

THE ADVOCATE

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Be a Champion

Tom Chapin uses music to make a compelling case for the arts in our schools.

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ENGAGING A New Generation of ANTI-HUNGER LEADERS:

Make the Time

These service-learning resources can help students develop proactive solutions in the fight against hunger.

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News of Note

Student leaders travel to Capitol Hill to promote the benefits of CTSOs.

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An Unforgettable Performance

Arts Integration and Advocacy Take Center Stage

BY KATHLEEN WILSON SHRYOCK

As a nation, we value the arts. Creative expression allows us to discover what it takes to thrive in school, career, and life. In a recent Harris Poll, 93 percent of Americans surveyed said that the arts are vital to a well-rounded education.¹ At the state and federal level, legislators seem to agree. Forty-nine states have established standards for one or more art forms, and 43 states require schools to provide arts instruction.² Even the federal No Child Left Behind Act defines the arts as a discipline that improves student outcomes. So why are the arts on the chopping block in so many of our schools?

Despite the overwhelmingly positive perception of the arts, mandates to teach to the test are undermining the importance of the arts in education. Two-thirds of teachers say that the arts are getting crowded out of the school day.³ Budget cuts, shifting priorities, and requirements to meet federal standards are leading to fewer opportunities to practice the arts in schools.

A reduction in arts accessibility is even more pronounced in schools that serve students with a low socioeconomic status (SES). Not surprisingly, these schools often include at-risk students who would benefit the most from arts engagement. Research shows that students with low SES who have high exposure to the arts are five times less likely to drop out of high school and two times more likely to go to college.⁴ Educators who practice arts inclusion are discovering that success in academics and a vibrant arts program are complementary for students at all levels. In fact, students involved in the arts are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement.⁵ ➔

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Source: James Catterall, *Doing Well and Doing Good by Doing Art: The Effects of Education in the Visual and Performing Arts on the Achievements and Values of Young Adults* (Los Angeles: Imagination Group, 2009)



Students at an A+ school in NC use dance to enhance academic learning.

The Arts in Action

Wiley H. Bates Middle School in Annapolis, MD, recently experienced the transformative power of the arts in action. A prolonged cycle of student apathy, declining test scores, and teacher frustration had combined to create an environment of disengagement. In order to save their failing school, administrators turned to the arts as a practical way of increasing student interest while improving academic performance. In 2008, a school-wide reform revolving around the arts took place. Since then, the school's developing body of research has indicated that arts integration has had a positive impact on all student groups, including those who were previously struggling. Math and reading scores for English-language learners have improved by almost 30 percent, behavioral referrals and suspensions have decreased by 23 percent, and overall math and reading proficiencies have increased to more than four times the state's average.⁶

Laura Brino, arts integration specialist at Bates Middle School, explains that a focus on the arts has resulted in highly engaged students. The positive findings are affirmed each year through formative assessments. Artful thinking, a strategy that encourages students to connect artwork to an academic concept, has become an essential classroom tool. "The artwork provides a nonjudgmental way to teach students about critical thinking," said Brino. "It provides neutral territory for students to take risks and not worry about making mistakes, because there are no incorrect answers. These routines allow students to access what they already know and build deeper understanding as they analyze and evaluate their observations."

Teachers at Bates have learned that there are countless creative ways to use the arts to enhance academics. In one math lesson, students crafted mosaics out of cut paper, and then used the artwork of their peers to predict sample size. Seventh-grade science students choreographed dances to represent the various systems of the human body, and eighth graders composed original songs as an aid for math comprehension. As the arts are incorporated into classroom learning, Brino said, students discover that it is easier to understand challenging subjects and retain the information. "When a standard is targeted with arts integration, students meet that standard."

"The arts provide students with multiple means to engage with the content. Teachers report over and over again that a child who was struggling before arts integration has become successful when given a chance to learn in a different way."

School administrators in North Carolina are also witnessing the benefits of whole-school arts integration. Since its inception in 1995, the A+ Schools Program of the North Carolina Arts Council has served as a blueprint for educational reform. Educators in other states, including Oklahoma and Arkansas, have replicated the A+ model.

