

Editorial:

SAVE our ARTS

Students Can Help Save Vital Local Arts Programs

by Keith Black, age 16

It seems like parents often have to tell their teenagers to turn their music down. Although this might be an attempt to save young eardrums, music and other art forms are a critical component to a creative and mind-expanding education. Research has shown that being engaged in the arts has a significant impact in education and overall development.

Unfortunately, schools today are reducing arts education opportunities.

Researchers from The National School Board Association and Americans for the Arts have done studies that show that children who participate in art programs are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement. They are also more likely to win an award for writing a poem or essay. In fact, students who are involved in the arts are more likely to achieve high SAT scores.

There are a variety of reasons that many school districts are reducing the menu of arts programs offered to students. By far the biggest reason is loss of funding and budget cuts. When schools lose funds, they often have to cut the number of classes they offer. Art classes are often not viewed as core academics.

And often they are first to face the budget axe.

Another reason arts education today is lacking is because of standardized testing. Classes like English, mathematics, science, and other core subject classes can be tested easily. Some teachers believe they need to focus more on these subjects so that students can pass the required standardized tests.

I believe that schools should focus on incorporating arts education into their core curriculum. This is being done creatively and successfully in many forward-thinking school districts.

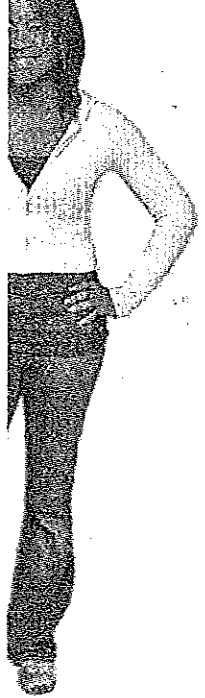
One organization that is working hard to bring the arts back into schools is Americans for the Arts. Beginning in 1996, this organization has stuck to three main goals: foster an environment in which arts can flourish, generate more public sector resources for the arts, and build individual appreciation of the value of arts. Through partnerships between local, state, and national arts organizations, Americans for the Arts has worked with teachers and community leaders, and the National School Board Association, to create stronger arts communities.

These organizations are not the only ones working toward these goals. All over

the country educators and communities are working on innovative ways to integrate the arts into school curriculum.

You can also help. Speak out, talk to administrators at your school about saving the arts in your community. If you want to learn more, visit www.artsusa.org to visit Americans for the arts webpage for more information on saving the arts.

[Source: <http://www.artsusa.org>; *The Arts: Who Needs Them? We All Do!*]



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