

Music Department Program Evaluation Report K-12

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Committee Members

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Program Scope and Highlights

The program evaluation took place during the 2016-2017 school year and fall of the 2017-2018 school year with the district music staff. The evaluation focused on curriculum practices and NJ State Standards, as well as a review of recommendations from previous evaluation reports.

Committee members conducted comparisons of curricula within the district, similar school districts, a review of evidence based programs, and development of recommendations to revise curriculum.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards -- Visual and Performing Arts

Standard 1.1 *The Creative Process*

Standard 1.2 *History of the Arts and Culture*

Standard 1.3 *Performing*

Standard 1.4 *Aesthetic Responses & Critique Methodologies*

Program Mission Statement, Philosophy and Vision

Mission

The mission of the Bernards Township Public School District music department is to provide students a learning environment that fosters meaningful cultural experiences in the performance, understanding, and appreciation of the discipline and art of music.

Philosophy

Just as there can be no music without learning, no education is complete without music. It helps develop skills in children that will give them intellectual and creative advantages that last a lifetime.

Music is an integral part of humankind and no known culture is without some aspect of artistic experience. Music is an important key to understanding our own cultural history and provides an understanding of other cultures. It is an indispensable tool to one who seeks an understanding of the past, the present, and the future. Music can provide universal communication to overcome the barriers of language, politics, and geography.

The study and playing of music, whether alone or in a group, offers students a lifelong enjoyment and appreciation of music. The study of music is designed for the development of individual and team skills through the rehearsal and performance of appropriate musical literature. Students not only acquire skills in music education, they also learn to be self-confident, committed, caring and compassionate individuals. The study of music provides students with the foundation, experience, and specialized instruction necessary for success in a variety of music careers, advanced studies, entrepreneurship, and life-long learning.

From kindergarten through Grade twelve, Music Education develops mental discipline through a spiraling sequence of learning experiences. It also nurtures an appreciation of music's aesthetic qualities. At every level, the skills acquired become the means for the expression of music. The realization of the goals, skill mastery, and artistic expression is the commitment of the music educators of the Bernards Township School District.

Vision

- To meet the Music Educational needs of our students through class study, rehearsal and performance opportunities.
- To allow students to gain an appreciation and understanding of some of civilization's greatest achievements in music.
- To envision a future where participation in all facets of music is valued and supported.
- To understand what it takes to achieve excellence.
- To build, nurture and expand abilities which form the basis of success in any area of study.
- To acquire musical knowledge which enables students to become lifelong lovers and participants in the arts.

Analysis of Current Program

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

All students in grades K-5 receive General Music instruction for 50 minutes per week in a dedicated music classroom. Each room is equipped with digital SMART projectors and a variety of musical instruments. Teachers have the option to incorporate Chromebooks into their lessons dependent upon availability within each school.

Performance ensembles are available in each building beginning in 3rd grade (chorus* and orchestra), as well as 4th grade and 5th grade for band, chorus and orchestra. Ensembles rehearse before the start of the school day for a 45-minute rehearsal.

**Oak Street School: all 3rd grade students participate in 3rd grade chorus as part of their weekly general music class. There is no before school rehearsal.*

Students who select to play a musical instrument receive a thirty-minute (band) and thirty-five-minute (string) small group lesson once per week, which are held during the school day and students are pulled out of their regular classes. The lessons rotate in time slots through all class periods, a different time slot each week. Ideally, children never miss the same subject more than once in any eight-week rotation. (Occasionally, due to the instrumental music teachers' assignments to teach General music, the rotation is every four weeks.) String lessons begin in Grade three; wind and percussion lessons begin in Grade four.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

6th Grade

Students in 6th grade are provided a general music class through the 6th grade cycle courses. This course is a continuation of the students' music instruction from their elementary years, focusing on music fundamentals, history, and music theory. This class is designed to assist the student to become more aware of the music they hear every day and develop a respect and understanding of the many music genres.

Participation in a music ensemble is available to students who desire to schedule the class. Ensemble classes offered include band, chorus and orchestra and are specific to the grade level of the student and include two public concerts each year. Students are scheduled for one ensemble class each week and are required to take one weekly group music lesson which is scheduled on a rotating basis. Students have the ability to reschedule a lesson if the timing is an interruption to an academic class.

