

The New Face Of Music Advocacy

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During the late 1980's and early 1990's, two very interesting arts-related movements began to form in America. One movement was the emergence of new studies linking music study to increased standardized test scores, QPA's, and enhanced mind function in various areas of reasoning and spatial relationships. The other movement was a swell in school districts' budgetary dilemmas, thought to be solved by the cutting back or elimination of arts programs in the schools. Either because of coincidental timing or novelty of new studies, advocates of public school arts programs used these studies to justify the importance of arts programs, and for the first time, a justification resisting the elimination or decrease of arts programs in the schools seemed to be effective.

Over the past decade and a half, these studies have been continuously used by music advocates in our country. However, there is one major flaw with this argument. The reasons that musicians play their instruments or sing have nothing to do with their desire to improve their math abilities or reasoning skills. Musicians make music as a form of expression. Music is the voice of our emotions, not merely a extraneous tag-along to the math curriculum. Mr. Hazo's presentation explores the true benefits of music to our society and to us as individuals, as it redirects the justification of music in the schools to be: The world needs music, and it starts in the schools.