

Contact: Tracee DuBeck @ [tdubeck@barnegatschools.com](mailto:tdubeck@barnegatschools.com)



### **Barnegat Township School District's Music Education Program Receives National Recognition**

**Barnegat, NJ – April 8, 2020** – **Barnegat Township 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 21st 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, **Barnegat Township School District** answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, and support for the music programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

Superintendent Dr. Brian Latwis said “This is truly a testament to the incredible students, teachers, and administrators that dedicate themselves to these programs and hold a high standard of excellence and embrace the students as they strive to meet and exceed that expectation. We have such a robust music program that affords students with opportunities to not only get involved but to excel. Barnegat Township School District recognizes the importance of infusing the arts into our programming and we could not be prouder to receive this prestigious honor.” Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Mr. James Barbieri added, “We are honored and humbled to be recognized for this prestigious award. Our district will continue to prioritize music education because we believe it provides an integral part of the well-rounded educational experience for students.”

This award recognizes that the Barnegat Township School District 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.

One of Barnegat's Instrumental Music Teachers, Anthony Orecchio said, “Music is a significant part of life. Music transports us to a place, a time, or an event, and helps us remember good times that bring a smile to our faces. Music is what connects us and reminds us that we are together. In our current world, as we continue to stay home and maintain social distancing guidelines, we are missing out on a very important part of our identity – interaction. Yes, we are with our families during this difficult time,

but we long for our extended family, our friends, our coworkers, and even the subtle interaction we get when we walk into a store...and it is not always easy to cope with this loss. But through music and music instruction, we can continue to interact with one another and make each other smile because we remember what it is like to experience emotion through music. That is what music does.” Erich Wald, Vocal Music Teacher said, “Music education is so important and amazing because it gives opportunities to educate the whole child by touching on concepts of math, language arts, history, and science, as well as, reaching the social and emotional aspects of the individual that are accessible through the arts. I spend every day as a curator of creativity and imagination, all while developing skills that my students will grow to find useful in so many aspects of their everyday life as a student and a future professional.”

Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational, cognitive, and social skill benefits for children who make music. Mrs. Tracee DuBeck, Supervisor of Visual and Performing Arts, said “It is through participation in the arts that students develop skills that are necessary for life. The benefits of music education extend far beyond the skills related to the music classroom. It is inspiring to see the extraordinary talent of our music educators and our students who participate in these programs.”

After two years of music education, research 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.

A 2015 study supported by The NAMM Foundation, “[Striking A Chord](#),” also outlines the overwhelming desire by teachers and parents for music education opportunities for all children as part of the school curriculum.

### **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, please visit [www.nammfoundation.org](http://www.nammfoundation.org).

###