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## **Larson discusses the power of fine arts education**

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For years, we have been aware of the connection between fine arts education and student achievement. However, in these times of a pandemic, social unrest, inflation, the war in Ukraine and more, it is clear the fine arts are more critical now than ever before.

### **The Power of Fine Arts**

The arts help students:

- Process their emotions
- Build resiliency and
- Reestablish social connections, team-based skills, and other interpersonal relationship skills that were missing early in the pandemic.

Research has shown that the arts develop systems in the nervous system that produce benefits ranging from fine motor skills to creativity and improved emotional balance.

For example, students in an art class will paint or draw images that express what they are feeling. The act of sketching, painting and more helps release one's emotions. Likewise, playing music helps students process their emotions and thoughts. The arts enable us to express feelings when we're not around others, something that was key early in the pandemic.

The arts also allow us to express our thoughts and feelings about current events. While it is difficult to process outrage, fear and frustration, working in the arts can help students work through such emotions. Art also enables us to understand other people and can lead to reconciliation.

In addition, the arts enable us to express feelings when we're not around others. This was important early in the pandemic and remains vital today.

### **Arts Education and 21<sup>st</sup> century Skills**

The results of arts education align with several qualities in Glenbard District 87's Profile of a Graduate. Our Profile of a Graduate, which identifies the abilities that characterize our graduates, states that a Glenbard graduate:

- Thinks Critically

- Communicates
- Creates
- Collaborates
- Embraces Diversity
- Is Self-Empowered

### **Connection Between Fine Arts and Student Achievement**

Consider these research findings related to the correlation between fine arts and student achievement:

- There is a significant difference in achievement, as well as important attitudes and behaviors, between students who are highly involved in the arts and those with little or no arts engagement.
- Training in the arts strengthens the brain's attention system, which can improve cognition.
- Students who study music, drama and dance are often more proficient at language arts and math.
- Studying the arts enhances long-term memory.

The arts are a core part of who we are and how people have interacted, bonded, told stories, celebrated, mourned and worshiped throughout history. Given the arts' many benefits, we encourage young people to continue their interaction with the arts throughout their lives.

Your local public schools are diligent in providing programming not only where students can thrive academically, but where they can also explore their interests and discover their passion in visual and performing arts. This important balance fully shapes our graduates to be well-rounded and well-prepared for the future.