

Bernards Township Public Schools
Basking Ridge, New Jersey

5-Year Evaluation

Music K-12

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PHILOSOPHY

Music is an integral part of humankind. No known culture is without some aspect of artistic experience. Music is an important key to understanding our own cultural history and provides an understanding of other cultures. It is an indispensable tool to one who seeks an understanding of the past, the present, and the future. Music can provide the universal communication to overcome the barriers of language, politics, and geography.

Music Education cultivates the whole child, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination, and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication. There is ample evidence that the arts help students develop the attitudes, characteristics, and intellectual skills required to participate effectively in today's society and economy. Music Education teaches self-discipline, reinforces self-esteem, and fosters the thinking skills and creativity so valued in the workplace.

From kindergarten through Grade twelve, Music Education develops mental discipline through a spiraling sequence of learning experiences. It also nurtures an appreciation of music's aesthetic qualities. At every level, the skills acquired become the means for the expression of music. The realization of the goals, skill mastery, and artistic expression is the commitment of the music Educators of Bernards Township.

(Adopted from the NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ARTS EDUCATION)

Summary of Current Program

Bernards Township Public School District has four elementary schools (Liberty Corner, Oak Street, Cedar Hill and Mount Prospect), one (William Annin 6-8) and one high school (Ridge 9-12).

There are fifteen full time music teachers, nine instrumental, four general music and two choral (six of the instrumental teachers also share in teaching some general music classes).

Since the last Five-Year Evaluation, a Supervisor of Fine and Practical Arts has been hired. This administrative position provides needed support both financially and administratively.

Elementary

All students receive general music for 50 minutes per week. General Music is on a cart in one building, on the stage in one building, in the orchestra pit in one building and in the fourth building there is a "Music Room."

Students can select to perform in chorus beginning in third Grade. In each building there is a beginning choir (3rd Grade) and an advanced choir (4th and 5th Grades). These choirs meet once a week before school for 45 minutes.

Students who select to play a musical instrument receive a thirty-minute (band) and thirty-five-minute (string) small group lesson once per week, which are held during the school day and students are pulled out of their regular classes. The lessons rotate in time slots through all class periods, a different time slot each week. Ideally, children never miss the same subject more than once in any eight-week rotation. (Occasionally, due to the instrumental music teachers' assignments to teach General music, the rotation is every four weeks.) String lessons begin in Grade three; wind and percussion lessons begin in Grade four. Fourth and fifth Grade bands and orchestras meet as group ensembles before the school day begins for forty-five minutes once per week. Each performing ensemble meets on separate days. It is strongly suggested that music students practice their instrument for a minimum of five days per week and twenty to thirty minutes each day. Students perform two concerts each year, as well as for school assemblies. Students may rent their instruments from any store/shop of their choosing.

Middle School

String, wind and percussion lessons are available in Grades 6-8. Band and orchestra ensembles meet once a week during school. This is a pullout from physical education or an elective course. There is also one lesson per week when the students are pulled out from any class on a rotating schedule.

Wind Ensemble, Jazz Band and Concert Orchestra each meet once a week after school. These ensembles are designed for the more serious student, and they are selected by

audition only. All three of these ensembles perform at least two concerts a year and attendance at these concerts is mandatory.

Orchestra students are combined, seventh and eighth Grades for an after school rehearsal once a week. Select Choir is also an auditioned ensemble that meets after school and combines students of different Grade levels.

General music is provided for all sixth Grade students on a cycle basis, which rotates every six weeks. Chorus is offered for each Grade level and meets twice per week, once as a pullout from physical education or elective course, and one day after school.

In eighth Grade students can select an elective such as Piano or Concert Choir. And Music Seminar is also available for auditioned students, Grades 6-8, who wish to develop their skills as soloists.

High School

The High School offerings consist of 9th Grade and Symphony Orchestras, Concert Band and Wind Ensemble, Ridge Chorale (9th and 10th Grade girls) Concert Choir and A Cappella Choirs. There are two single semester non-performance courses offered, Music Theory and Enjoyment of Music. Enough sections of these courses are offered to meet the enrollment of the students. There is also a co-curricular Jazz Ensemble, and a Marching Band, both of which are stipended positions. Beginning, intermediate and advanced instrumental and choral instruction is available.

Ensembles rehearse daily, and small group instrumental and vocal lessons are offered one to three times per week.

Students are encouraged to audition for outside organizations such as NJ Region II Chorus, All-State, and All-Eastern Ensembles, and Governor's School. The students of Bernards Township qualify to audition for these ensembles because all the music teachers in Bernards Township are paid members of MENC (Music Educators National Conference) and NJMEA (New Jersey Music Educators Association). In addition to these two organizations, many teachers have additional memberships in organizations like ACDA (American Choral Directors Association) and ASTA (American String Teachers Association). Without these memberships, students would not be eligible to audition for any of these regional, state, and national ensembles.

Curriculum

The music curriculum is described and outlined in a series of sequential and articulated guides for each Grade level and course. Every performing group presents at least two public performances each year. The K-12 music program in Bernards Township includes experiences in creating, performing, listening to, and analyzing music. Additional learning experiences are designed to develop the ability to read music, use the notation and terminology of music, describe music, make informed evaluations concerning music and discuss music practices in relation to history and culture.

Elementary

Interdisciplinary Opportunities

General Music motivational materials are used that invite students to explore connections among the visual arts, dance, theater, and music. Lessons also integrate math, reading/language arts, and science and social studies activities. Some specific activities are: finger plays and counting rhymes (math), lyrics in songs in second Grade (language arts), in third Grade students work on note values (math) as when they learn to play the recorder. Students discuss how sounds are produced through instruments (science) in fourth and fifth Grade and of course they review social studies skills when learning about composers or music from other cultures.

Cultural Diversity

In the fourth Grade general music classes use authentic song recordings from many cultures, recorded pronunciation lessons by native speakers for every non-English song, a variety of ethnic instruments are seen in illustrations and heard on recordings, and native singers, speakers, instrumentalists provide authentic regional music and cultural background. The students also work on circle games and dances from France, Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean Islands, as well as Native American music. They discuss where many instruments were created as well as reviewing map skills when they learn about composers each month.