Michelle Mazan Burrows, a former teacher and trainer, is the program's director. She explains that the success of the program can be attributed to the use of the arts, ongoing professional development, and a statewide network of teacher support. In addition, A+ Schools Program uses a comprehensive, three-part formula for achieving student success:

- **Arts education**—the pure teaching of the arts
- **Arts integration**—using the arts to reinforce non-arts content
- **Arts exposure**—helping students to see that art is all around them

Through this approach, students develop important life skills like problem solving, responsibility, creativity, and collaboration, while gaining a deeper understanding of the required standards. "For many students, gaining knowledge primarily through written or verbal experience can be a struggle," said Burrows. "The arts provide students with multiple means to engage with the content. Teachers report over and over again that a child who was struggling before arts integration has become successful when given a chance to learn in a different way."

To illustrate this point, Burrows describes a recent classroom activity that went beyond the confines of a traditional textbook. "As an adult and well-educated teacher, I had the experience of exploring mass and volume through a dance exercise. It wasn't until that moment that I realized I had never truly understood the difference between the two."

As at Bates Middle School, administrators for A+ Schools Program are measuring the impact of arts integration on a regular basis. In one district, students who had progressed through A+ elementary programs consistently graduated at the top of their class in high school. And a high-poverty middle school in the state has experienced a significant drop in behavioral referrals since implementing the program.

While arts integration provides young people with opportunities to thrive, the benefits are not limited to the students. In North Carolina, teachers at A+ schools report an increase in job satisfaction and in the attendance rates of their students. In addition, A+ teachers are provided with ongoing, high-quality professional development and access to a statewide network of support. These supports promote a team mentality that transfers to the school community. "Collaboration allows educators to share knowledge, strategize, and reflect together," said Burrows. A common vision, with arts integration at the core, contributes to a positive school climate.

Brino agrees that arts integration linked with professional development fosters enthusiastic educators. At Bates Middle School, professional development is embedded into the weekly schedule. In addition to collaborative planning, arts integration is a regular topic. “Hands-on professional development reminds teachers of the engaging power of the arts,” said Brino. “Teachers enjoy the creativity that our schools inspire. There is art literally all around us.”

A Call for Advocacy

A wealth of research combined with anecdotal evidence from real schools makes a compelling case for integrative arts-based programs for all students. But action is needed to maintain and expand programs that accentuate the arts in our schools. The nonprofit Americans for the Arts has analyzed numerous studies indicating that an investment in arts education results in improved academic, social, and civic outcomes. Jeff Poulin, the organization’s arts education program coordinator, believes that—in addition to these documented outcomes—access to the arts is invaluable in helping students gain the life skills necessary to find their passions in life.

Poulin explains that arts education is impacted by a complex ecosystem of stakeholders, some of whom may think it is necessary to cut funds or limit the amount of time dedicated to arts education. “It’s necessary for educators and advocates to understand the complexity of this ecosystem and learn how to navigate it,” he said. “We advise those who care about arts education to become familiar with the issues so that they can be equipped to promote arts education in their districts, states, or on Capitol Hill.” For this purpose, Americans for the Arts has partnered with Vans Custom Culture to design the *Arts Education Navigator*, a series of e-books designed to help educators, students, and advocates explore the complex field of arts education. These resources can be accessed at a4sa.org/ArtsEdNavigator.

Kristen Engebretsen, arts education program manager at Americans for the Arts, also encourages advocates to be proactive. “The most important thing to do is get involved. If school decision makers don’t hear from you that this is an important issue, they’ll assume it’s not,” she said. “When you combine the intrinsic benefits with the extrinsic benefits, you can tailor your advocacy messages

to various audiences and powerfully convey the importance of arts education.” She recommends the inclusion of both hard-hitting data and real-life examples of student success when presenting the impact of arts-based programs.

