

University of Alberta

Advocacy Now: The Importance of Music Education

By

Jolene Wong

A final project submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

Department of Secondary Education

Edmonton, Alberta
Winter, 2018

ABSTRACT

Historically music has played an important role in the education of students. Music was included in the education of students but at the turn of the 21st century with the rise of global competition, music education became strained due to budget cuts, standardized testing, and a shift in educational priorities. A review of pertinent literature reveals the benefits of music education and discusses the influence of music education. Researchers believe that children who have exposure to music and music training benefit from enhanced brain activity, which has been shown to increase students' abilities to perform on certain academic tasks. In addition, many practical life skills are acquired through music learning and music training. Therefore, it can be argued that music should be viewed as a core subject in the curriculum. Although research has indicated that music could and should be adopted amongst core subjects, this is not happening. Instead music programs are often teetering on the edge of extinction due to tight budgets and a lack of understanding of the important benefits that result from music education.

The challenge is that stakeholders often do not know or understand the value of music education. The primary stakeholders of music education are: (a) administrators who govern the activities within a school, (b) parents who make course choices for their children, and (c) students who are the active participants. If these stakeholders are not educated on the value of music education, the decline in music education will continue. Another problem is that music educators do not always know how to advocate for their programs. Music educators must understand what is at stake and how their craft influences the student and school community. Advocacy is important so that those who do not currently understand the significance of music in education may come to do so. The purpose of this project is to develop an advocacy tool kit to aid in both of these problems and help all stakeholders understand the value of music education, in turn aiding in the growth of music education. It is my hope that this advocacy kit is used by

music educators who may not know where to begin. This advocacy kit will be aimed at the main stakeholders of music education, focusing on different aspects of advocacy in order to better appeal to each group. It is with great hope that this project will assist with starting, growing, and maintaining a strong music program in schools.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the people who have contributed to this project including but not limited to current and former students, my administrators, and colleagues. I would like to extend appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Tom Dust, who has guided me through this degree. I would also like to thank my family and friends who have supported me in all things. I would like to dedicate this project to my father Sam, who passed down his love of music to me and sat next to me through countless hours of practicing. His love and patience have helped me chase whatever crazy dream I have and for that I am eternally thankful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Introduction	1
Conceptual Framework	3
History	3
Advocacy	5
How do we advocate for music education?	6
General benefits of music education	8
Cognitive benefits	8
Academic benefits	10
Social benefits	11
Stakeholders	13
Administrators	13
Parents	15
Students	17
Music Educators	18
Significance	19
References	20
Appendix I: CD directory	24
Appendix II: Music education PowerPoint slides with speaker notes	25
Appendix III: Sample parent letters	46
Appendix IV: Advocacy tips	50
Appendix V: Sample music program brochure and sample concert program	52

Introduction

A tragedy is occurring in the education system where budget cuts are reducing many arts programs with the emphasis on getting back to the basics. With political pressures emphasizing higher standardized test scores, a school's function has become more the preparing of students for the test instead of producing a well-educated child (Arostegui, 2016; Branscome, 2012; Reimer 1989; West, 2012). Riley states, "Tight budgets, overcrowded buildings and a renewed emphasis on core subjects have all conspired to limit the amount of music education in our nation's schools" (1999, p.4). Renee Williams of the National School Board Association states, "When school districts are strapped for funds, the programs that seem to get cut first before athletics or anything else are the arts programs" (Cited in Riley, 1999, p.5). With budgets becoming tighter and tighter, band programs are often among the first to receive cuts as they are usually one of the most expensive programs that a school runs (Pergola, 2014, Reimer). The unfortunate reality is that as provincial and federal money to schools continues to decrease and the cost of operating schools continues to rise, the risk of music programs suffering budget cuts is heightened if a school does not recognize the value of music education. Thus, teachers often go against their personal convictions and passions for a liberal arts curriculum by responding to pressures and expectations from school and district administrators who often champion the importance of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Along with budgetary cuts, an educational shift has happened in which a new focus is placed on core subjects of reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. With this we have forgotten the true purpose of education, the students. We must shift from the idea that the purpose of education is to prepare students for a job and instead focus on "the pursuit of truth and beauty, the development of human capacities and the improvement of the quality of life," all which are offered through music (Lehman, 1995, p.4).

Many teachers are left feeling disempowered and are not sure what they can do to advocate for their programs. If teachers who understand the importance of their craft fail to advocate for their programs, it is the students who end up being educationally disadvantaged. A portion of the decline to music education can also be attributed to the facts that music classes are not provided the level of resources needed for effective instruction and that the role of music in developing active citizens is no longer acknowledged (Arostegui, 2016). This decline seems odd and inconsistent with the development in contemporary youth cultures where music is readily available. Students consume music on a daily basis and see it as a way to express their social identity and their sense of belonging. Creativity and innovation are valued in today's society and these skills can arguably be found and promoted through music education, but this point seems to be missed as instead of seeing growth, music programs are often seeing a decline.

The irony is that a growing body of research shows that teaching music and other arts curricula enhances and contributes to students' cognitive performance on standardized tests, in areas such as reading and mathematics (Kelstrom, 1998; Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM), 2014; Rickard, Vasquez, Murphy, Gill, & Toukhsati, 2010). In addition, the study of fine arts curricula enhances motivation and discipline, which are intrinsic ingredients necessary to succeed in the academic arena. Williams confirms, "some people just don't see the importance of it [fine arts], that there has been recent research done on how these types of curriculums [sic] in music and art can help with brain development" (cited in Riley, 1999, p.5). So the question must be asked, how can we make people understand that music is a critical aspect of curriculum?

Conceptual Framework

This section of the paper will look at literature that is tied to music education and advocacy. It is important for educators to know the history behind music education in order to see the decline it has faced and where it could end up. There are also many pieces of research to help in the advocacy of music, which are also discussed.

History

Historically, music is deeply rooted in the history of education in North America. As church and state were deeply tied together, the value of music in church was taught through education. Students were taught how to sing and read notes in order to participate with church activities, and society as a whole was very cultured (Mark & Gary, 1999). After the American revolutionary war in 1783, many young people turned to intellectual and artistic pursuits, which led to a fruitful period of arts education. Lowell Mason created the first singing school for children in 1830, which led to founding of schools such as the Boston Academy of music (Mark & Gary). In 1838, music was declared a regular school subject and Mason and his assistants were hired as teachers (Mark & Gary). In 1963, the Yale Seminar took place, which addressed the problems facing music education and proposed possible solutions, specifically examining music materials and music performance. Music education was heavily criticized at this symposium, leading to many cuts. This was further fuelled by unemployment and homelessness, which became rampant in the United States in the late 1970s. Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) scores were at an all time low and to deal with the increasing shortcoming between the US and other countries both economically and educationally, a focus on the “Five New Basics of English, mathematics, science, social studies, and computer science” was introduced (Branscome, 2012, p.114). Recent legislation has a focus on testing in reading in mathematics, which has led to

some students not being able to participate in elective music programs due to little time left in an already overcrowded school day for music (Pergola, 2014). There are often many standardized tests, which accompany each of these core subjects to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of different educational systems as well as the promotion of a specific idea of “educational equality,” referring to similar topics taught and evaluated in the same way (Arostegui, 2016, p.98). Because music and the other fine arts do not fit into the nature of the evaluations they fall to the wayside. Because there is no standardized test for music, it has been rendered as curricular icing and thus less time and monetary resources are directed towards it. Technological literacy has also become an increasing focal point in modern schools to which resources such as time and energy are being dedicated. The heavy emphasis on technology has added to the atmosphere of isolation and a generation of relatively non-communicative students who tend to crave individual experiences rather than those of the group (Baril, 2006). As society has progressed it has begun promoting a “knowledge-based economy which is believed to justify an economy-based curriculum” where the development of individual skills and innovation strategy is valued (Arostegui, 2016, p.97). It is believed that schools should work for the economy and be effective, once again placing emphasis on the five new basics. As a consequence, these areas receive much more funding and music has begun to see cuts. Due to cutbacks facing music education, it is imperative that music educators know how to successfully advocate for their programs.

Historically, societies have transmitted cultural heritage to succeeding generations and music is always been one of the most powerful, compelling and “glorious manifestations of every cultural heritage” (Lehman, 1995, p. 3). We expect students to know Shakespeare, Michelangelo, da Vinci, and Beethoven, as well as the works of Galileo, Newton, and Einstein. With this said, a student who is deprived of the opportunity to study music is being cheated,

much like not taking biology, history, or mathematics. We look at countries for their contribution to the arts just as much as we do the sciences, and thus it is important that we pass on musical knowledge as much as language and science knowledge.