Remediation, Enrichment and Acceleration

In general music student remediation is provided in the classroom. Students are encouraged to perform to the best of their abilities, and they are able to do that while performing along with other students. Some students set an example for others, while some students look to others for guidance. All levels function cooperatively.

Where possible, teachers try to meet the needs of our instrumental students by placing them in ability grouped small group lesson classes. Other classes are accelerated based on each student's abilities, i.e. a few clarinet students are performing on the eighth Grade level while they are in fifth Grade. Some students are able through focused instruction to increase their skills, bringing them up to that of the larger group. All classes are enriched by the use of extra music outside the regular method book.

In General Music the students are encouraged to accelerate with recorder skills by participating in a “Recorder Karate” activity. They receive colored karate “belts” when they play a specific song. If they play the song correctly, without mistakes, they earn a belt to attach to the bottom of their recorder. Students are able to work on this activity independently and at their own speed.

Gifted students are encouraged by occasionally giving them solo opportunities, but this is difficult to do because parental pressure is strong to identify a very large percentage of students as gifted.

Two teachers have been working with learning centers (Oak Street and Cedar Hill), in buildings where the facilities allowed. These centers have offered the students extra enrichment in composer studies, technology, improvisation and listening skills. This strategy can only be presented where the facility allows.

Student Assessment

The elementary report cards communicate to parents that students are evaluated in two categories: “Demonstrates concept/skills” and “Demonstrates appropriate behavior.” They are assigned a letter indicating Outstanding, Satisfactory, Improving, and Needing Improvement. But in the classroom, students are continually assessed as they are observed participating in the class activities. Instruction is adapted to provide further opportunities to develop skills, or moved along to cover higher level skills.

Middle School and High School

Remediation, Enrichment and Acceleration

Band and orchestra instruction on the Middle School and High school levels is very individualized through small group instruction. Choral instruction in the Middle School is only in the full ensemble, but the teacher individualizes instruction by occasionally having students individually demonstrate their skills. In the small groups the teacher is able to listen to each student perform and assign techniques and skill practice to remedy any deficiencies. Students who are performing exceptionally well are encouraged and challenged to improve techniques, and can be given additional assignments to extend their experiences, including solo opportunities. The Middle School offers Music Seminar, a course for advanced students to develop their solo skills and perform in a recital. At the High School, there are two courses for advanced students, A Cappella Choir and Wind Ensemble (Honors level).

Assessment

Grading, as a method of communicating performance skills to parents is the same as that for all classes, as a letter Grade ranging from A to E. Teachers continually assess students in class to adjust their instruction, based on visual and auditory observation and analysis of performance. Students are encouraged to listen and critique their peers' performances on exercises, sight-reading and literature. There is a high level of expectation for attendance and public performances are mandatory. Teachers and students discuss and analyze performances, and recordings from rehearsals and performances are also analyzed.

Interdisciplinary and Culturally Diverse Opportunities

Music is interdisciplinary and multi-cultural, because it reflects people's lives, from wherever and whenever it was produced. New music is introduced in a context, describing the culture (including historically influential social factors), styles, genres, technology (instrumentation), and composers of the time. Students are expected to understand the role that music has played and continues to play in the lives of all human beings. Music is constructed mathematically and aesthetically, with dynamic factors that reflect cultures and time. Supporting the musical life of the school and community at large is encouraged in all music classes. Verbal skills are expanded and reinforced in the process of discussing, analyzing and critiquing.

Facilities/Equipment/Supplies

According to the National Association for Music Education, a suitable room should be available for teaching music in every school. The room should be large enough to accommodate the largest group taught and to provide ample space for physical movement. It should be equipped with a high-quality sound reproduction system capable of utilizing current recording technology. Every teacher should have convenient access to sound recordings representing a wide variety of music styles and cultures. Both secured and unsecured storage space should be available for instruments, equipment, and instructional materials. Running water should be available for maintenance of instruments. The music facilities should be adjacent to one another, acoustically isolated from the rest of the school and readily accessible to the auditorium stage.

Elementary

All four elementary buildings are different. Cedar Hill is the only building with an adequate "Music Room." At Liberty Corner, General Music has been provided "on a cart" for two years. The teacher actually manages with two carts, one primarily for a keyboard and one for books. On the stage at Mt. Prospect, General Music is in the gymnasium (a partition divides the spaces) and at Oak Street it is in the "orchestra pit" of the auditorium. At Mt. Prospect there is a good amount of space, with an area of chairs and an area designated with an area rug for student to move and use instruments. At Oak Street, in the orchestra pit area, the teacher chooses not to use chairs so the students sit on the floor, but they do have space in which to move. Even though the auditorium/stage spaces are better than being on a cart, they are still limiting. These are "all-purpose" spaces. Various groups use them for meetings held during the school day and assemblies. Teachers are forced out many times with little notice and have no traveling time between classes.

Recording equipment is not currently available in any of the music rooms. But every teacher does have access to professional recordings for listening to music as recommended above. All buildings are supplied with a set of music books for every Grade level, the *Share the Music Series* from McGraw/Hill. Videos and recordings accompanied this series when it was purchased.

National Standards state that "Classes in general music...include at least two of the following: recorder, fretted instruments, keyboard instruments, electronic instruments, instruments representing various cultures...Every room in which music is taught is equipped with a variety of classroom instruments, including drums, rhythm sticks, finger cymbals, triangles, cymbals, gongs, jingle bells, resonator bells, step bells, xylophone-type instruments with removable bars..." These instruments are available in the buildings with music spaces. But where music is on a cart, the availability of instruments is drastically limited. Movement is also limited due to the unpredictable arrangement of furniture and lack of open space in the classrooms.