7th Grade

Music ensemble classes (band, chorus and orchestra) are available for students who desire to schedule the course. Consistent with the 6th grade offering, students are scheduled for a weekly ensemble class and weekly group music lesson (on a rotating schedule). These ensemble classes are also grade level specific and provide for two public concerts each year. Students have the ability to reschedule a lesson if the timing is an interruption to an academic class.

8th Grade

Students wishing to participate in music continue to have the same ensemble opportunities as they had in 6th and 7th grade. The format remains the same (scheduled weekly ensemble class, weekly rotating group music lesson, and two annual concerts) as in previous grade levels. Additionally, students have the opportunity to schedule a music technology course ("Creating Music") which aims to introduce to the student how music is created. In a computer lab setting, students learn how to manipulate software to create music tracks that could be used in film scoring or to be played in a traditional setting. This course is a semester offering.

From a facilities standpoint, ensemble classes are taught in designated ensemble rooms which are also used for group lessons. The 6th Grade Music Cycle course is taught in the choral room.

HIGH SCHOOL

The music curriculum at Ridge High School builds on the program of the middle school, offering students continued exposure to ensemble music and group lesson study. Courses offered satisfy State and district graduation requirements. The following opportunities are offered:

Instrumental Music - BAND

Concert Band: a CP level course, Concert Band provides instruction and experience in instrumental technique, ensemble discipline and the understanding and appreciation of instrumental music literature. This course meets five-days per week throughout the school year and students are required to attend a weekly group music lesson which is scheduled during lunch periods. An additional section of this course has recently been added with the intent to isolate freshman level students in order to provide greater instruction. Students participate in a

minimum of two concerts each year and if available, participate in state adjudicated festivals. Students have the opportunity to audition for All-State and Region II ensembles.

Wind Ensemble: this course is offered to students at an honors level and an audition is required (Spring of the prior school year) in order to participate. Additionally, students are required to schedule the class in order to earn credit. Students participate in state adjudicated festivals and perform a minimum of two concerts each school year. This course is scheduled five days per week and is a full-year course. Students have the opportunity to audition for All-State and Region II ensembles.

Instrumental Music - ORCHESTRA

Chamber Orchestra: this CP level course is offered for students in grades 9 and 10. Similar to courses offered in band, students meet five days per week for the full school year and participate in a minimum of two annual concerts. Students in Chamber Orchestra perform a wide variety of string orchestra literature and receive training in advanced orchestral techniques. Students receive group instrumental lessons weekly which are scheduled during lunch periods. Students have the opportunity to audition for All-State and Region II ensembles.

Symphony Orchestra: this course is available for Honors Credit and is offered to students in grades 11 and 12. Like all other ensemble classes, this course meets five days per week and students are required to attend a weekly group music lesson during a lunch period. Music technique is continued to be developed and students are exposed to a wide variety of music literature and is performed in at least two concerts each school year. Students have the opportunity to audition for All-State and Region II ensembles.

Vocal Music

Ridge Chorale: this course is offered for girls only in grades 9 and 10 five days per week throughout the school year. Members of the Ridge Chorale are instructed in the basics of vocal technique and group performance. Students prepare a variety of seasonal literature.

Participation in winter and spring evening concerts is mandatory for this course. Members of the Ridge Chorale are scheduled into Choral Sectionals one day per week during lunch. This is a CP level course.

Concert Choir: a full year course that meets five days per week, Concert Choir is offered to boy's grades 9 - 12, and girl's grades 11 and 12. Concert Choir members are exposed to a wide variety of choral styles and performance techniques. Participation in winter and spring evening concerts is mandatory for participants in this course. Opportunities to audition for the Ridge High School A Cappella Choir, New Jersey All-State Chorus, and Region II Chorus are available to members of the Concert Choir. Members of the Concert Choir are scheduled into Choral Sectionals two days per week during lunch/study hall.

A Capella Choir: this course is available to any student, grades 9-12, with acceptance by audition only, as well as participation in Concert Choir, Ridge Chorale, or Choir Sectionals. This course is also available for Honors Credit after two years of participation. Students will be

exposed to a wide variety of choral literature and a mature standard of performance. Students accepted into the A Cappella Choir must also participate in Concert Choir or Ridge Chorale by class scheduling or through Choir Sectionals. Attendance at all rehearsals, sectionals, and participation in all public performances, as well as winter and spring evening concerts, are mandatory parts of this course. This course meets one night per week as a zero period for the entire school year. This course is not assigned during scheduling conferences as it is assigned after acceptance by auditions held in June.