Advocacy

Daly (2011) notes that people who can sell ideas are generally more successful and happier than those who have never developed that skill. There are often many teachers who stay silent on issues and this in turn has made them feel impotent and ultimately cynical, adding to the reasons of why music educators often leave the field (Baril, 2006). In order for ideas to be realized and music championed, advocates need to rise up. Advocacy is the act of persuading people to care about an issue by being listened to, being at the table when decisions are made, and being heard by people who make decisions (Daly). The question for effective advocacy is always how to balance philosophical honesty with practical efficacy (Reimer, 1989). Effective advocacy requires people who understand the basic values of music education deeply, yet are sensitive to the many other concerns held by various nonmusical constituents. Daly offers several ideas for successful advocacy including knowing exactly what you are advocating for (what do you want decision makers to remember?), staying on message with repetition and redundancy, framing the message, forming alliances, creating a good story, making a memorable case, networking, and creating persuasive messages. Suggestions made through advocacy should be realistic and practical.

Instead of being recognized as a contributing to the overall education of the student, music and other fine arts have been identified as dispensable by many in our government (Loudenback, 2016). While it is important to advocate, it is also important to discuss the methods used. Advocacy does not have to be combative and it is often more counterproductive getting

into a fight with administration. Sometimes we need to see that our administration wants to be our advocate but they simply do not understand how (Baril, 2006; Daly, 2011). As music educators we cannot expect policy makers, or at least most of them, to understand why the work done by music educators is important (Mark, 2005). We are musicians as well as teachers and thus inherently understand the importance and value of music, but if policy makers and those who have the authority to control education do not understand then we must not only tell them, but persuade them as well. Successful advocates are a catalyst for change (Daly).

Loudenback (2016) offers suggestions in regards to music advocacy specifically such as building a relationship with administrators by having several conversations with them before asking for money, acknowledging them at concerts, inviting them to be a part of what you do, sharing good news frequently in a way that makes them look good, and trying to solve problems on your own. If music educators are able to do a better job of communicating the value of music education, students will continue to reap the benefits of music programs.

How do we advocate for music education?

First we must ask ourselves the question “what is the mission of education?” A common response to this question is that the mission of education is to teach or educate children in hopes of preparing them for a job after high school. Benham (2006) argues that this should not be the case but rather that the mission of education is children learning. When education is perceived as teaching, decision-making becomes adult-centered where the issues become assessment and decision-making rather than student needs.

What is important while advocating is remembering that “advocacy is caring enough to put the student first” (Benham, 2006, p.30). Music educators must have the willingness to do whatever is necessary to save, restore, and expand educational opportunities for student

participation in music. The goal of advocacy is not to save a job or position, but rather saving the opportunity of participating in music for students.

In his book, *Music Advocacy: Moving from Survival to Vision*, Benham (2006) states that there are three primary keys to success in building or saving a music program. The first is to understand the timeline and process by which decisions are made in a school district. To influence key decisions before they are made requires knowing when decisions are made and who are the key players in the decision-making process are. The key is to be proactive instead of reactive. The second key is the presence of an active and organized music coalition. This coalition should empower parents to participate in and influence the decision-making process. It is important not to separate musical groups into choir, instrumental, orchestra, etc., but rather to recognize that issues are music issues and all should stand unified. Benham suggests four teams: (a) communications (in charge of recruitment, developing and publishing music newsletter, using press to inform and educate, and developing mailing list); (b) administrative liaison team (in charge of establishing lines of communication with administration, acquiring knowledge of administrative proposals, developing and presenting music proposals, representing group at school board meetings, and recruiting, training, supporting, and electing school board members); (c) statistics and finance team (maintaining statistical data, working with administrative liaison to develop proposals, managing fundraising activities, and assisting in development and presentation of music budget); and (d) philosophy and curriculum (in charge of assisting in development of district music philosophy and policy, assisting in development of student-centered curriculum, and presenting to school board for official adaptation as district policy). Benham's last key to success is suggesting that teachers and advocates work together for the benefit of the students. It is recommended that teachers take time to establish relationships with

parents and be ready to work with parents, putting aside curricular arrogance. Benham asks for educators to identify issues when a crisis arises, figuring out what is driving the issues and to break down the issues in order to tackle them in achievable, manageable steps.

There are many points that music educators can use to advocate for their cause and it is the purpose of this project to help identify these points. Many of Benham's points listed above may not be suitable for every program so it is important to identify what your program needs and tailor the information to suit. The following section will provide a general overview to the benefits students, administrators, and parents can expect from participating in music at school.

General Benefits of Music Education

The study of music has “many diverse benefits but that music is important and valuable in itself” (Lehman, 1995, p.3). We must remember that music is intrinsically worthwhile and worth knowing. Music programs do not exist to provide jobs for music teachers but rather to bring joy, expression, and satisfaction to the lives of those who learn music. Music hones the ability to think clearly and communicate effectively as well as builds problem solving, cooperative learning, and higher order thinking skills (Lehman).

Cognitive benefits

Many articles and researchers have suggested that music has the ability to make students smarter. Music lessons have been linked to improved IQ and academic performance. In a formal study conducted through the University of Toronto and published in 2004, researchers compared the IQ performance of children in music lessons with those in drama lessons or no extra lessons at all (RCM, 2014). IQ was measured both before and after the lesson. Students in the music group showed greater increases in full-scale IQ scores than those in either of the other groups. Short-term IQ increases and speeding up literacy skills as well as the study of foreign languages

have also been observed (P. Eerola & T. Eerola, 2014). Recent studies have also indicated that individuals who are musically trained have a better working memory than those who are not (RCM). Working memory refers to the type of memory that allows us to remember things even when we are preoccupied with other thoughts. Students with musical training have also been identified as having better phonological skills, which helps with learning words faster, developing a richer vocabulary, and learning to read sooner (Collins, 2014; Lautzenheiser, n.d; RCM, Rickard, et al., 2010). A 2009 study quoted in the Royal Conservatory of Music (2014) found that students taking music lessons showed dramatic improvements in verbal intelligence scores after only four weeks of training. Playing music has been found to improve a student's ability to listen and pick up nuances of speech as well as the successful acquisition of the rules of language and its syntax (Collins; RCM). Creativity is also boosted through the communication between both sides of the brain, which are both used while learning music. Music increases cognitive abilities such as problem solving skills and creative thinking (Vitale, 2011). Students are in addition often better able to recall verbal information (Rickard et al.).

Physically, important regions of the brain, such as the frontal lobe that performs high-level cognitive functions, are larger in musically trained individuals than those without training (Collins, 2014; RCM, 2014). Musicians have been shown to have a higher level of brain plasticity, which refers to the capacity of the brain to change, remain flexible, and continue to learn throughout one's life, than those who have not been involved with music education (Collins). Through musical experiences, students are given an opportunity to develop their potential. These are just but a few of the neurological benefits of music education and as technology continues to advance, new research linking positive brain development and music education continues to emerge.

Academic benefits

Music education is cross-curricular with many of the skills learned becoming transferable. There is a natural correlation between music and mathematics such as fractions and numerical counting. An example of this is how students can create their own rhythms, expressing them in both musical notation and in mathematical equations. Music can offer many opportunities for the development of mathematical skills and can also teach and reinforce basic mathematical concepts that are otherwise difficult to grasp for some students. Music and reading are also complementary, as even from a young age we have used music to help read (the alphabet song). Music learning develops the perceptual skill necessary in reading and develops auditory discrimination that has a positive influence in the development of phonetic skills (Kelstrom, 1998). It is also worth mentioning that hand-eye coordination and motor skills developed by playing a music instrument effectively transfer to writing skills (Kelstrom).

James Caterall, an arts education policy analyst at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), found that students who studied music had higher grades, higher test scores, better attendance records, and higher rates of community engagement than other students (Barnes, 2014). These facts are replicated in numerous studies, many that do a direct comparison of Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) scores between music and non-music students (Costley, 2011; Elpus, 2013; Olsen, 2009; Thorton, 2013).

Music is also able to assist in reaffirming cultural norms and values. Horace Mann, the founder of the American school system, believed that music was essential to the education of the young for the development of aesthetic appreciation, citizenship, and thinking (Miller & Coen, 1994). Along with entrenching our own culture, music has historically been used as a tool used for transmitting and sharing cultural heritages. Through music, students are able to learn the rich

dimensions of their own cultural heritage as well as the musical heritage of other cultures which can help them find common ground minimizing national boundaries and language differences (Miller & Co).

