

Scotty Clare

Children's Music

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Music Advocacy

Music education in the elementary school level is a vital aspect of a successful school's curriculum. Researchers have continually gathered evidence supporting the benefits and positive effects of music education within the school and have clearly demonstrated the need for elementary music programs. This paper identifies several of these key benefits of elementary music programs and illustrates why it is crucial for this school to keep its current elementary music program.

Ongoing research into the benefits of music education within the school proves that it would be a dire mistake to cut this school's elementary music program. Some of this research has shown that music education as early as pre-school is beneficial and results in increased intelligence and better study skills. As reported in the 1996 article "You Can Raise Your Child's IQ" in *Readers Digest*, a study by Ramey and Frances Campbell of the University of North Carolina showed that "preschool children taught with games and songs showed an IQ advantage for 10 to 20 points over those without the songs, and at age 15 had higher reading and math scores" (Harvey, 1997). This study makes it evident that when young children learn through music their IQ has the potential for significant increases, which helps them in their future education. Music education, such as the program in our school, increases children's cognitive development. Also, research shows that "preschoolers who took daily 30 minute group singing lessons and a weekly 10-15 minute private keyboard lesson scored 80 percent higher in object-

assembly skills than students who did not have the music lessons,” as reported in a 1994 study by Frances Rauscher and Gordon Shaw at the University of California, Irvine (Harvey, 1997). It is clear that music education programs dramatically stimulate a child’s learning capacity, as shown in drastic increases in the scores of children who participated in music programs. Music education programs can begin as early as preschool and should continue for the greatest results.

When music education is sustained throughout the elementary years, children continue to learn better through the clear connections between music and other areas of study. For instance, a 1999 study presented in *Neurological Research* reveals that when second and third-grade students were taught fractions through basic music rhythm notation, they “scored a full 100% higher on fractions tests than those who learned in the conventional manner.” This study shows that the students who learned about the mathematical concept of fractions related their music knowledge of the relationships between eighth, quarter, half and whole notes in order to fully understand the material. Students in music programs consistently score better on tests, as also exemplified in the 2001 study compiled by Music Educators National Conference, which exhibits that “SAT takers with coursework/experience in music performance scored 57 points higher on the verbal portion of the test and 41 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework/experience in the arts.” It is obvious that when students have experience in music education in both the elementary and high school level, they perform considerably better in other important subjects as well. Music education programs in the elementary school level are necessary for the future success of students in all subject areas.

Music education programs not only increase student’s opportunities for success in high school, but also ensure a healthy future lifestyle. For example, a 2006 Harris Interactive poll of high school principals showed that “schools that have music programs have significantly higher

graduation rates than do those without programs (90.2% as compared to 72.9%).” This fact certainly proves that students who participate in music education programs are consistently more successful in completing their high school education than students not exposed to music programs. It is crucial that music education programs are maintained during the elementary level so that when students reach high school they have the greatest opportunity for success. It is also incredibly beneficial for students to participate in music programs since they will be positively affected for the rest of their lives. This is displayed in the 1998 Texas Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse Report, as reported in the Houston Chronicle, which proclaims that “secondary students who participated in band or orchestra reported the lowest lifetime and current use of all substances (alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs).” It is easy to understand that music programs for children in the elementary level leads to academic success for students, but this report also makes it clear that students are positively affected by quality music programs far after school is out. Children who are actively involved in music programs offered by schools are equipped to make better lifestyle choices since they have a strong foundational knowledge of their abilities as well as a greater self-esteem due to their well-rounded education.

As educators of children, we must recognize that it is essential to teach each child as a whole, and that in order for a student to learn best, a school’s curriculum must acknowledge children’s multiple intelligences—such as musical. This school must do everything in its power to continue its music education program because of the many important benefits of learning through music. Research continues to confirm the positive effects of music education on children in the early as well as advanced stages of their lives. Music education programs must persevere so that children may continue to creatively learn about the world around them.

Works Cited

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