Choir Sectionals: Choir Sectionals are available to any student, grades 9-12, who is interested in performing with the Concert Choir or Ridge Chorale and/or those students who are already enrolled in these ensembles, providing an opportunity for full-year participation in the RHS Choral Program. This course receives one credit and are scheduled during lunch or study halls and functions similar to instrumental music lessons.

For students who do not wish to participate in an ensemble course, Ridge High School offers two courses that can satisfy graduation requirements.

Music Theory: this semester course provides students with an intensive study in aspects of harmony including progressions, part writing and analysis. There are no prerequisites, though students should have a working knowledge of the keyboard.

Enjoyment of Music: also a semester course, the class an overview of the evolution of the history of music, beginning with Medieval Music and Gregorian Chant, through Romantic and Modern periods. There is an emphasis on how each of the periods affect the music of today.

All music classes are conducted in dedicated music classrooms. Group lessons and vocal ensemble classes are taught in the music classroom or small practice rooms.

Staff

The Bernards Township Public Schools District enjoys a proud tradition of success within their music programs and this in great part is due to the talented and dedicated staff that share their passion and expertise with their students and community on a daily basis. At the elementary level, each school has a music specialist who instructs general music, as well as oversees each building's choral program. There are also four instrumental music teachers, two for band and two for strings that share the four district elementary schools.

At the middle school level, there are two band directors, an orchestra director and a choral director. In addition, there is a staff member who splits time between William Annin Middle School and Ridge High School, working with the 6th grade cycle course, instrumental music and the 8th grade elective, *Creating Music*. These staff members oversee all music activities conducted within the school and are highly involved in extracurricular music activities as well.

Ridge High School employs three full-time music educators, as well as shares a teacher with William Annin Middle School. This shared position assists with the band program when at the high school.

Prior Goals/Progress and Recommendations

#1: Facilities

Elementary -- Provide classrooms for all music classes, including before school ensembles.

All General Music classes are conducted in dedicated music rooms, equipped with a variety of equipment and technology to deliver instruction to meet 21st Century Learning Standards. Space has been allocated for instrumental music instruction that has also included a classroom if available. Building administration will work with the Supervisor of Fine Arts to identify additional space in the coming years based on school enrollment figures.

Middle School and High School -- Improve the heating and ventilation in the band and orchestra rooms.

This continues to be a challenge, as temperature “swings” can be extreme and cause damage to instruments, primarily those constructed of wood. The Supervisor of Fine Arts continues to work with the facilities director and building administration to find solutions to remedy this concern.

Middle School – Provide improved sound proofing in room 205 (orchestra).

This recommendation has been resolved.

High School – An improved performance space is needed at Ridge High School, as well as a rehearsal room for choral music.

2008 opened the Ridge Performing Arts Center, which provided a new performance space and choral rehearsal room. This recommendation has been resolved.

#2: Literature

Elementary -- Expand the library of musical literature for the elementary Grades.

Budget lines have been established in recent years and are monitored by the Supervisor of Fine Arts. The development and maintenance of a music literature library is ongoing.

#3: Teacher Scheduling

Elementary -- Improve scheduling to provide all students with the greatest expertise in the areas in which they are instructing.

All students receive music instruction from qualified, certified music educator professionals, each teaching subject matter they were trained in. There are no additional teachers recommended at this time; therefore, this recommendation is resolved.

#4: Student Scheduling

Elementary -- Reinstate general music in Kindergarten to twice a week, for 25 minutes each. Change Grade One general music to 40 minutes once per week.

The current “Specials” offerings coincide with the daily period schedule at each building. There is no consideration for a change in the elementary daily schedule at this time or in the foreseeable future.

Middle School-- Return the 8th Grade band and orchestra to 5 days a week as full-credit classes.

This recommendation has not been resolved. In surveying a number of districts, William Annin Middle School continues to offer far less music ensemble instruction than similar districts, not just in 8th grade, but in 6th and 7th as well. Schools with ensemble offerings provide ensemble instruction one day per week at the elementary level, and increase instruction to three to five days per week at the middle level until reaching daily instruction at the high school level. The current building schedule does not easily allow for a change of this type, though discussion regarding a change in the building schedule continues. In an effort to offset this short-coming, the high school band program has created a section for freshman students only, providing more focused instruction to increase student ability levels. The Supervisor of Fine Arts is part of the scheduling committee.