Social benefits

Music not only has a positive influence in brain development and academics, but offers many beneficial and practical life skills as well. Along with problem solving skills, music can be used to reduce physiological stress such as raised corticosteroid and adrenaline levels, which can hinder learning (Crncec, Wilson, & Prior, 2006). There is also a connection between music, empathy, and social awareness. Music, being inherently emotional, teaches students how to connect with people on an emotional level, an important trait for students later in life (Crncec et al.; RCM, 2014). Other skills such as discipline, cooperation, appreciation of their culture and the culture of others, and learning to express feelings are also valuable and necessary skills for students to achieve a balanced and healthy life. As our society shifts towards instant gratification through media and other sources, students often have the belief that they can achieve what they would like without much effort. Through music, students learn the value of discipline, perseverance, and the rewards of hard work. Learning to play a musical instrument demands technical mastery through the discipline of regular practice over a period of years. As students experience the positive outcome as the result of their discipline, they experience the connection of hard work to success. When former students are asked about the subject that best taught them the value of hard work and the importance of self-discipline, many students answer “music,” at least among those who were fortunate to have participated in a music program (Miller & Coen, 1994).

Self-esteem is an integral part of the health of students and can lead to self-confidence, strength, worth, adequacy, and efficacy. There is research to support that various types of musical engagement have positive effects on many aspects of student self-esteem (Costa-Giomi, 2004). Music has been linked to increases in self-esteem for diverse students as well as “students with high academic stress, behavioral problems, highly aggressive behaviors, low income households,” and has also been seen as a preventative for “declines in academic self-esteem” (Culp, 2016, p. 20).

Along with self-esteem, music has been seen to help individuals develop “autonomy, competence and social engagement” and thus these students are “less likely to engage in at-risk behaviors” (Barrett & Bond, 2015, p.38). Music is particularly helpful for children from at-risk populations or with language difficulties as it is suggested that music education projects are an effective means of addressing prejudice amongst young people and foster social inclusion amongst migrant groups and their new communities (Roy, Devroop, & Getz, 2015). Music programs may facilitate interpersonal connections, social cohesion, and student empowerment (Barrett & Bond). The challenge of music instills in students the belief that “even in the face of challenges, difficulties can be overcome, and goals can be achieved” (Barrett & Bond, p.50). There are often increased levels in optimism and motivation to seek gains as a result of being in school music programs (Roy et al.).

Music is able to bring people from different paths of life together and create relations between self and others, having the capacity to increase willingness to cooperate, show trust towards others and increase emotional empathy (P. Eerola & T. Eerola, 2014). The same study showed that short-term exposure to music is able to create social cohesion and increased affiliation leading to helpful and cooperative behavior among children. As society becomes more

and more interdependent, many employers are looking for employees who are team-players and music education is able to teach these skills (Baril, 2006). Music is one of the greatest experiences in cooperative learning because class takes place in a cooperative setting. The success of an ensemble depends on the cooperation of a group of individuals and students learn that other players, instruments, and parts must be accommodated in order to create a cooperative and successful performance. Through playing together, students learn to cooperate effectively with each other and generate ideas collaboratively (Rickard et al., 2010). This skill of collaboration will help students not only in music but also with their personal and professional lives.

Stakeholders

The above benefits are general and are applicable to all three of our main stakeholders. It is important for these stakeholders to know about the benefits of music education but as an effective advocate, educators must also understand the specific benefits that each group of stakeholders may be interested in and appeal to those points.

Administrators

A great number of decisions are made without music programs in mind, both at the district and local levels, often because the importance of music education is overlooked. Music educators must find a way to work alongside our administration and meet the needs of their students and program at the same time. Administrators are a key aspect to music education as these individuals make the majority of decisions in terms of programming within a school. Administrators often approach music education differently as they must be fiscally responsible. The welfare of a child is important but they are also tasked with balancing a budget and maintaining a safe and happy school environment.

On the budgetary side of things, a strong music program can bring in extra money to a school. A good band program can become a feature within a school that can draw students to the school, raising enrollment. As schools receive funding based on school enrollment, using the school band to do feeder school concerts is a great way of drawing students to the school (Alberta School Boards Association, (ASBA) 2017). Bands are also able to charge concert ticket admission to help generate extra revenue to help support the program. Fundraising efforts can also cut down the cost to run a band program with the assistance of the parent advisory council. It is important for administrators to know that music programs do not need to be expensive!

One of the great ways to establish the school presence in the community is by building relationships within the community. The music program is a great ambassador for the school. Within the school community music is able to counter poor engagement and satisfaction, creating more participation and social cohesion (P. Eerola & T. Eerola 2014). Inside the school music education can aid in creating a stimulating and motivating academic environment which can aid with wider learning (Crncec et al., 2006). Music has also been seen to break down societal barriers from race to socioeconomic strata, further creating a learning environment for all (Lautzenheiser, n.d.). Administrators should understand that music can also be particularly helpful for children from at-risk populations or with language difficulties and can be used to create a healthy school environment (Roy, et al., 2015). Music often provides an opportunity for students who have difficulty with other aspects of the curriculum, to experience success in a non-traditional classroom setting. Music class can often be a refuge to these students, a place where their “talents are appreciated, their contributions respected, and the achievements valued” (Lehamn, 1995, p.4). In this respect, music is able to make the school a better place for all.

It is key for music educators to understand that administrators look at music education differently than they might, and how to appeal to those differences. Educators must remember to make their requests to administrators practical and try to work with their administrators as much as possible. A music program offers a school publicity and creates many positive relationships both in and outside of the school.

Parents

Parents must understand that there is more to band than obtaining an instrument, having music class in the school schedule, and rehearsing for a concert. Through advocacy, parents should be informed that the skills learned in music are transferable to academic subjects and permeate every day life (Lautzenheiser, n.d). Parent involvement is critical for young children to be nurtured musically and to develop music skills and understandings because parents are typically the primary caregivers while children are young (Youm, 2013). If we are able to educate parents, this will help them provide music education for their children.

Music has a physical impact on brain growth and neurological development. It is known that the brain is made up of two halves and music helps the two hemispheres of the brain work together. Electroencephalogram tests reveal that music changes brain waves, making the brain more conducive to learning. Don Campbell, Director of the Institute for Music, Health and Education, explains that music “rhythmically and harmonically stimulates essential patterns of brain growth” (Davies, 2000, p.48). It is also found that a musician’s corpus callosum, the bridge between the left and right side of the brain, is larger than in a non-musician (Campbell, 1997). These are just some of the neurological aspects that happen within a child’s brain as it develops through music study.

As music helps the brain develop optimally, the natural beneficial outcomes are evident in the area of academics. Many studies reveal the correlation of music to test scores, grades, and academic achievement. Research suggests that music should assume a place in the regular school curriculum as it shows its effects on academic achievement and contributes to students' education (Kelstrom, 1998). Evidence for the benefits of music education is found in standardized test scores, academic recognition, and overall higher grades (RCM, 2014). There are many studies that look at the positive link between music and mathematics, many of which show that music enables students to learn multiplication tables and mathematic formulas more easily (Kelstrom). Experience in the study of music facilitates the ability to solve problems that are necessary in some branches of mathematics and it is suggested that when a child learns to play a musical instrument, she or he is developing architecture in the same areas of the brain used for reading and mathematical skills (Kosik, 1999). Music instruction increases perception and critical thinking skills, and these skills in turn correspond with logical skills. A person may use the ability for logical thinking that was developed in music class to solve problems unrelated to music (Kelstrom).

Aside from academics, music is able to sculpt children into well-rounded human beings. Music develops the logical side of a child as well the emotional side. As stated above, music is able to help students develop the ability to think creatively and become leaders through the development of skills such as cooperation and discipline. Through music, students are able to increase the enjoyment they "derive from the music that surrounds them every day and enable them to understand more sophisticated and complex music" (Lehman, 1995, p.4). The study of music is also able to dispel the false impression, often taught implicitly in school, that every important question has a right answer (Lehman). Students are taught that there is more than one

right answer and that life is filled with ambiguity and subjectivity. Ultimately one of the most important priorities for parents is the future happiness of their children. Parents dedicate their lives to creating a better world for their children and in a highly competitive society they would like to see their children have every possible advantage in their educational climate, chosen profession, etcetera and the study of music “is a cultural imperative fulfilling all the wants, needs and wishes of every caring-sharing parent” (Lautzenheiser, n.d., Framing the message for the welfare of the child section, para.1)

Students

The overriding key to success in any music program lies within the students. Students who are excited about music and truly engaged in music learning and performing are the “lifeblood of music education” and thus one of our primary goals as music educators is to create a learning environment that is rich in opportunities for student success and engagement with music (Ryan, 2009, p.35). Students who are dedicated to their school music program are the best advocates for music education in their school, homes, and wider communities. One of the ways educators can begin to engage students is by making music memorable for them. School field trips allow students to experience life beyond the walls of the school and add to their knowledge and skill, all while having a good time (Klause, 2003; Ryan). These trips can range from a simple weekend trip to performances in different provinces. Trips can also include band camp retreats as well as community concerts. It is important to relay connections between the trip to the curriculum on any field trip, preferably written in any documentation that will be sent home. CD recordings are also an exciting and motivating way to engage students. If your school has a hold line for the phones, you may suggest using one of these recordings as the hold tone. Recordings can help raise a program’s profile with students, parents, and staff, giving it a positive image.

