



EUGENE SYMPHONY

November 19, 2020

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To: Superintendent Hamilton & Springfield School Board Members

When the COVID health crisis began, we all started navigating unprecedented and challenging times. Throughout the pandemic, we've had to adjust to being isolated from others – from our families, our friends, and the circle of people with whom we engage on a regular basis at our schools and workplaces. Over the past nine months, we have heard many stories about people finding connection to others through music, and we are heartened by Springfield School District's commitment to ensuring that students have access to their music programs as a source of critical connection with others. **On behalf of the Eugene Symphony Board of Directors, staff, and musicians, thank you for making music education a priority in your district during these difficult times.**

Through the Eugene Symphony Association's Education Committee, we have heard from local music educators about the creativity, adaptivity, and passion these individuals are devoting to their programs and students. Music, which thrives through collaboration and teamwork, has required substantial and sustained innovation in order to excel via distance learning. For many students, music class is the anchor of their educational experience, and we are elated to hear accounts of music educators pivoting to create meaningful and engaging social distanced (in person) and virtual (from home) opportunities for their students.

Two Rivers–Dos Ríos Elementary School Music Educator Amy Danziger represents the Springfield School District on our Education Committee, and has recently shared some of the great work being done by teachers in your district:

At the elementary level, students move, sing and play along with both live and recorded original music lessons created by their school's very own music teacher. Students are able to respond to lessons and regularly send in adorable recordings of themselves for review. As metrics allow, K-3 students may be in the school building and continue to receive in-person music classes with safety protocols in place. Also, nearly 1,000 Springfield students are participating in Carnegie Hall's Link-Up music program this year through a partnership with Eugene Symphony, where students study major orchestral works through song, dance, and by learning to play recorder!

At the middle school level, students are taking new music appreciation classes. Band and orchestra students are participating in teacher-led virtual "smart music" clubs, which allow the students to establish a foundation that can be built on as they advance to high school music programs.

At the high school level, teachers are creating unique programs to engage students in music education. At A3, students are composing pieces which will serve as a basis for choreography in the school's dance class. At Springfield High School, choir classes are participating in a project called "SHS Sings for our Community," which pairs students with residents at

Springfield assisted-living facilities. Choir Director Stacey Swartout-Mckee shared, “I decided to create a project that will, hopefully, bring a little joy to both populations. My students will have a performance outlet, and at the same time, they will be providing a personal connection to our isolated community members.”

Music is more important than ever for our students. Music and the arts are not just creative outlets; they are safe spaces for students, and facilitate social-emotional learning. It is likely that when students return to classrooms they will have gaps in their academic learning and emotional growth; music is proven to help with both areas. Music, going forward, will help us heal from all the upheaval and challenging times we have all experienced recently.

Thank you again for supporting these critical programs and for keeping music (and connection) available to students during this difficult time. We ask that the district continue to make music education a priority by keeping music education funded and by providing this critical component of a holistic education.

Eugene Symphony is committed to championing strong music programs in local schools, and we value your partnership in making this a reality for the young musicians in our community.

Sincerely,

Paul Roth, Chair, Education Committee

& Ashlee Cribb, Chair, Music Advocacy/Pathways Subcommittee

on behalf of the Eugene Symphony Board of Directors