



16.08.2013

Professor Konstantinos Arvanitopoulos
Minister of Education and Religious Affairs
The Hellenic Parliament,
Vas. Georgiou A &
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Dear Sir,

I write as President of the *International Society for Music Education* and Chair of the *World Alliance for Arts Education* to express deep concern at the proposed changes to the school curriculum that would remove music education from Middle Schools in the Greek School System.

Music constitutes one of the key means by which we make sense of our worlds and communicate these understandings to self and others. This capacity is evidenced from young children's early engagement in musical play to the deep immersion in challenging performance opportunities that allow young people to experience different worlds. Research has demonstrated the ways in which music is a rich resource in human development contributing to young people's growth cognitively, emotionally and socially. The evidence emerging from projects across the globe highlights the ways in which participation in music activity contributes to social cohesion, the development of pro-social behaviours, and a sense of individual and collective well-being. It is through active experience of music that young people have the possibility of developing knowledge and experience of worlds they do not encounter in their daily lives. Active engagement in music assists young people in developing empathy, knowledge of significant social issues, and the capacity to appreciate and contribute to the world's cultural capital.

Music is not only a vehicle for learning about other aspects of the world, it is also comprised of a significant body of knowledge and set of skills and techniques which require deep and prolonged study. Removing music education from the Middle School curriculum would remove the opportunity for young people in Greece to develop this knowledge, skills, and techniques, and contribute to the wider social and cultural conversations of their country, region, and worlds.

The commitment of the *International Society for Music Education* to the development of music education in Greece was evidenced in the highly successful ISME World Conference hosted by the *Greek Society for Music Education* in July 2012 in Thessaloniki. This conference attracted in excess of 1400 music educators from some 30 countries across the globe. Through this conference delegates were provided opportunity to witness the commitment and integrity of Greek music educators and their significant contributions to the development of music education not only within Greece, but also to the global community of music educators. For such work to be cut short through the removal of music education from the Middle School



curriculum would not only be a loss for Greece, it would also prove a loss for the global community.

For these reasons we urge you to re-consider the current and proposed provision for music within the Greek Middle School Curriculum and ensure that the significant contribution that music makes to the social, cultural and economic fabric of Greek society is recognised and sustained.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margaret S. Barrett". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Margaret S. Barrett,
President of the International Society for Music Education
Chair, World Alliance for Arts Education
Professor and Head, School of Music, The University of Queensland.

c.c. Maria Dimitrakopoulou, President, *Greek Society for Music Education*
Graham Welch, Immediate Past President, *International Society for Music Education*
Sheila Woodward, President Elect, *International Society for Music Education*
Sergio Figueiredo, Executive Member, *International Society for Music Education*
Lee Higgins, Executive Member, *International Society for Music Education*
Angela Ruggles, Secretary General, *International Society for Music Education*