



Music Design Team

Your In-House Community & Music Consultants

The opportunity

St. Louis Park Schools is positioned to develop a **national model** for effective, values-driven, transformative music education.

Why we do this work:

RACIAL EQUITY PURPOSE STATEMENT

*Music education is **uniquely positioned at the intersection of culture, collaboration, creativity, and craft to interrupt the traditional transactional relationship between student and school.** The purpose of music education is fostering holistic musical literacy through learning as a **whole musician** and **liberating students artistic voices to connect with and critique the world around them.***

Anticipated outcomes

Increased enrollment and decreased attrition in music programs

Improved delivery on Minnesota State Arts Standards

Better vertical and horizontal collaboration among faculty

RACIAL EQUITY TRANSFORMATION

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Music education is uniquely positioned at the intersection of culture, collaboration, creativity, and craft to interrupt the traditional transactional relationship between student and school.

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WHAT IS MUSIC

The St. Louis Park Music Design Team believes that music is human and that all humans have innate musicality.

- Music is a universal part of the human experience used to connect with each other, bridge cultural differences, transcend borders, and challenge the status quo.
- We believe that music is a language: a form of self-expression and communication that can help us better understand each other's experiences, emotions, and the diverse cultures of the world.

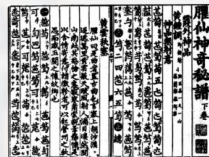
OUR RESPONSIBILITY

We believe, as music educators, it is our responsibility to be critically self-reflective, gather multiple perspectives, create racially- and culturally-honoring spaces, support shifts in mindset, and center student voice and experience.

- We believe in courageous action that challenges the status quo of exclusive, autocratic, homogenous, inequitable, and inaccessible music education practices by inspiring all community members (students and adults) to realize and grow their innate musicality and become partners in defining and driving change.

STUDENT BRILLIANCE

Therefore, we believe all racial and cultural identities are assets to music learning and our community; the musical richness of each learner's individual brilliance belongs within, and enhances our music curriculum, classes, and community.



QINNOTATION

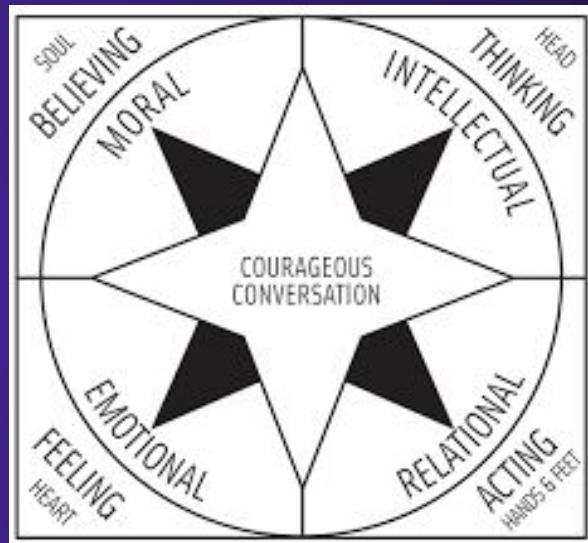
THE SYSTEM

We believe drastic systemic transformation is needed, and can happen when all students have the pathways to authentically engage within music education.

- We envision a music education system that is anti-racist, research-based, democratic, inclusive, accessible, engaging, and honors Black, Brown, Asian, and Indigenous perspectives, identities, skills, and cultures.
- We believe music education requires centering community, connection, and joy and is sustained through culturally responsive pathways which develop the whole musician towards a deeper understanding of music through contexts beyond performance and entertainment.

Reflection Questions

1. Is music actively used to uplift and build community within your school? As a school leader, how are you personally enabling—or unintentionally limiting—collaboration, innovation, and the growth of music education in our district?
2. How do you define “*music excellence*”? How does that definition align with MN state standards for music education?
3. In an era where AI can easily replicate technical answers and is reshaping employment, what kind of education cultivates essential human traits like **creativity**, **empathy**, **collaboration**, and **communication**? What kind of “core” education can interrupt and heal patterns of harm?
4. Who are you as a musician, and how does that shape your perspective on the state of music education today? If you see the system as broken, is it worth fixing? Or is it so undervalued that its brokenness is accepted as the norm?



