

THE CLASSICAL ACADEMY EXISTS TO ASSIST PARENTS IN THEIR MISSION TO DEVELOP EXEMPLARY CITIZENS EQUIPPED WITH ANALYTICAL THINKING SKILLS, VIRTUOUS CHARACTER, AND A PASSION FOR LEARNING, ALL BUILT UPON A SOLID FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

PALMARIUM

Electronic Devices

Over the past few weeks TCA families have received communications from the TCA Board and Dr. Sojourner on the topic of smart phones and other digital devices. As Dr. Sojourner noted in his letter *stay tuned for multiple opportunities to share your thoughts on this topic, including various Board listening sessions, focus groups, conversations, and e mail feedback appeals.* Please take some time to read some of the **resources** we have compiled to help educate the TCA community.

More Academic Accolades for TCA

Recently the TCA Board received the annual **TCA Accreditation, Assesment, and Achievement Results** report. Over the past few years the state of Colorado has transitioned all 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students to the **PSAT/SAT** series of tests. The Colorado Department of Education makes the performance on those tests available each year for all schools. In examining the data for the 480+ high schools that registered scores this past year TCA's performance at both our High School and College Pathways were noteworthy. These results reflect the **culmination of work from Kindergarten all the way through junior year** and I thought our community would like to see how TCA measures up compared to other high schools in the state. The rankings provided for each grade level are the High School (HS) or College Pathways (CP) ranking within the state out of the 480+ schools. **9th Grade - CP (12th) and HS (24th); 10th Grade - HS (21st) and CP (22nd); 11th Grade - CP (22nd) and HS (27th). All scores reflect a top 5% ranking compared to other high schools within the state.**



As I started thinking about his month's volume and the available **Why I Teach** inputs from staff I was drawn to music. I thought such an emphasis fitting after the Fall musical presentation of **Holiday Inn** and the recent Marching Band performance at the state competition. I hope



you enjoy hearing from an elementary and secondary music teacher as we move into this festive time of year.

The Editor



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VETERANS DAY 2019 at THE CLASSICAL ACADEMY

On November 11, TCA was honored to have **Colorado State Senator Owen Hill** join us for our Veterans Day Assembly. On a cold and blustery day 1,000 students, staff, veterans, and family members joined together to remember and honor those that have served, are serving today, and the many that have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Senator Hill spoke about **Education in the Republic** and challenged all in attendance to reflect upon those values our country was founded upon and to remember the values we espouse as a nation. Our schools play a critical role in that endeavor. Additionally, **Justin Martinez**, *Wounded Warrior Project*

Outreach Specialist and Bronze Star Recipient, and **Payton Campbell**, *Wounded Warrior Project Support Group Leader and Purple Heart Recipient* shared with the TCA community about the programs offered by Wounded Warrior Project and specifically how donations provided enable them to help veterans heal, both physically and emotionally.



WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT

WOUNDED WARRIOR

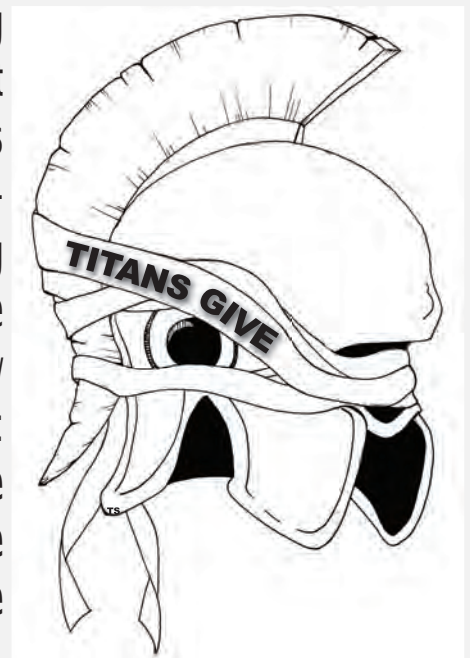
Last year we started a TCA-wide fundraising effort for the same organization, across all school levels, for the first time in our history [the 2018-19 school year focused on **Children's Hospital** and we raised nearly \$75,000]. The organizations selected for the six-year period from 2018-2024 were determined by students across all campuses. For the 2019-2020 school year the TCA-wide school fundraising focus will be for the **Wounded Warrior Project**. Each school has an individual donation page. If you'd like to donate to TCA's overall effort [click here](#).

