**Arts in Public Education**

Public education serves the general welfare by creating a more educated citizenry that can better participate in society. Higher levels of education are associated with higher salaries, greater levels of home ownership, and lower levels of dependence on public assistance. Education, however, is a broad term that encompasses a diverse spectrum of subjects and materials, some of which are considered more important than others in today’s world. While many feel that public education should focus exclusively on the traditional ‘Three Rs’ of reading, writing, and arithmetic, along with STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) offerings, others feel just as strongly that education should also incorporate arts such as music and dance, reasoning that society receives a benefit from providing an arts education in public schools. Given the decreasing budgets allocated to many public schools, it is worthwhile to examine what place, if any, the arts have in public education.

*Read and carefully consider these perspectives. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the arts and public education.*

**Perspective One -** Art and music, while valuable, simply do not warrant the time, energy, and money they consume in the public education system. Public education resources should be focused on crucial areas such as math, science, writing, and technology.

**Perspective Two -** The loss of art and music education from many public schools has drastically decreased the quality of education students receive today. While reading, language, math, and science subjects are important, the arts provide immeasurable benefits to students of all ages, enriching curriculums and enhancing the learning process.

**Perspective Three -** Public education should move toward a more holistic model where individual subjects are replaced with multidisciplinary studies that reflect the creative and analytical thinking skills that are highly valued in the modern workforce.

**Essay Task**

Write a cohesive, logical essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on the arts in public education. In your essay, be sure to:

**•** examine and assess the perspectives given

**•** declare and explain your own perspective on the issue

**•** discuss the relationship between your perspective and those given

Your perspective may be in full or partial agreement, or in total disagreement, with any of the others. Whatever the case, support your ideas with logical reasoning and detailed, persuasive examples.

**Plan and Write Your Essay**

Consider the following as you compose your essay:

* What are the strengths and weaknesses of the three perspectives provided?

**•** Identify the insights they present and what they fail to consider.

**•** Ascertain why a given perspective might persuade or fail to persuade.

* How can you apply your own experience, knowledge, and values?

**•** Express your perspective on the issue, identifying the perspective's strengths and weaknesses.

**•** Formulate a plan to support your perspective in your essay.