

The Justification of Music Education in P-12 Schools: An Examination of Two Recent Advocacy Publications by NAFME

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Abstract

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) was founded in 1907 as the Music Supervisors National Conference with 104 members in attendance. Since then, it has gone through two name changes and grown to over 130,000 members. Countless special interest research groups (SRIGs), journals, forums, blogs, and resources for the advocacy of music education in schools exist under the organizational umbrella of NAFME. It is instrumental and recognized for its role as “spokesperson” and advocate for music students, teachers, supporters, and advocates.

This paper examines the two most recent music advocacy statements composed and published by NAFME staff members: *Why Music Education? 2007* (2007) and the annually updated radio briefs *Why Music?* (2012). It is important to examine these publications because NAFME acts as a centralized representative for music education in the United States; their publications reflect not only the values of the organization, but also the vision of many music educators and the direction of music education at large. My intent in analyzing the 2007 and 2012 pieces is to answer the following questions: a) what reasons does NAFME provide for the inclusion of music education in P-12 schools?; b) what similarities and differences of rationale for the inclusion of music in P-12 schools exist between *Why Music Education? 2007* and *Why Music?*; and c) do the reasons for the inclusion of music in P-12 schools change or contradict each other?

“Why Music Education? 2007” (WME) was published during the centennial year of NAFME and uses compiled information from published research and literature. In their position statement, NAFME asserts that the benefits garnered from music education can be grouped in four categories: a) Success in society; b) Success in school and learning; c) Success in developing intelligence; and d) Success in life. “Why Music?” (WM) is a series of public service announcements (PSA) for radio, geared toward adults who work with children. The briefs, recorded by artists of varying musical genres and written by NAFME staff or by the recording artists, were aired during the March 2012 “Music in Our Schools” campaign. To analyze two seemingly different statements of advocacy, a coding frame (Schreier, 2012) was created using the research questions as parameters for analysis.

Select Findings

Table 1: Statements of Rationale for the inclusion of music education in P-12 schools

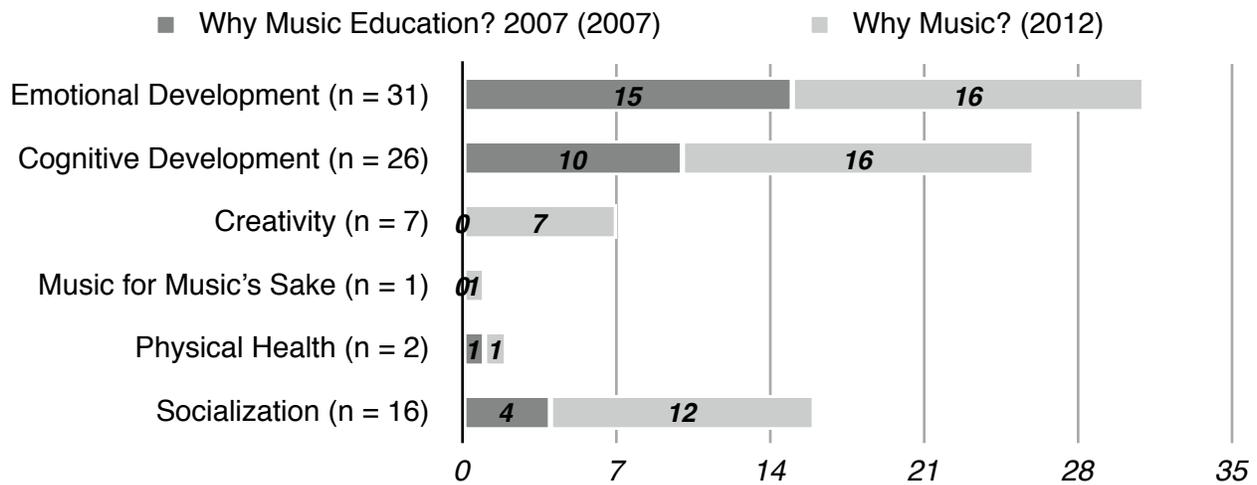


Table 2: Descriptive words unique to WME and WM*#

Categories	<i>Why Music Education? 2007</i> (WME)	<i>Why Music?</i> (WM)
Cognitive Development	An understanding of the “big picture” Better verbal learning and memory Expansive mind Higher graduation rates Higher attendance rates Higher scores on standardized tests	Better in math Better in science Critical thinking Successful (in future; math; life) Spatial I.Q.
Emotional Development	Adaptable Better Person Courageous Confidence Focus Ennoblement Enrichment Individuality	Challenging Enthusiasm Expression Fun Interesting Pride Self-esteem Thrilling
Socialization	Better person Adaptable	Joy in playing with others Cooperation Communication skills Open to diversity United with others Respectful

* Words presented in alphabetical order

Typical associated prompt for provided words: ‘Studying music in school is / results in developing / becoming _____’

References

National Association for Music Education. (n.d.). Retrieved September 29, 2012, from <http://www.nafme.org/>

Schreier, M. (2012). *Qualitative content analysis in practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.

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“Why music education? 2007.” (2007) Retrieved October 21, 2012, from <http://musiced.nafme.org/resources/why-music-education-2007/>