

Kelly White

Period 4, Comp. H.

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### Orchestra Class

It is my first day of orchestra class in high school. I am so excited because I now begin a new level of learning for the viola and I get to begin to play a new level of music. Everyone is rushing to the cases to pick out an instrument that is their size and running back to their seats with them to make sure no one else will grab it. I pick out my size viola and sit down at my seat. After the teacher finally finished taking her time going around the room taking down which student has which instrument, she instructs us to take them out to begin our exercises. I open up my case and I am completely flabbergasted to see what was inside.

Inside the case was the most beat up viola I have ever seen in my entire life. My heart almost skipped a beat because of the atrocity I was looking at. The viola was carved on from previous students, the finishing glaze was coming off in some places; the instrument was so old and worn down the nut was almost nonexistent and there was this big elephant of a crack on the instrument going down from the top of the body, through the F-hole all the way down to the tail. I do not think that I have ever seen such an ugly and abused instrument in my life. I turn my head around to my stand partner, her instrument is just as beat up, and abused as mine and looking around the room everyone had the same expression on their face as mine and my stand partner, disgust and disbelief. The teacher answers the questions on our faces by telling us that we have to play on these instruments because the orchestra has no money and there was not any funding for the school for the performing arts programs.

Ever since then I have felt very strongly about adequate funding for the performing arts programs in public schools, especially in the Clark County School District in Nevada. No child should have to learn or play on an instrument that is so old and beaten up that it falls apart in their hands and makes the wrong sounds when being played with a bow. Here is the school district offering these education enrichment activities like orchestra, band, and dance and the school district will not even come up with adequate funding for the programs. It does no good to have and offer programs like these when there is no money coming in to help keep the programs running with appropriate instruments and supplies.

Many students across the country use their ability to play an instrument as a way for them to get a better life and an education. So many scholarships go to students who know how to play an instrument that it is remarkable and many use that as their main means of paying for college. I feel like schools are cheating the young and able bodied when there are not enough instruments in for the class or when the instruments are so old and beaten up that they do not make the right sounds and practically fall apart in the students hands while playing. That is why I feel very strongly about the lack of funding for the performing arts programs in public schools. Every student should have the opportunity to be able to play and learn on instruments that are working correctly and are decent looking. Funding for performing arts programs in public schools is very important and crucial to most of the students because when a school only has instruments that are not up to par they are only cheating the students in their education.