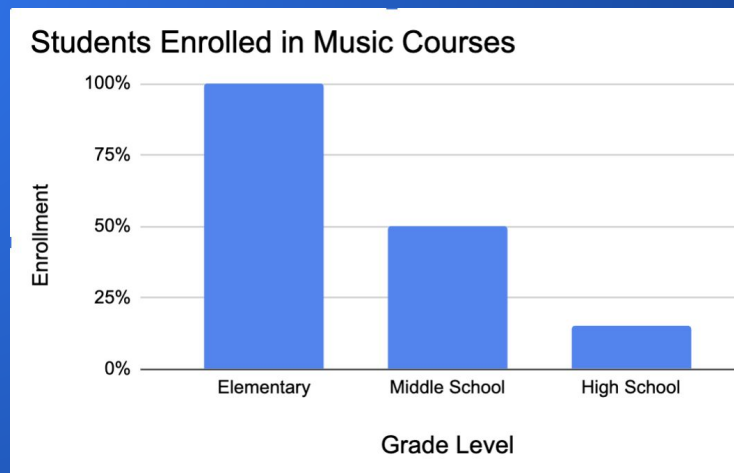
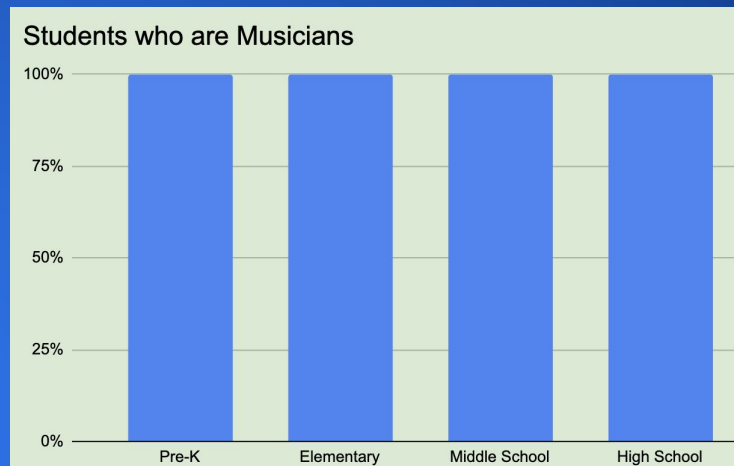
Goal 1: Increase enrollment and decrease attrition in music

Strategy:

Transform current K-12 teaching practices into inclusive, culturally responsive PreK-12 experiences that empower each student to see themselves as musicians.

Proposed tactics

- Enact elementary Ensemble "Opt-Out" enrollment
- Establish 4th grade as the common starting point for all instrumental/vocal ensembles, providing every student with equal and early access to specialized instruction.
- Launch High School to Elementary mentorships
- Offer flexible entry points for performance-based classes
- Expand secondary offerings to include contemporary and non-traditional music courses that connect them to real-world music career pathways.
- Rename band, orchestra, and choir classes: **The Cultural Arts**
- Transform concerts into non-graded, community-centered gatherings that celebrate shared musical connection, not competition.



Goal 2: Improve teaching of holistic music literacy

Strategy:

Improve delivery on the Minnesota State Art Standards strands

Proposed tactics

- Restructure course requirements and curriculum to position improvisation and composition as core skills (alongside technical and performance skills). Support teachers in evolving their instruction, expectations, and assessment practices accordingly.
- Hold quarterly meetings with principals to address misconceptions around music education and collaborate on aligning practices with MN State Art standards.

Strategy:

Imbue music throughout the student school experience, beyond just music classrooms

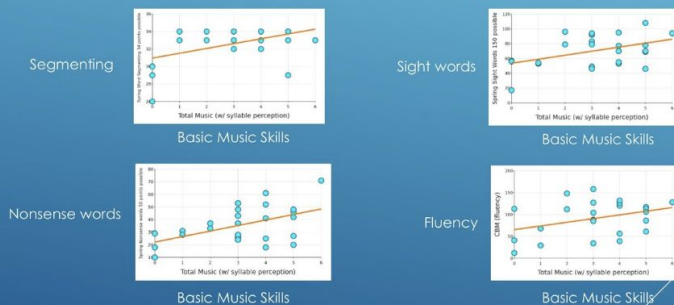
Proposed tactics

- Improve compliance with State Arts Education [statutes 120A.22 and 120B.021](#).
- Launch more cross-disciplinary collaborations on high-impact projects, such as Elder's Wisdom Children's Song
- Integrate music in all classrooms, drawing on research from experts like Drs. Anita Collins and Nina Kraus that shows musical engagement boosts language, reading, and overall cognitive development

Scholarly Sources Used

Better music skills correlates with better reading scores

- First graders were assessed on basic music skills and reading using the Fast Bridge assessment.
- Each dot represents a student's performance.
- As music skills increased, so did reading scores—in all 4 areas.



Data analysis by Noah DeMichalis, Breck School

Goal 3: Develop a unified, vertically aligned PreK-12 music education experience

Strategy:

Enable collaborative preK-12 planning to foster alignment, trust, and shared action.

Proposed tactics:

- Facilitate monthly PreK-12 music department vertical alignment meetings to transform curriculum and culture, guided by a designated district leader or leadership team and including student representatives.
- Rewrite job descriptions for future music educator applicants
- Launch a structured, district-led peer observation program that provides substitute coverage, allowing music teachers to visit and learn from colleagues in other buildings.