



## Elizabeth Public Schools Press Release

### **EPS Receives Best Community for Music Education Recognition**

*District recognized by NAMM Foundation for third straight year*



**Elizabeth, N.J., May 4, 2022** – Elizabeth Public Schools recently joined 738 districts and 80 schools across 44 states to be honored with the Best Communities for Music Education (BCME) designation from the NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education.

The BCME designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. Districts that have been recognized by the NAMM Foundation are often held up as models for other educators looking to boost their own music education programs.

The Elizabeth Public Schools music community, under the guidance of Supervisor of Visual and Performing Arts Tracy C. Monteiro, has now received the BCME distinction for the third year in a row and the sixth time in the past seven years. Elizabeth answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs to qualify for the Best Communities designation.

Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas who, in conjunction with The NAMM Foundation, created a new way for districts and schools to address the inroads and setbacks impacted by the pandemic, as well as goals for equity and access to music education for all students and national standards for music education in a short, qualitative survey.

This year's awards program was designed to celebrate schools and districts adapting, innovating, and persevering in the face of change. As the NAMM Foundation enters its 23rd year, it recognized the significance of access to music education as COVID protocols eased and schools across the nation began to return to in-person learning.

“Music educators, administrators, and communities truly rallied to support and sustain music education through a period of intense change and adaptation. These districts and schools persevered in serving their students and communities and assured that music education was part of curriculum offerings,” shares Mary Luehrsen, Executive Director of The NAMM Foundation. “We applaud the commitment and efforts of all music educators, school administrators, and community members in providing students the opportunity to explore their creativity through music.”

This award recognizes that Elizabeth Public Schools is leading the way with learning opportunities as outlined in federal education legislation, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which designates music and the arts as important elements of well-rounded education for all children. During the pandemic, many school districts have found that music and arts education has provided a valuable way to keep students engaged in school.

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.

The value Elizabeth Public Schools places on music education and being a music community is reflected in being recognized by the NAMM Foundation.

“The pandemic had a major impact on the ability of educators to provide access to and deliver instruction, whether it was for core subjects such as language arts and mathematics, or special subjects like music, art, and physical education,” said Elizabeth Public Schools Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer. “Achieving this designation for the third year in a row and for the sixth time in seven years shows the exceptional level of dedication and determination of our music educators and our student musicians.”

“Congratulations to the entire Elizabeth Public Schools music community and thank you to the NAMM Foundation for this wonderful recognition,” said Elizabeth Board of Education President Rosa Moreno Ortega. “We are very excited to see the outstanding musical talents of our students and educators being awarded. They should take great pride in the commitment to music education that they have shown to receive this award.”

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For further information on Elizabeth Public Schools, please visit [www.epsnj.org](http://www.epsnj.org)

**About The NAMM Foundation:**

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit supported in part by the National Association of Music Merchants and its approximately 10,300 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, please visit [www.nammfoundation.org](http://www.nammfoundation.org).