

Community Conversation – Instrumental Music K-12  
January 22, 2019  
Plains Jr. High School

*What's working – tell a story about when the music program really worked for you*

Band offers school-life balance

It's a chance to make life-long friends

I now have a core group of friends

Teaches you acceptance of responsibility

Meeting new people

Skills and neural pathways are developed

A student with dyslexia...playing music helped retrain neural pathways

Leadership skills

At one time was required to be in the arts program, now that's gone

Band is their community

A student had just moved here and was immediately accepted

In elementary schools the lack of music and band

Once you get to seventh and eighth grade, the teachers are starting from scratch

My son had no band at all until seventh grade, then he fell in love with the trombone. Think of the progress he could have made if he had started earlier.

Foundation is so much better if started at grade school level

Provided a home for me, and confidence, and leadership

In marching band you got solid friends...there's so many nice people

You have leadership teams. It gets you into that leadership roles you can use later in life

Develops confidence, with playing tests, auditions...it's kind of like public speaking. You get used to it and get over it.

Playing tests help you channel that stress

Time management – managing band, family, social life

Building soft skills like time management, collaboration

Band being a place to belong

Even if coming from a different school knew band was a place to fit in

Passion for music sparked by being in a band

Inclusivity, even kids with disabilities, a place to come together and make great music

Joined as a sophomore. Some of the experiences have been absolutely surreal. Seeing the sign “Grand National Champions.” Hearing that reverberation of the sound was most amazing. Want that experience extended to more and more people.

Band lets us take ownership of something, especially at a young age. No one can really practice for you. Gives you a sense of independence nothing else can.

In sixth grade I wanted to try band, but wasn’t able to do it because my mom babysits after school, and couldn’t pick me up.

*What requests you would make of the school district leaders?*

To have band in elementary during school day

This year seventh-grade does not have to take performing arts. Would like to see junior high pushed back to a seven-period day, to require performing arts at the junior high level.

Had to deal with Beacon for trainers. Marching band students are athletes. They should have same opportunity.

When kids go to junior high they have never been graded in music. That’s vital to tell band teachers what they know. The kids are blindsided. “I get graded in band?” Can they keep a steady beat? Can they match pitch? You have to see them 36 times to grade the. I only see them 30 times.

More exposure, from K to 12, more exposure to music. Listening, playing, whatever.

More bells at the high school. Many of us can’t do what we want at high school. You have to take all curricular stuff, so there’s no time for extra-curricular stuff.

Fostering a good sense of music education at younger ages, especially in regard to instruments. Keyboard labs in elementary schools. Access to digital music. The best musician in the world and a two-year-old can play middle C and sound the same. So much can come out of digital music labs.

Talking about the importance of singing, how it can unlock the musical mind. It not only teaches voice but it teaches how to listen. The listening side is huge. It leads to a well-rounded person in so many fields.

We need to attract quality teachers to the district. The way to do that is to have quality programs in district.

When I was in junior high our band director specialized in one family of instruments. With me being a percussionist, the only way to grow was to get private lessons. But not everyone can afford that or make the schedule work. We need more faculty for specialized instruction.

I'd like to see Mr. Carr and Mr. Tanis at the table when we're talking about schedule and facility changes.

Would like to see arts in the strategic plan.

With the staffing in grades seven to 12, I don't know how we do what we do...two bands to Grand Nationals. We have to treat it as a program, not a bunch of classes. We went from Steam to Steam squared, that was medical. What about steam cubed?

Summer school, online. It could add more opportunities, but at a cost.

An AP music class.

I would love to see strings also. Lakota doesn't have any strings at all offered. It's a huge disservice to students.

Lakota's 7-12 programs are premier programs. The directors do great jobs. But they only can do what they can do. We just need more staffing, to do even more.

In symphonic winds we lost 80 minutes per week with the new schedule. It's kind of frustrating. The new schedule doesn't really add time. No one understands why the schedule was changed in the first place. They should revert the schedule back to what it was.

Have more staffing at elementary school.

Fifth- and sixth-grade band during school, and a seven-period day at high school.

I'm a single mom. How do you get your kids there?

Expanding the instruments, including orchestra.

Absolutely need more directors and more teachers

Our student to teacher ratio is atrocious, even compared to Cincinnati.

Colorguard, Winterguard, varsity sports, had to turn away 20 to 30 girls because we don't have practice space. The space we're given is tiny. We get complaints...why we are there? Have to truck the equipment there twice a week.

Bring back the recorder for fifth and sixth grade. Make it every day.

Choir, art, make the classes mandatory.

36 percent are involved at an early age. If you don't bring back opportunities at early ages, you'll be behind other districts. My son started in fourth grade, and has gone on to do some wonderful things. We need some sort of arts program at early age.

It all comes back to exposure. I'm not saying every kid has to take everything. But allowing them try in early elementary, that's where you spark the early interest. That's why you're seeing only 36 percent. That's so sad. It's starting to trickle back now, but that's why we see 36 percent.

If we could say yes, you do have to take some arts, some music classes, that's exposure.

You could have high school groups, a swing choir, coming to play concerts in the lower grades.

They should be graded as elementary kids – absolutely. There's such a disparity in the es music programs.

My child came home and said we watched a movie about kids playing music.

A standardized, elementary music curriculum, where they receive a grade.

I'm one of six kids in my family. When you start earlier, you'll have more fun with more opportunities. I got a boost of friends when I got into band.

Maybe start doing clubs instead, have their meetings on evenings and weekends.

It's very expensive for instruments. It's really hard paying those monthly bills. A used instrument can be \$50 a month to rent. It's so much money.

The six-period day has really restricted the opportunity to take all the classes I want. It would be awesome if we didn't have to decide between what music classes to take because there's not enough bells.

How to have more choirs, and strings.

More band teachers in elementary school. Some don't have any, so students are bussed to another school so they have 18 for a class.

As an elementary teacher I see students one time every six days. I drive from one building to another every single day. I barely have time to choke down food. It's not fair to the kids.

There's an utter lack of respect from administration for the students at the high schools. Both went to the Grand National championships. We didn't even get recognized before we went (but did after). That's such a disservice to band that worked so hard. A lot of students don't even know what band is. "You walk and play...how hard can that be?" Some students scream obscenities at us, and talk over the performances. Would like to see more respect from administration and student body.

A more holistic approach for younger grades. Indoctrination in music ensembles, make best friends. It's something you can't oversell. We talked about adding a period to high school. Music is for credit, it needs to be part of the class day. It's not a club or a hobby. Respect it at the administrative level like a skill.

Speaking of administration, we have two of finest music schools in world in the area. One is CCM. Would love to see partnerships with CCM. Get some interns, and throw some skilled musicians at the problem.

Going back to the elementary school band program. Most parents don't put their child in band because they don't have enough time. Could other parents help move kids around, get them where they need to be?

Music is related to all the core subjects. Any way to incorporate that would be awesome.

When I was in high school, there were very few low brass. We need to expose seventh-graders and eighth-graders to lesser known instruments, like the tuba and French horn. They're under-represented in the current system.