

Bethel Board of Education Regular Meeting - Budget Workshop - Facilities/Budget Deliberations

Tuesday, February 11, 2025 7:00 PM

Board of Education Conference Room E, Live Stream:

<http://devos2.bethel.k12.ct.us/show?video=763ff4de0370> , Via Phone

conferencing during public comments - 203-794-8620. Materials can be viewed at: <https://meetings.boardbook.org/Public/Organization/2425> The opportunity for members of the public wishing to make comments can attend and comment in-person or may send public comments to the Board via email or letter and it will be included as part of the record of the meeting., 1 School Street, PO Box 253, Bethel, CT 06801

1. Call to Order

Speaker (s): Policy
9326

1.A. Roll Call for Quorum

1.B. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Budget Workshop - Facilities/Budget Deliberations

3. Correspondence

Speaker (s): Policy
9326

4. Public Comment

(Please note: The Board welcomes Public Comment and asks that speakers please limit their comments to 2 minutes. Speakers may offer objective comments of school operations and programs that concern them. The Board will not permit any expression of personal complaints or defamatory comments about Board of Education personnel and students, nor against any person connected with the Bethel Public School System.)

Speaker (s): Policy
9326

5. Adjourn



Board of Education, Bethel <boe@bethel.k12.ct.us>

Concerns of Cuts to Music Education

Kerry Walker <walker@wcsu.edu>
To: "boe@bethel.k12.ct.us" <boe@bethel.k12.ct.us>
Cc: Kerry Walker <walker@wcsu.edu>

Thu, Feb 6, 2025 at 6:49 PM

Dear Bethel Board of Education, Educators, Community members,

I am writing to address possible cuts to the music program in the Bethel schools. As a community member and as a professor of music, I urge you to reconsider this act.

Personally, I would like to comment on my son's educational experience in the Bethel schools. He was encouraged and supported by many wonderful educators, and he loved going to school until suddenly he didn't want to go. As a parent I couldn't understand what problem he was "trying to take care of by himself." Soon I received a call from the guidance counselor that he had experienced a traumatizing event by being bullied. There is a "no tolerance" policy at the schools, so the problem was rectified. But what of the shaming and humiliation that had remained? How was I to build back my son's confidence and enthusiasm? It was his musical experiences in Bethel that created the environment where everyone belonged to the community and everyone contributed. He participated in the concert band, marching band, Jazz band and even sang choir parts on the music trip. He helped tutor at the middle school and doubled song parts on the piano for the summer musical theater course. It was through music that he experienced the joy of creating and community with others, there is no "sitting on the bench" here everyone participates. Ultimately, my son grew his confidence back and became drum major, and Bethel won the all the competitions that year, but the largest gift of the life-preparing experience was that the striving and teamwork was the best part of the journey.

As an educator myself I can tell you that music learning is unique by training both the left and right parts of the brain. I can tell you that it is one of the only experiences where one remains present in the zone. Music maintains culture. It breeds empathy and feelings that are indescribable. It develops discipline and skills that are unique to other subjects.

The music educators in Bethel are outstanding! Music educators spend **years** with your children guiding them in character development. It is here that life-learning skills are developed and there is a place for everyone to belong through creating music. Where confidence may be renewed and self-worth cultivated through maintaining culture. Thank you to these special people that teach music every day. Please reconsider these cuts.

Sincerely,
Dr. Kerry Walker

Kerry Walker
Professor of Music, Western Connecticut State University
Faculty Advisor, Ives Concert Flutists
Recording Artist, *American Chamber Works for Flute* (Centaur Records, 2017)
Other Contact: (203) 948-4035



Board of Education, Bethel <boe@bethel.k12.ct.us>

Bethel music department

Schneider, Aimee N. (Student) <aimee.schneider@trincoll.edu>
To: "boe@bethel.k12.ct.us" <boe@bethel.k12.ct.us>

Thu, Feb 6, 2025 at 7:06 PM

Hello there,

I hope you're doing well. My name is Aimee Schneider, and I am a former student of the Bethel Public School District. I'm reaching out to express my deep concern regarding the potential elimination of specials like music.

As a former music student of many years, I strongly urge you to reconsider this decision. Beyond the extensive psychological research demonstrating the positive impact of music on children's development, this program has had a profound personal effect on my life.

Since third grade, music classes and department-related activities provided me with a safe space to connect with others and express my passion. During challenging times in my childhood, my music classes were often the one place where I felt peace. There were moments when attending music class was what kept me engaged in school and brought me joy.

Eliminating music programs would be a significant loss for Bethel students, depriving them of opportunities for creativity, emotional expression, and personal growth. I sincerely hope you will take these perspectives into account as you consider this decision.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,
Aimee Schneider



Board of Education, Bethel <boe@bethel.k12.ct.us>

Concerns Regarding Potential Cuts to Bethel's Music Programs

Alana Ferreira-Botex <aferreira-botex@lions.molloy.edu>
To: boe@bethel.k12.ct.us

Tue, Feb 11, 2025 at 12:35 PM

Hello,

My name is Lana Botex, and I am currently a third-year Music Therapy major at Molloy University. I am a former student of Bethel Public Schools, and my two younger siblings are currently enrolled in the district. I recently learned about the potential cuts to the music programs, specifically at the elementary and intermediate levels, and I was shocked—particularly by the possible downsizing of the strings program.

As a strings player (electric and upright bass, guitar), I can't fathom the idea of reducing or eliminating such an impactful program. Even if the plan is simply to cut a few teachers and redistribute responsibilities, this would significantly affect students. Music education, especially in programs like strings, thrives when students receive individualized attention. Without this, many may lose their passion for the instrument, as one teacher cannot adequately support all students, especially in a large class setting.

The music department in Bethel was instrumental in my academic and personal development, and I am where I am today because of the guidance I received from dedicated teachers. I believe this same opportunity should be available to all Bethel students. My younger sister, who started learning the violin last year, has blossomed in both confidence and patience through her music lessons. It's heartbreaking to think that other children might be deprived of this same opportunity.

Music education offers much more than artistic development; it teaches discipline, enhances memory, nurtures creativity, and fosters emotional intelligence. Music is an integral part of our society, and it offers real, sustainable career paths for those who pursue it. As a music therapy major, I know firsthand how vital music can be for both personal growth and professional fulfillment.

Cutting back on music programs sends the message that music is not valuable and that there are limited career opportunities in the field. I urge you to reconsider these cuts. Children deserve access to music education, which provides them with skills and experiences that last a lifetime.

Please take my concerns into account as you make your decision.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lana Botex