

# IS YOUR MUSIC PROGRAM SLATED FOR ELIMINATION?

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As the national economy continues downward, local governments are now feeling the “squeeze.” We all know that education programs are one of the first things trimmed to save localities money. To go even further... music programs are on the top of the list for removal or cutbacks even in the most affluent communities. While reforms for NCLB look hopeful this year, many programs may be targeted to lose partial or full funding. If your program is in jeopardy, please email Mary Wagner, ASTA advocacy chairman, at [mscello@cox.net](mailto:mscello@cox.net) if you need advice and resources to lobby your school board and local government officials.

## Talking Points

In order to grab your audience’s attention, you need to have a strong set of talking points, or fascinating facts, that will educate and resonate. The following are ASTA-approved talking points regarding No Child Left Behind and music education.

- **Even though No Child Left Behind lists Arts Education as a core academic subject, only 18% of US schools offer strings programs.** It is in the face of budget cuts that schools are resorting to cutting after school programs, art classes, and even music classes. No music program is complete without strings instruction. It is impossible to maintain a well-rounded curriculum without proper funding.<sup>1, 3, 4</sup>
- **The serious study of music has been demonstrated to complement other areas of academic study.** In 2005 test-taking College-Bound Seniors, those with an average of 2 years of study in

arts and music had significantly higher GPAs in each subject than those students who did not.<sup>1, 5</sup>

- **Music education programs enrich the whole student and are a critical component to a well-rounded academic curriculum.** Studies show that students who participate in band or orchestra show the lowest lifetime use of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs. Students who participate in music classes are less likely to be disruptive students in class. Among minority students, more identify their music teacher as role models than any other subject area. These students demonstrate higher self-esteem and thinking skills than their counterparts.<sup>2</sup>
- **Playing a musical instrument has cognitive benefits.** A Stanford study has found that musical training improves how the brain processes spoken word—this could lead to improving the reading ability of children who have dyslexia and other reading problems.<sup>7</sup> An increasing number of studies focusing on participation in musical activities and cognitive development in mathematics suggest that the two are closely related. Music at the basic level shows the obvious connection between music and mathematics.<sup>6</sup>
- **Students from a low socio-economic status (SES) who are highly involved in music consistently have higher standardized testing scores than their low-SES peers who have no involvement in music.** Studies show

that the absolute performance gaps between low SES students involved in music versus low SES non-music youth grows considerably between grades 8 and 12.<sup>6</sup>

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## References For Talking Points

- 1 *Recognizing the Benefits and Importance of School-Based Music Education.* House of Representatives. March 01, 2005.
- 2 *Recognizing the Benefits and Importance of School-Based Music Education.* House of Representatives. April 04, 2006.
- 3 *Wanted: 5,000 String Teachers! Status of Orchestra Programs in America's Schools.* A Study by the American String Teachers Association with Nation School Orchestra Association. 2000.
- 4 No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, Title IX, Part A, Sec. 9101 (11).
- 5 *2005 College-Bound Seniors—Total Group Profile.* College Board. Generated August 05, 2005.
- 6 *Involvement in the Arts and Human Development: General Involvement and Intensive Involvement in Music and Theater Arts.* J. S. Catterall, R. Chappleau, J. Iwanaga. The Imagination Project at UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, University of California at Los Angeles. September 1999.
- 7 *Playing Music Can Be Good For your Brain—Stanford Study Finds it Helps the Understanding of Language.* C. Sturrock. SFGate.com. Nov. 17, 2005.

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