

Supporting Music Education: What Administrators Can Do

Your administrative team—principal and superintendent—allocate time and resources for instruction. Their support is critical to developing a climate in which your arts program can flourish.

When you succeed, your principal succeeds! Share the following ideas with your administrative team to ensure quality music education flourishes.

Quality Instruction

- ▶ **Provide** music education opportunities for all students.
- ▶ **Ask:** Is your district's program about providing comprehensive music education or for the purpose of providing entertainment for school and community events?
- ▶ **Provide** all music classes with certified music specialists. Recruit and hire competent teachers, asking current music teachers for assistance in the interview process.
- ▶ **Support** music education as an integral part of the curriculum, providing music educators with the opportunity to plan together a sequential pre-K–12 music curriculum. Based on the National Music Standards, the curriculum will describe what students should know and be able to do at the end of grades 4, 8 and 12, as well as stating how and when that knowledge will be assessed and evaluated.
- ▶ **Coordinate** class schedules to minimize conflicts of music classes with other courses.
- ▶ **Ensure** that student grades for music courses are weighted in the GPA—the same way as grades for other academic courses.
- ▶ **Provide** a music program budget that includes funding for staffing, instruments, maintenance and repair, purchase of music and current technology.
- ▶ **Encourage** staff to be professionally active by providing support to serve in leadership positions, to attend professional meetings and to actively participate in professional development opportunities.
- ▶ **Provide** conflict-free time for music events in the school calendar. The needs of teachers, coaches, parents and students must be given equal consideration.
- ▶ **Show** your support by attending concerts. Drop by the rehearsal the next day to talk with the students.
- ▶ **Visit** music classrooms. This is where the learning celebrated at the concert takes place. Observe the process and provide feedback to your music teachers often.
- ▶ **Share** with your staff research regarding effective techniques for improving student learning.



- ▶ **Read** current literature. This should include the role of the arts in student achievement (i.e. Eric Jensen's *Art with the Brain in Mind*, ASCD, 2001.)
- ▶ **Encourage** staff to organize and plan effectively. This includes lesson plans, communication with parents and community, classroom structure and discipline management.
- ▶ **Be available** to discuss opportunities and issues as they develop.
- ▶ **Encourage** your music teachers to connect with teachers in other disciplines.

Community Awareness

Gaining the Arts Advantage states the **No. 1 factor** in creating support for arts education is **community involvement**. View the full report at [www.aep-arts.org/ Publications&Resources.html](http://www.aep-arts.org/Publications&Resources.html)

- ▶ **Communicate** to others the many music education opportunities that are available in your school. Know how these opportunities compare to those in other surrounding districts of similar size.
- ▶ **Track** music enrollment statistics by number of participants and percentage participating. Annually review those numbers with your staff to monitor student satisfaction and enrollment trends.
- ▶ **Invite** parents and community members to visit music classrooms and observe the process of music education; always be looking for ways for your music educators to extend their programs beyond the classroom.
- ▶ **Know** the instructional needs of your programs in terms of time, resources and the number of students served. Share this information with the school board, parents and the community frequently.
- ▶ **Make** presentations or invite arts advocates to speak at PTA and community meetings (such as service organizations), to share the importance of music education for students.
- ▶ **Know and communicate** the benefits of sequential curricular music education.

Further Your Understanding

- ▶ **Become familiar** with the ways participation in music education develops creativity, promotes higher-order thinking skills, enhances sensitivity and understanding of self, instills disciplined work habits and correlates with gains in standardized test scores.
- ▶ **Stay abreast** of current trends in music education by visiting Web sites such as www.smartz.org, www.musicachievement.org, www.menc.org or www.amc-music.org.

Share Your Vision!

- ▶ **Collaborate** with your administrative colleagues and faculty to support standards-based arts education.
- ▶ **Articulate** the role and value of arts education to the total educational experience. Insist that arts educators support the school's total educational vision.
- ▶ **Provide** time for educators to develop and deliver integrated learning opportunities.
- ▶ **Encourage** fellow administrators, teachers in other disciplines and parents to read about and understand the process of arts education. Include information in your school newsletter, on fact sheets that can be handed out at open house evenings and at parent-teacher conferences, as well as in school activity programs and mailings.
- ▶ **Invite** arts educators to make presentations regarding the value and process of music education at administrative conferences and as part of teacher in-service days.
- ▶ **Include** articles in individual school and school district newsletters that communicate the value of arts education in a student's education and preparation for the future.