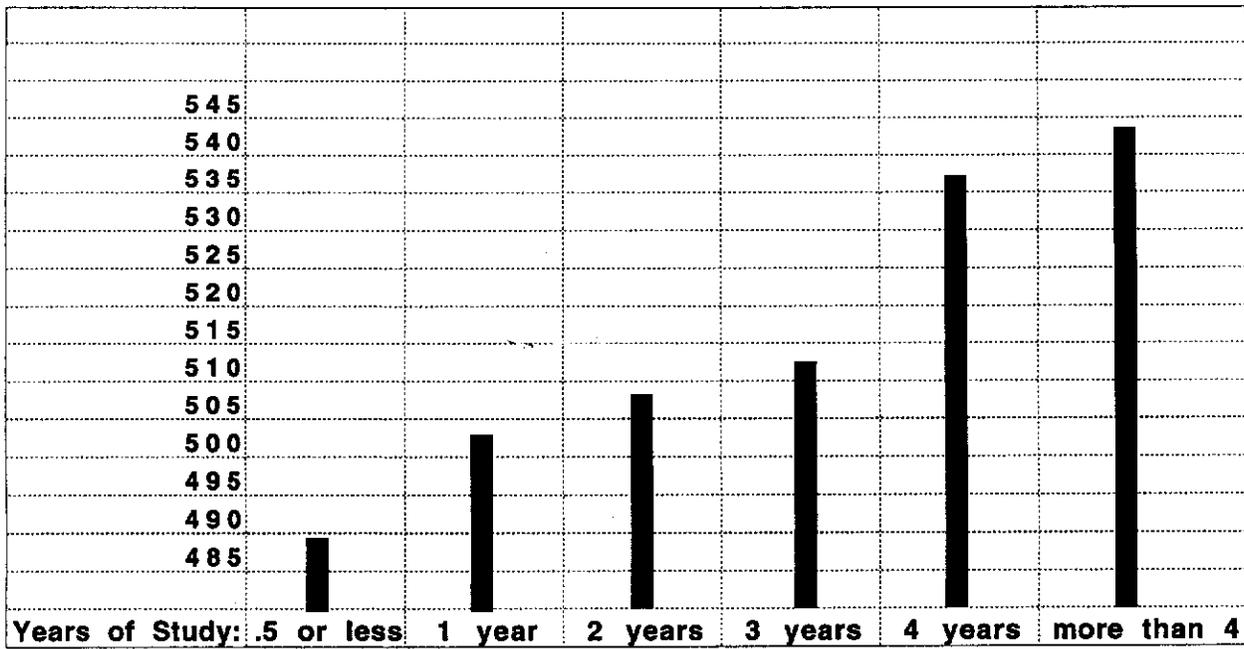
Because the arts are about *quality*, the final product in an arts class is almost always one of many attempts at perfection, even though the student understands that perfection is not achievable. They also lead to creative problem solving through a number of diverse approaches. Few subjects outside the arts teach creativity--one of the most valuable and marketable skills in today's job market.

•IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO

Students deserve rich experiences in the arts to give them a complete and rounded education, and parents want those experiences for their children.

2004 SAT Composite Scores Compared to Length of Study in Arts

Source: The College Board, Profile of College-Bound Seniors National Report



Paul Harvey

On Music Education In Our Public Schools



Paul Harvey is a syndicated editorial broadcaster and journalist of world-wide fame.

Music is everywhere - in bird song and in bubbling brooks and in laughter, even in the stars.

Music is the universal language that transcends time and space.

Music is one of the seven forms of human intelligence, all equal in stature and in potential.

And yet education - as is - is almost totally geared to nurturing linguistic and logical-mathematical abilities alone, leaving the other five forms - including music - neglected.

At elementary-school level more than half of all school districts in the United States have no full-time music teacher.

And thus our schools tend to refine intellects but neglect to discipline emotions.

And undisciplined emotions keep getting us into trouble.

The ugliest headlines are about somebody who may have been smart as all get-out - smart enough to be a bank executive or a politician or a scientist.

But if emotionally colorblind, he's an unguided missile inevitably destined to self-destruct.

Without the arts - including music - we risk graduating young people who are "right-brain damaged."

For anyone to grow up complete, music education is imperative.

Case histories on file with the National Commission on Music Education uncover exciting correlation between the study of music and such critical work-place performance factors as self-esteem, self-discipline, the ability to work in groups and higher cognitive and analytical skills.

Music in schools, what little there is, is considered ancillary to "real education", as something of a "curricular icing". If it is to be re-established as basic to education, as fundamental to being "an educated person", then educators and performers, composers and publishers - and those in music-related industries - must close ranks to restore educational balance in schools.

The National Commission on Music Education is such a coalition. Already, in its first year, it has won the support of 75 national organizations, willing, under a slogan of "Let's Make Music", to work together toward the musical enrichment of public schools' curricula.

How does one plausibly argue for spending school money on music when we are graduating illiterates?

Should we not be putting all our emphasis on reading, writing and math?

The "back-to-basics curricula", while it has merit, ignores the most urgent void in our present system - absence of self-discipline.

The arts, inspiring - indeed requiring - self-discipline, may be more "basic" to our national survival than traditional credit courses.

Presently we are spending 29 times more on science than on the arts, and the result so far is worldwide intellectual embarrassment.

BAND TOGETHER

All of us at C.L. Barnhouse Co. were so overwhelmed when we read this recent column by world renowned editorial columnist - broadcaster Paul Harvey that we sought permission to share it with others who have the same concerns for the future of our youth and for the world as the place we live.

Let's all band together to create an awareness of this critical issue. It is our hope that you will share this article with the people in your area who directly make decisions concerning the welfare of your children and their opportunities to study music in your public schools.



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- Paul Harvey

OTHER REFERENCES

For further information about the importance of the arts in our schools, contact the following individuals:

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SAT Scores for Students in the Arts

Source: The College Board: Profile of College-Bound Seniors National Report

