

Regular Board Meeting – February 17, 2009

SUBJECT: GENERAL MUSIC LEARNING TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS**Overview**

During the fall of 2008, a District 68 General Music Learning Team (GMLT) was formed for the purpose of examining the current general music curriculum and instructional best practice. The overall goal of the team was to set the stage for the curriculum revision process. The following members served on the GMLT:

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| Susan Arcus | Parent, Stenson |
| Constance Bergman | Parent, Devonshire |
| Connie Donnelly | Elementary Bands Director, K-8 Instrumental, Music Dept. Coordinator, OOJH Chorus |
| Louise Finton | K-5 Music, Stenson |
| Leslie Gordon | Principal, Highland School |
| Kimberly Heath | Assistant Principal, OOJH |
| Paul Livieri | Board of Education |
| Barbara Phillips | Assistant Superintendent, ESC |
| Hank Schneider | Board of Education |
| Steven Spiegel | General Music and Gifted Education, OOJH |
| Christine Toy | Parent, Highland and OOJH |
| Dr. Rollo Dilworth | North Park University (Chicago), consultant |

The GMLT met six times between September 18 and January 6, 2009, and completed the following activities:

- Reviewed the Illinois and National Performance Standards for Music (K-8)
- Read and reviewed literature on current trends and best practices in general music education
- Discussed parent and community expectations for general music instruction in the district
- Discussed the current general music program in terms of alignment with standards and course offerings
- Reviewed vision statements from professional music organizations and from prior documents regarding the music program in District 68
- Audited the music program with a rubric/template prepared by the consultant which aligned with national standards and was completed by teachers of general music and instrumental music
- Listened to a presentation from Daniel Gregerman, a music teacher from Niles North High School, regarding the secondary education curriculum including identification of the competencies that need to be addressed and met in the K-8 curriculum if students are to be adequately prepared for high school level music programs (vocal and instrumental).
- Listened to a presentation from Kimberly Heath, assistant principal at OOJH, regarding the current Encore (fine/applied offerings) offerings and schedule
- Conducted three school visits based on recommendations from our consultant and team members regarding exemplary music programs outside the district to observe curriculum, programs, scheduling, and pedagogy
- Conducted three music classroom visits within District 68 for informational purposes

Belief Statement

The GMLT formulated the following belief statement:

The vision of District 68 is “to provide all students with the comprehensive education necessary for living an enriched and productive life in a rapidly changing world.” The *Music Vision 2020 Housewright Declaration* embraces this vision in regard to music and selected excerpts provide the foundation for the belief statement:

“Music makes a difference in people’s lives. It exalts the human spirit; it enhances the quality of life. Indeed, meaningful music activity should be experienced throughout one’s life toward the goal of continuing involvement.”

“Music is a basic way of knowing and doing because of its own nature and because of its relationship of that nature to the human condition, including mind, body, and feeling. It is worth studying because it represents a basic mode of thought and action. And because in itself, it is the one of the primary ways human beings create and share meanings. It must be studied fully to access its richness.”

General Music is one of the fine arts offerings in grades K-5 and one of the areas of study in the OOJH Encore program. The purpose of the general music program in District 68 is to explore the concepts of melody, harmony, rhythm, form, timbre, and expression through the behaviors of singing, listening, moving, playing/performing, creating/composing, and reading/writing. It is through these concepts and behaviors that students examine music literature of our society and the world. The K-5 general music curriculum should serve as the foundation for specialized programs such as instrumental or vocal ensembles.

The GMLT believes that:

- General music education encompasses singing, playing/performing, listening, moving, creating/composing, reading/writing, and feeling
- Music empowers student creativity and self expression in ways unattainable through other disciplines
- Music provides an opportunity for all students to reach their full aesthetic potential
- Music is a universal language bridging world cultures, communities, and traditions
- The study of music promotes tolerance and compassion, respect for diversity, and develops the cooperative learning skills of students
- Music awakens and enlivens both our intellects and our emotions.
- Research and practice have shown the positive effects of music study on academic performance, cross-curricular learnings, and social cultures in schools
- Music performance should be an outward expression that reflects and engages the community

Recommendations

The GMLT made the following recommendations:

A. Curriculum

1. Refine and revise the general music program to incorporate
 - Alignment with Illinois and National Standards in K-8 music

- Best practices as found in exemplary programs
 - Stylistic and cultural diversity
 - More curricular development and attention to standards relating to composing and arranging music in K-8, in evaluating music and music performances in K-8, and in singing in 6-8
 - Multiple opportunities for parents and the community to participate as audience members and as resources to the music program
 - Assessments to support, enhance, measure, and reinforce student learning
2. Revise (align) the instrumental (band and orchestra) and vocal music (after school choral club) program to complement the general music program after the general music program is completed, implemented, and evaluated

B. Program Structure Guidance:

1. Investigate ways to increase vocal music opportunities in K-8 with emphasis at the middle school and provide choral opportunities during the day with supporting staff and resources
2. Investigate ways to increase interdisciplinary connections across the arts and in other content areas with opportunities for staff to plan curricular integration together for selected units
3. Increase utilization of local and community resources and technology to improve the quality and quantity of music instruction
4. Provide opportunities for K-8 music staff to meet regularly to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment

Implementation Planning

Phase I of the implementation of the general music curriculum began in January, 2009 with Dr. Rollo Dilworth, consultant and K-5 general music teachers. The focus has been on the development of a scope and sequence aligned with Illinois standards and national recommendations for the general music program in the elementary schools. The development of middle school scope and sequence will begin in March. Assessments for each standard will be developed using performance checklists and written products to monitor progress over time. Unit development, selection of materials, and staff development will follow. The timeline is projected to span the remainder of this school year and the 2009-2010 school year. Implementation of the curriculum may begin in selected grades next year while others may begin in 2010-2011. When the general music curriculum is completed, implemented, and evaluated, the vocal (after school choral club) and instrumental (band and instrumental) program will be revised for pedagogical alignment and consonance with the general music program.

The revised general music curriculum will develop the recommended concepts and skills as students examine and perform the music of our society and world. It provides an opportunity for all students to develop their aesthetic potential.