

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Elementary Music Programming

At BHM, music is provided at all elementary schools from Kindergarten through 5th grade. At the middle school, music is required at 6th and 7th grades and is optional in 8th grade. At the high school, music is an elective course as part of a Fine Arts requirement

Elementary schools vary in the amount of music instruction provided each week based on prep schedules and each principal's scheduling choices. Students receive regular instruction in listening, playing classroom Orff (xylophone) and rhythm instruments, playing recorders, creating original music, studying families of instruments, music fundamentals, singing, and movement. Each school offers unique opportunities including keyboards, drums and guitar. Some schools have musicals and other programs for parents in the evening and/or during the day to share with parents what they are learning in music class. Two elementary schools offer choir during the school day as an option. None of the elementary schools offer instrumental music.

Secondary Music Programming

Music is required in 6th and 7th grades. BCMS students who choose to perform can be in band, choir, or orchestra, and students who choose not to perform can take a general music class called Music Discovery. Music is an elective at the 8th grade level. Students can take band, choir, orchestra or guitar. All BCMS music classes meet every other day.

BCMS Extra-Curricular Options (before and after school)

- Jazz 7 & Jazz 8
- Guys Group Choir
- 6th Grade Singers
- Chamber Orchestra 7-8
- Bison Band 7-8 (volunteer position)
- Flute Choir, Clarinet Choir, Saxophone Choir, Brass Choir, Percussion Ensemble (volunteer position)

- Chamber Choir 7-8 (volunteer position)
- Allegro Honor Band, State Level Honor Band, Choir and Orchestra Prep (volunteer position)

Music is not required at the high school level but students are required to complete one credit of a course in The Arts as a graduation requirement. A music class can fulfill this requirement. Students who choose to perform can be in band, choir, or orchestra. Freshman level groups meet every other day. The middle and upper level groups meet daily. In addition to performance-based classes, the BHS Music Department offers: Music in America, History of Classical Music, AP Music Theory, and Advanced Independent Musicianship. The History of Classical Music and AP Music Theory classes are not currently offered as a separate course and are taught by teachers during their prep period.

BHS Extra-Curricular Options (before and after school)

- Jazz I, II & III
- Pep Band
- Summer Marching Band
- BHS Singers, Treble Singers, Varsity Singers
- Music Listening Contest (volunteer position)
- Tri M Music Honor Society (volunteer position)
- Tri M Variety Show (volunteer position)
- Chamber Strings I, II & III
- All School Musical
- Solo and Ensemble Program
- All State Band/Choir/Orchestra, Regional, State and College Honor Ensemble Preparation

Historical Reductions and Lost Opportunities

- Winter Drumline was a school sponsored activity and was cut in 2008. It has continued to meet students' needs through parent funding and management.
- Bravo Strings was a school sponsored activity and was cut in 2008. It has continued to meet students' needs through parent funding.
- Elementary choir was eliminated from most of the elementary schools in 2008 as well.
- Band and Orchestra at the 5th grade level was cut in 2007. We have never really recovered from this and are struggling to create an effective beginning instrumental music structure in the middle school at the current staffing level.

- Music Students at BCMS used to have rehearsal every day AND receive small group lessons. Students at BCMS now receive less than 50% of the instructional time than they received about 15 years ago. Combined with the loss of 5th grade band and orchestra, this means an instrumental student enters the high school having spent about 45% of the time in band or orchestra that someone a generation before would have.

Comparisons to Area & Comparable Size School Districts

Elementary- St. Michael, Delano and Rockford begin band in 5th grade. Elementary specialist schedules meet about the same amount of time as BHM schools. Other districts' performances are comparable to student performance opportunities offered for BHM elementary music students.

Middle School - As a strength, our middle school is one of the only schools in the area that offers an orchestra program to students in grades 6-8. Most schools in the area and of similar size only offer band and choir programs. As a limitation, many schools in our area and of similar size are able to offer students the ability to participate in both instrumental and vocal music during the school day, and many of these schools are able to offer some kind of small group instruction in instrumental music. Most of our neighboring districts are offering beginning instrumental music in 5th grade.

High School - BHS is similar to other comparable and neighboring districts in that it offers band, choir, and select groups such as jazz band and chamber choir. We differ in the fact that not many high schools in Minnesota have an orchestra program. Another difference is that some schools offer stand-alone music classes such as guitar or garage band to allow students who are not in band, choir, or orchestra to have a class where they make music.

STATE STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

Like other content areas, music has standards that are used in their courses.

The four basic strands that make up the greater music standards are:

- Perform (sing/play alone or with others)
- Artistic foundations (basic skills and vocabulary)
- Compose (Write/notate)
- Reflect (write, pair, share, post-concert reflection)

These four strands encompass the skill requirements at all levels K-12, for all music students. The link below gives the exact standards and benchmarks for K-12 Music for Minnesota.

<http://perpich.mn.gov/files/MNArtsStandards.pdf>. The state arts standards will be reviewed again during the 2017-18 school year.

BHM EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Music evidence of achievement is most likely in the form of performance. There are a few written tests to measure specific content knowledge, but students are learning to perform as early as kindergarten.

Here are few examples of Elementary assessments to show evidence of achievement.

Elementary 1st Grade Steady Beat Common Assessment, Spring 2016

PROFICIENCY TOTAL %: 86% (350/407 students)

NOT ACHIEVING GOAL %: 14% (57/407 students)

The steady beat common assessment includes showing steady beat on classroom instruments with music in the style of a march. Students practice showing steady beat by moving, using body percussion, and playing classroom instruments.

Elementary Performance over Time

Elementary level students begin learning how to play the recorder in third or fourth grade and continue until fifth grade. The following shows examples of performance of recorders.

[Hanover students learn how to play the recorder](#)

For Middle School students, the focus is also on performance. There are some common assessments, for example the 6th grade vocabulary test. Performances are scored using a variety of rubrics.

Students are given a vocabulary test in the fall and spring during 6th grade. The vocabulary test is comprised of words students need to know and use to effectively participate in a music class. By the end of the year in 2015-2016, the average vocabulary test score for all 6th grade music students was 85.2%.

Middle school music students are assessed on their performance in a variety of ways throughout their time in middle school music.

Middle School music students attend a variety of honor bands, choirs and orchestras that are organized by various state organizations. Approximately 1-20 students per year participate in 5 different honor band activities, including the CMBDA (Central Minnesota Band Director's Association) Honor Band, the MBDA (Minnesota Band Director's Association) Honor Band, MBDA Beginning Band Festival, the Allegro Honor Band, and the UMD Middle Level Honor Band. Approximately 8-10 choir students participate in the ACDA (American Choral Director's Association) 7th-8th Grade Honor Choir each year. Each year, 2-3 orchestra students audition

for the MNSOTA (Minnesota String and Orchestra Teacher's Association) Middle Level Honor Orchestra.

At BHS, the most obvious evidence of achievement is the high number of quality performances the music department puts on each year. Students learn a wide variety of music and perform it at a very high level. Once or twice a year, performances by many of our ensembles are formally judged in a regional or national festival. The performances consistently receive top ratings. Some BHS ensembles have been invited to perform as featured groups at our state music convention as well as several other state choral festivals.

A number of BHS students also perform solos or small group ensembles in our region's solo and ensemble festival. The students largely work outside of class, independently implementing the skills they have learned in the ensembles and achieve high success in doing so. This transfer of knowledge from situation to situation is a benchmark of success in the program. Not only do students perform at a high level in solo and ensemble, they also participate at a high level as well. Most years, BHS has more solo and ensemble entries at our region festival than the rest of the five other schools combined.

There are also a consistently high number of students (7-11) selected for All-State Honor Ensemble opportunities. Many participating schools only have 1-2 students each year. Additionally, BHS students participate in a number of other regional and state level honor ensembles. Students in these ensembles are often chosen as leaders of their sections and frequently outnumber students from most schools.

