

The use of an authority's quotation to open this editorial lends credibility to the writer's opinion. Seventh-grader Jess backs up her position in subsequent paragraphs.

Musical Arts

"Fine arts are important in the curriculum because of what they do for learning," stated Patty Taylor, arts consultant for the California State Department of Education. In other words, the arts, especially music, should be part of every school's curriculum at every grade level. Music makes students smarter, gives children something positive to do, and builds self-confidence. Most students don't have a chance to learn music outside of school, and everyone deserves that opportunity.

Students would be much smarter if they had some music experience. They would improve their classroom skills, like paying attention, following directions, and participating without interrupting. People develop all these skills when they learn music. Musicians are also better in math, and they get higher S.A.T. scores. For instance, a study by the College Entrance Examination Board reported, "Students with 20 units of arts and music scored 128 points higher on the S.A.T. verbal and 118 points higher in math." A Rockefeller Foundation study states that music majors have the highest rate of admittance to medical school. Making music also lets children use their imaginations, unlike playing with video games and electronic stuffed animals. "It provides students a chance to try out their own ideas," according to the *California Educator*. Music makes children well-rounded students.

Music not only makes children better students but also gives them something positive to do. In a music program, children can be part of a band or choir instead of getting into trouble. Parents can enjoy listening to their children's music instead of seeing them glued to a computer or TV screen. In band, students get to be part of a team. They can interact with old friends and make new friends through music. In fact, on her Web site "The Musician's Brain," Lois Svard explains how music stimulates "mirror neurons," which synchronize performers but also help them empathize with each other. As the great choral conductor Eric Whitacre said, directing a choir is all about getting a room of people to breathe together. In many ways, music helps people connect.

Music builds self-confidence. It gives children a sense of accomplishment and success. Making music is something for them to be proud of, and it lets kids practice

performing in front of an audience. As reported in the California Educator, “It gives [students] self-confidence and a feeling of importance to have a skill someone appreciates. They are also learning how to accomplish something from beginning to end and actually come out with a product that they can be proud of.” Music gives children an outlet for self-expression, and that helps develop their self-confidence.

Once again, music is important because it can make children better students, give them something positive to do, and build their character. Unfortunately, the children who need music lessons the most usually don’t have access to them outside of school. That is why music should be offered in every single grade in every school.