

The War on Art
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The New York Times

In recent years, art education has become less and less important in schools. School boards across the nation have had to make the difficult decision to cut art programs from the curriculum. While they believe to be doing what is best for the school and its funding, they simply do not understand the harm being done to the students by removing programs such as art, music, and dance.

Many students only have the time and resources to practice art in school during these designated times. Without these programs being incorporated in their class schedule, they often participate in artistic expression less and less until it dwindles to nothing. As someone who played the saxophone in the school band for four years and has always enjoyed art class, I can personally say that those few hours a day where I could be creatively free were the best parts of my day.

To make the problem worse, “The decline of arts education has been felt most severely in low-performing, low-income schools,” (teachnkidslearn.com). For some of these children, their artistic expression may be their only way to escape from the everyday struggles they face. Many of the greatest artists have come from turmoil and pain but found beauty in their journey.

Art has also been linked to “positive effects on empathy, school engagement, student discipline, and writing achievement,” (Education Next). The article then goes on to say, “Students’ emotional and cognitive empathy increase by 7.2 percent (...) students are 20.7 percent less likely to have a disciplinary infraction (...) School engagement increases by 8 percent.”. Art is more than just fun, it improves overall sociability, focus, and discipline. When artistic education is limited, it affects parts of development that math and english can’t teach. It has proven to be a necessary component in healthy, well-balanced development.

Some may argue that subjects like math and english are more important than the arts; that those subjects lead to a better chance at a successful career, but not only are there many careers to be made in the arts, art education also teaches students skills that subjects like math and english cannot. Art education has been proven to improve decision-making, confidence, and motor skills; it has also been linked to improved problem-solving, mental health, and perseverance. It has also been proven to improve performance in other school subjects, “Elementary schools with art programs show a 23% increase in math scores and a 12% increase in reading scores,” (Gitnux).

Art expression and art education are proven to be key components in developing a well-rounded individual. Many people find immense joy in their creativity and allowing space for that in school can make a much more positive environment. Art has also been proven to improve performance and scoring in core courses which in turn yields results that are beneficial to everyone. Keep a component of fun and freedom in schools and watch how much more engaged students become. We must end the war on art, in the end, it is only harming the children.

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