The following was written by band director Alex Goff from Arkansas.

Advocacy:   
  
I was recently asked by my principal why I felt that music was an important part of the school day. I don't think I need to warn you that what follows is a LONG read, but this is what I replied with.   
  
"You asked me before what role of music education was in the educational day. I've given the question some more thought, and I don't feel like the answer I gave was adequate.   
  
I want to use our SWLO (school-wide learning outcomes) rubrics to show the academic relevance of music as a discipline.   
  
Knowledge and Thinking: More than any other subject, music requires you to think on your feet. It involves both reading complex notation and making on the fly judgements about not just the written material, but the emotional nuance behind it. The multiple intelligences theory proposed by Howard Gardner outlines 9 intelligences innate in all human beings (on some level), and acknowledges that each of these areas of intelligence can be expanded through use. Most school subjects target a handful of these intelligences (visual-spatial, logical-mathematical, verbal-linguistic; and rarely, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic and existential). Music engages all of these intelligences in addition to the bodily kinesthetic and musical-rhythmic-harmonic domains. Music is the only subject offered in schools that engages the whole mind.   
  
\* High school music students have been shown to hold higher grade point averages (GPA) than   
non-musicians in the same school.   
~ National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988   
  
\* A study of 7,500 university students revealed that music majors scored the highest reading   
scores among all majors including English, biology, chemistry and math.   
~ The Case for Music in the Schools, Phi Delta Kappa, 1994   
  
Agency: Band offers students the opportunity for almost infinite upward growth. Students have blind-adjudicated solo competition opportunities like All-Region, All-State, Honor Bands, Band Camps, and Solo and Ensemble in which they take the initiative to prepare advanced music and compete against other students and a professionally developed rubric. Through personal observation and through reflection on my own growth as a musician, I've seen that there is, more than in any other subject area, a direct correlation between effort and growth. This is a college-readiness skill! Students who learn the value of work ethic from a young age are more likely to persist through obstacles.   
  
In addition to the solo opportunities, students learn the value of initiative in an ensemble as well. In other classes, it's possible for a students to slack in their work and it not affect anyone else in their class (with the possible exception of group work). In band, this is impossible. Especially in a band of 20-25 like ours. Our instrumentation is limited, so there is usually only one person on a part. If one person fails to prepare their part, everyone in the group notices immediately. The push to be personally accountable for one's work is reinforced by the positive peer pressure of their colleagues. This, more than anything, is what has contributed to the success of every successful band program I've seen, and these kids have it.   
  
Collaboration: To me, this is the most fascinating part of teaching band. You take music students from every racial, socioeconomic, regional, lingual, religious, ethnic and cultural background, put them in an ensemble together, and immediately they have a common language and a frame of reference to communicate and understand each other without verbal communication. Students, while engaging their technical skills through their individual playing, are also listening to the parts around them and determining their importance in the moment. They adjust their individual volume to fit underneath the melody, they bring out their part when they perceive it is important. I've often told my students that when they walk into an ensemble rehearsal, they are to leave every shred of personal identity at the door; every expectation, every disappointment, every hurt and every success: they're all counterproductive to our goal. The band functions as a singular entity. I discovered this in high school when, after a halftime performance, people would pass by me in the concession stand line and say, "Good job, band!" When I was in the uniform, I stopped being Alex Goff: I was "the band." Playing in a musical ensemble is by far the closest collaboration I have ever done.   
  
Written Communication: I often challenge my students with an assignment that seems to enforce both their written skills and their musical skills. For certain pieces, I ask them to write a story that reflects what goes on in the music. They are encouraged to consider the music as a movie soundtrack and write a plot for the movie. We then use this as a framework to achieve a higher degree of musicality in our performance.   
  
Music, in and of itself, is a written language. But unlike most languages, there is a lot more subtext. The written part is left wide open for interpretation. In classical notation, a composer may label a passage "piano" or "soft." Well, how soft is soft? Is this a solo part with the full band playing behind it, in which case it doesn't need to be very soft at all, or is is a hidden background part that needs to be barely audible? In jazz, there is the greater interpretive challenge of improvisation. The composer lays out a harmonic framework, but the melodic material is composed on the spot by the performer. Improvisation is the ultimate dipstick for musical creativity.   
  
Furthermore, the band students (though they don't know it yet) are going to be asked to compose a solo or small ensemble work, using their musical knowledge to create a unique piece of music. Afterward, they will be asked to justify their artistic choices (all upper-level questioning: "Why did you..." "How did you..." "What does\_\_\_\_ mean?").   
  
Oral Communication: I often find this domain to be too limited. I think a better name for it might be "live performance." One of the first things you learn in an oral communications class is that the actual oral communication accounts for only 10% of what is actually being communicated. So much is inferred through body language, posture, gesture, vocal quality, etc. that isn't present in the words themselves. The strength of oral communication over written is its ability to lend presence to the words, to bring them alive.   
  
Music performance is the same, however we're aren't conveying concrete ideas. We are usually conveying abstract or emotional ideas. I've often wondered if many of the behavioral issues we face with our students might not be the result of not having an outlet for emotional expression and performance. I first noticed this when I taught the drum circle unit to my general music classes. At times, I had to reign them in for fear of them damaging the instruments because they were so into the performance. I could see the anger in their faces as they pounded the drums or struck the gong or shook the maracas. Getting them to turn off that emotional flow once we had opened it was like trying to stop a breached dam with your bare hands.   
  
Performance of music teaches them to draw from the well of emotions inside of them and channel them into a creative force. When we play slow, sad music, I often ask students to recall a time when they lost a loved one or a pet, and approach the music as if it were a canvas where they could paint their grief. When we play something lively and cheerful, I'll ask them to recall a time when they felt exuberant joy. The quality of their performance changes every time.   
  
At times when they aren't "feeling" whatever the music is trying to portray, they learn how to manipulate their sound and their body language, and eventually to convince themselves to feel a certain way for a short time. If the composer's intent is emotional manipulation (and it often is), the only truly effective performance is one that stirs that emotion in the listener.  
  
Here are some additional statistics:   
  
\* Students who participate in school band or orchestra have the lowest levels of current and   
lifelong use of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs among any group in our society.   
~ H. Con. Res. 266, United States Senate, June 13, 2000   
  
\* Music majors are the most likely group of college grads to be admitted to medical school.   
~Lewis Thomas, Case for Music in the Schools, Phi Delta Kappa, 1994   
  
\* 78% of Americans feel learning a musical instrument helps students perform better in other   
subjects.   
~ Gallup Poll, "American Attitudes Toward Music," 2003   
  
\* With music in schools, students connect to each other better-greater camaraderie, fewer fights,   
less racism and reduced use of hurtful sarcasm.   
~ Eric Jensen, Arts With the Brain in Mind, 2001   
  
\* Students who were exposed to music-based lessons scored a full 100% higher on fractions tests than   
those who learned in the conventional manner.   
~ Neurological Research, March 15, 1999   
  
\* The schools that produced the highest academic achievement in the United States today are   
spending 20% to 30% of the day on the arts, with special emphasis on music.   
~ International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IAEEA) Test, 1988   
  
\* In 2003, 54% of American households reported having a least one musical instrument player, the   
highest figure since the study began in 1978.   
~ Gallup Poll, "American Attitudes Toward Music," 2003   
  
\* The College Entrance Examination Board found that students in music appreciation scored 63 points   
higher on verbal and 44 points higher on math than students with no arts participation.   
~ College-Bound Seniors National Report: Profile of SAT Program Test Takers. Princeton, NJ: The College Entrance Examination   
Board, 2001   
  
\* The world's top academic countries place a high value on music education. Hungary, Netherlands   
and Japan have required music training at the elementary and middle school levels, both instrumental   
and vocal, for several decades.   
~ 1988 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IAEEA) Test   
  
\* Music training helps under-achievers. Students lagging behind in scholastic performance caught up   
to their fellow students in reading and surpassed their classmates in math by 22% when given music   
instruction over seven months.   
~ Nature, May 23, 1996   
  
\* College-age musicians are emotionally healthier than their non-musician counterparts for   
performance anxiety, emotional concerns and alcohol-related problems.   
~ Houston Chronicle, January 11, 1998   
  
\* Children given piano lessons significantly improved in their spatial-temporal IQ scores (important   
for some types of mathematical reasoning) compared to children who received computer lessons,   
casual singing or no lessons.   
~ Rauscher, F.H., et al., Music training causes long-term enhancement of preschool children's spatial temporal reasoning, 1997   
  
\* U.S. Department of Education data show that students who report consistently high levels of   
involvement in instrumental music during the middle- and high-school years show "significantly   
higher levels of mathematics proficiency by grade 12."   
~ James Catterall, Richard Chapleau, and John Iwanaga, "Involvement in the Arts and Human Development," 1999   
  
\* Children who have received music instruction scored higher marks on tests of their spatial and   
arithmetic skills.   
~ Rauscher, F.H., Shaw, G.L., Levine, L.J., Wright, E.L., Dennis, W.R., and Newcomb, R., Music training causes long-term   
enhancement of preschool children's spatial temporal reasoning, 1997   
  
\* The foremost technical designers and engineers in Silicon Valley are almost all practicing   
musicians.   
~ Dee Dickinson, Music and the Mind, 1993   
  
There are plenty more, and I'd be happy to share if you'd like!   
  
Hope this helps, and feel free to ask if you have any more questions!