

Dear SD 68 Board and Trustees

We are writing this letter to affirm our support of Elementary Band programs being able to run at the already participating schools for the 2021-2022 school year.

We acknowledge that COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on our schools and on everyone involved with our school system – teachers, families and students. Music educators have faithfully remained the lifeline needed to maintain the mental and physical health of our children.

At the highschool level in Nanaimo, music teachers have successfully run bands following Ministry guidelines during the 2020-21 school year. In July of 2020 the BC Music Educators' Association created the document "[Guidance for Music Classes in British Columbia During Covid-19](#)". Furthermore, the [Provincial Government](#) Ministry website recognizes music as an area of learning by providing precautions for teaching music in Covid-19 safe schools. Both of these documents provide guidance and information on how to continue to run music programs safely during the pandemic. With these safety measures in place, schools have successfully maintained music programs over the 2020/21 school year.

Nanaimo has a long history of students who have participated in the music programs and have been successful in life. We have former students who have become musicians working on the International scene, such as Diana Krall, Ingrid Jensen, Christine Jensen, and David Gogo, and students who are now in occupations such as music therapists, music producers, performers, music educators, educators, managers, doctors, scientists, and lawyers, just to name a few. To what do many of these successful adults attribute their success? To their time spent in their band programs in elementary and highschool.

Even with these guidelines and successful programs, we as parents are concerned that there could be a possibility of disruption to the continuation of elementary band programs in our district.

We know that the continuation of Elementary Band is an essential requirement of students who are looking forward to being able to participate in future elementary and high school programs. Not having these programs puts all students at a disadvantage, most especially low income students who do not have access to private musical training. Missing a year of music education will potentially deter them from further pursuit of music and a love of learning in general.

In music programs children develop comfort, confidence, self-expression, perseverance, and patience. They learn the importance of collaborating together. Music challenges our boundaries through interaction with the aesthetic beauty of different cultures and has the transformational potential of interacting with something bigger than individual goals.

We have seen many students who only excel at and enjoy their studies because of the strong music programs in our schools. (We have seen some who only stay in school because of the music programs).

We urge you to keep these essential programs intact and funded in these trying times. The emotional health and future well being of our students depends on it.

Signed

Departure Bay Parents

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