



Fine Arts Department **Art, Music & Theatre**

The high school Visual and Performing Arts programs expose students to a variety of media and performance styles. The arts play an important role in students' education. Enrollment in visual and performing arts courses enhance students' critical thinking abilities and improve their performances in core coursework (Source: Americans for the Arts Action Fund). From Thomas L. Friedman (The World is Flat) to Daniel Pink (A Whole New Mind), experts from different arenas are stressing the importance of a sound visual and performing arts education as the new big educational need for the 21st century world. Researcher Dr. Shirley Brice-Hall of Stanford University has shown that a visual arts education accomplishes much more than equipping students with traditional studio skills. A research team exploring the link between music and intelligence reported that music training is far superior to computer instruction in dramatically enhancing children's abstract reasoning skills, the skills necessary for learning math and science. (Source: Shaw, Rauscher, Levine, Wright, Dennis and Newcomb, "Music training causes long-term enhancement of preschool children's spatial-temporal reasoning," Neurological Research, Vol. 19, February 1997)

Bexley City School's Fine Arts staff members are at the forefront of a national movement to align K-12 courses vertically. This "best practice" better prepares students for the rigorous requirements of upper level courses such as AP Studio Art, AP Art History and AP Music Theory and highly encourages students to participate in a variety of courses before signing up for the AP offerings. Various approaches to problem solving will broaden students' confidence in decision-making. The rewarding completion of complex, long-term projects helps students develop pride in their work and sharpen their artistic skills.

ART

"Art is a building block of civilization. A civilization that does not value its artistic expressions is a civilization that does not value itself. These tangible artistic expressions help us to understand ourselves. The arts teach us to respect both the diversity of our communities and the strength of our traditions. I encourage people not to segment art into an "extra" sphere of life and decorations. Why? Because art is everywhere, and has already taken root in our lives. Therefore, the question is not so much "why art?" but "which art?" We are presented with a choice. And this choice is a responsibility of cultural stewardship. Just as we have responsibility for natural resources, so do we have to take stewardship care of our culture."

-Makoto Fujimura

MUSIC

"The musician is constantly adjusting decisions on tempo, tone, style, rhythm, phrasing, and feeling--training the brain to become incredibly good at organizing and conducting numerous activities at once. Dedicated practice of this orchestration can have a great payoff for lifelong attentional skills, intelligence, and an ability for self-knowledge and expression."

-John J. Ratey, MD., A User's Guide to the Brain.