

#38

COMPLETE

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Q1 Which of these arts did you have as part of your K-12 education? **Dance, Music**

Q2 How did learning in the arts impact your education and life after high school??

Participating in the arts helped build my confidence and provide a creative outlet to channel my energy. I still turn to music and dance both for pleasure and a way to express myself when words won't do. As an adult, I've been an arts workshop facilitator for teens, many of whom have had difficulties in school and at home. Witnessing them find hope and healing through the arts has been deeply moving and a testament to the necessity of these programs.

Q3 How would you describe the current status of arts education in your district? What's good, and where is there room for improvement?The arts (dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts) are a core subject in our state definition of basic education, and in federal law.(1) However, the reality is that many schools are not providing adequate arts instruction.(2)

Our school district has been taking great steps in improving access to the arts. However, we need to continue increasing funding for arts program—particularly those targeted at underrepresented populations. It is difficult for students whose families have low-income to participate in arts programs and we should working even harder to ensure that they have access. I would like to see a wider diversity of arts course offerings that are relevant to today's students and the arts used as a teaching and learning tool across various subjects.

Q4 How would you describe your role in ensuring that there is an equitable provision of standards-based arts instruction for all students in your district? What strategies would you use to support this?A well-rounded curriculum is a key part of a high-quality education. However, studies(3) show that over the past decade the arts have been crowded out of the school day.

My role is to understand where gaps exist and monitor that we are moving toward a more equitable provision of programs. Through the Bellingham Promise, the Bellingham School District has committed to developing students and graduates who are "artists and performers". It is my role to ensure that we are moving toward that goal. We need to collect detailed data on student participation in arts programs, direct resources to schools where access to the arts is low, and develop an arts-focused District advisory committee.

DO VOTERS KNOW YOUR VIEWS ON ARTS EDUCATION?

Q5 How do you see the arts playing a role in student success in your district? Extensive research (4) has shown that arts education increases student engagement. It helps close opportunity gaps, reduces dropout rates, helps more students be college-ready, and develops the creativity needed in the 21st-century workforce.

Arts education has tremendous benefits on student's lives. I've witnessed firsthand the ability of the arts to help students feel more engaged with their schools and teachers, and build confidence. As our society becomes more individualized, our workforce will continue to emphasize creativity and "outside the box" thinking.

Q6 If elected, which of these strategies would you consider for supporting arts education in your district? (Check all that apply)

Research current arts programs and assess needs at district buildings.

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Work for a budget to financially support arts instruction at all schools.

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Utilize arts organizations to support arts instruction and professional development for classroom teachers.

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Find opportunities under ESSA to use federal funds to support arts education.

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Create a local arts education task-force.

Develop or update a district level arts plan. Outline policies, goals, and strategies for implementing arts education for all students.

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Share research about the benefits of arts learning with colleagues.

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Q7 Please enter your name and school district.

Name

Jenn Mason

School District, Position Number

Bellingham School District, Position 4