

12th Grade: Informational Writing
Writing Prompt: Music

Dear Davis School District School Board,

Evidence has shown that music education can have a positive impact on children's development and future. It has been proven to be an important learning experience in an adolescence life. In "Why Learn to Play Music?" By NAMM Foundation, they say, "Music education supports healthy social development." NAMM Foundation also says, "Children who study a musical instrument are more likely to excel in all of their studies, work better in teams, have enhanced critical thinking skills, stay in school, and pursue further education." Music education proves to be important because it helps kids to learn important life skills and it has shown to keep them in school.

Commented [RG1]: Writer uses direct quotes to amplify his/her claims.

In "This Is How Music Can Change Your Brain" by Melissa Locker, she talks about a program called The Harmony Project. The Harmony Project provides low-income kids in LA with music lessons. Locker states, "According to The Harmony Project's website, since 2008, 93 percent of Harmony Project seniors have gone to college, despite a drop out rate of 50 percent or more in their neighborhoods." If music education can have such a great impact on students education, it seems necessary to continue it.

Commented [RG2]: The writer re-addresses his claims and expounds on the evidence provided.

Lastly, in "What's the Right Age to Begin Music Lessons?" By Dr. Robert A. Cutietta, he talks about what's called the "window of opportunity." The "window of opportunity" starts at about birth and lasts until about the age of 9. Cutietta states, "It is important to expose children in this age range to music." He also says, "Musical experience at an early age is extremely important in a child's developmental process." Music education has shown to significantly improve a child's education, and starting this musical experience at a young age seems to have the greatest impact.

Commented [RG3]: The writer uses specific domain language from the article to support his/her claims.

Commented [RG4]: The writer effectively uses direct quotes to support his/her claims in addressing the school board.

Commented [RG5]: The writer re-states his/her initial claim to conclude the essay/letter.

Thank you for taking time to read this.

Purpose/Focus & Organization	Evidence/Elaboration	Conventions/Editing
4	4	2
Writing is concise and to the point. Elaboration is evident and expounded throughout the essay. Lastly, there are no glaring issues that impair to writer's regiment.		

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What is the point of music? Does it help us to become smarter? Or does it not make us smarter? In the article (Why Learn to Play Music), it tells us that studies have been shown that music can trigger the brain to release chemicals that distract the body from pain. The study also shows that music can continue throughout your lifespan, from childhood through adulthood. But for the adults that don't listen or play anything classical it can cause negative effects such as aging, memory loss, as well as hearing difficulties. It can happen to you when you are younger. Children who study a musical instrument are more likely to excel in all of their studies, work, better team players, as well as better thinking skills, they are more likely to stay in school and want to have a better education.

Nina Kraus, director of Northwestern's Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory exclaims, "We don't see these kinds of biological changes in people who are just listening to music, who are not playing an instrument." Studies show that people who play a musical instrument are more likely to excel in things. For example, going to college wanting to go out and see the World. They are better at focusing than others who do not play a musical instrument.

Robert A. Cutietta declared by saying "You should help your child focus on the music with simple movement activities such as musical games, swaying or dancing while holding the baby, or singing or playing an instrument for the child." It is not that important of actually play the instrument it is the fact that playing the instrument helps develops skills such as identifying a beat in the music, identifying the melody, or identifying instrmnts.

Commented [RG6]: Not addressing the audience as provided in the prompt.

Commented [RG7]: Interesting questions are asked and the topic sentence eventually describes the writer's intent. But, there is a lot of rambling and unclear focus before this.

Commented [RG8]: Writer uses some evidence, but is not clear where the evidence came from, nor does he/she make an explicit connection to the initial argument.

Commented [RG9]: No connection to the texts as a basis for this argument.

Commented [RG10]: The writer does not conclude with a restatement of their topic sentence. The last paragraph is rambling.

Commented [RG11]: The writer uses some explication from direct quotes, but does not clarify who the person providing the information is, nor their importance on the subject matter (credentials).

Purpose/Focus and Organization	Evidence/Elaboration	Conventions/Editing
2	2	2
No Clear focus throughout. Writer is not intentional towards the audience. Evidence used is not integrated or relevant to the topic.		

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Dear Schoolboard,

Every school year there is a strain on the school budgets for all of the different programs. Because of this issue, the music education programs have been considered to be cut out to save money for the rest of the programs. Through studies, music has shown to have many benefits to those who participate in it. An article from the NAMM Foundation stated, "Children who study a musical instrument are more likely to excel in all of their studies, work better in teams, have enhanced critical thinking skills, stay in school, and pursue further education." These studies have shown that music stimulates the brain in many ways. With music, children are more likely to have higher attention spans, cooperation, sharing, compromise, hearing, engagement, and much more.

Many parents encourage their children to start playing an instrument at an early age, but some wait until their children are old enough to decide for themselves. In Robert Cutietta's article, he discusses the importance of introducing music into children's lives at very early ages. He talks of the periods of time when children need to start to develop a "musical sensibility." At a young age, "Mental structures and mechanisms associated with processing and understanding music are in the prime stages of development" (Cutietta). Building musical skills to small children will offer deeper development of their brains, and give experience and knowledge that they will always be able to use for their benefit.

Commented [RG12]: The writer is aware of the intended audience.

Commented [RG13]: The author addresses the problem while addressing the school board.

Commented [RG14]: Author makes a clear argument in their topic sentence. The rest of the paragraph build nicely into the topic sentence.

