

Music Education Advocacy

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful dedicated individuals can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Music Advocacy begins with us.

“Just as there can be no music without learning; no education is complete without music.” (NAfME).

It seems so obvious to us but to the community leaders, administrators, business leaders, parents and even our students it may not be as obvious.

“The Sky is falling!”

- NCLB & early initiatives.....result: National and state standards.
- Research.....Music makes you smarter!
- True! But along the way we have lost track of the value and importance of music.
- While validating music in terms of how it helps other disciplines we have lost sight of music’s inherent merit...**“It makes us more human.”**
- Wordless expression. When words fail music helps us make connections.
- John Williams.....music tells the story
- Eric Ewazin...”*Hymn to the Lost and the Living.*”
- Ronald LoPresti.....”*Elegy for a Young American.*”
- These pieces do not make us smarter...or fix the economy. They do allow each of us to reach a point of emotional understanding and realization that helps us grow and mature as humans.

The Music Educators professional mission statement:

“Learning music is a birth right for every child!”

In addition to preparing for the next concert remember and advocate:

1. Music is intrinsic....unique to all...connected to the human spirit and the creative mind.
2. Music opens the mind....research continues to link the development of learning skills with music.

3. Music teaches more than music...while not specifically tied to music they are a byproduct of the study of music:
- ✓ Establishment of high achievement standards transferable to other academic subjects.
 - ✓ Problem solving
 - ✓ Collaborative teamwork habits through communication skills (verbal & non-verbal).
 - ✓ Flexible thinking...adapting known to the unknown.
 - ✓ Improves reading comprehension, motor skills, spatial awareness, listening ability.
 - ✓ Self-discipline, confidence, self-esteem.
4. Global awareness, culturally sensitive.

"We are in the twilight of a society based on data. As information and intelligence becomes the domain of computers, society will place a new value on the human ability that cannot be automated: EMOTION."

Rolf Jensen, director of the Copenhagen Institute for Future Studies.

We are in the business of....

"Making better people and making people better."

- **Raising test scores is one means.**
- **Music making will afford the learner the opportunity to integrate the learned data in a meaningful way that makes life worth living. (Lautzenheiser)**

"So, what do we do?!" We need.....

1. the best artist/educators!
2. music educators ready to teach for low pay, horrible conditions, in the middle of nowhere and with little support.
3. music educators that believe the future of music rests with the student setting in the back of the band with the beat up euphonium or the member of the bass section that you have trouble hearing sing.
4. teachers that are ready to speak with decision makers to keep music in our schools.
5. teachers that are not complacent and do not look the other way when arts are threatened.

Music Advocacy is an ongoing process for all of us.

I encourage you not to think of it as a way to “justify music in our schools.” Instead approach it as an ongoing communication with present music makers, potential music makers, music supporters, fellow faculty, administrators and parents. Meaning, do not wait until it becomes an item for the school board to consider.

Advocacy information generates enthusiasm for the importance of music.