At Bates Middle School, A+ schools in North Carolina, and at other schools across the nation, arts education in an age of challenging time and budget constraints is an important consideration. “We know that creative and advanced critical-thinking skills are influenced by arts education,” Burrows said. “The arts are a huge part of future careers and of preserving the cultural fabric of our lives. For those of us who love and care about the arts, there is no more important issue.” Rather than being written off as disposable, the arts must be included as an indispensable ingredient in educational reform. ●

TO LEARN MORE about Bates Middle School, view this video from Edutopia: a4sa.org/Bates.

TO LEARN MORE about the A+ Schools Program in North Carolina, go to a4sa.org/aplus.

STUDENTS AT Bugg Creative Arts and Science Magnet Elementary, an A+ Program school in Raleigh, NC, used arts-integration concepts to combine dance with physical education. View the amazing results: a4sa.org/ArtsPE.

FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, research findings, and advocacy tips, go to Americans for the Arts: americansforthearts.org.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Americans for the Arts, “New Harris Poll Reveals That 93% of Americans Believe That the Arts Are Vital to Providing a Well-Rounded Education,” news release, 2005, www.artsusa.org.
- 2 Sandra S. Ruppert, *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement* (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 2006), www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Critical-Evidence.pdf.
- 3 *Arts Ed Navigator: Facts and Figures* (Americans for the Arts, 2013), americansforthearts.org/artseducation.
- 4 James Catterall, *Doing Well and Doing Good by Doing Art: The Effects of Education in the Visual and Performing Arts on the Achievements and Values of Young Adults* (Los Angeles: Imagination Group, 2009).
- 5 *Arts Ed Navigator: Facts and Figures* (Americans for the Arts, 2013), americansforthearts.org/artseducation.
- 6 Sharlene Habermeyer, *Good Music, Brighter Children* (North Charleston, SC: printed by CreateSpace, 2014).

ARTS RESOURCES



A+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM This program of the North Carolina Arts Council is the largest, longest running arts-based whole-school reform effort in the nation. Since 1995, A+ Schools has been using the arts as a catalyst for making schools engaging, meaningful, and enjoyable places to teach and learn.



AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS This nonprofit organization believes that the arts can transform students into engaged learners. Their goal is to serve organizations and individuals who promote the arts in schools, communities, and businesses. Their online Arts Ed Navigator includes a series of e-books as well as facts and figures about art education in America.



ARTS EDUCATION FIELD GUIDE This publication from Americans for the Arts includes information about strengthening arts education in our schools and communities. Topics include grant and funding availability, professional development programs, parental advocacy, school board and administrator practices, and more.

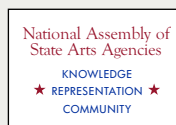
a4sa.org/resources



ARTS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP This nonprofit entity is dedicated to securing a high-quality arts education for every young person in America. The online publications store feature an array of resources (some for free, some for a fee) all aimed at helping educators make the most of arts education in their schools.



CRITICAL EVIDENCE: HOW THE ARTS BENEFIT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT This publication by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and the Arts Education Partnership describes how research supports the premise that the arts contribute to student success. The guide uses nontechnical terms to summarize the results of years of comprehensive research.



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF STATE ARTS AGENCIES State arts agencies increase public access to the arts and work to ensure that every community in America enjoys a thriving arts sector. The agencies provide grant funding for schools and community groups and also support in- and out-of-school arts activities for young people.

Meet Tom Chapin: Inspiring Policy Makers to Sing a New Song

TOM CHAPIN IS an award-winning singer, songwriter, and activist. As a strong supporter of the arts, Chapin uses his musical talents to spread the message that creativity in the classroom leads to better learning. In this dialogue, he shares his views regarding the importance of the arts in our schools.

Why do you think it is important to speak out about the need for the arts in education?

As a kid who grew up in New York City, I am a great fan of America's public education. I attended PS 41 in Greenwich Village, PS 8 in Brooklyn Heights, Brooklyn Technical High School, and State University of New York in Plattsburgh.

Now, as a father and a grandfather, I appreciate the tough job that faces every teacher. I believe teachers need all the help they can get. Anything that excites students and opens their eyes, hearts, and minds is a positive asset that makes children want to invest in school.

