

## Music Education Advocacy Talking Points

Engaging · Sustaining · Transforming

### Orchestras are Essential to Their Communities

- Orchestras are essential and active partners in increasing access to lifelong music education. They enhance the quality of life in their communities by collaborating with school systems and other local partners to deliver a wide array of education and community programs. Education and community engagement activity in America's orchestras is growing fast, with nearly three times as many events as a decade ago. Orchestras now offer more than 13,000 education concerts, more than 1,000 community engagement concerts, and more than 40 kinds of programs.
- Being part of an orchestra encourages young people to develop their talents and to experience teamwork, self-discipline, and individual expression. There are nearly 500 youth orchestras across America and all of them help meet the growing demand for music education and positive activities for young people. These orchestras involve more than 50,000 young musicians in the joy of music making and all its ancillary benefits.

### A Complete Education Includes the Arts

- A child's education is not complete unless it includes the arts. In fact, the current iteration of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) (also known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) lists the arts among the core academic subjects, requiring schools to enable all students to achieve in the arts and to reap the full benefits of a comprehensive arts education.
- Music is vital to maximizing a child's full potential. Ensemble music making in schools is an important part of a complete music education.

### The Arts Have Broad Reach

- Students who participate in the arts outperform those who do not on virtually every measure. Researchers found that sustained learning in music and theater correlate to greater success in math and reading, with students from lower socio-economic backgrounds reaping the greatest benefits.<sup>1</sup> It is now accepted that the arts are uniquely able to boost learning and achievement for young children, students with disabilities, students from under-resourced environments, and students needing remedial instruction.<sup>2</sup>
- A study by the Arts Education Partnership, *Third Space: When Learning Matters*, finds that schools with large populations of students in economic poverty - too often places of frustration and failure for both students and teachers - can be transformed into vibrant hubs of learning when the arts are infused into their culture and curriculum. Additionally, studies have found that 8th graders from under-resourced environments who are highly involved in the arts have better grades, less likelihood of dropping out by grade 10, have more positive attitudes about school, and are more likely to go on to college.
- Schools, especially those that are struggling, can attract new educators and keep their best teachers by becoming havens for creativity and innovation; places where students want to learn and teachers want to teach. As we aim to improve the teaching environment, the arts can help us retain our outstanding future and current educators in our nation's schools.

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<sup>1</sup> Center on Education Policy. (2006). From the Capitol to the Classroom: Year 4 of the No Child Left Behind Act, March 2006. (p. xi).

<sup>2</sup> Horowitz, R. & Webb-Dempsey, J. (2003). Promising signs of positive effects: Lessons from the multi-arts studies. In R. J. Deasy (Ed). *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*. Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership. (p. 98-100). Mason, C.Y., Thormann, M.S., & Steedley, K. M. (2004). *How Students with Disabilities Learn in and through the Arts*. Washington, DC: VSAarts. (p. 19-25).

### The Arts Provide Academic, Social, and Future Workforce Benefits

- Research has proven that arts education uniquely provides academic and social benefits, preparing students for success in school, work, and life. The status of music education in our nation's schools has short- and long-term consequences for both student achievement and the future of all our orchestras.
- The 2006 report from the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, a bipartisan assembly of Education Secretaries, state officials and business leaders, said in its executive summary, "The best employers the world over will be looking for the most competent, most creative and most innovative people on the face of the earth and will be willing to pay them top dollar for their services." The report points to the arts as an essential skill for the future workforce.
- To succeed in today's economy of ideas, students must masterfully use words, images, sounds, and movement to communicate. The arts provide the skills and knowledge students need to develop the creativity and determination necessary for success in today's global information age.

### Policy Leaders and the Public Agree on the Value of the Arts

- Policy leaders have spoken to the value and power of the arts:
  - U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan has urged state governors not to make "short-sighted cuts" such as "eliminating instruction in the arts."
  - Secretary Duncan also proclaimed, "The arts can no longer be treated as a frill... President Obama, the First Lady, and I reject the notion that the arts, history, foreign languages, geography, and civics are ornamental offerings that can or should be cut from schools during a fiscal crunch. The truth is that, in the information age, a well-rounded curriculum is not a luxury but a necessity."
- Arts education has the capacity to be deployed as an economic development strategy. According to a 2007 Conference Board report, there is overwhelming support from school superintendents (98 percent) and corporate leaders (96 percent) that creativity is of increasing importance to the U.S workforce. Further, a Lake Research poll of 1,000 likely voters revealed that 83 percent of voters believe that a greater emphasis on the arts, along with math, science, and technology would better prepare students for the demands of the 21st century.

### The Arts Are a Model for Other Subjects of Learning

- The arts are a model of beyond-the-bubble assessments of student learning. Comprehensive national standards for what children should know and be able to do in the arts were created for dance, music, theater, and the visual arts in 1994. These standards provided the basis for the National Arts Education Assessment Framework, which was adopted by the U.S. Department of Education's National Assessment Governing Board and demonstrates that schools can and should measure student progress in creating, performing, and responding to works of art. The arts can not only be a part of the emerging assessment reform conversations, but can lead the way with knowledge and experience regarding the performance and portfolio-based measurements envied by other core academic subjects.

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#### **Recommended Resources:**

Arts Education: Creating Student Success in School, Work, and Life

[http://www.americanorchestras.org/images/stories/adv\\_gov\\_pdf/artsed\\_white\\_paper.pdf](http://www.americanorchestras.org/images/stories/adv_gov_pdf/artsed_white_paper.pdf)

Orchestras Support In-School Music Education

[http://www.americanorchestras.org/advocacy\\_and\\_government/music\\_ed\\_advocates.html](http://www.americanorchestras.org/advocacy_and_government/music_ed_advocates.html)

Music Education Advocacy Tools

[http://www.americanorchestras.org/advocacy\\_and\\_government/music\\_education\\_advocacy\\_tools.html](http://www.americanorchestras.org/advocacy_and_government/music_education_advocacy_tools.html)