Encouraging students to be a part of district ensembles as well as school celebrations is another way to keep students engaged and active while taking a leadership role at school.

Students may also be appealed to academically. For Alberta high school students looking to apply to an Alberta university, Instrumental Music 30 is included in the top five courses that a university will accept as an entrance requirement for most programs. From experience, most students maintain a high standing in music and thus their music grade would increase the competitive entrance average of a student looking to apply to a post-secondary institution. Music may also be included in both academic and non-academic résumés, showing that a student is well rounded and participates in extra-curricular activities.

For many students, music class is also a break mentally from their taxing school day. Music being a creative art, is able to help students release stress. Music engages the imagination and provides a means for self-realization and self-fulfillment (Lehman, 1995).

Music educators

Although music educators have not been tied in as a key stakeholder in this project, they are an integral part of music education. Advocacy is important but in order to build strong, respected music programs, effective teachers need to foster positive relationships with a variety of individuals and groups within and outside the school walls. These people include colleagues, parents, other teachers, music merchants, former students, and other members of the community, each having special contributions they can make to the development of a school music program. The job of the music teacher is to understand the role these people can play and reach out to them for assistance and support – to build a solid network of advocates and assistants. Teachers should also not shy away from technology, popular music, and other resources. In order to adapt and keep up with the times educators must make space for student ideas and be more liberal in

how they teach (Arostegui, 2016). Often music teachers are alone in their schools, being the only specialist in their field, but they must beware of making music education too self-contained.

Music educators should be knowledgeable and should be aware of resources and major conferences in their fields. The importance of collaboration and open dialogue between professionals is encouraged to help meet the common goal of strengthening the music curriculum for all (Baril, 2006). Teachers are encouraged to sharpen their skills through professional development and to ask for help when necessary.

Significance

Although there are many emerging pieces of research supporting the benefits of music education, there is a crisis emerging: the reduction of music programs across the country. Music instruction is a powerful educational resource and should be recognized as such. As music educators we must ask ourselves what the purpose of education is and why we are doing it. Too often has learning been turned into a short-term value for the sake of a test score. Educators must ask themselves if they are more interested in producing students who are libraries of “commit-to-memory” information, or if they are looking to develop well adjusted students who are sensitive to those around them and interested in exploring their own potential (Lautzenheiser, n.d., Why education section, para.2). Music optimally assists in brain development as well as helps students achieve academically and socially. There is research that reveals music’s beneficial link to mathematics, language, and the teaching of values. In addition, music fosters practical life skills that students need to live balanced and rewarding lives. Through music, students acquire discipline, develop the ability to manage stress, learn to cooperate, increase their self-esteem, and develop the healthy expression of emotions. As music educators, we must defend and endorse music and music education within and outside of our classrooms through proper advocacy.

REFERENCES

- Alberta School Boards Association. (2017). *Education funding* [Data file]. Retrieved from <http://www.asba.ab.ca/being-a-school-trustee/education-funding/>
- Arostegui, J. L. (2016). Exploring the global decline of music education. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 117(2), 96-103.
- Baril, R. (2006). *Life cycle of a music educator* (Unpublished masters project). University of Alberta, Edmonton.
- Barnes, T. (2014). The tremendous cognitive benefits of teaching your kids to play music. *National Association for Music Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.nafme.org/the-tremendous-cognitive-benefits-of-teaching-your-kids-to-play-music/>
- Barrett, M. S., & Bond, N. (2015). Connecting through music: The contribution of a music programme to fostering positive youth development. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 37(1), 37-54.
- Benham, J. (2006). *Music Advocacy: Moving from survival to vision*. Chicago, IL: Gia Publications, Inc.
- Branscome, E. (2012). The impact of education reform on music education: Paradigm shifts in music education curriculum, advocacy, and philosophy from "sputnik" to race to the top. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 113(3), 112-118.
- Campbell, D. (1997). *The Mozart effect*. New York: Avon Books.
- Collins, A. (2014). Music education and the brain: What does it take to make a change? *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 32(2), 4-10.
- Costa-Giomi, E. (2004). Effects of three years of piano instruction on children's academic achievement, school performance and self-esteem. *Psychology of Music*, 32(2), 139-152.

- Costley, K. C. (2011). *The link between musical achievement and academic achievement of young children*. Online Submission.
- Crncec, R., Wilson, S. J., & Prior, M. (2006). The cognitive and academic benefits of music to children: Facts and fiction. *Educational Psychology, 26*(4), 579-594.
- Culp, M. E. (2016). Improving self-esteem in general music. *General Music Today, 29*(3), 19-24.
- Daly, J. A. (2011). *Advocacy: Championing ideas and influencing others*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Davies, M.A. (2000). Learning...the beat goes on. *Childhood Education, 76*. 148-154.
- Eerola, P., & Eerola, T. (2014). Extended music education enhances the quality of school life. *Music Education Research, 16*(1), 88-104. doi:10.1080/14613808.2013.829428
- Elpus, K. (2013). Is it the music or is it selection bias? A nationwide analysis of music and non-music students SAT scores. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 61*(2), 175-194. doi:10.1177/0022429413485601
- Kelstrom, J.M. (1998). The untapped power of music: Its role in the curriculum and its effect on academic achievement. *NASSP Bulletin, 82*, 34-43.
- Klause, K. (2003). *Grade 9 instrumental music student attrition* (Unpublished masters project). University of Alberta, Edmonton.
- Kosik, K. (1999). *Etching memories into the brain*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Boston, Boston, Ma.
- Lautzenheiser, T. (n.d). Why music? Why band? In *Teaching music through performance in band*. Retrieved from <http://www.musicforall.org/who-we-are/advocacy/why-music-why-band>

- Lehmann P. (1995). Why teach music in school? In B. Pearson (Ed.), *Why music is basic: The value of music education* (pp. 3-4). San Diego, CA: Neil A. Kjos Music Company.
- Loudenback, D. (2016). *Working with district initiatives, not against*. Retrieved from <http://banddirectorstalkshop.com/2016/09/16/working-within-district-initiatives-not/>
- Mark, M. L. (2005). Why music? Essays on the importance of music education and advocacy: Why does our profession need advocacy? *International Journal of Music Education*, 23(2), 94-98.
- Mark, M. L. & Gary, C.L. (1999). *A history of American music education*. Reston, VA: Schirmer Books.
- Miller, A. & Coen, D. (1994). The case for music in the schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 75, 459-462.
- Olson, C. A. (2009). Music and academic success go together at Whitworth; university's survey results also suggest high school music may boost chances of college admittance. *Teaching Music*, 16(6), 20.
- Pergola, J. (2014). *Music education in crisis* Timeless Communications Corp.
- Reimer, B. (1989). *A philosophy of music education* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Rickard, N. S., Vasquez, J. T., Murphy, F., Gill, A., & Toukhsati, S. R. (2010). Benefits of a classroom based instrumental music program on verbal memory of primary school children: A longitudinal study. *Australian Journal of Music Education*.NI p36-47 2010,12.
- Riley, R. (1999). Where does music instruction fit into the curriculum? *Curriculum Review*, 38(5), 4.
- Roy, M. M., Devroop, K., & Getz, L. (2015). Improvement in South African students' outlook due to music involvement. *Music Education Research*, 17(4), 465-479.

- The Royal Conservatory of Music. (2014). *The benefits of music education*. Retrieved from https://www.rcmusic.ca/sites/default/files/files/RCM_MusicEducationBenefits.pdf
- Ryan, C. (2009). *Building strong music programs: A handbook for pre-service and novice music teachers*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Thornton, L. (2013). A comparison of state assessment scores between music and nonmusic students. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 32(1), 5-11.
- Vitale, J. L. (2011). Music makes you smarter: A new paradigm for music education? perceptions and perspectives from four groups of elementary education stakeholders. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 34(3), 317-343.
- West, C. (2012). Teaching music in an era of high-stakes testing and budget reductions. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 113(2), 75-79.
- Youm, H. K. (2013). Parents goals, knowledge, practices, and needs regarding music education for their young children in South Korea. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 61(3), 280-302. doi:10.1177/0022429413497233

APPENDIX I: CD DIRECTORY

The tools on this CD will help you advocate for music education within your school. Each tool may be modified to suit individual needs.