Music, art, drama, and sports—these are what kept me involved when I was in school. And these very things, which make the job of a teacher—and a student—easier and more rewarding, are the things being cut from curriculums across the country. We are teaching by rote again, where the test and only the test, becomes the reason to teach and study.

It's no secret that American industry has outsourced most factory jobs to other countries to take advantage of cheaper labor costs. So why are we putting so much effort into a form of education in which there is no creativity? This is the time that our youth should be taught to think outside of the box, not be placed in a tighter one!

How do you use your music to reach out to students, teachers, and education advocates?

I write songs with my friends, record them, and then play them in front of lots of people, many of whom are parents and grandparents of children in public schools. Once in a while, I get to perform them for teachers and administrators. The response is always electric.

I see my music and CDs, first and foremost, as entertainment. They are written and recorded to be fun for families to listen to and perhaps sing along to, but there are ideas strongly voiced

throughout the music. Exactly how the CD is used is out of my control, but the songs have a life of their own. It's terrific when the songs inform, teach, and help move issues forward. With "Not On The Test," an original song about the importance of the arts, there is a video and even a website to help give context and data to those who want to pursue these ideas.

What is the most important thing that people can do to support the arts in education?

Talk about it. Share information with friends and other parents. Schools listen to parents. It is really important to get involved with parent groups to effectively lobby schools and officials. ●

*They sorted through the data
and found as a rule
That kids who have the arts
do much better in school.
In song and in the dance, on the canvas, on the stage,
Art gives life to the lessons they read on a page.
Imagination's needed in a challenging world
To nurture the mind of each boy and each girl.
The arts are an answer to an old paradox:
How to teach a whole class to think out of the box.
Oh, you can't spell "smart" without art,
you can't spell "smart" without art.
Yes, science and reading and math do their part, but
You can't spell "smart" without art.*

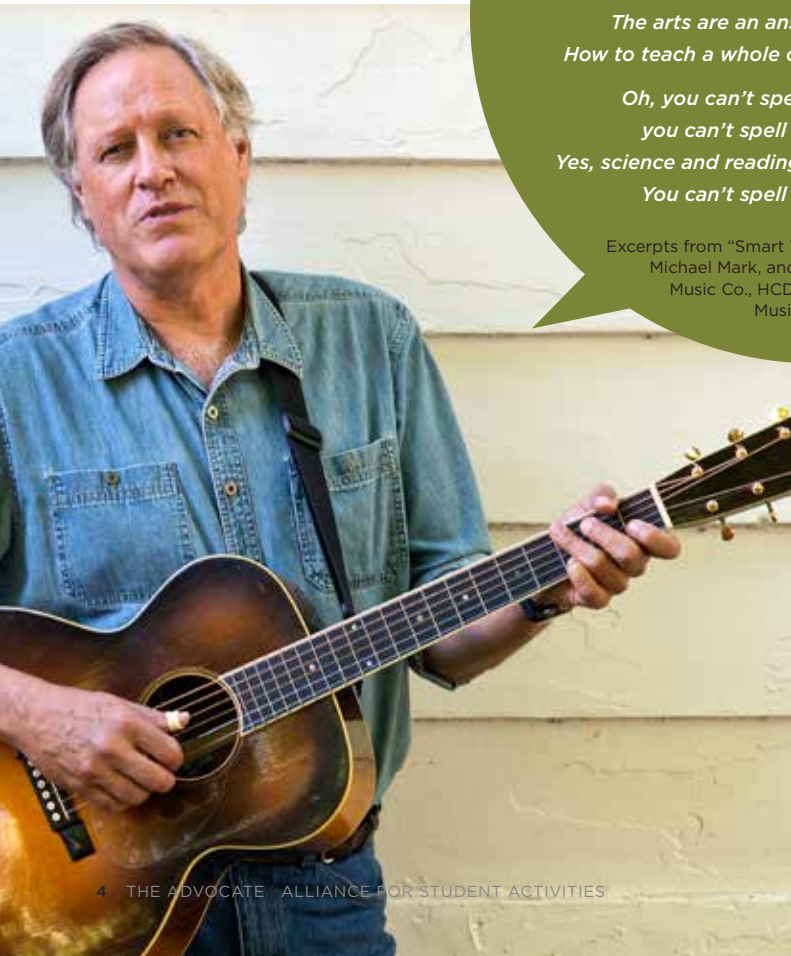
Excerpts from "Smart Without Art" by Tom Chapin, Michael Mark, and Jon Cobert ©The Last Music Co., HCD Music & Red Wagon Music (ASCAP)