Instrumental music is taught mostly in very small rooms, which are adequate to varying degrees for small group lessons. The smallest room is at Oak Street where there is barely

enough room for the students, teacher, chairs and stands to fit in the room, much less perform comfortably. At Cedar Hill lessons are provided on the stage and in the hallway vestibule. Liberty Corner teachers share a room with the General music teacher (her desk and supplies) but the room is adequate for small groups. Mt. Prospect facilities are variable. All the music teachers use the stage (desk space), and depending on the times the space is needed, and a small room is used for lessons that also is shared with OT/PT, and is located off the cafeteria. If neither of those spaces is available, lessons are provided in a variety of spaces such as the office conference room, the Media Center office, and a stairwell or storage closet.

In all the buildings, the early morning ensembles meet in the larger public rooms such as the auditorium at Oak Street, the cafeteria at Cedar Hill, the gyms at Liberty Corner and Mt. Prospect (also the stage). With the crowding in some buildings the spaces utilized are not very advantageous.

The stage at Mt. Prospect has particularly poor lighting and the noise from the gym on the other side of a partition sometimes interferes with lessons. At Mt. Prospect there are nice posture chairs for the children and room for them to spread out on a carpeted area of the floor. At Oak Street, storage is on the stage, so the teacher must carry instruments and materials up and down to set up or clean up. In the “music on a cart” building the teacher includes movement as best she can, but the classroom furniture arrangements are not conducive to dancing. She does have the students stand up, and move, but it is limited and unpredictable, as the teacher cannot anticipate new arrangements in the rooms.

There is a need for improved safety and security for instruments in all the schools. This problem is an increasing concern with the loss of space in the various buildings. There particularly is concern about the storage of all the Orff instruments in the elementary building where there is no “music room,” because the instruments are expensive and can be damaged and warped if not properly stored. There are no proper cabinets or closets for them. They are stored in rooms with other materials, sometimes stacked up, and constantly moved around, which is not conducive to keeping them in good condition.

At Oak Street, school owned instruments such as cellos are stored in the back of the unlocked auditorium. In the other elementary schools they are in locked rooms, but not secured in the rooms. Instruments have been known to disappear over the summer.

There are budgets of varying amounts supplied in the elementary schools by the principals for purchasing music and supplies. In addition, the supervisor has funds that are used to purchase instruments, make repairs and supplement the programs’ needs.

Middle School

For general/choral music the choral music room is a wonderful facility. In addition to choral rehearsals, classes such as the 6th Grade music cycles, the 8th Grade Piano Class, and Music Seminar are held this room. It is equipped with a grand piano, choral risers, a piano lab as well as chair-desks. Physically it is a pleasure to work and teach in. Occasionally the chorus classes are moved out of the chorus room to the auditorium

because the music cycles must take place at the same time. It can be frustrating to have to find another rehearsal area, lug books and folders and sometimes even a piano in order to hold class. But overall, this is just an inconvenience.

Both the band and orchestra programs have suitable rehearsal spaces for small and large ensembles. Students in both programs have spaces to store their instruments and folders. Additional sound proofing in room 205 (orchestra) would be beneficial to all surrounding rooms (room 203 and 207). This would prevent distractions during orchestra rehearsals and art lessons. There is a small practice room off 205 that serves as an office space for one teacher, and instructional space for small groups.

There continue to be problems with heating and ventilation in the band and orchestra rooms. Attempts to rectify these problems were made this past winter, but problems continue.

The band program is in need of additional percussion equipment, but the programs continue to receive adequate funds from the building principal for purchasing music literature, instrument supplies, and repairs. Each year the teachers order what is needed to keep the instruments in good condition.

Recording equipment is available in the auditorium, and used for all concerts. It would be most useful in the music rooms, but not supplied at this time.

High School

The High School music facilities are adequate in size, have appropriate furniture, music stands, and storage areas. There is a teaching station for each full time staff member. They also have a desk and file cabinets in the teaching room or in an office adjacent to it.

Choral risers are available in the auditorium. Posture chairs are available in the Band and Orchestra rooms. Music stands are provided where needed. Sinks and water supply are available in the high school instrumental music rooms.

There is recording equipment available in the band room at the high school. Recording is contracted out in the high school for concerts.

Choral Music at the High School is taught in the pit area of the auditorium. The piano is 10 years old and when tuned properly, is a solid teaching instrument. There is no room for a white board so there can never be any formal instruction complete with demonstration. There is a wall space allocated for a bulletin board but it is placed far away from the teaching area. A cast-off stereo unit serves the needs for listening activities. A connection to the new stereo system was supposed to be installed in the auditorium, but that never was done. The greatest advantage to the singing area is that the acoustics are such that the students and teacher work in what is probably the most “live” area of the room. Although this space is ill equipped as a proper classroom, it remains the best place, for now, for the performing ensembles. A large screen TV/VCR unit is needed, one which could remain permanently in the “classroom” to share videos

with the ensemble classes.

Music Theory is taught in the Orchestra Room. Although better suited for classroom/board work, the placement of the stereo unit is awkward. Two computer/keyboard stations have been set up in this room with Sibelius software, which will be a welcome addition to the instruction of Music Theory.

Like the auditorium, the Orchestra and Band rooms do not have TV/VCR units either. A large, flat screen TV should be purchased and permanently mounted in the room to serve video viewing needs.

The Band room itself is an excellent space. The acoustics are terrific for rehearsals. Having a sink is wonderful. There is a desk and file for the Band Director, but no office space.

The main problem with the facility is the need for an improved instrument storage room. The room that exists is long and narrow, with one access. When as many as 70 students need to get in and out in a short amount of time movement is difficult to impossible. There are no individual cubbies for instruments, but rather large cubbies for multiple instruments. These cubbies are also low to the ground, and while they are large, the upper area is empty. Shelves need to be constructed to improve efficiency. There is not enough room for everyone's instrument now, and the band program keeps growing. Individual lockers would be more practical, and more secure. The lockers could take up all the wall space (up to the ceiling) in the current storage room, provide a secure place for students and RHS to store instruments, and also be placed along walls in the room in order to compensate for growing numbers.

At this time the space in the Orchestra Room is adequate for rehearsal needs. One negative aspect of the facility is the poor ventilation system. Aramark controls the system by computer; but there appear to be limitations to what can be done to improve the consistency of temperature and humidity. The room is more comfortable with the heat turned off. The air conditioning does not function to provide adequate climate control. The air brings with it tremendous humidity, which hurts the wood instruments and causes expensive damage every year. The heat creates the opposite effect of drying out the instruments until they crack. This ongoing problem costs the district excessive repair bills as well as wear and tear on the instruments.

