



Garden City Friends of Music  
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April 8, 2018

Via email to BOE@gcufsd.net

Hon. Angela Heineman, President  
and Members of the Board of Education  
Garden City Public Schools  
56 Cathedral Avenue  
Garden City, NY 11530

Re: Proposed School Budget Cuts regarding Music in the Middle School

Dear Mrs. Heineman and Members of the Board of Education:

During last month's Board of Ed meeting, we learned that the Board is considering reducing the number of Middle School Band instructors from 2 FTE to 1.4. Our group, consisting of over 300 families, urges you, in the strongest of terms, to reconsider this possibility and leave the program with two full time instructors.

We are very concerned that given the robust size of the MS band program, a cut from 2 to 1.4 FTE may lead to unintended, long term detrimental consequences. For example, it would appear that the 1 FTE, Ms. Iovino, would be in charge of Morning Jazz, Late Night Jazz, Marching Band, and the entire running of the band program (administratively and in class teaching) which, at the moment includes 212 students, with, as we understand it, a projected enrollment for next year. That scenario seems fraught with problems which will not only impact the MS program, but may well cause students to drop out of the band program for lack of individual attention, and thus have a future impact on the High School Music Department, most particularly the bands and Marching Band. Additionally, we voice concern about the 0.4 hire. Are we really going to attract the best quality candidates for a 0.4 position? And if we cannot fill that position, or keep someone in it who takes it, that puts more of a burden back on the 1 FTE.

We strongly believe that the increase in the number of students participating in NYSSMA, All County, All State, and even All Eastern, as well as the Music in the Park program, is due to the strong district wide coordinated music program that we currently enjoy, and we urge you to consider that when deciding on any cuts.

And finally, we remind the Board of the credible research supporting the fact that brain development at the middle school level is critical, making these years ones where our students need to,

and want to, try new things and explore all their potential --- music, art, science, sports, etc. It is important for them to diversify themselves for their individual development and for the health and wellbeing of our entire district.

We strongly urge you to keep the long standing tradition of 2 FTE in the Middle School band program so that the “middle” of our K through 12 Music curriculum remains robust. Recognizing that we are in tough budget times, and that many departments must make cuts, we ask to work collaboratively with Dr. Prasso and your Board to perhaps come up with alternatives to the current proposal.

We acknowledge the very difficult work you do as a Board and we thank you for your volunteer service to our community.

Sincerely,

Garden City Friends of Music Executive Committee  
Tiffany Wakeham, Emily Ross, & Matthew Wakeham,  
co-Presidents

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