

February 4, 2010

The music educators of Indiana have been watching closely as school districts around our state deal with the difficult issues currently facing education. We realize that the problems confronting you are complex and challenging, and that the decisions you make as school board members in the days ahead will demand foresight, prudence and wisdom. At the same time, we have enormous concern at the potentially irreversible damage that some of the proposed across-the-board cuts in music education may do to individual students and their communities. On behalf of music education we ask that you consider these points:

- A fast-growing body of research on the relationship of music-making and brain development demonstrates that **participation in music activities actually rewires the brain**, often enabling the brain to perform other learning tasks more efficiently. While researchers are hesitant to identify a cause-and-effect relationship between music activities and test scores in other content areas, there is irrefutable evidence that the focused attention needed to perform music does have an impact on cognitive processing.
- There are additional ancillary benefits to music classes. Music-making, both alone and in a group, has been shown to **develop the important 21st century skills** of creativity, critical thinking, self-direction, personal communication and teamwork. In addition, a survey of secondary school administrators indicated that principals believe that music classes and ensembles are a powerful motivator in keeping kids in school and persisting to graduation—two important goals identified by our state’s education leaders.
- Although much attention is being focused on the tested subject areas, please remember **the importance of educating the whole child**. Music provides an outlet for expression that is not available in other content areas, and has significant value as a source of inspiration for children whose lives may have few other encounters with things of beauty.
- Strong schools make for strong communities, places in which potential businesses and home-buyers choose to invest. Diminishing the quality of your schools by restricting access to music education can have a **crucial economic impact** on your community.
- Learning music is a process that requires **regular, sequential instruction by teachers who are well-trained in both music and pedagogy**. As you consider various ways of dealing with budget deficits, please avoid decisions that would interrupt or do permanent damage to the on-going standards-based music instruction that has earned Indiana the respect of music educators around the country.

Thank you for your consideration, and thank you for all that you do on behalf of education in our state. Please feel free to contact our organization or your local music teachers if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Barbara J. Resch
President, Indiana Music Educators Association, on behalf of all Indiana music educators