



Springfield Public School's Music Education Program Receives National Recognition for second year in a row.

Springfield, MN – 4/27/2023 – Springfield Public School has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education. Now in its 24th year, the Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students.

To qualify for the Best Communities designation, the music education staff answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program and community music-making programs. Responses were verified by school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

"I am very proud of the Springfield community being recognized for the second year in a row as a Best Community for Music Education. The Springfield School District tradition of excellence in music and fine arts program is alive and well. This is directly related to the dedicated and passionate work of Mr. Bailey Cords, vocal music instructor; Ms. Erin Oberle, instrumental music instructor; and Ms. Andrea Berends, elementary music instructor. I am grateful for this team.

It has been wonderful to see student participation in our music program continue to grow and the positive impact it is having on our students and school community. It is outstanding to see the community pack the auditorium for concerts that one might believe performs at a collegiate level. We are also so very grateful for the generosity and financial support our community provides our music program to provide necessary equipment and facility improvements.

Being selected as a Best Community for Music Education is truly indicative of our school community's realization of and commitment to the academic, social, emotional, and personal benefits children attain by making music together." said Keith Kottke, Superintendent of Springfield Public School.

Since the passage of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* in 2015 and a stated emphasis on a well-rounded education, many school districts have re-committed to music and arts education programs. During the pandemic, music and arts programs were a vital component to keeping students engaged in school. ESSA provides designated funding for well-rounded educational opportunities through Title IV Part A Student Academic Success and Achievement grants. NAMM Foundation research has revealed that these grants are being widely used by school districts to address instructional gaps in access to music and arts education.

"Our music department has achieved yet another impressive feat – we are the proud recipients of the "Best Communities for Music Education" award by NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants). This recognition is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and talent of our music teachers and

students. The music department (Ms. Berends, Mr. Cords, and Ms. Oberle) at Springfield Public Schools is flourishing like never before, with a record number of 7-12 students participating in both the band and choir. These students are dedicated, hardworking, and sound absolutely wonderful when performing.

But the benefits of our music program go far beyond just producing beautiful music. Students who participate in our music department are well-rounded, taking pride in their other activities as well. They learn discipline, teamwork, and perseverance, all of which are crucial skills for success in any area of life.

In fact, research shows that students who participate in music programs tend to perform better academically and have higher graduation rates. It's no surprise, then, that our music department is an integral part of our high school community.

We're proud of the hard work and dedication our students and music teachers put into our music program. From playing pep band at our student activities to our choir going caroling on Springfield's annual Holiday event, they continue to impress us with their talent and commitment. The importance of our music department cannot be overstated, and we look forward to many more years of beautiful music and academic success." said Pat Moritarty, High School Principal.

Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational/cognitive and social skill benefits for children who make music: After two years of music education, researchers found that participants showed more substantial improvements in how the brain processes speech and reading scores than their less-involved peers and that students who are involved in music are not only more likely to graduate high school but also to attend college as well. In addition, everyday listening skills are stronger in musically trained children than in those without music training. Significantly, listening skills are closely tied to the ability to: perceive speech in a noisy background, pay attention, and keep sounds in memory. Later in life, individuals who took music lessons as children show stronger neural processing of sound: young adults and even older adults who have not played an instrument for up to 50 years show enhanced neural processing compared to their peers. Not to mention, social benefits include conflict resolution, teamwork skills, and how to give and receive constructive criticism.

Elementary Principal Jeff Kuehn stated, **"It's a privilege to have so many great music opportunities for students in our schools. The learning that our students are exposed to and the opportunities that they have to perform are outstanding. Music is a language that our students are becoming fluent in and are finding success. The joy that they're experiencing is genuine and it's so wonderful to see them moved by the power of music. This is all made possible by the excellent staff that we have in place. Mr. Cords, Ms. Oberle, and Ms. Berends have a real passion for what they do. They have high standards, energy, enthusiasm, and a knowledge base that allows them to communicate the skills that students need to master in order to sound their best. They've built a sense of pride in their programs throughout the community and it's awesome to see so many families attend concerts and support their work with our kids. This recognition is well-deserved and I look forward to seeing them continue to grow the music experience for kids in our schools."**

About The NAMM Foundation

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit supported in part by the National Association of Music Merchants and its 15,000 member companies and individual professionals. The foundation advances active participation in music making across the lifespan by supporting scientific research, philanthropic giving, and public service programs. For more information about The NAMM Foundation, please visit www.nammfoundation.org.

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