FOR MORE INFORMATION about Tom Chapin, his music, and resources for teachers, go to tomchapin.com.

TO DOWNLOAD the "Not On The Test" audio or video and for advocacy tips, visit notonthetest.com.

In 2008, Chapin delivered a message about the importance of music and art in education at a conference for the New York State United Teachers. **WATCH HIS PRESENTATION** at a4sa.org/Chapin-NYTeachers.

Chapin also encourages educators and students to learn more about hunger and food-related issues in their own communities and around the world. See whyhunger.org for more, or review the *Give Peas a Chance* CD at a4sa.org/Peas.



Science Olympiad Celebrates Innovation

SCIENCE OLYMPIAD (soinc.org) is dedicated to improving the quality of K-12 science education. The Olympiad was started 30 years ago by a small group of science teachers who wanted to increase student interest in science. Today, the organization is a nationwide powerhouse of science support. Through an innovative curriculum, teacher training, and one of the largest science tournaments in the nation, Science Olympiad allows students to have fun while developing key competencies for college and career.



For middle schools and high schools, the program spans an entire year and emphasizes teamwork, commitment, mentoring, and STEM-skill development. Each year, organizers vary the activities offered through their many events. The ever-changing assignments allow students—and teachers—to be exposed to a variety of dynamic disciplines.

In order to qualify for the annual tournaments, each educator must register his or her team. Each team is allowed to bring 15 students to events, but many schools boast as many as 75 members, who serve in a variety of leadership and apprentice roles. More than 280 regional and state tournaments culminate in the national tournament, held at a different university every year. This rotating system gives kids a chance to visit new parts of the country, tour colleges, and experience additional team-building activities. Many participants are inspired to pursue additional studies in science, technology, and medicine.

Science Olympiad also celebrates science by offering scholarships, grants, and medals to teachers and students. Science Olympiad summer camps and a special program aimed at students in urban schools are designed to increase accessibility. ●

SEE SCIENCE OLYMPIAD in action: a4sa.org/ScienceVideo.

LEARN MORE about Science Olympiad's Urban Schools Initiative: a4sa.org/ScienceUrban.

Bring the Fight Against Hunger to School

ACCORDING TO THE USDA, 16 million children in the United States—one in every five—are at risk for hunger. Lack of nutritious food compromises the ability of these children to reach their full potential in school and in life. Through a variety of programs aimed at channeling the energy of America's youth, anti-hunger advocates are discovering that our schools can be a valuable resource in the fight against childhood hunger. When educators make the time to implement service-oriented anti-hunger initiatives in the classroom, their students become more engaged in learning, their communities benefit from the services being offered, and everyone wins.

Youth Service America (YSA) and **Sodexo Foundation** are two organizations working to bring the anti-hunger fight to the classroom. Together, they have produced *A Teacher's Guide to Engaging a New Generation of Anti-Hunger Leaders*. This free resource for K-12 teachers enlists the framework from YSA's Semester of Service to combine academics with hands-on community service.

In preparation for the compilation of the teacher's guide, YSA installed Semester of Service anti-hunger initiatives in 39 classrooms across the country beginning in 2010. With funding by Sodexo, YSA provided participating teachers with grants, training, and ongoing support. Teachers used activities that supported Common Core and other state-mandated standards to engage students in continuous service-learning opportunities. Practical strategies from teachers who participated in the initial program are included in the comprehensive guide.

