

# FACTS ABOUT MUSIC AT THE SCHOOL

## DID YOU KNOW ?

A ten-year study, tracking more than 25,000 students, shows that music-making improves test scores. Regardless of socioeconomic background, music-making students get higher marks in standardized tests than those who had no music involvement. The test scores studied were not only standardized tests, such as the SAT, but also in reading proficiency exams.

*Source: Dr. James Catterall, UCLA, 1997*

The world's top academic countries place a high value on music education. Hungary, Netherlands and Japan stand atop worldwide science achievement and have strong commitment to music education. All three countries have required music training at the elementary and middle school levels, both instrumental and vocal, for several decades. The centrality of music education to learning in the top-ranked countries seems to contradict the United States' focus on math, science, vocabulary, and technology.

*Source: 1988 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IAEEA) Test*

High school music students score higher on SATs in both verbal and math than their peers. In 2001, SAT takers with coursework/experience in music performance scored 57 points higher on the verbal portion of the test and 41 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework/experience in the arts.

*Source: Profile of SAT and Achievement Test Takers, The College Board, compiled by Music Educators National Conference, 2001.*

Middle school and high school students who participated in instrumental music scored significantly higher than their non-band peers in standardized tests. University studies conducted in Georgia and Texas found significant correlations between the number of years of instrumental music instruction and academic achievement in math, science and language arts.

*Source: University of Sarasota Study, Jeffrey Lynn Kluball; East Texas State University Study, Daryl Erick Trent*

Students who were exposed to the music-based lessons scored a full 100 percent higher on fractions tests than those who learned in the conventional manner. Second-grade and third-grade students were taught fractions in an untraditional manner by teaching them basic music rhythm notation. The group was taught about the relationships between eighth, quarter, half and whole notes. Their peers received traditional

fraction instruction.

*Source: Neurological Research, March 15, 1999*

Music majors are the most likely group of college grads to be admitted to medical school. Physician and biologist Lewis Thomas studied the undergraduate majors of medical school applicants. He found that 66 percent of music majors who applied to med school were admitted, the highest percentage of any group. For comparison, (44 percent) of biochemistry majors were admitted. Also, a study of 7,500 university students revealed that music majors scored the highest reading scores among all majors including English, biology, chemistry and math.

*Sources: "The Comparative Academic Abilities of Students in Education and in Other Areas of a Multi-focus University," Peter H. Wood, ERIC Document No. ED327480*  
*"The Case for Music in the Schools," Phi Delta Kappan, February, 1994*

Music study can help kids understand advanced music concepts. A grasp of proportional math and fractions is a prerequisite to math at higher levels, and children who do not master these areas cannot understand more advanced math critical to high-tech fields. Music involves ratios, fractions, proportions and thinking in space and time. Second-grade students were given four months of piano keyboard training, as well as time using newly designed math software. The group scored over 27 percent higher on proportional math and fractions tests than children who used only the math software.

*Source: Neurological Research March, 1999*

Data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 showed that music participants received more academic honors and awards than non-music students, and that the percentage of music participants receiving As, As/Bs, and Bs was higher than the percentage of non-participants receiving those grades.

*Source: National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 First Follow-Up (1990), U.S. Department of Education.*

Young children with developed rhythm skills perform better academically in early school years. Findings of a recent study showed that there was a significant difference in the academic achievement levels of students classified according to rhythmic competency. Students who were achieving at academic expectation scored high on all rhythmic tasks, while many of those who scored lower on the rhythmic test achieved below academic expectation.

*Source: "The Relationship between Rhythmic Competency and Academic Performance in First Grade Children," University of Central Florida, Debby Mitchell*

College-age musicians are emotionally healthier than their non-musician counterparts. A study conducted at the University of Texas looked at 362 students who were in their first semester of college. They were given three tests, measuring performance anxiety, emotional concerns and alcohol related problems. In addition to having fewer battles with the bottle, researchers also noted that the college-aged music students

seemed to have surer footing when facing tests.

*Source: Houston Chronicle, January 11, 1998*

Music training helps under-achievers. In Rhode Island, researchers studied eight public school first grade classes. Half of the classes became "test arts" groups, receiving ongoing music and visual arts training. In kindergarten, this group had lagged behind in scholastic performance. After seven months, the students were given a standardized test. The "test arts" group had caught up to their fellow students in reading and surpassed their classmates in math by 22 percent. In the second year of the project, the arts students widened this margin even further. Students were also evaluated on attitude and behavior. Classroom teachers noted improvement in these areas also.

*Source: Nature May 23, 1996*

"The nation's top business executives agree that arts education programs can help repair weaknesses in American education and better prepare workers for the 21st century."

*Source: "The Changing Workplace is Changing Our View of Education," Business Week, October 1996.*