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA:



For the sixth consecutive year TCA schools have partnered with **Wreaths Across America** to raise funds to purchase wreaths to place on the graves of veterans. In addition to the fundraisers, TCA students will also honor these veterans by participating in the wreath laying effort at

Memorial Gardens on December 14th. This year TCA donated **397 wreaths** (the highest total to date) and we are approaching **1,900 total wreaths** donated over the years we have been involved. This is truly an example of our Core Values in action: We value the fact that freedom isn't free and honor the sacrifices made by the men and women who serve or have served in the Armed Forces.



As a person who values music, has always enjoyed music, has always done music in one form or another; **I LOVE being a music teacher.** I have always been musical, and often when I was growing up my parents would tell me to quit singing TV commercial jingles while I walked around the house. In fact, we had a rule: **“no singing at the dinner table”.** **Guess who that rule was for!!?** I sang in 3 choirs in High School, and as a music major in both college and grad school, I sang in both of those programs as well. I sang in a community choir when I lived in Georgia, and I've sung in a community choir most of the years I've lived here in Colorado. **There is something intangible and magical about getting to make music with other people,** and my students and I get to do this every day. We learn music together; we perform music together; we talk about music and **how it relates to our “real” lives.**

But the **most rewarding and best part of my job** is after my students leave me. It's when I get to see them perform in their Junior High/High School band or choir. It's when they excitedly come to tell me that they get to play tuba in band next year! It's when I see them get the lead in the school musical as a senior. Because even though I haven't personally had them in my classroom for the past 6 years, I couldn't be prouder. **Every musical win for them is a tally mark for why I have the best job ever.** I not only get to instill a love for music in my students, I am ever hopeful that they take that love with them and continue to be musical for the rest of their lives. **I couldn't ask for anything more.**

Kerri Edwards,
Central Elementary Music



people as were willing to listen and to learn. My ambition was to offer opportunities for students to gain musical skill as well as a deep appreciation for quality music that had passed the test of time. **However true and noble my reasons for teaching were then, they have simplified over the latter part of my career.** Some of the darkest days of my life could have been avoided if I were not a teacher and some of the brightest days could have been missed if not for being a teacher. **I teach because I GET to!** I GET to know some amazing students who are smart and funny and caring and generous. I GET to collaborate with some of the best colleagues in the world who **never cease to amaze me with their excellence, insight and creativity.** I GET to work at a school that values and supports the arts! I GET to do music everyday with students who inspire me. And I GET to share

WHY I TEACH: Stories from the Classroom

the arts with students who *desperately need a very human way of making life more bearable.* (Kurt Vonnegut)

Years ago, I received a note from a second grade student who said, **“Dear Mrs. Calvert, I love SINNING all because of you and I'm not just saying that to be nice!”** I choose to believe that was a spelling error and not a statement of morality – **SINGING!!** The arts **make a difference in the lives of people** – I GET to do that!

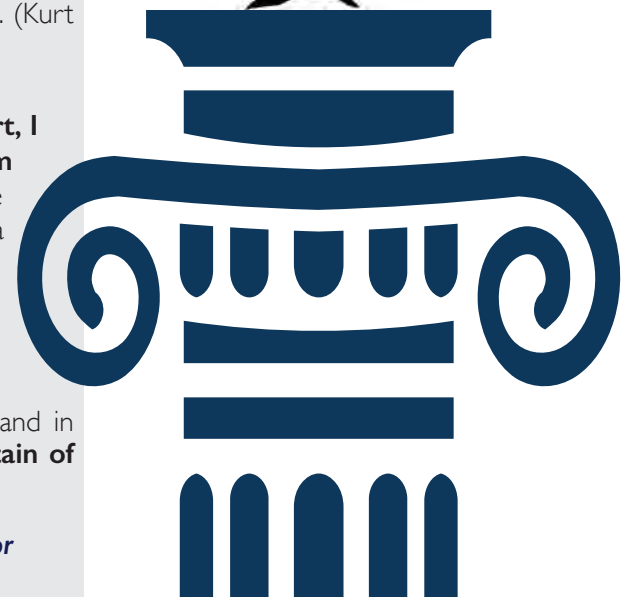
“Music will help dissolve your perplexities and purify your character and sensibilities, and in time of care and sorrow, will **keep a fountain of joy alive in you.**” Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Susan Calvert, High School Choir Director

The answer to this question has developed for me over the years. **As a young teacher, I wanted to pass on my passion for music and the arts to as many young**

A Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams on May 12, 1780

The Science of Government it is my Duty to study, more than all other Sciences; the Art of Legislation and Administration and Negotiation, ought to take the Place, indeed to exclude, in a manner, all other Arts. **I must study Politics and War; that our sons may have liberty** to study Mathematics and Philosophy. **My sons ought to study Mathematics and Philosophy, Geography, natural History, Naval Architecture, navigation, Commerce and Agriculture in order to give their Children a right to study** Painting, Poetry, **Music,** Architecture, Statuary, Tapestry and Porcelain.



