



Port Allegany's Music Education Program Receives National Recognition

Port Allegany, PA – April 7, 2021 – Port Allegany School District 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 22nd 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, Port Allegany School District 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 with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

Port Allegany Elementary Principal Mr. Tracy Kio shared, "I am excited to hear about the Port Allegany School District being recognized for the Best Communities for School Award. This honor showcases the work ethic and commitment that our students, staff and community members make in promoting the importance music plays in our daily lives. Music instills qualities such as creativity, focus, and joy into our hearts and this is always on display during our many student performances each year. Congratulations to our entire learning community for this wonderful recognition."

Since the passage by Congress in 2015 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and a stated emphasis on a well-rounded education, many school districts have re-committed to music and arts education programs and found that in this time of a national pandemic, provides a valuable way to keep 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.

8th grade music student Connor Briggs said, "Music has allowed me to grow closer with many people, and it has opened me up to many enjoyable opportunities. I believe that music is one of the most important things a person can experience in their lifetime, and nobody should have to miss out on it. By creating bonds and connecting to viewers through song, you could allow them the chance to witness one of the greatest moments of their lives..."

Senior Mallory Causer said, "Port Allegany has given me a wealth of opportunities to grow as an individual in the music program... It has given me the chance to have more confidence on a stage and to perform in front of a live audience. It has made me realize how much I love performing for a crowd. The memories and experiences I have had throughout the years in the music program will forever be in my heart. I will use this newfound confidence in my future endeavors."

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. 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.

Port Allegany students have the opportunity to participate in music electives and co-curricular classes in grades Pre-K through 12. Students in the upper elementary grades may participate in band and choir with the opportunity to audition for the Elementary Ensemble. Students in grades 7 through 12 may choose from band, choir, guitar class, piano class, vocal arts, and other music electives. High School students also have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular ensembles including Chamber Singers, Show Choir, Jazz Band, and Marching Band. In the spring, students collaborate on a musical theatre production and concerts. In a typical year, many students participate in annual instrumental and choral festivals including: Elementary Song Fest, IU9 Band, PMEA District and Region Band and Chorus. The Port Allegany Music Department has a variety of concerts and performances each year, check the district website at pasdedu.org for details about performances.

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