

SPEECH - MUSIC EDUCATORS

Thank you, Ken, for your introduction and for inviting me to speak with this wonderful audience of music educators. I am proud to be the first Superintendent of Public Instruction to speak (and perform!) at your annual conference.

Intrinsic Value of the Arts]

Why do I advocate so strongly for rich arts experiences for our students? First, because I believe that a rich-arts education is central to the education of our students. The arts have an intrinsic value in and of themselves. While serving as a Board member in Paradise Valley, I wrote for *the Observer*, “Students in schools, whose music and art programs are inadequate, or mediocre, are not receiving an education worthy of the civilization that we have inherited.”

I often quote John Adams in my speeches: “I study war and politics so that my children can study business and commerce, so that their children can study literature and the arts.” This tells us really what education is about, and what life is about.

I also like to quote Thucydides, who said of the Athenians: “The love of the life of the mind does not make us soft, and the love of beauty does not make us profligate.”

I advocate study of the arts for its own sake: A student who has not learned deeper forms of beauty has not been given an education.

[Academic Benefit of the Arts]

An additional factor in my advocacy for the arts is the fact that students involved in the arts do better academically than other students.

There are numerous studies that have demonstrated this. I am sure that you are familiar with many of them. I like the study in which young children were divided into three groups. One group got computers, one group got violins, and the third group was a control group without either. The students who ended up doing the best in math were not the ones who got the computers, but the ones who got the violins.

The most recent such study was in Tucson, called Opening Minds through the Arts.

In 2002, the Tucson Unified School District received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to fund OMA – Opening Minds through the Arts. This is a program which integrates arts learning, specifically music, dance and drama, into the classrooms of five Tucson elementary schools. Kindergarteners work with a string or woodwind trio, first graders write their own opera, second graders experience dance, third graders all get

recorders, and fourth graders all get violins to learn. Based on scientific research which ties artistic learning with academic learning, the hope was that students would not only benefit from richer arts experiences, but would also perform better academically than their peers at schools not participating in Opening Minds through the Arts (“OMA”).

Research was conducted by WestEd, a federally funded education research laboratory. They found that students receiving the arts education outscored similar students not receiving arts education, in every academic area. For example, in language, the scores were 30% higher. Interestingly, for the Latino students, the language scores were 55% higher.

And the early buzz on this year’s findings, to be released shortly in Tucson, is that the latest results show an even stronger tie between the OMA program and academic achievement for Tucson students. OMA schools outperformed schools without the program yet again. Third grade students at OMA schools outscored their peers at non-OMA schools by 19% on the language portion of the Stanford 9 and 25% on the math section. OMA students also outscored their peers in statistically significant ways on AIMS in all three areas – reading, writing and math – the first year WestEd looked at AIMS results and OMA. These academic achievement

increases held for all ethnic groups, showing that students who participate in OMA benefited from the program regardless of ethnicity. Our congratulations to our colleagues in Tucson USD, including their fine arts coordinator, Dr. Joan Ashcraft, an active member of AMEA, for their continuing success!

[Arts Initiative]

These studies were the justification for my decision to focus \$4 million of federal money on arts programs, a promise made in my 2004 State of Education speech. These federal dollars have funded arts integration programs in schools throughout the state, from Yuma to Flagstaff, Nogales to Phoenix Union High School District. This year, 43 sites are participating through funding under the Comprehensive School Reform program and 21 sites are participating through funding from Title V.

To give you a sense of the potential impact of these programs, I'd like to draw on applications from two sites who are participating in our project: Santa Cruz County High School in Eloy and Fort Thomas Elementary on the San Carlos Reservation east of Globe.

Santa Cruz wrote: "We have many students in our Art, Music and Drama classes who are not normally reached during other school

activities. The arts change the learning experience for these students. It is our hope that integrating the arts into all curriculums will change the experience for students and teachers alike. Even though these core arts subjects are the first to fill up during registration, it has been increasingly difficult to fund areas that do not teach to the tested areas.”

The funds from this initiative are helping the high school learn how to integrate the students’ interest in the arts into other academic areas, including those that are tested. My goal is that the school’s leadership, including the school board, will understand that students need a comprehensive curriculum including the arts in order to succeed on the AIMS and other achievement tests. And, that a comprehensive curriculum not only benefits the short-term goal of higher academic test scores, but helps create more well-rounded and employable citizens for our state.

I believe the quote from Fort Thomas’ application is even more telling: “It has been 10 years since our site has provided music or art classes. This was due to funding issues and lack of extra classrooms. During this time the focus has been on reading, writing, and mathematics in order to achieve state mandated achievement goals. It is very apparent that not all students can be reached through books, lectures and

worksheets. Losing the arts may have cost us some percentage of the achievement we could have made.”

Fort Thomas has chosen to begin to rejuvenate its arts programs by hiring its first music specialist in a decade. That music specialist is considered a master teacher who not only teaches music to the students, but works with the classroom teachers to integrate music learning into all aspects of the students’ lessons. I look forward to the results of this project, as well as the others, as we learn more about how to stimulate quality arts integration and arts programs throughout the state.

When I first broached the subject of using federal funds to support arts programs in Arizona, we thought we might be criticized. To our surprise, a letter went out from the U.S. Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, in July, to school superintendents throughout the country, on the subject of No Child Left Behind and the arts. Some people had testified in federal hearings that No Child Left Behind was causing schools to cut back on the arts. He wrote that that was not the intent, that the arts are a core subject in NCLB. This letter cited Arizona as an example of a state using \$4 million of NCLB money for arts programs. Rather than being criticized, we were held out as an example of how federal dollars can support the arts. A copy

of that letter is in your conference materials. We hope that you can draw on it to support your own music programs in your schools.

[AIMS and the Arts]

Inspired by Secretary Paige's lead, and in response to inquiries from you in the field, I am working on a letter to go out to Arizona's superintendents discussing AIMS and the Arts. I open my State of Education Speech this year by saying, "the obvious bears repeating: education is about more than passing the AIMS test." While I believe it is imperative that high schools focus on helping their students pass AIMS, this is not to be interpreted as a call to narrow the high school curriculum to reading, writing and math. This is also not a call to ask music and visual arts teachers to tutor students in reading, writing or math. Unfortunately, some schools see the AIMS as the rationale for cutting arts and other content-rich curriculum. This unintended consequence needs to be addressed head on by us at the Department and by you as teachers in the field.

So: How do we go about doing that? First, my administration has made it clear to our Solutions Teams working with underperforming schools that narrowing the curriculum is not a solution. Schools are not rewarded

for short-changing their students. I invite those of you who have interest in helping schools achieve to apply to be members of the Solutions Teams. We are looking for high-quality administrators and teachers from throughout the state and throughout the curriculum, including people like you. And... you can help make certain that the “content-rich” message comes through loud and clear as a Solutions Team member.

Second, look to resources at the Department of Education for assistance when you need it. The full-time Arts Position was reinstated for this very purpose: to help advocate for quality arts and music programs in Arizona’s schools. Call on Lynn Tuttle to help you if your programs are in jeopardy. She is available to provide assistance, whether that means visiting with your administration, helping you find research to back your case, looking into various funding options, or putting you in touch with other advocacy groups who can help organize your parents to support your programs. And, if you are fortunate enough to work in a district that supports music well, share your success stories with the Department, too. We are looking at ways to recognize innovative practices, including in the arts, and want to hear from you if you have a story to share.

Third, become an active player on your campus. To borrow from our sports colleagues, “a good offense is the best defense.” Find ways that you

can show how your programs support the education of the entire student. You-all teach reading, writing and math on a daily basis to your students. Show your administrators how you do that – and how what you teach ties into the content being tested on AIMS. A good example of this comes from Gilbert where the math department sent out “ambassadors” to every other subject area in the high school. The math ambassadors worked with the visual arts teachers to identify the math used in visual arts that was also being taught in the high school’s math classes. The visual arts teachers came up with a two-page, single-spaced list of shared terms. The teachers then developed ways to make certain that the definitions of the shared terms could match across the two curriculums. The list became a way that the visual arts teachers could support the math faculty in the teaching of concepts tested on AIMS, within the visual arts curriculum. I encourage you to engage in similar conversations across departments, especially at the high school level.

Fourth, consider being an active player not only on your campus but in your district and beyond. Being a member of AMEA and attending this conference is a good start. You can also provide input into the revision of the state’s music standards by filling out the survey in your registration packet. If you are interested in doing more, contact Lynn at the

Department. There are many projects she is working on to further the field of music and arts education, and welcomes all the input and help she can get from you out in the field.

Finally, I will continue to use my position to reiterate ad infinitum the importance of a comprehensive, content-rich curriculum including the study of the arts and music. I will carry this message to my colleagues in the legislature, at the State Board of Education, and to school administrators throughout the state.

Please know that our voices are not alone. The National Association of State Boards of Education have voiced the need for focus on the arts and humanities in a study called *The Lost Curriculum*. Governor Huckabee of Arkansas is using his tenure as president of Education Commission of the States to launch a multi-year arts education initiative. And the US Department of Education is investing in arts education funding again this year. The larger education field is beginning to wake up to the importance of a comprehensive curriculum and to the power of arts learning. Our work is to carry that message out into the state of Arizona and make certain all of our students have access to quality, sequential, and comprehensive education in the arts.

I wish you well for the remainder of your conference, and thank you again for inviting me to speak and perform for you this morning.