1. Music education Powerpoint

- A quick powerpoint with speaker notes. The presentation is divided into three sections, targeting specific stakeholders of music education (Parents, Administrators, and Students). The presentation may be used in its entirety or in sections.

2. Sample advocacy letters

- Sample letters that can be sent to parents, administrators, and school districts to outline the importance of music education.

3. Advocacy ideas & tips: A quick overview

- A quick guide to some useful ideas when advocating for music education.

4. Sample music promotional brochure

- A sample brochure to be handed out at Open House and other possible recruitment events. The brochure outlines the importance of music education and introduces your program.

5. Sample concert program with education outcomes

- A sample program with Alberta Curriculum outcomes embedded.

6. Advocacy poster

- A poster outlining the main stakeholders of music education and the importance of music within schools.

7. Sample promotional video

- A sample promotional video that can be played at Open House or during other recruitment events.

APPENDIX II: MUSIC EDUCATION POWERPOINT SLIDES WITH SPEAKER NOTES



The first portion of this presentation is aimed at parents, the second portion is aimed at administrators and the third is for students. You may use the slides as sections or as a whole.



This portion of the presentation is aimed at parents and could be shown during a parent council meeting or during Open House events.

Music study is not only enriching in its own right but there is mounting evidence that a high-quality music education in school helps young people to develop intellectual capacity, to remain committed to attending school, and to do better in later years – whether pursuing music and the arts professionally or using skills that transfer to other fields.



Music education can help spark a child's imagination or ignite a lifetime of passion. When you provide a child with new worlds to explore and challenges to tackle, the possibilities are endless. Music education should not be a privilege for a lucky few, it should be a part of every child's world of possibility.

Hillary Clinton

Let me begin with this quote by Hillary Clinton, former first lady of the United States of America. It was difficult to choose one quote to embody the importance of music education. Many philosophers, politicians, and the greatest minds in history have spoken about music and its importance to the well being of a child. Perhaps they were all on to something.



Scientific Research Shows Music Study Helps Young Minds Develop

- ✘ Music is a basic building block of intelligence
- ✘ Playing music develops critical neural connections



Until recently, our belief that learning music is good for youth was based on intuitive and historical knowledge and often on personal observations of our lives and those of students.

In the last several years, the results of a number of scientific studies are building a solid foundation of evidence that music instruction is not only inherently worthy but that it helps young minds grow and flourish. Music education builds the intellect.

Music research explores the relationship between music education and the development of a young person's cognitive and affective skills. It covers a wide range of topics from the fascinating way that music-making promotes the growth of neural connections in the brain to music's role as correlating with math and language learning to evidence that IQ scores rise with increased frequency of music study. New reports are emerging on a regular basis that substantiate our understanding of music's impact on development. In order for these benefits to reach students, we have to work together to assure that all children have access to music education.

As we review this information together, please ask if you would like me to cite where the research and reports have been published!



Research reveals strong correlations between quality music education in school and...



- ✗ Academic achievement
- ✗ Healthy social development
- ✗ Preparation for the 21st century workplace
- ✗ Quality of a young person's life

It is important to understand that music should be learned for its own sake. The study of music brings an important means of self-expression and creativity to students, reminding us of what it is to be human. Along with intrinsic reasons that music should be studied, there are additional benefits to note. Research informs us that music instruction trains the mind in many ways beyond acquiring musical skills and knowledge. Studying an instrument increases spatial-temporal reasoning skills (our ability to visualize in space and time). This is an important skill in solving math and engineering problems and in understanding fractions and proportions. Music students develop the mental flexibility to think and read ahead while performing a precise task in the present. As students begin to compose and improvise, they learn to consider options in real time and make quick decisions. Because music is a language in its own right, musicians learn to think in pitches, timbres, and tempos without the aid of words and sentences. Translating these musical thoughts into the act of playing an instrument introduces young minds to thinking in the abstract. Musicians practice in order to master a piece of music. The discipline and honest self-evaluation required is excellent training for any future activity. All of these skills are necessary for success in the 21st century workplace and we want to give our students every opportunity to succeed.



Research Reveals:

Children taking music lessons improved more over the year on several memory skill tests than children who did not take music lessons

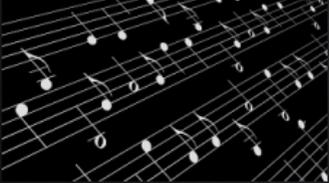


A study published in the scientific journal *Brain, A Journal of Neurology* (September 2006) indicates that young children who received a year of music instruction showed brain changes and superior memory when compared with children who did not receive music instruction. Researchers at McMaster University noted “It is very interesting that the children taking music lessons improved more over the year on general memory skills that are correlated with nonmusical abilities, such as literacy, verbal memory, visuospatial processing, mathematics, and IQ, than did the children not taking lessons.”

Source: Takako Fukioka, Bernhard Ross, Ryusuke Kakigi, Christo Pantev and Laurel J. Trainor, *Brain, A Journal of Neurology*. Oxford University Press, September 2006.

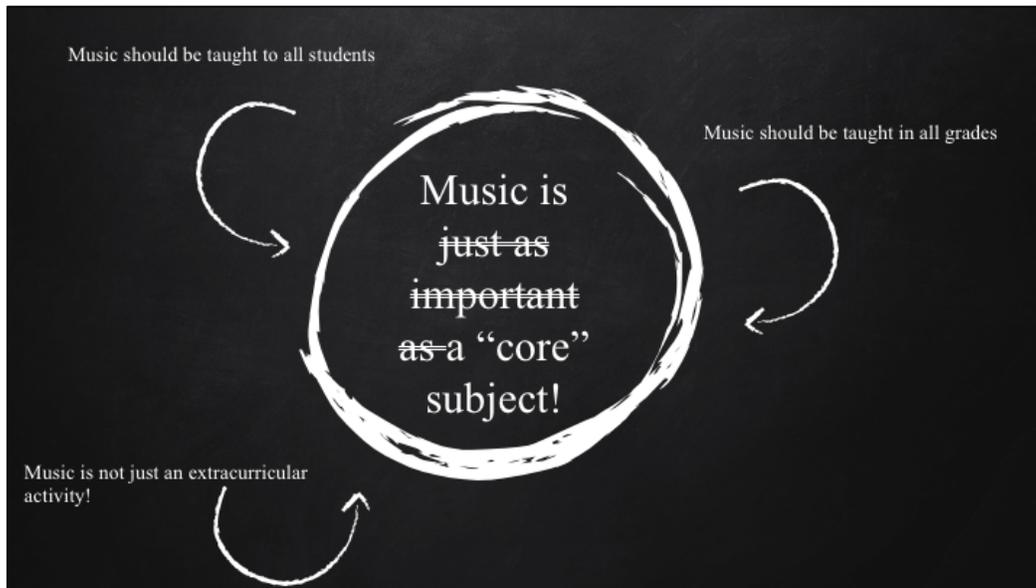


Music making develops students in many ways



- ✗ Better math skills
- ✗ Better social skills
- ✗ More transferable skills
- ✗ Development of lifelong skill – making music!

Many studies support similar conclusions – music making helps the brain develop in many positive ways, and it advances core learning and personal skills for life. With so many studies indicating the relationship of music making to academic achievement, the case for music instruction is compelling. Many people believe that the benefits to children and learning are undeniable. When we consider the challenges that students will face in the workplace of the new millennium, we need to prepare them adequately. Music must be apart of the curriculum.



Music education should be given the support that “core” subjects do, and access to instruction must be secured by education funding and policies – as are reading, science, and math. Music should be taught to all students in all grades in a sequential program by qualified teachers. Music education is not a frill or an extracurricular activity. Music must be funded as are all other core academic subjects to ensure access to music instruction for all students.