Commented [RG15]: The writer effectively uses summarizing and direct quotes to elaborate their argument, but the rest of the paragraph does drift a little from the author's original intent.

Purpose/Focus & Organization	Evidence/Elaboration	Conventions/Editing
4	3	2
The first paragraph is a solid 4, but the next paragraph drifts and loses focus. Evidence is well integrated throughout.		

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Having music in schools is a great thing. However, it may not be the most important. Learning how to read, understand and comprehend music can enhance the way you think and is one-way music classes can help you. Researchers have found that even learning how to play a musical instrument can enhance your brain performance. There are many other ways that school activities can do the same things playing an instrument. Sports, for example, are another way you can enhance your learning, focus, and brain functions.

Let's look at cheerleading as an example. Cheerleaders are put up to tremendous tasks that include focus, precision, and things that include a different way of thinking. They have to learn new material, which requires you to pay attention and retain information to remember what you're supposed to do. Cheerleaders have to put their motions to music or words. Doing so requires focus and intense brain motor function skills. All of these things can be compared to what you learn in school and how it helps you be a better student. Not only in school but it teaches you how to work together as a team in a way you can't learn anywhere else. You have to communicate well with others and learning how to play music is not the only way you need to learn to do that.

Yes, music is important to learn in our generation, but it may not be the most important. Music can help you with many brain responses, but it's not the only thing that can teach you those things. In my opinion, sports can enhance your brain and help your understanding of concepts more than learning how to play a musical instrument. Both are important to help you focus and learn how to multi-task, however, I think music is less important. If students were more into going out and getting active, they could have the same learning experience as someone that likes to play an instrument.

Commented [RG16]: The writer does not address the intended audience.

Commented [RG17]: The writer alluded to some evidence, but does not attempt to elaborate, and then proceeds to argue a different point altogether.

Commented [RG18]: Completely off topic. The writer proceeds to use only his/her opinion. Does not follow the prompt at all.

Commented [RG19]: A conclusion is evident, but the writer never broached the prompt aside from a few vague references.

Purpose/Focus & Organization	Evidence/Elaboration	Conventions/Editing
1	1	2
The writer is totally off topic, no evidence whatsoever. The writer is only clarifying his/her opinion.		

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Music is a very important thing for many people. It allows one to express themselves through something unique, and allows others to feel what the musician is interpreting through the music. Parents are usually responsible for children to be put into music classes, which can be a very smart choice for their children's development process. Music causes many positive effects on children such as better listening skills or more creativity. Children who play instruments will grow up with better skills compared to a child who hasn't learned to play any instruments.

Commented [RG20]: Even though the writer is not specific regarding the audience he/she is addressing, he/she is specific with the focus of their topic sentence.

Commented [RG21]: The writer re-states their argument.

Many studies have been taken in order to see if playing an instrument does help a child develop to become smarter. In an article called: "Why Learn to Play Music?", they directly test this on a large group of six year olds, and came to the conclusion that even just being in a music class for a little over a year, young children's brains will get larger. Melissa Locker, author of the article "This Is How Music Can Change Your Brain", she explains to us that, in order for this process to work, children need to be highly involved. You cannot just sit there and listen, you have to learn how to use the instrument, and the things that go along with it. In another article "What's the Right Age to Begin Music Lessons?", by Dr. Robert A. Cutietta, he includes another aspect of learning an instrument. When should you place your child in a music class? He explains to us that the best time is when they are young. It will be easier for them to understand and comprehend it at younger ages. It will also help with their development, and will lead to them developing better skills at a younger age.

Commented [RG22]: A clear transition with using evidence to support their claims.

Commented [RG23]: After several citations and elaboration on them, the author revisits their claim to conclude the essay.

Purpose/Focus & Organization	Evidence/Elaboration	Conventions/Editing
3	3	2
A solid 3 example. The writer uses good examples for evidence and stays focused throughout.		

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Music can help young children learn in school and with their social life. In article 1 it says "It supports healthy social development and quality of young person's life." Music can help kids be more social in their daily lives, and is a great skill to have when they get older. The article also says "Children who study a musical instrument are more likely to excel in all of their studies." Instruments help kids be better students and make them excel in school.

You can't just listen to music and expect to get all of these benefits. In article 2 it says "In order to fully reap the cognitive benefits of a music class, kids can't just sit there and let the sound of music wash over them." If students are actively trying to learn a new instrument rather than just going through the motions will only help them. In the same article a foundation gave less fortunate kids the chance to play musical instruments. They found out that the kids in the area that played the instrument had a 93% chance to graduate despite a 50% dropout rate in the kids' neighborhoods.

Music is so important in Young adult life's. It teaches them the necessary skills that they need for school and will help them out when they get older. If we didn't have music we wouldn't have as many good students as we do. We need to press kids to learn about music because of all the things they learn and it will make sure we have students with better grades.

Commented [RG24]: No clear audience is being addressed in the essay.

Commented [RG25]: Topic sentence does have a focus, albeit an unclear one.

Commented [RG26]: Not an effective use of evidence. Citation and elaboration are lacking.

Commented [RG27]: Evidence is used and loosely elaborated. However, the paragraph includes some rambling points.

Commented [RG28]: No support for this claim.

Commented [RG29]: The writer does not re-address the initial claim from the topic sentence.

Purpose/Focus & Organization	Evidence/Elaboration	Conventions/Editing
2	2	2
The writing is loosely connected to the topic. Evidence is at times, unclear.		