As the orchestra grows, there will be a need for more chairs and stands and a place to store both as well. It will be necessary to purchase more school instruments especially cellos and basses. Currently these supplies are purchased annually as needed.

As the school enrollment grows, there is a concern that the ensembles could grow beyond the capacity of the rooms. If they grow too large for the space, consideration will have to be given to dividing the ensembles into two groups for rehearsals, and meeting different periods.

These programs continue to receive adequate funds for purchasing music, instrument

supplies, and repairs. Pianos, digital pianos and /or keyboards are available in all the schools.

Technology

Elementary

All the elementary schools have computers for the music teachers/programs, but most are not easily accessible for classroom use, and since the teacher in one of the four buildings is on a cart, and two are in auditoriums, the settings preclude access. Classrooms have computers, but since all the classrooms have different arrangements of furniture, and computer use, it is not practical for the music teachers to try to use them. Software was a large part of the last book adoption series, but the teachers need more workshops related to the use of the software in a classroom setting, and since they don't have access to hardware, further utilization is not feasible. Instrumental lessons are only 30-35 minutes, so there is little time to incorporate technology. Two years ago, some of the music teachers visited an elementary school with a room that had 12 computer workstations. This would be ideal to advance our students in music technology. General Music teachers can reserve time in the computer labs, but availability is limited.

Middle School

The band and orchestra programs at the Middle School are equipped with two satisfactory computers with Internet access. Sibelius music notating software is available and waiting to be installed when the teachers arrange furniture and keyboards appropriately. The purchase of digital recording equipment would greatly benefit the program by improving rehearsals and helping to document performances. It is available in the auditorium, but not portable.

A piano lab utilizes technology to allow the students to all play at the same time, while listening to themselves on headphones, and the teacher to listen in on each student to critique their performance.

Ridge High School

There is an office computer with Internet access, two computers in the orchestra room and one in the Band room. These computers all have access to the network and Sibelius. Currently these computers are used primarily for transposing music, but will be used in the future for the Music Theory class and for composing.

There is a CD recorder with microphones in the Band room that allows for live digital recording. This is extremely helpful for critiquing performances as well as making audition CDs. There is a fairly new stereo system that enables the teacher to play music for classes at a volume that everyone in the classroom can hear. Listening is an essential part of music education.

Scheduling

Elementary

The recommended time for music instruction per week is 90 minutes (National Music Association Standards). Students who take part in the choral and/or instrumental program do have that amount of instruction. But students who do not take part in those optional programs receive only 50 minutes per week.

It also is recommended that instructional periods be not less than twenty minutes or more than thirty minutes in Grades 1 and 2, and in periods of not less than twenty-five minutes nor more than forty-five minutes in Grades 3 through 6. Class sizes should be commensurate with the other subject class sizes.

In accordance with the above recommendation, the class periods in this district are currently fifty-minute General music periods for Grades 1-5 (a little long), and thirty minutes for Kindergarten. The Kindergarten 30-minutes is good, but they would be better to meet twice a week than just once. And fifty-minutes for Grade one is too long. But the 50 minutes are tied in to providing classroom teachers with their required prep periods. The only way that this schedule could change would be if changes were also implemented in the other special subject areas that also provide prep times, such as art, computers, physical education, foreign language, etc. This is a good example of schedule dictating the program instead of the other way around.

There have been complaints about the pullouts for instrumental music lessons. We have tried to find other solutions for this inconvenience to the classroom teachers. In researching other school districts, we found that our eight-week rotation schedule is the best solution with the least impact. As a matter of fact, other districts have greater impacts because they provide their full ensemble rehearsals during the school day instead of before school in the morning as is done in Bernards Township. The music teachers are very accommodating to the classroom teachers. If there is testing going on, or any other activity for which the teachers particularly need all their students together, the students are encouraged to stay in their classrooms. The music teachers encourage the students to come in at other times in the week to make up lessons, or the lessons are just missed. Though the music teachers, and it is hoped that the district at large, believes in the overriding benefits that the music instruction provides; it is a voluntary program. If parents feel that the Instrumental Lesson pullouts are impacting too severely on their children's performance in their classrooms, the children are not coerced to remain or to sign up.

Middle School

As previously mentioned, the instrumental and choral music programs at William Annin are all dependent on student pullouts. As in the elementary schools, the music teachers are very accommodating to the classroom teachers. If there is testing going on, or any other activity for which the teachers particularly need all their students together, the

students are encouraged to stay in their classrooms. The music teachers encourage the students to come in at other times in the week to make up lessons. As stated in reference to the Elementary School Instrumental Program, though the music teachers, and it is hoped that the district at large, believes in the overriding benefits that the music instruction provides; it is a voluntary program. If parents feel that the pullouts are impacting too severely on their children's performance in their classrooms, the children are not coerced to remain or to sign up. From informal surveys done, the students do not feel that the pullouts had a significant impact on their performances.

Students are also pulled out of academics for GATE (Gifted and Talented, REACH as of September 2004) as well as Band and Orchestra. The students are not supposed to miss any one academic class more than once a week for a pullout, and are supposed to keep track of absences themselves. A cut is assigned if more than one is missed, but it is hard for teachers to keep track of which classes the students miss.

In the last two years, all Grade Level Bands and Orchestras have been scheduled to meet as a whole, once per week. That has been a great improvement. Ideally, the Middle School should provide a transition between the elementary program (once per week lessons and ensemble) and the high school (once per week lesson, daily ensemble), but there has not been a way to schedule more ensemble rehearsals without impacting too severely on other classes. To improve the transition between elementary school (one ensemble rehearsal per week) to the high school (daily ensemble rehearsals), the Middle School should have at least two full ensemble rehearsals per week.

The 30-day cycles (General music in 6th Grade) are, in reality, shorter than that because of days missed for field trips, pullouts, testing, fire drills and vacations (family pull-outs). But pullouts enable the instrumental and choral music programs to exist.