Advocating with Administration

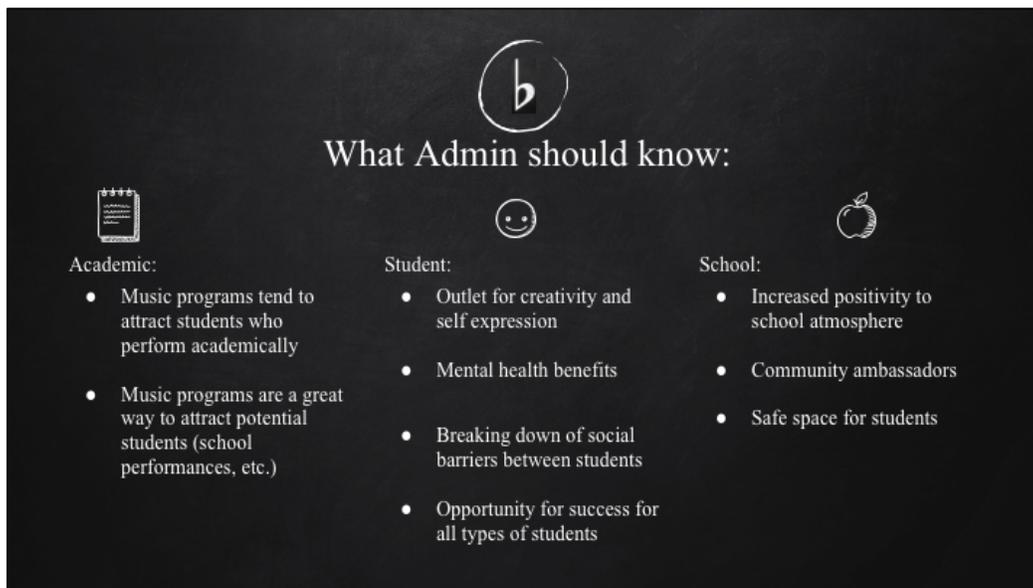
What can you say to administrators

This portion of the presentation is designed to help you become a more effective advocate for your students and your community. It is not intended that all the information or assistance you may need to save your program in a crisis is contained in this presentation. Rather, it will help you understand how the educational system functions, get organized, and gather the kind of information necessary to save your program should a crisis occur.



When asking students, parents, and even teachers “what is the mission of education,” over 99.9% have responded that the mission of education is to teach or educate children for the future. This is not the case! The mission of education is children learning. The difference is vast and may be the most significant issue before education today. When the mission is perceived as teaching, decision making becomes adult-centered; that is, what is good for teachers is assumed to be good for children. When the focus of the mission is children learning, the issue becomes assessment and decision-making centered on student needs and outcomes.

Use all the points on benefits of music education to advocate for the students. Music is for them!



What Admin should know:

 <p>Academic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music programs tend to attract students who perform academically • Music programs are a great way to attract potential students (school performances, etc.) 	 <p>Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlet for creativity and self expression • Mental health benefits • Breaking down of social barriers between students • Opportunity for success for all types of students 	 <p>School:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased positivity to school atmosphere • Community ambassadors • Safe space for students
--	--	---

On the budgetary side of things, a strong music program can bring in extra money to a school. A good band program can become a feature within a school that can draw students to the school, raising enrollment as well as attracting academically focused students. The school band can be used as a recruitment tool, used for feeder school tours. As schools receive funding based on school enrollment, using the school band to do feeder school concerts is a great way of drawing students to the school (Alberta School Boards Association, [ASBA] 2017).

Music has also been seen to break down societal barriers from race to socioeconomic strata, further creating a learning environment for all (Lautzenheiser, n.d.). Administrators should know that music can also be particularly helpful for children from at-risk populations or with language difficulties and be used to create a healthy school environment (Roy, et al., 2015). Music often provides an opportunity for students who have difficulty with other aspects of the curriculum, often helping them find success in a non-traditional classroom setting. This may include students who have special needs. Along with these benefits, students are given an opportunity to participate in self expression, which can boost mental health.

One of the great ways to establish the school presence in community is building relationships within the community. The music program is a great ambassador for the school. Within the school community music is able to counter poor engagement and satisfaction, creating more participation and social cohesion (P. Eerola & T. Eerola 2014). Inside the school, music education can aid in creating a stimulating and motivating academic environment which can in turn create a stimulating and motivating academic environment which can aid with wider learning (Crncec et al., 2006). Music class can often be a refuge for students, a place where their “talents are appreciated, their contributions respected, and the achievements valued” (Lehamn, 1995). In this respect, music is able to make the school a better place for all.



Remember that a financial crisis usually exposes the real educational philosophy of any administrator or school board. The greatest significance in a financial crisis is the status of the General Fund. It is usually the largest fund and is the fund that pays for salaries and related costs of personnel. Between 85% and 90% of the total budget of a district may be dedicated to personnel. Therefore, a financial crisis nearly always affects staffing. Resultant cuts will be based upon what are commonly called FTE (Full Time Equivalent) values.

A 1.0 FTE equates to a full time teacher based upon the number of courses taught per day, and the AVERAGE daily student load of a teacher. If the normal teacher load is 5 classes, that would equal 1.0 FTE. One of those five classes would then equal .2 FTE. In the budgetary process ALL teachers are calculated as having the same number of students and making the same amount of money (“average teacher salary”). As we will see, this budgetary assumption is often misleading when it comes to music teachers.



Average Student Loads Comparison (music/non-music)

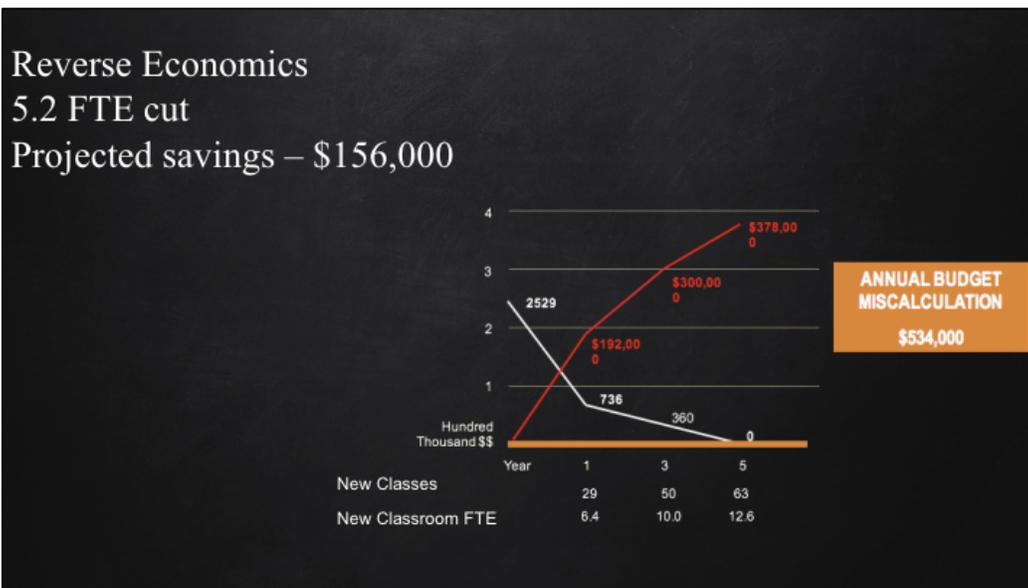
FTE Load	Classification	Classes x students	Student
1.0	Non-music classroom teacher	5 x 30	150
1.0	Music Performance Teacher	5 x 40	200
2.0	Teachers		350
1.0	Non-music classroom teacher	5 x 30	150
1.0	Replacement Teacher	5 x 30	150
0.4	Replacement Teachers	2 x 25	50
2.4	Teachers		350

The FTE value of a teacher is based upon the ACTUAL student load of any teacher (SFR, or student-faculty ratio) as he/she relates to the average value of 1.0 FTE. The more students assigned to a specific class or teacher, the greater the financial value of that teacher. This is normally the music performance teacher (band, choir, orchestra). Therefore, it is never financially advisable to eliminate a music performance teacher!

The above table illustrates the relative value of a music performance teacher to a regular classroom teacher. It assumes the average student load of a 1.0 FTE teacher is 150 students, and the average student load of a music performance teacher is 200. Numbers will, of course, vary greatly from school to school.

It is also important to realize that only part of a music performance teacher's load may be in band, choir and/or orchestra; and therefore, she or he may not actually be a 1.0 FTE in music. Each teacher load must be carefully calculated or the figures will be inaccurate, potentially undermining the credibility of the analysis. The significance of this disparity is seen in the next slide.

**Taken From John Benham



In this district case study, the administration proposed the elimination of 5.2 FTE band and orchestra instructors to “save” \$156,000. There were 2529 students (grades 4-12) involved. Cuts would have necessitated the elimination of nearly 1800 students the first year, requiring the addition of 6.4 FTE classroom teachers to replace the 5.2 FTE music performance teachers proposed for elimination.

In other words, instead of saving \$156,000, the school would have been required to spend \$192,000 the first year on replacement teachers with lesser FTE value. By year five, the annual budget miscalculation would have been \$534,000. (\$156,000 anticipated cut + \$378,000 for 12.6 FTE replacement classroom teachers).

This loss of student participation is based on extensive national case studies that indicate the elimination of an elementary band feeder system will cause a minimum 65% loss in student participation at the secondary level within two to four years. This is in part because no new elementary students will be started (in this case) until year three, and a similar amount of students will have been graduated. In Alberta, this is equivalent to losing junior high band programs and expecting high school band programs to survive.