TCA Cross Country and Marching Band



The **Titan Marching band** had another successful marching season for 2019. The kids began preparing over the summer and then commenced their August through October trek of marching band. The show was entitled "**All the World's a Stage**" using some of the music from Leonard Bernstein's "West Side Story". The storyline of the show was that all are tested and then go through periods of doubt of adequate preparation and worries of belonging before they can seize their place on the ever present stage of life.

The band **placed first in the CBA Southern Regional** and **second in the CBA State Marching band finals**. The students left the finals field feeling like they had given their all – which is the desired win of any performance art.

Many reasons for the students and community to be proud of their marching band this season. Go Titans!!!



For the second straight year, the **TCA girls cross country team** claimed a **3A state title**. Gone were three key seniors from last year's team, but the team of Sawyer Wilson (2nd), Kennedy McDonald (5th), Rebecca Thompson (15th), Kotryna Obergfell (18th), Sophia Valentine (20th), Kyra Shaner (21st), and Adia Byron (35th) didn't miss a beat. The TCA total of 50 points beat second-place Faith Christian by 38 points.



The **state title for the girls** is the **12th in program history**.

The **boys cross country team** also enjoyed a fine showing at state, **finishing second** to Frontier Academy in the 3A race. And the Titans got a state title there, too, as **Mason Norman won the 3A individual title for the third year in a row**. Also competing for the boys were Ryan Flaherty (21st), Adam Ambuul (24th), Chandler Wilburn (25th), Will Moore (30th), Landon Sheveland (47th), and Nathaniel Brim (84th).



SOCIAL MEDIA & SCREEN TIME: PARENT PERSPECTIVE

Dear TCA Parents,

My name is Tammy Wehrman and I am a TCA mom of 3 and serve as Room Parent Liaison at TCA East Elementary. I have an MA in counseling and PhD in Psychology. I have taught both counseling and psychology for 15 years. If you're like me, raising kids today presents challenges absent from the days I grew up, specifically related to technology, screen, time, social media and the like! In teaching child development, I have become aware of the growing amount of research related to these topics and our children's development. I wanted to share some researched understandings that have helped me as a mom and that I hope you will find helpful as well. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions, twehrman@hotmail.com. Thank you in advance for reading!

Social Media & Screen Time – Impacts on Our Children RESEARCHED UNDERSTANDINGS IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

For the sake of definitions, **screen time and media** are terms used to refer to the period of time spent viewing digital devices (e.g., smartphones, cell phones, television, video games, computers, iPads, iPods).

SLEEP AND SCREEN TIME

Sleep is crucial to a child's development – during sleep, children grow physically, develop cognitively, process the days' events and even learn and retain information. It is vital to memory and learning as it allows kids to be rested and fully engaged in the learning process. When looking at teen development specifically, lack of sleep in adolescence has been shown, through research, to contribute to anxiety, depression and low self-esteem (Alfano et al., 2009). **For optimal health, children ages 6 to 12 need 9-12 hours of sleep for while children ages 12 to 18 need 8-10 hours of sleep.**

These guidelines come from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and are endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) which also found through its research that children who get the required amount of needed sleep on a regular basis have better attention, behavior, learning, memory, emotional regulation, quality of life, and mental and physical health (AAP is an organization of 64,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults, more information about these guidelines and the organizations can be found at: www.aap.org). While this may be surprising, study after study shows the importance of both sufficient and quality sleep for children for health, wellness, and development.

Knowing this information, how does screen time impact sleep? Research demonstrates that looking at a screen within hours of bedtime can reduce the production of melatonin (our sleep hormone) and interfere with our sleep-wake cycles (Licht, Hull & Ballantyne, 2018). Studies also link the increased use of the Internet to increased daytime tiredness in kids (Garmy et al., 2012). While the National Sleep Foundation (2016) suggests removing electronics from the bedroom at least one hour before sleep, as many as 90% of Americans report using devices within an hour of bedtime (Bedrosian et al., 2016). It is also important to remove electronic devices from bedrooms at night (place in common areas, for example) and silence or turn them off. Kids who have devices on at night get one to two hours less sleep and are more likely to fall asleep at school than those with devices off (National Sleep Foundation's 2014 Sleep in America Poll). You might ask, why not just have the device in the bedroom and set limits on its use? This seems simple enough but our response to the noises our phones make is called an event schema. When our phone makes a noise, we reach for it. It is an automatic brain response and is very hard to avoid so it is best to remove devices from bedrooms during sleep hours.