Currently General music stops after Grade 6. The National and State Music Associations recommend that formal music instruction continue through 8th Grade.

Such continued experiences would give them the opportunity to appreciate the abilities and efforts of their peers and establish goals for themselves.

Ridge High

The schedules work well. Students schedule their small group instrumental lessons during study halls, or their lunch periods one day per week. If it is during their lunch, lessons are for half the period allowing them the other half of the period to eat. Ensembles meet daily, and the advanced wind and percussion students are scheduled for Wind Ensemble the same period as the Symphony Orchestra's rehearsal, so they can practice with that group for two days per week. Jazz Band meets once a week after school.

Group Voice classes meet once a week for the chorale, which due to its ineffectiveness, may be phased out. CC-GV Classes meet in sections one to two times per week and come together on Fridays as SATB ensembles.

Staff

Bernards Township encourages staff development for its entire staff. They are recognized and rewarded for keeping their knowledge current and incorporating the best current practices. In recent years, with the implementation of Staff College and the state requirement for Professional Development, the music teachers like all teachers have increased the amount of training they receive. They have taken a variety of courses including Instructional Strategies, Essential Elements of Instruction, Brain-Based Learning, Classroom Management, Cooperative Learning, Multiple Intelligences, and the use of rubrics, various assessment techniques, and technology.

There is a Supervisor of Fine and Practical Arts, a position created since the last 5-Year Evaluation. The presence of this administrator provides support for the curriculum, maintenance of the music facilities and equipment, and representation on a planning level.

Elementary

Due to the balance of demands between instrumental music lessons and general music lessons, for the past few years the instrumental music teachers increasingly have been required to help cover the General music classes at in all four elementary buildings. The two string teachers have had the largest instrumental enrollment, so the Band teachers have taught the larger number of General music classes. The instrumental teachers continue to teach some of the General music classes in the coming year.

The National Association for Music Education recommends one general music teacher for every 400 students. The ratio in our elementary buildings is currently:

Cedar Hill		1 to 523 students
Liberty Corner	1 to 575 students	
Oak Street		1 to 566 students
Mt. Prospect		1 to 633 students

Middle School and High School

There is no need for additional teaching staff at this time. An accompanist is provided on a daily basis for ensemble rehearsals at the high school and on a more limited rehearsal schedule, plus concerts at the Middle School.

The idea has been discussed to encourage private music teachers to come into the building to offer lesson during or after school hours (pulling students from study halls or lunch during school hours). This would make better use of the building, like 0 periods. The students would pay for their lessons directly to the private teacher. This option would be done on a facility rental basis and the idea is being explored.

OVERVIEW: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Program Leadership and Coordination

Strengths

A Music Supervisor is in place and Music staff members are encouraged to participate in continuing education and professional activities. There are Board policies to govern field trips, activity funds, and public performances by school performing groups. Long range plans are developed for the music program and ongoing communication is encouraged among the music staff members. A plan for assessing student achievement and for evaluating the music program is established.

Curriculum

Strengths

Opportunities to study music are provided for all pupils as part of the regular school curriculum during the school day in Grades K to 6. Appropriate opportunities in music are provided for advanced and highly proficient students and for special education students according to state statutes and student needs. Class sizes are commensurate with average size for all classroom instruction, K-12, with the exception of ensembles that are naturally larger and meet in larger facilities.

There are Music Curriculum Guides for every music offering that has been developed by the Music Staff that reflect the Music Department's Philosophy and goals, and National and State Standards for Music Education. The curriculum provides for student experiences in:

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

The quality of instruction provided to the students in Bernards Township is affirmed by performances that are highly visible to all. Parents can not only see and hear about their children's musical education at home, but they see the ensembles perform in public. Awards and acknowledgements from competitions outside the district, which are noteworthy and frequent, are publicized for all to see (listed in the Addendum).

Staffing and Scheduling

Strengths

All Music teachers are certified teachers of music, and they are provided with at least 50 minutes of prep time every day, excluding lunch and travel from room to room, or building to building where applicable.

Students in the Middle School and High School have the opportunity to elect music experiences in all Grades including extra and co-curricular activities. Music electives meet for a full period daily and receive credit on the same as other academic courses. State graduation requirements in the Visual and Performing Arts have increased slightly for students graduating in 2008.

The elementary choral, band and string ensembles meet during the school year once per week for 45 minutes. In elementary school, instrumental lessons are at least 30 minutes. All students enrolled in the instrumental and choral programs have opportunities for both large group and small group instruction weekly. Instrumental music instruction begins in Grade 4 and for string instruments in Grade 3 continuing through Grade 12. Music is part of an overall plan for comprehensive arts education opportunities available to students.

Weaknesses

Emphasis in the Bernards Township schools is placed on academic subjects as necessary to pursue acceptances in desirable colleges. In the elementary schools and Middle School this becomes evident in concern about students missing class for instrumental music lessons. In the High School academic electives have increased in number and have drawn some additional students away from the Arts. From Grades 7 to 12, opportunities to study music as part of the school day become optional and though many students continue, enrollment drops off. Mandatory music instruction should continue through 8th Grade. In the Elementary Schools additional resources could resolve the impact of the pullouts on the classroom. If there were sufficient staff and space, all the pullouts could be scheduled for one or two days in each building. But with the current restrictions on those factors pull-outs continue every day of the week in some classes.

Music teachers, Grades K-12 occasionally have time to plan cooperatively with other fine staff, but not consistently. In the Middle School particularly, schedules are set up so that the arts classes are offered when the academics are not, in order to offer the Team teachers to meet. That encourages the Team teachers to coordinate, but excludes the Arts teachers. At the High School, teachers tend to stay in their own instructional and office space rather than to interact with teachers of other departments. Also, the music teachers teach during the lunch periods so there is little opportunity for interaction.

Facilities/Equipment/Supplies

Strengths

The majority of secondary facilities are excellent. Rooms are adequate in size, have appropriate furniture and music stands, and storage areas. There is a teaching station for each full time staff member. Each teacher at the Middle School and High School has a desk and file cabinets in the teaching room or in an office adjacent to it.

