



**Interlochen**  
ARTS ACADEMY



# Reasons to Study the Arts in High School

**What does an arts high school have to offer? Arts students develop valuable skills, launch into successful careers, and prepare to change the world.**

The high school years are a special time of making memories, self discovery, and charting a path for the future. For many students, the start of high school means selecting the best classes for college admissions. It also provides a chance to reevaluate educational trajectories and ensure that students are where they need to be in order to succeed. Families of arts-minded students often take time to consider sending their students to an arts high school, giving them a head start on a future in creative work. But what exactly does an arts high school have to offer?



## **8 REASONS TO STUDY THE ARTS IN HIGH SCHOOL**

### **Studying the arts in high school...**

- 1. Develops creativity for career readiness**
- 2. Inspires the pursuit of excellence in any field**
- 3. Leads to successful college outcomes**
- 4. Strengthens communication skills**
- 5. Fosters a collaborative mindset, builds teamwork**
- 6. Develops empathy and encourages complex thought**
- 7. Creates the next generation of changemakers**
- 8. Creates enjoyment for life**

# 1 Develops creativity for career readiness



Today's employers are looking for individuals who possess creativity. Definitions of creativity include the ability to think critically, make surprising connections, and innovate with a growth mindset. At an arts high school, students have opportunities to develop creative skills that set them apart from their peers. The arts programs at Interlochen Arts Academy allow students to explore within the disciplines of dance, creative writing, film and new media, music, theatre, and visual arts. In addition, students can forge their own paths through the Interdisciplinary Arts major. Having the freedom to combine different artistic disciplines builds students' responsibility and helps them take ownership of their educational journeys.



## 2 Inspires the pursuit of excellence in any field

Many students find that the exceptional education and personal attention they receive in an arts high school leads to strong outcomes in their chosen fields. An excellent arts school provides top-notch instruction in every high school subject, from science and math to English, social studies, and foreign languages. In fact, the arts and traditional high school subjects complement each other: studies have shown that students who engage with music often score better on tests in all subjects. A strong academic foundation prepares students for success in any arena. Graduates of Interlochen Arts Academy have gone on to excel in diverse areas, including science, technology, business, law, healthcare, education, and more. Dr. Holly Gilbert (IAA 86-88) studied cello in her time at Interlochen, then decided to pursue the sciences. She went on to work in heliophysics at NASA and now heads up the High Altitude Observatory at The National Center for Atmospheric Research.



# 3

## Leads to successful college outcomes

The choice to attend an academically excellent arts high school helps students shine in the college admissions process. Colleges tend to regard highly the kind of dedication and hard work that success in an arts school requires. In recent years, 96% of Interlochen Arts Academy graduates have been accepted into one of their top three colleges. Academy graduating seniors have been accepted to prestigious institutions including Columbia University, Yale University, Cornell University, Northwestern University, Stanford University, and the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. Graduates have also been accepted into the nation's top arts schools, including Curtis Institute of Music, New England Conservatory of Music, Eastman School of Music, Carnegie Mellon University School of Fine Arts, Boston University College of Fine Arts, and more.

# 4 Strengthens communication skills



Whether they're reading aloud their latest poems or acting in Shakespeare's plays, students at arts high schools hone their self-presentation and public speaking skills in every performance. Visual, written, and oral communication skills are a must in today's workforce; these skills help students to succeed in any future scenario where they'll need to present their own ideas. Graduates of arts high schools are prepared to excel in interviews, craft compelling proposals, and share their biggest dreams with the world.



# 5

## Fosters a collaborative mindset, builds teamwork

In any career type, it's vital to work well with people who have different interests and skill sets. No one person can accomplish as much as a team of passionate individuals. At an arts high school, students are challenged to collaborate on a daily basis. For example, a theatre production requires actors, directors, lighting and sound technicians, costume designers, and more to work together in order to achieve a common goal. The arts help foster an interconnected view of the world, which leads to greater success no matter where a graduate's path may lead.

# 6 Develops empathy and encourages complex thought



In a world that's increasingly focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, the humanities are more relevant than ever. Studying the arts helps students to critically examine each new development in technology, always asking the ethical question of whether or not it's the right thing to pursue. In the process of exploring their multifaceted cultural heritage, students build empathy for people with different backgrounds and learn to make decisions with the broader community in mind. The arts bring purpose and meaning to life, ensuring that students seek what matters most.





# 7 Creates the next generation of changemakers

The best art doesn't leave us the same—it pushes boundaries, asks questions, and challenges the status quo. As part of an excellent arts education, students critically examine their own cultural pasts and look ahead to an enlightened future. Students who are consistently exposed to the best art are empowered to act in a way that influences the world around them. Take, for example, Julieanna Richardson (IAA 71-72). After studying theatre at Interlochen, Richardson channeled her love of stories into a groundbreaking interview project. She traveled the United States, compiling the world's largest collection of African-American oral histories. Graduates like Richardson use their arts-informed perspectives to make a difference and ensure that everyone's voice is heard.



## Creates enjoyment for life

Regardless of what career a student opts to pursue, four formative years at an arts high school give training in skills that will last a lifetime. Musical talents, writing, and more provide students with a rich well of resources for recreation and enjoyment. Students are prepared to be active and thriving citizens of their local communities, offering the enduring gift of the arts to themselves and to others.



## Summing it up

Studying the arts in high school provides great advantages to students in college admissions and the workforce. Students develop strong communication skills, learn to ask ethical questions, and practice effective collaboration. Perhaps the greatest benefit, however, is the way these students are equipped to positively impact the world around them. Poet Dana Gioia writes, “The purpose of arts education is not to produce more artists, though that is a byproduct. The real purpose of arts education is to create complete human beings capable of leading successful and productive lives in a free society.” For graduates of excellent arts high schools, this statement proves true.

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