MEMORY, LEARNING & SCREEN TIME

Did you know that if we learn something (do homework, study, etc) while being distracted by our phone or a screen that we don't learn the material as well as without the distraction? Students are surprised when I have them participate in an activity that demonstrates this concept as they are sure they can do both effectively – monitor their phone and study! Studies have linked media multitasking to reduced academic performance and a recent review of the literature on this topic finds **media multitasking interferes with attention and working memory negatively affecting recall, comprehension, academic performance and overall grades** (May & Elder, 2018). While this applies to our kids, the good news is we can assist them in this! Completing homework or studying *without* devices nearby or the television on, for example, will allow them to learn the material more effectively and perform better academically. Memory is improved through taking these steps!

SOCIAL MEDIA SCREEN TIME

Child and adolescent use of social media is on the rise and reading the research that is just now becoming available on the impacts, it is unfortunately not good news for health or development. **I feel this is a very difficult area to address as a mom since I use my devices, social media and the like and understanding how it impacts my children means little to no use of it for my kids.**

That said, **here is some of what we know to date regarding child and adolescent use of social media...** As kids approach the teen years and puberty, they see themselves in ways different than we do as adults and this is based on their cognitive development. Did you know that our brain takes more than two decades to fully mature? Our frontal lobes (the brain region that allows us to reason, plan, think through our actions, manage our emotions) do not begin the pruning process until about age 9 and are not fully developed (pruning still taking place) until into our early 20s. This allows us the amazing frontal lobe abilities we have as human beings, but it takes past childhood to get to our full abilities in these areas! It also means despite children becoming more like adults as they grow and develop, they do not have the cognitive abilities of adults which makes social media risky for them.

David Elkind developed the following concepts in the 70s which hold today through decades of research: young teens are incredibly sensitive to what others think, they first become aware of others' flaws and then become acutely aware of their own. **This is not a fault but a normal part of their cognitive development** which they do not have control over. They are **egocentric** (according to Elkind, young teens tend to feel that their actions are at the center of everyone else's consciousness) and an aspect of this is Elkind's **imaginary audience** (they feel everyone is watching their actions which evokes intense self-consciousness). Again, these are normal (and challenging at the same time) aspects of their cognitive development resulting in experiences during this stage of development that differ from that of adults. As puberty begins and as a result of what is happening with cognitive development, kids tend to seek immediate gratification over future rewards and are especially vulnerable to peer pressure in emotionally charged situations (Belsky, 2019). If you are thinking, wow, this is a lot for them to go through! It is a lot and while all normal in terms of a child's development, access to social media can exacerbate these already challenging developmental hurdles. As caregivers of children and as they develop, we always want to provide what is called the best **person-fit environment**. This is a term used in development that refers to the extent to which the environment is tailored to our biological tendencies and talents. This is crucial to promote our human potential and is a core goal of developmental science.

Studies find **social media use in adolescents linked to depression, regardless of the amount of time spent using it** (Benjamin et al., 2015). The same findings exist for adults. In other words, with use comes higher risk of depression and anxiety. You may ask, WHY? Kids at this age, due to how they are developing cognitively, are at higher risk for such challenges when social media is a consistent part of their lives. They are at an already heightened state of self-consciousness and the unique nature of social media with constant alerts **creates pressure for adolescents** to respond and not miss out and even more, **adolescents report feeling stress and guilt** when not responding to a message immediately (Woods & Scott, 2016). Again, this links to their cognitive development and how they view self and others at this time in their development. We can relate to this as adults as when we hear our phone, we reach for it. We usually want to respond as immediately as we can.

