

The Facts About Arts Education and Student Achievement

The arts are much more than just fun “extra” activities for kids. Participation in the arts opens up children's worlds and minds, and offers children the skills they need for a bright future.

Young people who participate in the arts for at least three hours on three days each week through at least one full year are

- * Four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement.
- * Three times more likely to be elected to class office within their schools.
- * Four times more likely to participate in a math and science fair.
- * Three times more likely to win an award for school attendance.
- * Four times more likely to win an award for writing an essay or poem.

Young artists, as compared with their peers, are likely to

- * Attend music, art, and dance classes nearly three times as frequently.
- * Participate in youth groups nearly four times as frequently.
- * Read for pleasure nearly twice as often.
- * Perform community service more than four times as often.

(Shirley Brice Heath, Elisabeth Soep, and Adelma Roach, *Living the Arts Through Language and Learning: A Report on Community-Based Youth Organizations*, Americans for the Arts Monograph, November 1998.)

Further, arts education:

- * Makes a tremendous impact on the developmental growth of every child and has proven to help level the “learning field” across socioeconomic boundaries.

(James S. Catterall, *Involvement in the Arts and Success in Secondary School*, Americans for the Arts Monograph, January 1998.)

- * Has a measurable impact on youth at risk in deterring delinquent behavior and truancy problems while also increasing overall academic performance among those youth engaged in after-school and summer arts programs targeted toward delinquency prevention.

(YouthARTS Development Project, 1996, U.S. Department of Justice, National Endowment for the Arts, and Americans for the Arts.)

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Businesses understand that arts education:

- * Builds a school climate of high expectation, discipline, and academic rigor that attracts businesses to your community.
- * Strengthens student problem-solving and critical thinking skills, adding to overall academic achievement and school success.
- * Helps students develop a sense of craftsmanship, quality task performance, and goal-setting—skills needed to succeed in the classroom and beyond.
- * Can help troubled youth, providing an alternative to destructive behavior and another way for students to approach learning.
- * Provides another opportunity for parent, community, and business involvement with schools.
- * Helps all students develop more appreciation and understanding of the world around them.
- * Helps students develop a positive work ethic and pride in a job well done.

(Business Circle for Arts Education in Oklahoma, “Arts at the Core of Learning 1999 Initiative.”)

Simply put,

- * The arts teach kids to be more tolerant and open.
- * The arts allow kids to express themselves creatively.
- * The arts promote individuality, bolster self-confidence, and improve overall academic performance.
- * The arts can help troubled youth, providing an alternative to delinquent behavior and truancy while also providing an improved attitude toward school.

*Adapted with permission from Americans for the Arts, National Arts Education Public Awareness Campaign,
www.AmericansForTheArts.org/Public_Awareness/.*

