

(3/13/24 District Administrator's Corner Article)

The benefits of arts in education are immense and highly beneficial to students. Music (which includes general music, vocal music, or instrumental); Art (which includes visual arts, media arts, or design); and Theater (which includes plays, drama, musical theater, and forensics) all positively impact a child's academic performance, assist in developing a kid's social skills, and provide time in a student's day for creativity.

The arts improve and develop a student's language skills. Alida Anderson in Psychology Today states “...*the arts support reading, writing, speaking, and listening—across different learning abilities. Whether it's an English language learner, a child with a learning disability, or a child who has been in an under-resourced environment, children with many different learning profiles can benefit from the arts, and all students should have access to the arts as a means to authentic literacy learning.*”

Sue Wachter at Demme Learning finds, “*Both math and the arts encourage the development of critical and creative thinking skills that your student can carry with them through life, such as reasoning, analyzing, evaluating, decision-making, and estimating ... math and art skills will make a difference.*” It's embedded... reading, writing, and arithmetic.

The arts are a space for developing incredible memory skills. Have you ever listened to a song for the first time in a long time and still remember the lyrics? Have you ever stared at an image and knew that it was historical and relevant? Consider when someone taught you the tunes that accompany the “A, B, C's” or “The National Anthem.”

Every district in the State of Wisconsin has an obligation to provide art instruction and music instruction in accordance with a written comprehensive curriculum, including developmental experiences provided by licensed teachers. River Valley has a rich tradition of celebrating the arts and being a leader in our region and state. On April 2, after months of discussions with volunteers from our community, River Valley voters will have the opportunity to vote on whether or not to build a Performing Arts Center (estimated at \$14.5 million). Many have asked how the space would be used. Here is a drafted list of events and uses:

- 10 music concerts a year: 400 students
- High School musical rehearsals/performances: 40-60 students
- Solo and Ensemble: 40-60 students
- Middle School Shakespeare productions: 25-40 students
- Forensics team
- Mock Trial team
- School Board meetings
- Graduation overflow (via video)
- Public speaking opportunities
- Senior Awards Night
- Athletics and Activities Awards Nights
- FFA presentations
- Scholarship Night
- Staff meetings, inservice activities, and professional development

The following community events could also secure access to the space:

- River Valley Players performances
- Dance recitals/competitions

- Two Crows Theatre Company performances
- Possible winter performances
- Village(s) board meetings / presentations
- Rural Musicians Forum performances
- Church use or ceremonies
- Adult workshops or training opportunities
- Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts
- Community meetings

March celebrates “Music in Our Schools Month” and the spring brings election time. The River Valley School District Board of Education has long discussed our performing arts facilities and the potential to offer a space within our campus for students, staff, and community. If you need more information on the referendum to make an informed vote on April 2, visit our website at (<https://www.rvschools.org/district/referendum-2024.cfm>)

(For more information, please contact Loren Glasbrenner, District Administrator, at (608) 588-2551 or lglasbrenner@rvschools.org.)

Sincerely,

Loren Glasbrenner, District Administrator
River Valley School District