



Dear School Board,

We know that you are faced with many difficult decisions as you deal with school budget deficits. We have an answer to help you, your students, and your school!

**“Most people don’t realize that money is actually saved by making in-school music programs stronger – and that it costs more in the long run to make cuts to programs. This concept of “reverse economics” is at the heart of nearly every school board discussion about making cuts to music programs.” --Dr. John Benham, Administrator, Music Educator, Music Cuts and Reverse Economics; [www.oregonmusic.org/files/fileMusicCuts.pdf](http://www.oregonmusic.org/files/fileMusicCuts.pdf)**

Music classes can effectively accommodate more students than most classes. To calculate the principle of “reverse economics” take the number of students who are, or could be, in a music class and divide it by the number of teachers you would have to pay if those students were not in that class.

Music also teaches the skills students need to know! The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) advisory group and the strategic council of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills outlined these skills:

#### **Learning and Innovation Skills -**

These are the skills most often cited when referring to 21st century skills. They are increasingly being recognized as attributes that separate students who are prepared for a more and more complex life and work environment in the 21st century, from those who are not:

- **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving**, e.g., effectively analyze and evaluate evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs; solve different kinds of non-familiar problems in both conventional and innovative ways.
- **Communication**, e.g., articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral and written communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts.
- **Collaboration**, e.g., demonstrate ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams.
- **Creativity and Innovation**, e.g., use a wide range of idea creation techniques to create new and worthwhile ideas. --*21<sup>st</sup> Century Knowledge and Skills in Educator Preparation, 2010, page.7; [www.p21.org](http://www.p21.org)*

**Research affirms that music teaches the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and innovation skills listed above. Music is cost effective and teaches the skills students need! We encourage you to increase music instruction in your school, for the quality of life in your school and as a money savings strategy that benefits students.**

Schools that have music programs have significantly higher graduation rates than do those without programs (90.2% versus 72.9%). In addition, those that rate their programs as “excellent” or “very good” have an even higher graduation rate (90.9%). Schools that have music programs have significantly higher attendance rates than do those without programs (93.3% versus 84.9%). --*Harris Interactive poll of high school principals conducted Spring 2006; funded by MENC and NAMM. For more info, contact [info@menc.org](mailto:info@menc.org).*

Lastly, data show that high earnings are not just associated with people who have high technical skills. In fact, mastery of the arts and humanities is just as closely correlated with high earnings, and, according to our analysis, that will continue to be true. History, music, drawing, and painting, and economics will give our students an edge just as surely as math and science will. – *Tough Choices or Tough Times: The report of the new commission on the skills of the American workforce, 2007, page 29; [www.skillscommission.org](http://www.skillscommission.org)*

Respectfully,

OMEA-The Oregon Music Educators Association

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## More research:

Secondary students who participated in band or orchestra reported the lowest lifetime and current use of all substances (alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs). – *Texas Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse Report. Reported in Houston Chronicle, January, 1998.*

“The fact that choral singing is a communal activity is especially significant today when we increasingly rely on internet-based communications, rather than face-to-face interaction. Several recent studies have shown a significant decline in civic engagement in our communities.” Robert Putnam, Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government.

It is also well known and widely recognized that the arts contribute significantly to children’s intellectual development." In addition, one or two years of Visual and Performing Arts is recommended for college-bound high school students. – *Getting Ready for College Early: A Handbook for Parents of Students in the Middle and Junior High School Years, U.S. Department of Education, 1997; <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/GettingReadyCollegeEarly/step2.html>*

We need to favor an education that cultivates the critical capacities, that fosters a complex understanding of the world and its peoples and that educates and refines the capacity for sympathy. In short, an education that cultivates human beings rather than producing useful machines. If we do not insist on the crucial importance of the humanities and the arts, they will drop away. They don’t make money; but they do something far more precious; they make the world worth living in. – *Martha Nussbaum, Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics, University of Chicago; Newsweek International, August 21 – 18, 2006; “Teaching Humanity”;*  
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14322948/print/1/displaymode/1098/>

The arts provide one alternative for states looking to build the workforce of tomorrow - a choice growing in popularity and esteem. The arts can provide effective learning opportunities to the general student population, yielding increased academic performance, reduced absenteeism, and better skill building. An even more compelling advantage is the striking success of arts-based educational programs among disadvantaged populations, especially at-risk and incarcerated youth. For at-risk youth, that segment of society most likely to suffer from limited lifetime productivity, the arts contribute to lower recidivism rates; increased self-esteem; the acquisition of job skills; and the development of much needed creative thinking, problem solving and communications skills. Involvement in the arts is one avenue by which at-risk youth can acquire the various competencies necessary to become economically self-sufficient over the long term, rather than becoming a financial strain on their states and communities. – *The Impact of Arts Education on Workforce Preparation, May 2002, The National Governors Association; <http://www.nga.org/cda/files/050102ARTSED.pdf>*

Schools that have higher levels of student participation in the fine arts receive higher academic ratings and have lower dropout rates. Average student enrollment in fine arts courses is 17 percent points higher in high schools that are rated —exemplary than in those rated —low performing, based on data from the Texas Education Agency on 951 high schools. Schools with the lowest dropout rates on average have 52% of their students enrolled in fine arts classes while schools with the highest dropout rates have only 42% of their students in fine arts courses. The data from 864 middle schools followed the same trend as high schools. – *Analysis conducted by the Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education and the Texas Music Educators Association (www.tmea.org). Full report: [www.music-for-all.org/WME/documents/TexasArtsStudy.pdf](http://www.music-for-all.org/WME/documents/TexasArtsStudy.pdf)*

Students of the arts continue to outperform their non-arts peers on the SAT, according to reports by the College Entrance Examination Board. In 2006, SAT takers with coursework/experience in music performance scored 57 points higher on the verbal portion of the test and 43 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework or experience in the arts. Scores for those with coursework in music appreciation were 62 points higher on the verbal and 41 points higher on the math portion. – *The Student Descriptive Questionnaire, a self-reported component of the SAT that gathers information about students’ academic preparation, gathered data for these reports. Source: The College Board, Profile of College-Bound Seniors National Report for 2006; [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)*

—When I hear people asking how do we fix the education system, I tell them we need to do the opposite of what is happening, cutting budgets by cutting music programs.... Nothing could be stupider than removing the ability for the left and right brains to function. Ask a CEO what they are looking for in an employee and they say they need people who understand teamwork, people who are disciplined, people who understand the big picture. You know what they need? They need musicians. – *Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, MENC Centennial Congress, Orlando, Florida, June 2007*

More substantiating evidence <http://www.oregonmusic.org/files/file/SUCCESS%20IN%20SCHOOL%20AND%20LEARNING.pdf>