STATE AND NATIONAL TRENDS

The National trends are identified below.

1. Technology: Using various apps or programs for music classrooms. Some examples include NotateMe, ForScore, and SmartMusic for composition. Another example is Musical Futures which is a training program that focuses on developing and extending the skills of classroom and instrumental teachers to create sustainable music opportunities for students in schools. Staff use Skype or Google Hangouts with professionals outside of the district to provide students with additional instruction. Buffalo High School has already made use of this technology.
2. STEAM: With many of the nation's education leaders focused on the importance of STEM education, the movement to add the arts to the equation is getting more attention.

3. A trend of more creativity in math and reading has brought a movement, "Broader Minded", which makes the argument that music helps kids be more creative and work better together.
4. The National Association for Music Education is asking schools to look at whether their music classes are reaching all of the students in their schools, and if not, what can they do to remedy this situation.

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

The K-12 parent and student survey conducted this year noted that the strengths of the program include a strong sense of community within the music program, student enjoyment, and a culture of high expectations. Parents and students alike noted that the caring and supportive teachers in the music department are one of the greatest strengths of the music program at BHM. There are a large number of extra-curricular music opportunities that meet outside of the school day, and parents have indicated that they appreciate the number of opportunities available to their students. Concerts are a highlight of the year with parents commenting on the high level of performance.

Many parents indicated on their survey that they would like to see even more opportunities for their students in music. Students also indicated that they would be interested in taking more music classes if a greater variety of classes were offered.

PROGRAM LIMITATIONS OR CHALLENGES

At the elementary level, the biggest challenge is providing a consistent curriculum to each BHM student. Currently, there are vast differences in the amount of time students at different elementary schools spend in a music classroom. For example, a Northwinds music student is in music class for 50 minutes once every 4 days while a student at Discovery is in music 25 minutes every day. Where do middle school teachers begin their teaching when some students walk in the door with twice the level of instruction as others? Budgets at the elementary level vary by building and students have different instrument opportunities at different buildings.

At the middle school level, the main limitations are staffing and budget. Successful middle school music programs have a way to reach kids at the individual level in addition to the classroom or ensemble level. We have had a variety of different set ups to try and accommodate both aspects of small group and large group instruction since losing small group lessons due to budget cuts. None have had a noticeable impact on increasing student success. The level of music students are able to play in instrumental music continues to decline. For example, our Freshman Band is playing music that our 7th grade band used to play.

The middle school does not have a schedule that allows for ability-basing any ensembles, forcing students who want an advanced or enriched experience to join groups outside of the school day. This sometimes prevents some students from being part of an enriched experience.

At the high school level, the budget is not sufficient to keep up with costs. The high school has thousands of dollars of inventory in instruments, music stands, choir risers, microphones, etc. This equipment is depreciating at a much faster rate than it can be repaired or replaced. For example, the band has about 100 school-owned instruments in their inventory. The current capital budget funds about half an instrument per year. In other words, at the current rate, a band instrument purchased this year will be replaced in 2217! In the survey, some parents stated that cost can be a factor in students beginning to play or continuing to play an instrument. Having school-owned instruments helps more students to participate. Parents also indicated they would like more music opportunities to be offered, however it would require more staff to provide those opportunities.

There are currently no opportunities for beginning instruction on an instrument after 6th grade. This prohibits some students who join our district after 6th grade or students who decide later that they want to learn an instrument.

NEXT STEPS

Next year, Music will be in the Research Phase in the CIP cycle. During that time, the music department is looking at researching:

- How many minutes is the right number of minutes spent in elementary music according to best practices
- What have other schools done to make sure the curriculum is consistent
- How quality middle school programs are set up
- Models for high school non-band, orchestra, choir classes
- Models for middle school and high school instrumental “re-entry” classes
- How other districts foster the continuity of the music department possibly through a district level coordinator or advocate

The music department will continue to be a voice to advocate for consistency at the elementary level, better communication with all stakeholders, and work on a scope and sequence throughout our K-12 programs.