Risers are available for special purpose rooms. Posture chairs are available in one elementary room, in the Middle School and high school band and orchestra rooms. Music stands are provided where needed. Sinks and water supply are available in the high school rooms only.

There is recording equipment available in the band room and the high school and in the auditorium at the Middle School. Recording is contracted out in the High School for concerts.

Technology is being put into place gradually with a plan to increase its use. A piano lab is provided in the Middle School.

The secondary program facilities include two practice rooms. Space, furniture, and equipment are provided for sheet music and score libraries.

There are adequate budgets for consumable and non-consumable music supplies. An annual budget is provided for repair, maintenance and replacement of instruments and equipment, books, music and media.

Pianos, digital pianos and/or keyboards are available in all the schools. Procedures for repairs are well established and equipment is maintained.

Adequate size performance spaces exist in the elementary schools.

Weaknesses

The elementary music classrooms facilities are poor.. In one of the four buildings there is no music room and the teacher is on a cart. In two of the four buildings there is no music room and the teachers are on carts. In the other two buildings there is a dimly lit stage, and the orchestra pit of the auditorium respectively. There are only small portable chalkboards, and minimal bulletin boards. Shelving is not consistently available for supplies and/or equipment. An area carpet is available on the stage of the one school, and on the floor of the orchestra pit in the other. But in the schools where music is on a cart, there are no carpeted areas large enough for seating the whole class or doing movement. Strong music programs require movement including dancing, and the use of rhythm instruments. In the building with General music in the orchestra pit, classes must frequently be moved to their classrooms to accommodate meetings and assemblies.

Both building procedures and facilities affect the program offerings and they differ from one building to another. Examples of such differences are funding of budgets, available equipment, room availability and schedule prioritizing.

The Orff instruments, in particular, are a very important part of the elementary program, not only for teaching rhythm, but notation, scales, harmony, pitch and reading music and creativity. These instruments have been an investment in each building over time, until a substantial variety and quantity exist. In one of the three buildings these instruments are stored away and cannot be utilized for instruction. Where the students are in the orchestra pit, the instruments must be stored back stage, and must be carried back and forth to utilize them. There is no good storage for the instruments. In two of the buildings instruments are stored in unsecured spaces.

The High School Choral program is located in the auditorium. Though this space is acoustically good, the available equipment is lacking. A storage unit is kept in the pit area, and a piano is available, but there is no white board. A bulletin board is located on a side wall, but a distance away from instruction. As with the Elementary School, when other activities are scheduled to use the auditorium the choral program is affected. As with the elementary music presented on the stage, the lighting is very poor for reading music.

Again, at Ridge, storage of band instruments is poor. There is a room, but poorly designed shelving is not efficient. One entrance means congestion at the beginning and end of the class.

Ventilation in the Band and Orchestra rooms at the Middle School and High School is poor. There is a system in place, including air-conditioning, but the temperatures vary to extremes, causing damage to wooden instruments. In all of the district schools the temperature and humidity is inconsistent heat in the winter and with the exception of the high school, standard air circulation in the warm months. At the Middle School and High School the air-conditioning is often extreme and humidity is high. This results in damage to instruments.

In the elementary schools, a desk in crowded surroundings is the predominant condition available for the teachers, usually in a space shared with other activities, or poorly lighted.

The performance space at the high school is far from adequate for the size of the audiences that currently attend musical or dramatic performances. With no air-conditioning, performances can be very uncomfortable experiences. Recording equipment should also be available but is not.

Comprehensive Arts Education

Strengths

There are co-curricular and extra curricular activities available in Grades 3-12 in the arts.

Music is part of an overall plan for comprehensive arts education. The community is rich in arts opportunities of which students and their families avail themselves.

Fine arts resources in the community outside the schools are identified students are encouraged to take advantage of them.

Professional artists are occasionally invited to work with or present their own skills to the students.

Weaknesses

There are none identified at this time.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation One

Elementary: All performing ensembles should have large ensemble rehearsals scheduled during the school day in addition to the before school rehearsals.

On-going: This is a very worthy long term goal, but due to the emphasis on classroom instructional time and pressure for students to score well on standardized tests, it is unlikely that any additional time will be taken from the classrooms for the arts.

Middle School: All of the choruses must meet as large ensembles once a week in addition to the small group instruction currently taking place.

Done: This currently is the practice.

Return the 8th Grade band and orchestra to 5 days a week as full-credit classes.

On going: This would still be a sound recommendation, also one that would be difficult to implement in light of the structure of the Middle School scheduling system. The bands and orchestras are now meeting as complete ensembles, rather than divided, during the school day, a big improvement.

Recommendation Two

Elementary: Reinstate General music in Grades K-5 to twice a week. If this is not possible then at the very least, lengthen Grades 1 to 5 from 40 minutes to 50 minutes.

Done: Currently k-5 is meeting for 50 minutes per week. This is workable for Grades 1-5, but a challenge for the Kindergartners. Ideally the Kindergarten children would have two 30-minute classes.

Recommendation Three

Elementary: All K-5 buildings must, like the Middle School and high school, provide an appropriate allocation of funds not per teacher but by the needs of each music class (i.e. orchestra, chorus, band and general music).

Done: Budgets for music and "consumable supplies" are adequate in the elementary schools, though not consistent between buildings. Fund raising is no longer required to make necessary purchases for these items.

The Middle School and high school budgets are allocated by musical area, and are also sufficient to meet the school needs.

Recommendation Four

Elementary, Middle School and High School: Increase the inventory of school-owned instruments (i.e. pianos, orchestra and band instruments) and provide the necessary funds for the maintenance of these and all previously purchased instruments.

Done: There has been an ongoing effort to purchase instruments in the elementary, middle and high school programs. An inventory should be updated to determine current needs and plan to continue this procedure.

Recommendation Five

Elementary, Middle School, and High School: Music technology must be incorporated into all music offerings K-12. This can easily be implemented with the purchase of one Single Music Technology Station in each teaching area.

