



## Fact Sheet

### How Teens Benefit from Making Music

A study by Patricia Shehan Campbell, Ph.D., of the University of Washington, called "Adolescents' Expressed meanings of Music In and Out of School," reveals the meaning and importance of music participation in the lives of middle and high school adolescents, including those enrolled and not enrolled in school music programs. The research was based on responses by 1,155 teens who submitted student essays to *Teen People* magazine as part of an online contest inviting teens to speak out to help prevent the further elimination of music programs in schools across the country. The findings conclude that teens:

- **See music as their "social glue" and as a bridge for building acceptance and tolerance** for people of different ages and cultural backgrounds
- Look at music as an **opportunity in school for engagement as performers, composers and intelligent listeners**—activities and qualities that appear to be deeply meaningful to them
- **Associate playing music with music literacy, listening skills, motor ability, eye-hand coordination and heightened intellectual capabilities**
- **Spoke with the experience of eight to 12 years of schooling in their young lives concerning music's place in school curriculum**, the relationship of music to other subjects, the quality of instruction and their perceived need for change to develop more relevant courses and repertoires
- Believe music **helps adolescents release or control emotions and helps coping with difficult situations** such as peer pressure, substance abuse, pressures of study and family, the dynamics of friendships and social life, and the pain of loss or abuse
- **Feel that playing music teaches self-discipline**
- Believe that **playing music diminishes boundaries between people of different ethnic backgrounds, age groups and social interests**
- Indicate making **music provides the freedom for teens to just be themselves**; to be different; to be something they thought they could never be; to be comfortable and relaxed in school and elsewhere in their lives
- **Long for more variety and options for making music in school**, including the expansion to instruments and technology used in popular music
- **Are committed to their instruments and their school ensembles because they love to be involved in these musical and social groups**; 20% of the respondents specified instruments as part of their musical identities, whether or not they were engaged in school music education
- **Believe that music is an integral part of American life**, and that music reflects American culture and society; there were 333 mentions of the skills that music education can provide access to, including the historical and cultural significance of music in civilizations and societies
- **Described their music teachers as encouraging, motivating and acting as both role models and friends** that can be trusted for listening and giving advice.

For more information about these studies, contact Lora Bodmer, director of public relations and social media at NAMM: [lorab@namm.org](mailto:lorab@namm.org), phone: 760-438-8007, ext. 102.