



Jeffco Performing Arts Advocacy Coalition

September 2014 Newsletter

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We Need Your Help at Tuesday's Jeffco Marching Festival

The Jeffco Performing Arts Advocacy Coalition will be staffing an informational table at this week's Jeffco Marching Festival. We will have flyers with information about the organization and what we are doing for students. We will also have information about why people should care and should be active in their advocacy.

If you can help us with staffing the table, please reply to this email and let us know. We will have the table open from 4:30pm to 9:00pm. If you can help at any point during that time, we would appreciate it!

Why You Should be Actively Advocating for Performing Arts

Music produces a kind of pleasure which human nature cannot do without.
~ Confucius

<http://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Music-Matters-Final.pdf>

A. Music education prepares students to learn

1. *Enhances fine motor skills*

2. Prepares the brain for achievement
3. Fosters superior working memory
4. Cultivates better thinking skills

B. Music education facilitates student academic achievement

1. Improves recall and retention of verbal information
2. Advances math achievement
3. Boosts reading and English language arts (ELA) skills
4. Improves average SAT scores

C. Music education develops the creative capacities for lifelong success

1. Sharpens student attentiveness
2. Strengthens perseverance
3. Equips students to be creative
4. Supports better study habits and self-esteem

It provides an opportunity for students to follow their passions and to build connections with others who follow that same passion.

How Has JPAAC Been Advocating?

In the past few months JPAAC has had opportunities to engage several board members and our new superintendent in discussions about the importance of the performing arts in Jeffco. All have said that they do not want to cut any performing arts programs. You can see the statements of Mr. Witt and Mr. Newkirk at one of our meetings [here](#). In addition, you can hear Mr. McMinimee tell Colorado Public Radio the same thing [here](#).

We appreciate their willingness to talk with our JPAAC board and truly hope that performing arts will continue to be a valued and supported piece of our students' education.

Potential Concerns and Reasons for Advocacy

There are a few items that deserve our attention as we continue to advocate for the future of our arts programs.

1. Music and theater classes are not mandated by the school district at the secondary level. Because of this they are not a guaranteed part of the curriculum.
2. Band and orchestra at the elementary level have been on the list of budget cuts in the past and so it is important that we stress the importance of those programs.
3. The amount of testing is having a negative impact on some of our music programs especially elementary band and orchestra. Oftentimes their classes are cancelled because of testing. This is a huge concern, because students are only in these classes twice a week for 30 minutes as it is.
4. Many students are "double dosed" at the middle school level and are often not able to take as many electives. "Double dosing" means that students are required to take an extra math, reading class to catch them up. Obviously we want students to be academically successful, but this limits their ability to take electives which is often where they are able to create lasting

friendships and participate in something that they really enjoy. It makes them *want* to come to school

5. **Flexible Spending:** Jeffco has been discussing flexible spending which gives principals increased spending power. In his interview with Colorado Public Radio (link above), Jeffco Superintendent McMinimee discusses the need to allow principals to have more leeway in determining how their budget money is allocated. You need to care about this for the simple fact that your principal *could* choose to pull funding away from performing arts programs in favor of other programs. Even assuming that principal is making the best choice they know how to for their school, your student's program is impacted. This is why you need to advocate at the school level.
6. **Teacher Compensation:** Teacher compensation is a hot button issue currently facing the district. JPAAC's main concern is a compensation system referred to as "Market Based Pay." Currently the district is saying that they are not going that direction, however it is important to be informed on this topic. If you look at what has happened in other districts which have implemented forms of market based pay, the math and science teachers generally get paid more than their performing arts counterparts. When this happens, the performing arts teachers, feeling undervalued by the district, leave to go elsewhere and our students lose their teachers. Again, these programs are not mandated at the secondary level, and when the teacher leaves, the programs can simply be shut down. This is another reason you need to advocate to the school board. To ensure that whatever compensation plan goes into place in Jeffco, that it is competitive for ALL teachers.

What Can You Do?

1. Advocate at the school level! Talk to your school administration about the importance of the arts to our students' education.
2. Take the time to write letters to the board. Tell them that all Jeffco students deserve to have access to performing arts programs. Request meetings with them to share your thoughts. Only in these manners can you truly influence future decisions!
3. Spread the word to other parents and community members about the importance of performing arts for our students. Encourage them to sign up on our email list and to check our Facebook page. (links at the end)
4. Ask how you might be active with JPAAC.

Thank you for taking the time to read and supporting arts for our kids!!

New Website Content

One of the things we would like to be to the community is a resource for information. Today, if you have a question about advocacy, research, or local, state, or national organizations, the process of finding answers can be difficult. If you don't know where to start, it's tough. One of our goals is to make that easier through our website. To that end, we have a considerable amount of useful content, with more being added all the time. Major sections include:

- News and Events, which may include local or national events, webinars, or other events of interest.

- Research and Data (We just added a link to some great new research, just published in June)
- Helpful Links, which includes links to state and national organizations, booster clubs, and Jeffco Board of Education contact and bio information.
- Multimedia, which has content from performances, impacts on lives, JPAAC recorded meetings, and other content.
- How to stay informed or volunteer.
- Coming soon: Links to available grants!!!

We continuously add content to the site, but we need your help. If you come across research, organizations, webcasts, performances, or booster links, please share those with us at jeffcopaadvocacy@gmail.com so we can post and share for the benefit of all community members.

Spread the Word!

It isn't important that the Jeffco Performing Arts Advocacy Coalition is known for its own sake. What is important is that people know that we are a place to go for resources and information and that we push out information relevant to performing arts advocacy.

Our web site is full of useful content. For example, as principal control over school budgets increases over time, it's all the more important that you as a parent can go to our website and find research which shows the benefit of music on cognitive abilities. (And we have several research studies available!) Armed with that, you can talk to your principal about the funding of performing arts and why it's so important. This is just one example.

Staying informed through Facebook is another. Just Wednesday, we posted that Jeffco had opened a survey about school choice and elective options. It's critical that as many people voice support for Performing Arts as possible. [These are the reasons you should spread the word, tell your friends about us, and take the time to invite them to our page on Facebook!](#)

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Our Contact Information:

Website: <http://www.jeffcopaadvocacy.org>
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/jeffcopaadvocacy>
Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/jeffcopaadvocac> (no "y" at the end)
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If you didn't receive this e-mail directly from us, go here to stay informed or to volunteer:
<http://www.jeffcopaadvocacy.org/stay-informed-or-volunteer.html>

