

My Beliefs on Education and Music

1. *Every* student can succeed in school and life if they so choose.
2. Students are capable of much more than we can imagine if we inspire and enable them, then get out of the way.
3. In the world of today and tomorrow, the core subjects will not be enough to succeed. At home and at work, 21st century students will need to draw upon highly developed critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity skills to function in our increasingly complex world. (See “The Partnership for 21st Century Skills”)
4. *Everyone* can be reached through music.
Music is one of the most powerfully influential media in our society. It is a particularly effective but underutilized tool for teaching students, and it is an inspiring, enabling tool in a student’s hands.
5. Music is an international language shared by all humans. Distinct styles of music are a strikingly accurate expression of cultures and individuals.
6. Music is beauty, skill and most importantly communication.
7. The primary goal of music education is rarely to prepare a student for a career in music. Rather, it is to prepare a student to strive for excellence in whatever field they choose. (Shinichi Suzuki)
Music education teaches students patience, diligence, discipline and exactness, as well as creativity, expression, humanity and poise. Many of the world’s greatest minds (such as Newton, Galileo and Einstein) readily attributed much of their success to their musical training.
8. Performing Classical music exercises both hemispheres of the brain in a way nothing else does. Many studies have shown that the study of music affords many significant cognitive benefits, in addition to the well-known behavioral ones.
9. Far too often public-school music teachers grossly short-change their students by focusing all of their instructional time on preparing for the next concert. Music is not a competitive sport! It is closer to a language. The learning of musical skills and aesthetic awareness ought not to be just a possible by-product in the effort to teach student to parrot their teacher’s talents. Music classes should enable students to understand and create their own musical expression. The concert should take its rightful place in music education as a culminating experience, but certainly not the only experience worth having.
10. When done correctly, the study of music is the study of history, anthropology, communication, literature, art, psychology, science and mathematics. The potential for cross-subject connection and application is endless and unavoidable in music, encouraging a lifetime attitude of learning and exploration.