DOWNLOAD a free copy of the guide from YSA and Sodexo: a4sa.org/TeacherGuide-AntiHunger.

Sodexo also partners with other groups that address hunger issues by giving schools the tools to be part of the solution. In the Backpack Food Program, Sodexo joins with schools and local food pantries to provide backpacks filled with nutritious, easy-to-prepare food for students who are at risk of hunger. The Campus Kitchens Project works with students in universities and some high schools to share on-campus kitchen space and engage students as volunteers who prepare and deliver meals to the community.

LEARN MORE about Sodexo's initiatives: a4sa.org/Sodexo.

Heifer International provides teachers with resources to educate their students about hunger in the global community. Global Education to Improve Tomorrow (GET IT!) is a middle school program that teaches students about the effects their choices have in the global marketplace, while emphasizing high-level thinking and research strategies.

PREVIEW classroom resources from Heifer International: a4sa.org/Heifer.

WhyHunger is a nonprofit organization that strives to end hunger by connecting people to nutritious, affordable food. The group supports practical solutions that inspire self-reliance and community empowerment. Activist and WhyHunger board member Tom Chapin stresses that the most important fact for students to know about hunger is that it is all around us. Almost every locality in our nation has at least one soup kitchen or feeding site. He recommends that student groups plan a field trip or invite someone from a local food program to provide information, answer questions, and serve as a knowledgeable resource for students as they brainstorm about advocacy and solutions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about WhyHunger's important initiatives, visit whyhunger.org. ●

CTSO Students Endorse the Value of 21st-Century Learning

FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS who are interested in navigating the path to college and career, practical experiences that connect the dots between education and future success are invaluable. Membership in a Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) provides students with hands-on opportunities to explore interests and develop skills that apply to a variety of career fields, including technology, education, agriculture, health care, and business.

This February, in honor of Career and Technical Education Month, student representatives from nine CTSOs traveled to the US Department of Education in Washington, DC, to promote the value of these important organizations. Their goal was to spread the enthusiastic message that CTSO participation gives students the skills they need to become productive citizens in the workforce, home, and community.

During their trip, the students met with US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and described ways that their CTSO involvement has allowed them to discover potential career interests, develop marketable skills, and set a clear course for the future. In addition to sharing their views about the importance of CTSOs, the students talked with members of the current administration about the need to spread awareness of CTSO benefits throughout our communities and schools.

The National Coordinating Council for CTSOs reports that students who participate in CTSOs demonstrate higher levels of academic engagement and motivation, civic engagement, career efficacy, and employability than their nonparticipating peers. In addition, the majority of CTSOs host competitions and conferences that help students practice leadership, collaboration, and teamwork. By shining a spotlight on these valuable organizations, the students hope to inspire additional young people to participate and also to encourage stakeholders to support CTSOs in their schools and communities. ●

TO LEARN MORE, read this article provided by the US Department of Education: a4sa.org/CTSOSVisitDC.

PROMOTE THE VALUE

let $X=$ ATHLETICS

In many schools, budget cuts, time crunches, and increased emphasis on test scores have led to a decreased appreciation for the value of arts, athletics, and activities programs. Athletics are a missing variable in too many educational reform equations.

students who play sports are
on time to school more often
and **absent less frequently**

student athletes are **4x**
more likely to attend college

female athletes are **3x**
more likely to graduate
than non-athletes

student athletes
are better at managing
emotions, resolving
conflicts, and resisting
peer pressure

between 2009-2011,
\$3.5 billion was cut from
youth sports programs

by the year 2020,
27% of U.S. public high
schools **will not have** athletics

source: Sports Matter, Dick's Sporting Goods Foundation, and Up2Us.org



Promote the Value.
Alliance for Student Activities

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THE ADVOCATE

The Advocate is published ten times a year by the Alliance for Student Activities, a nonprofit corporation whose mission is to promote the value of student activities through advocacy, training, resources, and networking.

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Submissions of student activities research and other inquiries are welcome. Contact advocate@a4sa.org

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