

Arts Education Is Essential

It is imperative that all students have access to an equitable delivery of arts education that includes dance, media arts, music, theatre and visual arts that supports their educational, social and emotional well-being, taught by certified professional arts educators in partnership with community arts providers.

Teaching and learning will never quite be the same in our post-COVID-19 world. However, our commitment to provide rich and varied educational experiences remains unwavering. The arts have played an important role in these tumultuous times and will continue to do so for all students, including the traditionally underrepresented, those with special needs and from low-income families. Here's why:

Arts education supports the social and emotional well-being of students, whether through distance learning or in person. Self-awareness, self-efficacy, self-management and perseverance, social awareness and relationship skills are central to any arts education activity, no matter the age and ability of the student or the environment in which the learning takes place. The arts, with their strong emphasis on team building and self-reflection, are supremely suited to reignite students' interest in learning through collaboration, while simultaneously fostering creativity, critical thinking, and communication.

Arts education nurtures the creation of a welcoming school environment where students can express themselves in a safe and positive way. Celebrating our ability to come together as educators and students is vital to creating a healthy and inclusive school community. The arts, through a rich partnership among certified arts educators, teaching artists and community arts providers, play a valuable role in helping students and their families build and sustain community and cultural connections.

Arts education is part of a well-rounded education for all students as understood and supported by federal and state policymakers. As defined in ESSA, "music and the arts" are part of a well-rounded education. Every state in the nation recognizes the importance of the arts as reflected in rigorous preK-12 state arts standards. Forty-six states require an arts credit to receive a high school diploma, and 43 states have instructional requirements in the arts for elementary and secondary schools. As noted in Arts Education for America's Students:

A Shared Endeavor: "An education without the arts is inadequate."

The healing and unifying power of the arts has been evident as the COVID-19 pandemic swept the country. We have seen and heard it play out through works of art on sidewalks, shared musical moments from porches, in plays and dance performances, and every other imaginable iteration of art making. As states and schools work through multiple challenges in the years ahead, arts education must remain central to a well-rounded education and fully funded to support the well-being of all students and the entire school community.

Afterschool Alliance
American Choral Directors Association
American Composers Forum
American Orff-Schulwerk Association
American String Teachers Association
Americans for the Arts
Barbershop Harmony Society
Carnegie Hall
Casio America Inc
Chorus America
CMA Foundation
College Band Directors National Association
Conn-Selmer, Inc.
D'Addario Foundation
Eastman Music Company
Education Through Music
Educational Theatre Association
Give a Note Foundation
Hal Leonard
Historically Black Colleges and
Universities National Band Directors' Consortium
Jazz at Lincoln Center
Jazz Education Network
KHS America
KORG, USA
League of American Orchestras
Little Kids Rock

Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation
Music for All
Music Teachers National Association
NAMM Foundation
National Art Education Association
National Association for Music Education
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Coalition for Core Arts Standards
National Dance Education Organization
National Education Association
National Federation of State High School Associations
National YoungArts Foundation
Organization of American Kodály Educators
Quadrant Research
QuaverEd
Recording Academy
Save The Music Foundation
State Education Agency Directors of Arts Association
The Rock and Roll Forever Foundation
United Sound, Inc.
Varsity Performing Arts
West Music Company
WURRLYedu
Yamaha Corporation of America
Young Audiences Arts for Learning
YOUnison