Middle School - Recommendation would be to add a 7th Grade music cycle.

7th Grade Music Cycle had been added, but was eliminated to add a Mathematics Cycle to provide students more mathematics instruction time.

#5: Instrument Inventory/Security/Storage

Elementary, Middle School and High School -- Expand the district owned instrument inventory.

Elementary -- Provide adequate security for storage of instruments

High School -- Renovate Band room storage facility.

Through budget allocations, the district has greatly improved its allotment of school-owned instruments based on the recommendations of staff members in collaboration with the Supervisor of Fine Arts. Instrument sharing amongst buildings is currently conducted on an as needed basis, though it is not as necessary due to the acquisition of instruments over recent years. Security of instruments does not appear to be an issue at this time, nor has it been in recent years. The high school band room has not been renovated to accommodate instrument storage. The program has grown over recent years and the need for adequate storage facilities is paramount. Discussions have been ongoing but have not produced additional storage.

#6: Technology

Elementary, Middle School and High School -- Music technology must be incorporated into all music offerings K-12

Through budgetary allocations, a variety of items have been acquired at each level which include software and keyboards. Updated items will continue to be purchased based upon need and budget constraints. This recommendation has been resolved.

#7: Media

High School: Provide TV/VCR units in all three areas at Ridge.

This recommendation has been resolved, as all classrooms contain updated, full screen projection systems that link directly to the district-provided teacher computer.

Middle School and High School: Provide digital recording systems where they are lacking.

All staff have the means in which to record rehearsals in order to improve reflective activities. This recommendation has been resolved.

Comparative Schools/Resources

Programs of studies were reviewed from the following school districts, representing a broad spectrum of programs from around the state. In addition to reviews of each district's program of studies, staff members reached-out to contacts they have professional relationships with in order to glean additional information about their programs. Additionally, the Supervisor of Fine Arts initiated several telephone conversations with his counterparts, discussing programming and plans for future coursework.

Bridgewater-Raritan	Chatham	Edison
Egg Harbor Township	Glen Rock	Hopewell Valley
Livingston	Millburn	Montgomery
New Providence	Northern Valley Regional	Princeton
Roxbury	Springfield	Summit
Washington Township	Watchung Hills	West Morris Mendham
West Orange	West Windsor-Plainsboro	Westfield

Goals/Recommendations

Goal #1: Develop a schedule that allows for an increased number of students to schedule music classes at Ridge High School without the need to take away from their lunch period.

Problem statement: In order for a number of students to participate in a music class, students need to utilize a portion of their lunch period to attend the scheduled class. This situation is compounded by the scheduling of science labs during certain periods of the day.

Proposed solution: The Supervisor of Fine Arts is a member of an administrative team tasked with researching and recommending a new schedule to be implemented at Ridge High School. The staff members have been diligent with providing suggestions supported by research they have conducted with colleagues in other school districts, and the Supervisor is the conduit that expresses the information provided by his staff to the administrative scheduling team. Additionally, the Fine Arts Supervisor will work closely with the Supervisor of Science and the counseling department in order to develop a schedule of class periods to meet the needs of as many students as possible.

Goal #2: Develop and present a plan to the Central Office Administration and building administration that will provide for additional adequate storage for instruments and equipment.

Problem statement: As programming has grown and become more diversified, the need for additional storage is paramount. Currently, practice rooms housed at Ridge High School are being utilized for storage and not for the intended use as instruction/small rehearsal space. At both William Annin Middle School and Ridge High School, programming has changed over recent years, primarily with the addition of the ABA Music Program, which is utilizing space that was once designated for use with the general education music program.

Proposed solution: The Supervisor of Fine Arts will work with building administration to identify potential areas that can be utilized as an additional instructional space.

Goal #3: Develop a plan to create teaching spaces for elementary instrumental music classes.

Problem statement: Teaching spaces for instrumental music classes is limited to school stages or other locations that are less than the size of a traditional classroom. Instruction is impaired through the distractions of noise from lunches and Before Care, a true challenge for the very young musician trying to learn a new “language.”

Proposed solution: The possibility of enrollment shifts creates an opportunity for music classes to be moved into a traditional classroom, just as it has happened at Oak Street School. The Supervisor of Fine Arts will work closely with building administrators to identify the possibility

of such a move and a potential timeline when it could occur. Soundproofing is recommended for these rooms in order not to disrupt general education students, depending upon their location, which can be included in yearly budget requests.