

Dear Board Member, I am a parent of a 4th grader and 6th grader at Rogers International School (K-8th). I was shocked to hear that in the year 2024, our city government still has members that feel that elementary school music programs are dispensable. Students learn about 1 hour of Music Ed a week starting in Kindergarten, but it is not until 4th grade when given the chance to learn an instrument and participate in band/orchestra that the true skills develop that influence the development of children's intellect and even the path of future careers.

I can use my own family as an example. My son was in 4th grade orchestra, then in 5th grade switched to band and started playing the trombone. He thought it was TORTURE! I required him to continue playing into 6th grade as a stipulation as being allowed to also play on his Nintendo. It is now the end of 6th grade and he actually can play, and play well. He will be representing Rogers and Stamford at the Elementary Honors Band concert in Hartford on April 4th. The music he plays now 2 years into this instrument actually sounds musical and he knows it. He is willingly (possibly even enthusiastically) going to continue with Band in 7th grade.

This next part is the important part, so I'll put it in all caps... IF KEVIN HAD NOT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO START LEARNING IN 4TH/5TH GRADE, THERE IS NO WAY THAT I WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO "FORCE" A STUBBORN PRE-TEEN/TEENAGER TO JOIN BAND. NO-WAY.

They need to get through the part where they are beginners (i.e. sound terrible) when they are still young enough to not know better. By cutting funding for elementary school band, you will be cutting the legs off the entire music departments of the Middle Schools, High Schools, UConn band.....

Now let's move onto my daughter in 4th grade. She loves to sing, wanted to learn an instrument, and signed up for the violin. Unfortunately, either budget cuts or staff shortages left Roger's without an orchestra teacher, so she will be entering 5th grade not having had the opportunity her brother had. If the Board of Finance cuts elementary orchestra/band, then she will never have this opportunity and likely will never play an instrument.

I urge you and all the members to view the repercussions of this decision with a view towards the future of the City of Stamford and the future of music in our schools and our children's lives.

Thank you in advance for your support of the student's of Stamford Public Schools.

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