



Doc H's Blog

Kentucky Education Commissioner
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Painting Pictures on Silence: Why Music and Art Education Matter

I began my education career as a teacher of music and band in 1972 in Gaffney, South Carolina, and I taught music and band until 1987. My heart will always be in the classroom, with kids, and my decisions as a leader will always be impacted by my experience in the classroom and my support of teachers.

This week, I was reminded of my teaching career during a meeting with the president of the National Association of Music Merchants ([NAMM](#), the International Music Products Association) and other Kentucky educators. We were discussing ways in which we could partner to support the visual and performing arts in schools and districts in Kentucky.

As readers know, Kentucky has supported a major change in school and district accountability with the addition of [Program Reviews](#) required by 2009's Senate Bill 1. The Program Reviews require schools and districts to analyze the components of a program (standards, curriculum, instruction, assessment, evidences of learning, opportunities and more) against a common scoring rubric. As a result, schools and districts could identify areas of strength and improvement for programs in the arts/humanities, practical living and writing (K-3 and world language reviews will be added at a later date).

As commissioner, I am strongly committed to Program Reviews in non-tested areas to ensure that we have a balanced system of education in Kentucky. As a former music teacher, I am particularly interested in ensuring that the visual and performing arts are well-represented in every child's educational experience in Kentucky.

In our meeting this week, my visitors left two brochures that highlight the need for music in our schools. If you are interested in these resources, please visit www.supportmusic.com and www.amc-music.com.

1) Why Learn to Play Music?

- Research tells us children who play music do better in school and in life.
- Music education helps young people feel inspired and motivated.
- Playing music builds motivation and self-esteem.
- Music lessons boost thinking skills.
- School music fosters well-being.

- Learning music builds skills for the future.

2) Can Music Really Make Your Child Smarter?

- Music makes the brain grow.
- Rhythm students learn fractions better.
- Music students score higher on the SAT.
- Piano raises conceptual math scores.
- Substance abuse is lowest in music students.

Let me be clear. I support a balanced approach to education. Our challenge as educators is to equally address the minds, hearts, bodies and characters of our most precious resource – the children of Kentucky. As I watch my two adult children every day, I am so thankful that music was an important part of their lives. They are better humans because of those experiences.

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