

Dear Board of Education and Finance

I am a 2nd grade teacher at Strawberry Hill School and mother to two boys in Stamford Public Schools (2nd and 4th grade). Music is very imperative in elementary school! Many studies and research has shown improvement in math and reading when students are encouraged to learn, play and read music. My son, Charlie, is in 4th grade. The joy in his face when he was able to begin instrumental lessons this year was tremendous. I have seen much improvement in his literacy and writing as well.

I am from a family of musicians. My dad played the saxophone and clarinet and my uncle is a music teacher and performer in Florida. It allowed myself to connect to my elders as well as my son. I played the clarinet when I was in elementary school and through high school. It was a key factor in some of my extra curricular activities. It was always a highlight in my year to have my band concert. My son is feeling similar as well right now. They are busy preparing for their concert.

It has taught him discipline and structure in his school day as well as at home. It allows him a creative outlet that he may not otherwise have an opportunity to have.

I feel as though it would be a travesty to our students and district to lose this role in elementary schools. It would put our students further behind in many aspects of school as compared to other districts in our area.

Please consider helping preserve our budget so our instrumental program can stay intact. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Rachel Cuesta

2nd Grade Teacher
Strawberry Hill School