WHY teach music?

music is a science

It is exact, specific; it demands exact acoustics. A conductor's full score is a chart, a graph which indicates frequencies, intensities, volume changes, melody and harmony all at once and with the most exact control of time.

music is mathematical

It is rhythmically based on the subdivision of time into fractions which must be done instantaneously, not worked out on paper.

music is a foreign language

Most of the terms are in Italian, German, or French; and the notation is certainly not English – but a highly developed kind of shorthand that uses symbols to represent ideas. The semantics of music is the most complete and universal language. Also, many songs we study are from other cultures.

music is physical education

It requires fantastic coordination of fingers, hands, arms, lip, cheek, and facial muscles, in addition to extraordinary control of the diaphragmatic, back, stomach, and chest muscles, which respond instantly to the sound the ear hears and the mind interprets.

most of all, music is art.

It allows a human being to take all these dry, technically boring (but difficult) techniques and use them to create emotion. That is one thing science cannot duplicate: humanism, feeling, emotion.



You Should Be In Band!

How to get students into band

This portion of the presentation is designed to help you advocate to your students and convince them to be in band!

The overriding key to success in any music program lies with the students. Students who are excited about music and truly engaged in music learning and performing are the “lifeblood of music education” and thus one of our primary goals as music educators is to create a learning environment that is rich in opportunities for student success and engagement with music (Ryan, 2009). Students who are dedicated to their school music program are the best advocates for music education in their school, homes, and wider communities.



Fun things to entice students

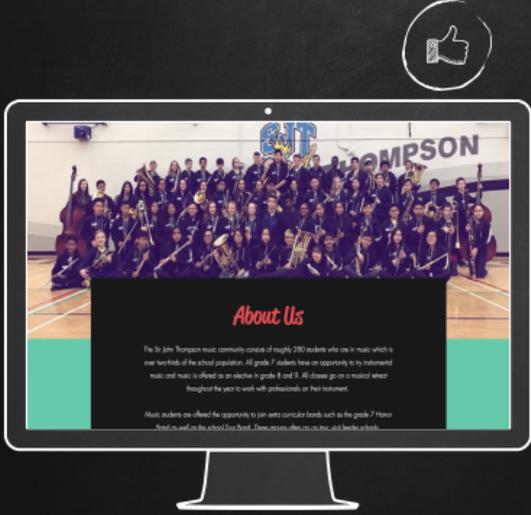
- ✕ Field trips
 - Band trips/ Festivals
 - Local clinics
 - Feeder school performances
- ✕ CD recording
- ✕ Extra curricular band



One of the ways educators can begin to engage students is by making music memorable for them. School field trips allow students to experience life beyond the walls of the school and add to their knowledge and skill, all while having a good time (Klause; 2003; Ryan, 2009). These trips can range from a simple weekend trip to performances and competitions in different provinces. Trips can include band camp retreats, community concerts, or band festivals and competitions. It is important to relay the connections to the curriculum on any field trip, preferably in any field trip documents.

CD recordings are also an exciting and motivating way to engage students. Recordings can help raise a program's profile with students, parents, and staff, giving it a positive image. If your school has a telephone hold line you may suggest using one of these recordings as a hold tone.

Encouraging students to be a part of district ensembles as well as school celebrations is another way to keep students engaged and active in taking a leadership role at school.



Social Media

Social media is a good way to entice students.

- Website
- Twitter/ Facebook

Start a website (google is free) and update with current and upcoming information.

Social media – start a Facebook, Twitter, etc. account for your organization and have parents, students, and other supports “follow” you. Make posts interesting in a timely manner but be aware of spamming.

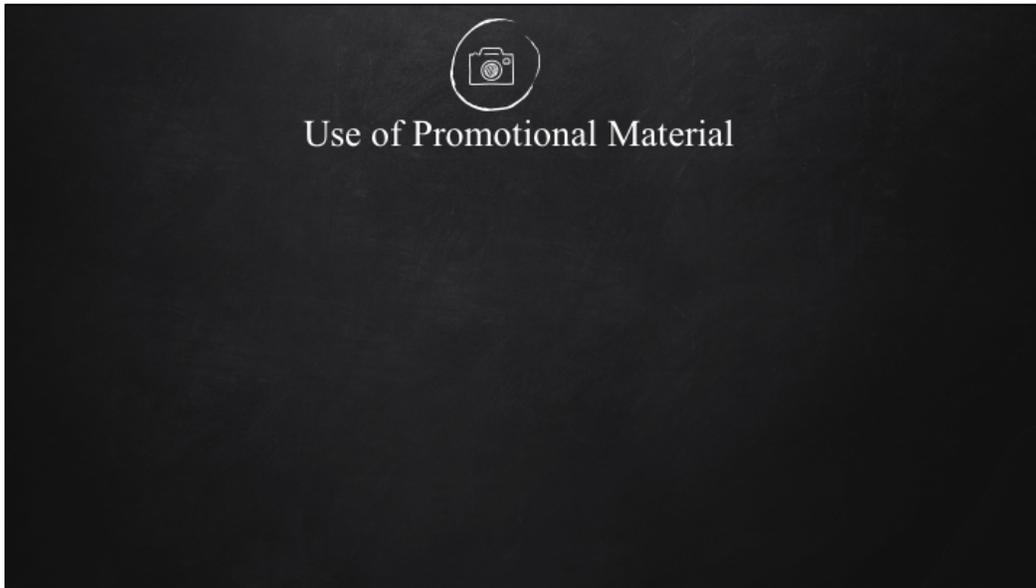


Convincing students through academics



- ✘ Able to use Instrumental 30 for university entrance
- ✘ Good résumé addition

For Canadian high school students looking to apply to a Canadian university, Instrumental Music 30 (or band 30) is included in the top 5 courses that many universities will accept as an entrance requirement for most programs. Most students maintain a high standing in music and this grade would increase the competitive entrance average of a student applying to a post secondary institution. Music may also be included in both academic and non-academic résumés, showing that a student is well rounded and participates in extra-curricular activities.



Having videos and pictures of students creates the feel of a community.
“Commercials” or other promotional clips which may be shown at open house
or other school publicity events are great.



thanks!

Any questions?

You can find me at
jolene.wong@ecsd.net

APPENDIX III: SAMPLE PARENT LETTERS

Letter from School Music Director to Parents' Group

If you're the director of a school music program, you know that parental support is the single most important factor for the success of an issue before the school board. Parents want what is good for their children, and we have compelling evidence that music is one of those basic "good things." How well we are able to communicate this to parents will play a large part in our success.

Making a presentation to a parents group will accomplish two things: (a) Inform parents of the results of scientific study and, (b) Identify strong music advocates among the parents. Those parents who agree most with the research are the most likely candidates to make the presentation to the school board. Meetings may be attached to existing events like parent council meetings or even a "rent to own" night for instruments.

Dear [name of parent group president],

There is powerful scientific evidence of a cause-and-effect link between music instruction and student achievement in school and in life.

As music director for [your school or district], I would like to make a presentation to your group about the nature and details of the most recent research that links music study with increased learning and social capacity. The presentation takes less than 10 minutes and contains information that will be of great interest to all concerned parents of school-age children.

I hope that you can make time in your next meeting agenda for this informative presentation and that we can work together to help our local decision-makers understand the importance of educating the whole child. Please contact me at [your direct phone number or e-mail address] to discuss when I may present this information to your group.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
[Your name and title]

Letter from School Music Director to Parent

You can use this letter during program recruitment to make parents aware of the academic benefits their children can receive through the study of music. Parents respond strongly to activities that have positive benefits for their children. Good times to set meetings are: September, before term changes, or before option selections happen. (Note: schools use many different procedures to enroll students in various music programs. Feel free to edit the last paragraph appropriately.)

Dear Parent,

Learning to play a musical instrument is a rewarding experience for anyone at any age, but music is especially helpful to the development of children. Music develops intellectual skills, builds teamwork, and is an activity that can bring joy for a lifetime. Music can also help your children be more successful in life.

Statistics indicate that if your child participates in music, he or she is likely to earn higher grades and score better on standardized tests. Now there is powerful evidence of a cause-and-effect link between music instruction and intelligence.

There are dozens of other recent studies that indicate that music making is a key component of academic and social success. [Name of school or district] provides an opportunity for your child to enjoy the benefits that music making can bring.

Enclosed is a sign-up form for our school music program. Please discuss its options with your child and return it to the school by [date].

Sincerely,
[Your name and title]

Letter to School Administrators

Before you ask to make a presentation to the Board, ease its members and school administrators into the issue by sending each individual a "Why Learn to Play Music?" brochure with this cover letter. The brochure will speak to the Board and administrators on both a personal and professional level. Remember that administrators are often busy people, so keep any presentation short and precise. Remember to emphasize the benefits to the student and to the school.

