



# Backgrounder

May 5, 2006

## THE BENEFITS OF ARTS EDUCATION

Arts education has a significant impact on our children's future success in school, work and life. Arts education supports higher academic achievement and measurable gains in student motivation and reduced dropout rates.

1. Extensive research demonstrates the links between arts education and academic success, and literacy and numeracy. Students scored significantly higher, 11 per cent, in computation and estimation after three years of a sustained arts program than students in a study's control schools.
2. Students involved in the arts also display more tolerant behaviour toward different racial groups, greater commitment to community and watch less TV.
3. As a result of an arts program in a community setting, standardized test scores indicated that, over five years, test scores rose 49 per cent in mathematics, 63 per cent in reading and 39 per cent in writing.
4. The arts transform environments for learning. Schools become places of discovery, teachers and students are more fully engaged, and even the physical appearance of school buildings is brought to life.
5. The arts reach students who are not otherwise being reached. The arts provide a reason, and sometimes the only reason, for at-risk youth to remain engaged with school or other organizations.
6. Involvement in arts programs has a positive impact on students' engagement with learning and, for students from Indigenous communities, leads to improved attendance at school.
7. Children and youth involved in after school arts programs have better adult outcomes than those involved in sports or community service.
8. Children and youth involved in the arts use up to 50 per cent less social, justice and health services. When programming is subsidized, that number goes up significantly. By offering recreation and art programs to youth, costs are more than paid for by the reduction of costs to Children's Aid, health providers and the justice sector.
9. Youth who participated in community-based, structured after-school arts programs demonstrated decreased anti-social behaviour, decreased emotional problems, increased confidence, improved interpersonal, conflict resolution and problem-

solving skills.

10. An innovative and creative workforce is essential in today's knowledge-based creative economy. Talent has become the single most important critical factor of production. In the knowledge economy, those places that have talent thrive, while those that do not, decline.
11. Providing all students with a complete education in the arts and humanities can help them cope with faced-paced technological advances, forces of globalization, and major demographic and societal shifts that characterize today's world. The abilities to think creatively, to communicate effectively, and to work collaboratively are increasingly identified as necessary skills.
12. We believe that today's knowledge based, post industrial societies require citizens with confident, flexible intelligences, creative verbal and non-verbal communication skills, abilities to think critically and imaginatively, intercultural understandings and an empathetic commitment to cultural diversity. Research increasingly shows that these personal attributes are acquired through the process of learning and applying artistic languages.

### RESEARCH SOURCES

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2. U.S. Department of Education, 1998
3. Learning and the Arts: Crossing Boundaries, National Endowment of the Arts, 2000
4. Champions of Change: The Impacts of the Arts on Learning , 1999: involved seven teams of leading researchers – from the Imagination Project at University of California Los Angeles, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching at Stanford, the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory and Harvard University's Graduate School of Education
5. Champions of Change: The Impacts of the Arts on Learning - see above
6. Evaluation of School-based Arts Education Programmes in Australian Schools, Jennifer Bryce, Juliette Mendelovits, Adrian Beavis, Joy McQueen-Australian Council for Educational Research & Isabelle Adams, Vision Network Pty Ltd., Australia, August 2004
7. Shirley Brice-Heath, Imaginative Actuality: Learning the Arts During Non-School Hours, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching – after more than 10 years of a national investigation of a wide range of youth development program strategies in the United States, particularly athletics programs
8. When the Bough Breaks, Dr. Gina Browne, McMaster University, Ontario 1998
9. National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project, Dr. Robin Wright, etc., School of Social Work, McGill University, Montreal 2004
10. Richard Florida, The Rise of the Creative Class, 2002

11. Creativity, Culture, Education and The Workforce, Ann M. Galligan, Northeastern University, 2001
12. UNESCO World Arts Conference - Lisbon, March, 2006: Joint Declaration

### SUGGESTED READING

The Arts Make a Difference: It's time to stop thinking about the arts as fluff. They make schools better places to learn, and they raise student achievement, *Nick Rabkin and Robin Redmond*, Helping Struggling Students Pages 60-64, Educational Leadership, February 2006 | Volume 63 | Number 5

Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement, Sandra S. Ruppert, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) and the Arts Education Partnership (AEP), Washington, D.C., 2006  
<http://www.nasaa-arts.org/publications/critical-evidence.pdf>

Learning the Arts in an Age of Uncertainty, Walter Pitman, Canada, 1998

The Defiant Imagination: Why Culture Matters, Max Wyman, Canada, 2004

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