On going: Music software was purchased in 2000 along with the McGraw Hill Music Book Series. Since that time there has been an effort to provide each building and area with at least one station that is also Internet accessible. This has been accomplished, however, in the elementary schools facilities have become very restricted so the computers are no longer accessible to the teachers for instruction.

Teachers do need training to use the technology, but without access it is frustrating and futile to work toward that end. The Middle School areas are waiting for the teachers to arrange their spaces appropriately. It is expected that next year each area will have a computer and keyboard setup with Sibelius.

Recommendation Six

Elementary, Middle School and High School: Increase staffing to meet the needs of growing enrollment.

Done: Staff has increased to keep up with growing enrollment, but shifting enrollment numbers have been difficult to adapt to. Demand for General music Teachers has outstretched the demand for instrumental music teachers. So instrumental music teachers have been assigned to teach General music. An additional part time General music teacher is proposed for 2004-05 to teach additional classes being added to the elementary schools. But instrumental teachers will still be required to cover some

classes. Since the music teachers' certification covers all areas, the district is required to assign these classes to currently employed staff.

Staffing for instrumental music teachers is based on an average of 5 students to a group. This average is not always possible to achieve due to the uneven distribution of instrument selections. Sometimes groups must be made up combining more than one instrument, but similar. All teachers are now provided with the same number of prep minutes per week as the classroom teachers, including travel time where needed

Recommendation Seven

Elementary, Middle School and High Schools: Modify the choral, instrumental and general music curricula Grades 3-8. Create a curriculum for the Third, Fourth and Fifth Grade Choruses.

Done: These curricula have been created.

Recommendation Eight

Elementary, Middle School and High School: Develop a Gifted and Talented music program.

On going: In the elementary schools it is very difficult to address the Gifted and Talented in any what other than as part of the regular ensembles. If any individual students are singled out for special opportunity there is are phone calls from parents asking why their children were not selected. Occasionally teachers are able to provide a large number of rolls for students at a concert that provide children with additional opportunities. Otherwise, all students perform the same music and are encouraged within the established ensembles to do their best.

Done: In the Middle School, Music Seminar has been established, along with the Jazz Band, Wind Ensemble, Concert Orchestra, and Select Choir to allow auditioned students to perform on a more challenging level.

Done: At the high school, all students are placed according to their abilities and therefore gifted and talented students are acknowledged and challenged to perform at a high level. The A Cappella Choir, the new Wind Ensemble and the Jazz Band are auditioned ensembles that challenge students with excelled abilities. Students in the Wind Ensemble course also play in the Symphony Orchestra (two days each week). The A Cappella Choir and Wind Ensemble will now offer Honors credit to eligible students.

Recommendation Nine

Elementary, Middle School and High Schools: Increase the opportunity for music teachers to meet, plan and confer, including specific In-service workshops devoted to music education.

On-going: On the elementary level, the Music Supervisor has instituted "Lesson Studies" whereby the General music teachers are provided with release time during the day to meet together, discuss current concerns and share new information, experiences, methods for presenting the curriculum and sharing music literature.

Done: In the music teachers have common planning periods when they are able to meet together to share ideas.

On-going: The high school teachers do manage to communicate with each other, but due to the schedules where the Choral Director has a flex schedule that has her arrive later in the morning, and the fact that they all teach through lunch periods, there is no one period when they are all available for common planning together. The Music Supervisor does plan meetings that allow for brainstorming, curriculum planning, sharing ideas for teaching strategies, and timely concerns. Teachers are encouraged to suggest items for meeting agendas. A K-8 meeting and a 6-12 meeting have been scheduled, but cancelled due to conflicts in scheduling. Music teachers are encouraged to visit school districts that have model music programs, and are given released time to visit and observe other music teachers in Bernards Township. Teachers are also encouraged to identify topics for discussion, offer Staff College Courses, and request topics for staff development.

Recommendation Ten

Middle School: Continue to provide classrooms for all music classes. Build a chorus room at William Annin.

Done: A classroom was constructed for chorus/general music and a piano lab at William Annin. The high school has two rooms that were created for music, one for Band and one for Orchestra. But the choral program meets in the auditorium.

The elementary school General music programs have lost ground in this regard, as has been explained elsewhere in this document, and along with that program has been affected. The instrumental music instruction is presented in less than adequate facilities in the majority of the elementary buildings. This recommendation should continue to be a strong recommendation for future attention.

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation One-Facilities

Elementary: Provide classrooms for all music classes, including before school ensembles.

This goal should be of the highest priority for the school district, as it has the greatest impact on the music programs in the schools, and the greatest strain on the teachers implementing the programs.

Strategies: As enrollments go down, work with Administration to reclaim music rooms that have become classrooms. If enrollments do not go down, seek other solutions.

Time Line: ASAP

Budget Impact: Dependent on solution. If enrollments go down and music rooms can be reclaimed there would be no cost. If enrollments do not go down, costs would be a part of a large budgetary issue.

Middle School and High School: Improve the heating and ventilation in the band and orchestra rooms.

Discussions have been ongoing, with some attempts to rectify the difficulties, but temperatures still swing to extremes, and are all together poor for the teachers and students. The consequence of these temperatures and humidity variations are damaging to the instruments stored in these rooms.

Strategies: Work with Aramark and the Business Administrator to make appropriate repairs to the system.

Time Line: ASAP

Budget Impact: There is potential cost, but undetermined at this time.

Middle School: Provide improved sound proofing in room 205 (orchestra).

Soundproofing would be beneficial to all surrounding rooms (room 203 and 207). This would prevent distractions during orchestra rehearsals and art lessons.

Strategies: Work with the Business Administrator to find a solution.

Time Line: ASAP

Budget Impact: Potential, but unknown.

High School: An improved performance space is needed at Ridge, as well as a rehearsal room for choral music.

Currently there is standing room only for musical performances at the high school, so the existing auditorium cannot accommodate the parents and students who wish to attend concerts. There is also a need for a more adequate space to accommodate dramatic performances, high school assemblies, and community events. The choral program needs an instructional space in which to rehearse and hold lessons that is appropriate for its needs, i.e. risers and storage with a chalkboard, and bulletin boards. This space would mean that the choral program would no longer be interrupted every time the auditorium was used for other programs.