Dear [school administrator, school principal, or member of the school board],

We believe that music instruction can help all of our children and we have confidence in the results of numerous studies that show how music can make a difference in a child's education.

The enclosed brochure summarizes several of these studies. We feel that it is information you will want to know. We would be happy to pass along more detailed information on these and other studies at your request.

I am confident that we can work together with the Board to help bring the benefits of music making to all our schoolchildren.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

Follow-up Letter Requesting A Presentation To The School Board

Local school boards have their own procedures for putting items on their meeting agendas. The most basic request will begin in the form of a letter. This letter identifies who wishes to make the presentation (ideally, a parents' group) and what the general scope of the presentation will be. If every Board member has received the "Why Learn to Play Music?" brochure, they will be aware of the issue and some of the research.

Dear [name of school board member],

*"Musical training is a more potent instrument
than any other for education."
Plato, circa 400 B.C.*

The idea that music and the arts are important to educational development is not new, and there is growing scientific evidence that supports this long-held belief. In fact, research now suggests that music is a basic building block of intelligence.

[Name of your group] believe that the results of recent research give us new insight into the value of music and arts education in our schools. As key decision-makers in our district, you and fellow members of the school board should be aware of this important information.

We would like to make a presentation to the Board about the nature and details of the most recent research that links music study to student growth and achievement in school and in life. The presentation takes less than 10 minutes and contains information that will be of great interest to everyone concerned about our children's future.

We hope that you can make time at an upcoming meeting for this informative presentation, and that we can work together to improve the learning opportunities for all our children. Please let us know when we can schedule the presentation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
[Your name and title]

APPENDIX IV: ADVOCACY IDEAS

Advocacy Ideas

Proactive Advocacy Ideas

1. Social media – start a Facebook, Twitter, etc. account for your organization and have parents and other supports “follow” you. Make posts interesting in a timely manner but be aware of spamming.
 2. Start a website (Google is free) and update with current and upcoming information.
 3. Put standards and benchmarks in your concert programs or post them in a public space. List which benchmark or standard is being covered. This shows that music is curriculum based.
 4. List administration and school board members in concert programs. Recognize them when they are present. Ask them to MC or be involved.
 5. Make a powerpoint or short film (like a commercial) and put it on your district or school website.
- Remember to start NOW! Decisions are being made daily. Be proactive and positive.
 - Two good quotes to use are “we aren’t trying to save the arts; we want to use the arts to save the children.” And, “we don’t teach the arts to make them professionals, or to make them teachers. We teach them the arts to make them human!”

Advocacy Tips

- All politics are local and band parents are the best source of help. Contact outside sources for help such as organizations you may be a part of (Alberta Band Association, Alberta

Teachers' Association, etc.). Parents advocating for their children will seem less biased than a teacher who may seem to have an ulterior motive such as job retention.

- Use all the information you can find that show the impact of the arts on students. Get information from neighboring districts and make your points personal by pointing out specific examples that pertain to your students! List who would be hurt by cuts and be specific (use names!).
- Remember you were hired to be an advocate for your teaching assignment and discipline. Let the administration and the Board know you are advocating for your students in their district otherwise it may look like you are only interested in preserving your job.
- Campaign! Make sure your campaign is aimed at the needs and benefits of the students in your district.
- Remain positive!

APPENDIX V: SAMPLE MUSIC PROGRAM BROCHURE And SAMPLE CONCERT PROGRAM



Tour Band in Sun Peaks, BC

Extra Curricular?

Tour Band:

- This is an auditioned ensemble that meets once a week to perform music of a high degree of difficulty and complexity
- Tour band travels across Alberta and British Columbia doing school tours and competing in festivals

Gr. 7 Honor Band:

- This is a hand-picked ensemble that meets twice a week to perform music that is more challenging than grade level

Other Opportunities?

Students at SJT have

Many different opportunities within the music program. In the past groups have made CD recordings and have been invited to participate in Provincial honor bands as well as the ECSD Junior All City Band. Music is an enriching experience that makes junior high memorable.

Come be apart of the Triton Nation!



SIR JOHN THOMPSON

WHY SHOULD YOU BE IN
OUR BAND?!



SIR JOHN THOMPSON
13525-132 Ave,
Edmonton, AB
T5L3R6



SJT Tour Band @ Winspear

Who are we?

The music program

Here at Sir John Thompson music is a required option in grade 7 and an elective in grades 8 and 9. Music is the most popular option at the school with over two thirds of the school population enrolled.

Why music?

Music is not only enriching in its own right but there is mounting evidence that music education helps students develop intellectual capacity, to remain committed to attending school and to do better in later years_ whether pursuing music and the arts professionally or using skills that transfer to other fields.

“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything.” - Plato



Grade 9 Band competing at AIBF

Academic Benefits:

- Higher test scores
- Development of cross curricular skills in math and reading
- Helps students reach their potential by providing unique opportunities
- Safe space for all students to find success

Social and Emotional Benefits:

- Development of empathy, social awareness, discipline, perseverance, and teamwork
- Higher self-esteem and reduced risk to engage in at-risk behaviors

Music is hands on and fun!

Cognitive Benefits:

- Improved IQ
- Better working memory
- Improved problem solving abilities
- Outlet for creativity and self-expression

Goals of the Instrumental Music Program

The instrumental music program will help students to develop competencies and to strive for excellence, within the limits of their individual capabilities in playing, listening, reading, creating and valuing.

**Taken from the Alberta Junior High Curriculum Guide*

Why music?

In the last several years, the results of a number of scientific studies are building a solid foundation of evidence that music instruction is not only inherently worthy but that it helps young minds grow and flourish. Music education builds the intellect.

Music-making promotes the growth of neural connections in the brain and there is evidence that IQ scores rise with increased frequency of music study. Students develop empathy social awareness, discipline, perseverance and teamwork skills within class. Students are able to use class as an outlet for creativity and self-expression, leading to higher self-esteem and reduced risk in engaging in at risk behaviors. Music is taught not only to make your children smarter, but also to improve their quality of life and develop their potential!

Thank you for supporting your child's musical endeavors here at school!

Upcoming Dates!

Band Share day @ Winspear – March 5
 Grade 9 Band AIBF – March 15
 Calgary Band Share @ SJT – March 15
 Tour Band Banff Trip – April 26, 27, 28
 Spring Concert – June 7



Grade 8-2 Band

- Armory by Randall Standridge
- The student will recognize and perform staccato and accents
- Colliding Visions by Brian Balmages
- The student will perform three dynamic levels demonstrating crescendo and decrescendo
- Celtic Air and Dance No.2 by Michael Sweeney
- The student will recognize and interpret *anacrusis, caesura, legato and staccato*

Grade 8-1 Band

- Variants on a Sea Shanty Arr. By Robert Sheldon
- The student will recognize and interpret *alla breve/cut time*
- Moai by Michael Sweeney
- Students will recognize and perform intervals of major and minor 3rds, perfect 4ths and 5ths, and octaves
- *Gotta love that Dixieland! By Andy Clark
- Students will recognize and perform level II articulations

Grade 7A / 7C Band

- Standard of Excellence Selections by Bruce Pearson
- *Dragon Dance by Michael Story
- The student will recognize that the phrase is the musical equivalent of a sentence
 - The student will watch and respond to the conductor
 - The student will recognize and interpret level I note values and rests, and meters

Grade 7B / 7D Band

- Standard of Excellence Selections by Bruce Pearson
- Battle of the Primes by Patrick Roszell
- The student will recognize that the phrase is the musical equivalent of a sentence
 - The student will watch and respond to the conductor
 - The student will recognize and interpret level I note values and rests, and meters

Grade 9 Band

- X Factor by Michael Oare
- The student will list, define and demonstrate *sforzando, fp, f-p, and morendo*
- *Balladair by Frank Erickson
- The student will recognize and perform *legato and level III articulations*
- Carmina Burana by Carl Orff, Arr. Jay Bocook
- The student will identify and perform phrases, achieving musical sensitivity through stylistic practices such as development of intensity, adding flexibility of tempo and adding dynamic contrast to repeated phrases

Tony Band

- The student will exhibit positive musical attitude characterized by participation in extracurricular musical activities
- Mission Apollo by Tyler S. Grant
- The student will perform four dynamic levels demonstrating crescendo and decrescendo
- Loch Lomond by Frank Ticheli
- The student will develop an awareness of balance, blend and texture within the ensemble
- Andalucia by Amy Webb
- The student will recognize and perform *tenuto, marcato and level III articulation patterns*

Music Director: Miss J. Wong
*Conducted by Mr. A. K'ha, Student teacher

A special thank-you to all families, teachers, staff, and friends who have made this evening a success.

See you at our Spring Concert June 7, 2018!