



## **Arlington's Music Education Program Receives National Recognition for the 9th time!**

LaGrangeville, NY - April 7, 2021– The Arlington Central School District has once again been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education. This is the 9th time since 2012 that Arlington has received this honor. 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, Arlington District Music Coordinators Kristina Rizzo and Richard Guillen 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.

When asked how music education is important to the district and its students, the district's music coordinator team of Kristina Rizzo, K-8 Music Coordinator, and Richard Guillen, 9-12 Music Coordinator, responded with the following statement: "Music has always been an integral part of the overall fabric of the Arlington Central School District Community for well over 50 years. The consistent and unwavering support of the community, board of education, and district administration has been a key factor for the music program's long history of excellence and success. receiving this designation once again helps to validate something we are fortunate enough to already know! Arlington's Music Faculty has overcome many obstacles during the Covid-19 Pandemic and has managed to keep music alive and well in the district. The Arlington community and administration has been incredibly supportive throughout the pandemic to provide PPE, safe learning environments, new experiences, and the ability and flexibility for the educators to provide unique and fulfilling experiences under challenging circumstances."

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. This award recognizes that Arlington is leading the way with learning opportunities as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The legislation guides implementation in the states and replaces the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which was often criticized for an overemphasis on testing-while leaving behind subjects such as music. ESSA recommends music and the arts as important elements of a well-rounded education for all children.

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.

### **About the Arlington Music Department**

The Arlington Central School District's Music Department is a comprehensive K-12 program that offers students the opportunity to experience General Music classes in grades K-7, with the introduction of instrumental and vocal music in grade 4. Students participate in band, orchestra, and chorus every day in grades 6-12, with continued opportunities for general music instruction, classes in piano, guitar, ukulele, music theory. Classes in the Theater Arts are also offered in grades 9-12. Students in performing ensembles like band, orchestra, and chorus also receive small group lesson instruction to further their musical learning opportunities. Arlington music students have received many honors and accolades, including consistent superior ratings at festivals & competitions and performances at Carnegie Hall, state, regional and national music events, and multiple state and national-championship caliber groups.

The Arlington Central School District is located 75 miles north of New York City and is comprised of eight elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Geographically, the district covers an area of 114 square miles and is situated to the east of both the Hudson River and the City of Poughkeepsie. There are approximately 8,200 students in the Arlington Schools. Student achievement is high. Approximately ninety percent of our graduates continue their education in college while ten percent enter military service or the work force.

"The Arlington Central School District mission is to empower all students to be self-directed, lifelong learners, who willingly contribute to their community, and lead passionate, purposeful lives."

### **About The NAMM Foundation**

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit supported in part by the National Association of Music Merchants and its approximately 10,400 members around the world. 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 and to view a complete list of all the school districts receiving this honor, please visit:

<https://www.nammfoundation.org/articles/bcme-2021-districts>

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