

## THE USEFULNESS OF MUSIC EDUCATION IN THE K-12 CURRICULUM

*by:*

**Padilla M. Reyes Jr.**

*Teacher III, Magsaysay National High School*

It is common misconception by the public that music education classes are just for fun, but that is not the case. While music education courses are enjoyable, there is substantial evidence provided by various studies and experiments that they also provide many benefits for kids. Not only can music education provide an enjoyable experience for the students, but studies have shown that it can benefit them cognitively, emotionally, and academically. Due to the numerous benefits, it provides for students, music education should not be removed from the K-12 curriculum.

Receiving musical instruction as a child, while the brain is still developing, can function of the brain, but the question remains, do these changes carry on after musical instruction ceases? Results of a study done at the institute of Neuroscience suggest that they do. In this study, 45 healthy adults ages between 18 and 31 years old were divided into three groups of 15. Group number two consisted of those with zero years of musical instruction. Group number three consisted of those who had six to eleven years of musical instruction during childhood. These subjects were put in a soundproof booth and exposed to multiple different sound frequencies while electrodes attached to various parts of their scalp recorded their brain activity. Those adults with musical training during childhood showed significantly higher brain activity in response to the sound frequencies than those without. This indicates that musical training during childhood can lead to long-lasting, positive benefits, including higher cognitive function in response to sound in adulthood.

In some cases, those students enrolled in music education tends to score higher on their academic achievement test than those who were not.

In addition to music education being academically beneficial, it has also been known to correlate with thinking skills, literacy, social skills, emotional development, and motivation to learn. Music education can boost reasoning ability, intuition, perception, imagination, inventiveness, creativity, problem-solving, and expressiveness. Furthermore, music education can enhance social skills such as self-confidence, self-control, conflict resolution, collaboration, empathy, and social tolerance. Music education can also serve as a motivation to stay in school.

Music education has such a long list of benefits that have been proven over and over, but the general public doesn't seem to understand. That being said, how do educators feel? What about the government? Both educators and the government are completely on board in the support of music education.

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If music education has all those wonderful benefits and has the support of both educators and the government, one must wonder, why is it fading out from our school systems? There are many reasons for this. Some aren't eligible for government funding for the art ad when it comes to making budget cuts, music is usually the first thing to go in lieu of subjects such as math or English, which are more valuable skills to have. This is the result of higher education costs, difficulty gaining acceptance into college level music education programs, and a decline in students applying for music education programs since music education is being pulled out of the K-12 curriculum across the country. It is hard enough to get a job as a music teacher in our current job market and even if a teaching position obtained, it's hard to tell whether or not the job will still be there ten years down the road, since music continuous to be pulled from the curriculum. Because of this, many people, have chosen a different career path in hopes of finding better job

security. The final reason is that the general public simply doesn't understand the benefits that music education can provide.

No matter what the reasons, we need to find a way to get music back into our schools where they belong. We need to join music advocacy groups and educate the general public on the benefits of music education using the countless statistical resources to back us up. Furthermore, we need to help raise funds for those school districts that can't afford to have music programs. All of these objectives can be achieved by getting involved with the National Association for Music Education.

There is plenty list of benefits for students because of music education. When received during the early years of childhood when the brain is still developing, music education can actually alter the anatomy and function of the brain, leaving long lasting, positive cognitive benefits. In addition, music education has been proven to improve standardized test scores. Furthermore, music education has been proven to have positive effects on math, reading, verbal and spatial abilities, concentration, memorization, fine motor skills, and emotional expressiveness. It also extremely beneficial to special needs students. Moreover, students can receive additional benefits by participating in school choir, ensemble, and other school organization that promotes music experiences. The benefits include improved physical fitness and advanced skills in neurological multi-tasking. Marching band also teaches discipline, teamwork, time management, camaraderie, resilience, manners respect, generosity, and body awareness. Though music education provides all these fantastic benefits for kids, it is still being pulled out of the K-12 curriculum and it needs to be stopped. Due to the numerous benefits it provides for students, music education should not be removed from the K-12 curriculum.

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