Strategies: Work with Administration to study the overall building needs for the high school and make recommendations to the public.

Time Line: 2004/05

Budget Impact: Bond Proposal

Recommendation Two-Literature

Elementary: Expand the library of musical literature for the elementary Grades.

In the elementary schools, conduct an inventory of district owned music. Distribute the inventory of music among the schools and when possible, share the music. Establish a recommended budget amount and request that the elementary building principals allocate a similar amount commensurate with the enrollment of each school.

Strategies: Prioritize the purchase of literature in supply orders for each building. Create a district wide inventory that all buildings can make use of to share the district resources.

Time Line: 2004/05

Budget Impact: Utilize currently budgeted funds, or none.

Recommendation Three-Teacher Scheduling

Elementary: Improve scheduling to provide all students with the greatest expertise in the areas in which they are instructing.

To accommodate the need to teach all the general music classes, and minimize the impact of instrumental music pullouts, work together with the teachers, principals and supervisor to produce the best schedules possible for the benefit of the students and compliance with the teachers' contract.

Strategies: Recognizing that elementary music teachers are tenured and certified to teach “Music” the district is obligated to assign any instructional needs to the teachers on staff. When instrumental enrollments are down, the district’s only choice is to assign the instrumental teachers to teach General Music. If enrollments go up, additional staff should be hired to fill the General Music needs and the Instrumental Music teachers would absorb the additional students.

Time Line: ASAP

Budget Impact: Staffing increase, commensurate with increased enrollment.

Recommendation Four-Student Scheduling

Elementary: Reinstate general music in Kindergarten to twice a week, for 25 minutes each. Change Grade One general music to 40 minutes once per week.

Currently K-5 is meeting for 50 minutes per week. This is workable for Grades 1-5, but a tremendous challenge for the Kindergartners, and even for Grade 1, especially in the beginning of the year.

Strategies: Discuss scheduling changes with the elementary school Principals. Divide the Kindergarten classes into two twenty-five minute classes per week, and reduce the Grade one classes to 40 minutes.

Time Line: September 2005

Budget Impact: None

Middle School: Return the 8th Grade band and orchestra to 5 days a week as full-credit classes.

This is a difficult recommendation to implement in light of the structure of the Middle School scheduling system. The bands and orchestras are now meeting as complete ensembles, rather than divided, during the school day, a big improvement. A compromise to improve the transition between elementary school (one ensemble rehearsal per week) to the high school (daily ensemble rehearsals) would be for the Middle School to have at least two full ensemble rehearsals per week. It is a recommendation worthy of identifying, in the hopes that one day it would become a reality.

Strategies: Continue to discuss with administration the scheduling options available.

Time Line: 2004/2005

Budget Impact: None

Middle School: Recommendation would be to add a 7th Grade music cycle.

National Music Education Standards recommend that formal music education continue through 8th Grade.

Strategies: Continue to discuss with administration the scheduling options available.

Time Line: 2004/05

Budget Impact: None. It might mean a reallocation of staff.

Recommendation Five-Instrument Inventory

Elementary, Middle School and High School: Expand the district owned instrument inventory.

Conduct an inventory of district owned instruments. Expand the inventory of school-owned instruments. Generate a plan for acquisition of needed instruments.

Strategies: All music teachers meet together to create the inventory and establish ways to share instruments. Prioritize needs and create a plan for purchase of instruments on a yearly basis.

Time Line: 2004/05

Budget Impact: Currently budgeted funds

Elementary: Provide adequate security for storage of instruments
High School: Renovate Band room storage facility.

Strategies: All music teachers meet together to discuss the storage of instruments. Brainstorm methods and establish a specific plan. If storage units need to be ordered, write up requisitions. If construction needs to be done, draw up a plan.

Time Line: Fall, 2004

Budget Impact: Possible cost of storage units. Currently budgeted funds.

Recommendation Six-Technology

Elementary, Middle School and High School: Music technology must be incorporated into all music offerings K-12.

In the elementary buildings this means improving the facilities, primarily space.

Acquire keyboards and other peripherals necessary, along with in-service training for teachers to develop the skills necessary to use the technology.

Purchase additional software necessary for the various levels of instruction.

Strategies: Survey teachers to establish needs of each building. Purchase a keyboard for each teacher and any hardware necessary to have it function with a computer. Purchase and install software. Have currently owned software installed in any computer labs where it is not already installed to allow for teachers to take their classes in for class work.

Time Line: 2004/05

Budget Impact: Currently budgeted funds

Recommendation Seven-Media

High School: Provide TV/VCR units in all three areas at Ridge.

There currently is no convenient way for students to view videos. The rooms are large and ensembles also large. The standard size TVs is too small for use under these conditions.

Strategies: Purchase units.

Time Line: 2004/05

Budget Impact: Currently budgeted funds, or budget for next year

Middle School and High School: Provide digital recording systems where they are lacking.

This would allow students to listen to themselves and encourage critiquing, improving rehearsals and reflective activities.

Strategies: Purchase units.

Time Line: 2004/05

Budget Impact: Currently budgeted funds, or budget for next year

DATA COLLECTION

The following resources were chosen as a means to evaluate the Bernards Township Music Program as it currently stands.

NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards: These standards were adopted by the State and dictate a student's basic level of education by graduation, to be assessed by the local districts at Grades 4, 8 and 11. The Visual and Performing Arts standards are presented together. The Draft of these Standards was adopted in April 2003.

The Music Educators National Conference (MENC) "Opportunity-To-Learn Standards for Music Instruction" presents the ideal situations for A) curriculum and scheduling B) staffing C) materials and equipment D) facilities in order to implement the nine National Standards.

The National Standards for Arts Education developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations (The American Alliance for Theatre & Education, MENC, National Art Education Association and National Dance Association).

Telephone surveys of other School Districts with strong music programs:

- Millburn
- Chatham
- East Brunswick
- Summit
- South Orange Maplewood
- Bridgewater-Raritan
- Randolph
- Piscataway
- West Windsor.

Student Competition results

District Climate Survey