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INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #775

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March 16, 2018



Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Pam Diem and I am the band director at KMS High School which located in Kerkhoven, MN. I am the sole band director responsible for all instrumental ensembles from 5th grade-12th grade, which means I have just over 230 students involved in 4 concert bands, a jazz ensemble, a marching band, pep band, drumline, pit band and other small ensembles.

Our school is located in rural West Central Minnesota and there are not a lot of opportunities for my students to hear live professional music, let alone study from a private instructor. Being as I am the only band director in my district, my time is limited. I am only able to give lesson instruction through the 8th grade, which means I was only able to take our students to a very limiting level of musicianship. This was one of the reasons I was interested in learning more about MacPhail's online program.

MacPhail's Online School Partnership program was introduced as a program to help supplement music education to schools that did not have access to private instructors and for directors to have an option to help their students reach new levels that they alone could not provide. I was reassured that it was not designed as a replacement for the teacher but rather as a tool to assist the teacher and improve music education. It truly is a partnership and I have never felt that it was intended for anything other than that.

Since collaborating with MacPhail, my students and program have benefited and improved dramatically. We typically have 10-12 students studying privately with an artist each week in private lessons with an artist specific to their instrument. Many of these students have gone on to perform solos at contest and successfully audition for various honor bands and All-State bands. These opportunities were not an option before the MacPhail OSP. We also now have several students continuing to play in college as their confidence, interest and level of musicianship has grown exponentially thanks to the MacPhail OSP.

I also use the Online School Partnership program to run sectional rehearsals while I am in a full rehearsal so all my 9-12th grade students are getting more detailed rehearsal and techniques from their sectionals while I am able to continue to teach in the other room a full band rehearsal. I feel like I am now part of a department, rather than just me alone here. I have colleagues and peer support that I would not otherwise have. These peer relationships have made me a better teacher and have been a true benefit for the students as we often collaborate on literature choices and instrument upgrades and such for the students.

The MacPhail OSP has been a real game-changer for our school, band and most importantly for the band students. I couldn't imagine not having it as now it is a part of our curriculum and it is allowing me to open more doors for my students as they leave KMS.

Sincerely,

Pam Diem
KMS Band Director