



NYSSMA®

A State Unit of NAFME, National Association for Music Education

November 14, 2024

Suzanne McCabe
Managing Editor of Junior Scholastic
Scholastic Corporation
557 Broadway
New York, NY. 10012

Dear Editor McCabe,

I am writing in response to your recent article in the "Debate" section of *Scholastic News*, which posed the question, "*Should kids learn music in schools?*"

Music education is not a frivolous or decorative subject; it is a vital, law-defined component of a well-rounded education. According to the U.S. Department of Education, schools are required to provide students access to an "enriched curriculum and educational experience," which includes music as a core subject, alongside math, science, social studies, and language arts. Music is integral to a child's development, not an optional add-on.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that music education significantly enhances academic performance across all disciplines. The cognitive benefits are vast—music fosters self-discipline, communication skills, social skills, and creative thinking. It nurtures teamwork, goal setting, problem-solving, and self-expression. Moreover, music helps build confidence, memory, coordination, concentration, and resilience, skills that are essential not only in the classroom but throughout life. The young student that was quoted would be somewhat unaware of these numerous and important benefits of a well-constructed, sequential music education curriculum. By quoting the young reader, the article is doing a disservice to all students who benefit from music education every day.

Music education prepares students for meaningful participation in cultural activities. It offers students a lifelong avenue for personal enrichment and connection with others, extending far beyond the classroom.

Regrettably, your article inadvertently undermines the work of countless educators, administrators, and organizations like the New York State School Music Association, who advocate for music to be recognized as equal to other core subjects. The message conveyed—that music is expendable or non-essential—risks sending the wrong signal to students, parents, and schools. It contradicts federal policy and contemporary educational research that supports the inclusion of music as a fundamental aspect of every student's education.

NYSSMA would be proud to provide our expertise to ensure that music education's rightful place in schools is clearly understood. Thank you for your kind attention to this important message.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edmund A. Chiarello".

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