



Stanford eCorner

Funding for arts and sports

Kim Smith, *New Schools Venture Fund*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/628/Funding-for-arts-and-sports>

Smith believes that extracurricular activities are essential. Funds are being cut currently because, in trying to achieve funding equity, everyone's funding was reduced instead of simply increasing funding to those who needed it. Fixing this is a matter of political will, she adds.



Transcript

So the question was around extracurriculars that are being cut. Arts and sports and those kinds of things, debate club. Yeah, I think their crucial. I mean I think everyone of us if we think back on our education and the parts of it that really affected our sense of what we were capable of, there was something in there that was arts or sports or debate club or whatever, right? It wasn't just the test scores. I think what happened is because we were trying to get to equity and funding, we reduced everybody's funding instead of increasing those who did not have enough money and that comes down to sheer political will. Do we as a country have the political will to spend what it takes on every child so that every child can have sports and arts, and all those things that I personally find incredibly important? Or are we cheapskates and we don't want to spend it so we bring our basic level of funding down, all the poor kids get screwed and all the rich kids get in on the side, which is basically the equation we have now, right? I think you would have trouble finding someone who says those things are not important. I mean every job we go to is on a team. Well, and there's a dramatic impact for girls especially if you're athletics like girls who are involved in athletics do not fall off in their teen years on confidence and communication skills and leadership abilities has a huge impact on girls. We know that there's huge impact on the arts and thinking about things using both sides of your brain like that. I don't think you could find people who would say these things are not important.

The question is do we have the will to pay for them. If we don't and we drag spending down, what saves is core basic skills and we focus on improving those. It's a little bit of cart and horse because people say, "Well if you guys are better, we'd give you more money and then you can have the arts." and we say, "We can't get better until you give us more money." and we go back and forth and back and forth. So our goal is to incorporate in the spending we have as much of that as we can. Often it's community service-type activities. Don Shalvey, one of our entrepreneurs jokes he says, "Yeah, you know, we offer all sorts of languages as long as it's Spanish." That's all they can do in their schools, right? But they offer good Spanish courses and they recognize that if they have more money, they'd have a more diverse language selection. Same with sports. They have soccer and basketball or something like that. Things that require very little equipment. They don't have a field for football and they're going to do football.

So it's about values choices. Many of the folks we invest in are trying to bring arts and music back in but it has to be an addition to doing a good job on core skills, right? You can't say we're doing this instead of that. It has to be both and we simply have to be willing to put the money into, which we're not right now. So, and do think they're important, we have to provide more money for them.