LACK OF OUTDOOR PLAY AND SCREEN TIME

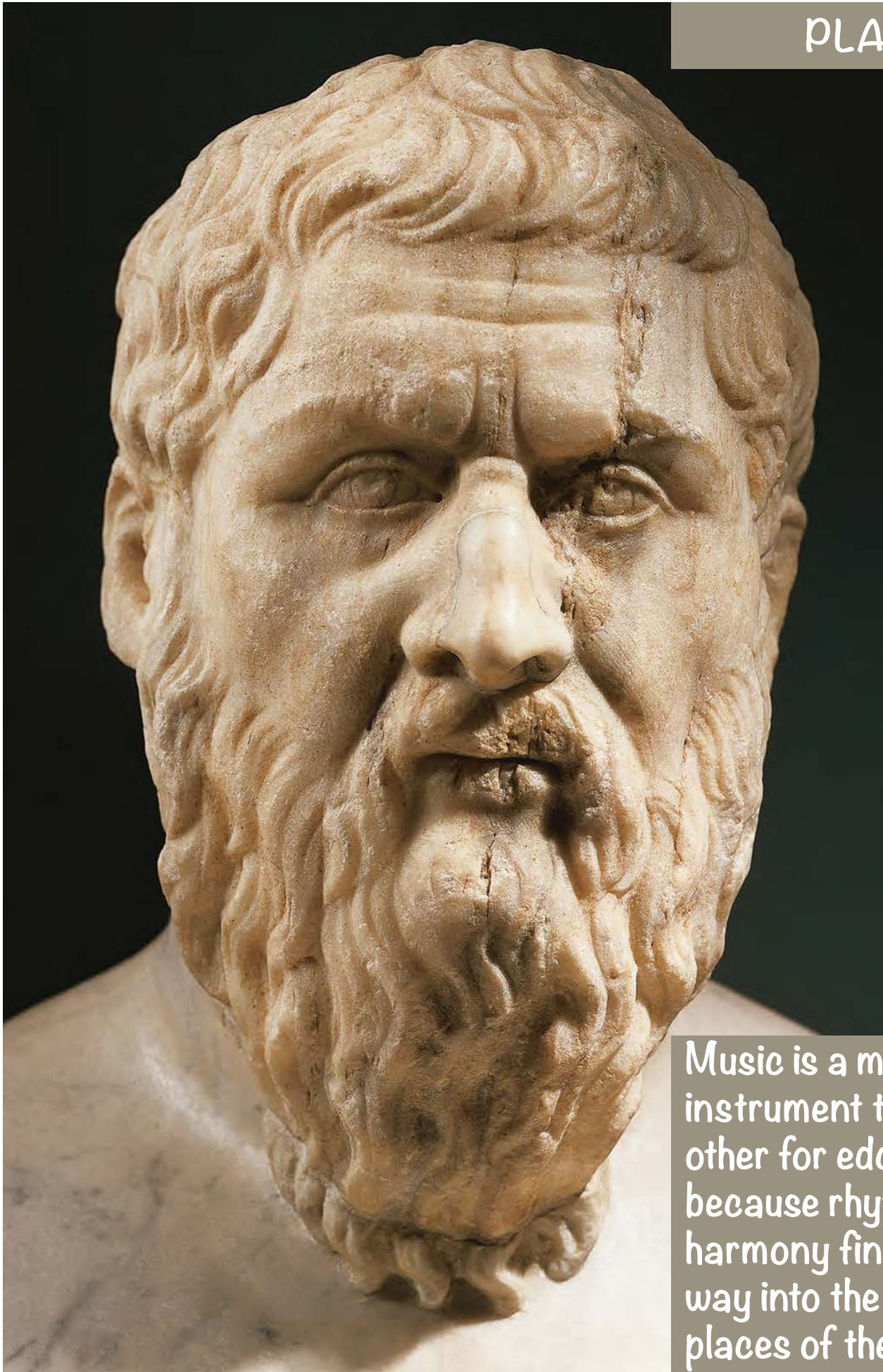
One of the areas of child development that stands out most to me as a mom is the **lack of outdoor play that is occurring as a result of screen time**. This is a concept that has been talked about in child development for years, but only recently do we have research to back up the **unfortunate negative impacts of screen time as it relates to children's physical development** – their growth and motor skills. I remember growing up and spending hours each day outside with friends. While today is a different era and the concerns among parents are many regarding close supervision of their children, free play and especially **outdoor play is crucial to healthy child development**. In addition to the physical benefits of outdoor play, it allows children to be creative, problem solve, and learn. Recent research across many countries including the United States find that **today's elementary school children are less proficient physically than in the past** (multiple studies cited in Belsky, 2019). This is an area of burgeoning research and one in which I'm sure we will continue to hear more about! The message to take from what we know through research to date is: **allow kids time to play outside (or free play inside when weather does not allow) whenever possible**.

SCREEN TIME ALLOWANCES

While the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP, 2016) recommends no screen time before age 18 months and one hour per day of high-quality programming for ages 2 to 5, for children ages 6 and older, it recommends consistent limits be placed on time spent using media. AAP further states, **screen time should not take the place of adequate sleep or physical activity** and recommends having media free times together such as family meals and to continually talk with kids about online citizenship and safety (for example, treating other with respect online and offline).

IN CLOSING, I know this is a lot of information and, as a parent, it is overwhelming! I am with you in that, but I also feel that with changes in society and screen time use on the rise, it is important to share these researched understandings to assist both us – as parents facing these challenges – and our children. Thank you so much for reading!

PLATO



Music is a more potent instrument than any other for education, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul.