

Strong Arts, Strong Schools

Teachers are frequently torn between two competing ways of organizing instruction. One approach is to think of each school subjects as a separate and distinct collection of knowledge best understood, studied, and learned by itself. The second way to organize instruction is to assume that every school subject has connections to other school subjects and that the best way to learn is by encouraging students to actively examine those relationships.

- **“Students in the arts scored an average of 82 points higher every year than their non-arts counterparts.”** Quote from the College Board, College-Bound Seniors National Report: A Profile on SAT Program Test Takers for 1998, 1999, and 2000.
- **An arts education helps children and their imagination** to see something wholly new in the most ordinary materials and events. All children should have the opportunity to invent a broader universe in which to see new dimensions and create their own visions of the world as it was, is, and might be.
- **When the arts are integrated in the curriculum daily attendance increases.** The Guggenheim Elementary School in inner-city Chicago for example, after the arts were at the core of the curriculum, daily attendance increased to 94%, and 83% of the students achieved at or above national norm in reading and math.
- **Keeping young people in school is not just an educational or social issue,** it’s an economic one, too. In Los Angeles, for example, 85% all daytime crime is committed by truant youth. The annual cost of truancy to the nation is \$228 Billion. Later on in the lives of young people, it costs the business community about \$30 billion annually to train unskilled employees in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- **Study of the arts encourages a suppleness of mind,** a toleration for ambiguity, a taste for nuance, and the ability to make trade-offs among alternative courses of action. An arts education contributes to the quality of education overall and builds critical thinking skills.
- **An arts education directly teaches life attitudes and skills that businesses value.** Arts instruction pushes students to work to a higher level of standard by producing and offering models of excellence.
- **An education in the arts teaches students how to work cooperatively, and how to work out conflicting points of view.**
- **An education in the arts builds an understanding of diversity and the multi-cultural dimensions of our world.**