

West ISD's Music Education Program Receives National Recognition

District is one of 5% of school districts in nation to receive distinction

On Tuesday, May 1, 2018, West ISD received notification that our music program was once again honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for our outstanding commitment to music education. West ISD is one of 5% of districts across the nation receiving this prestigious award in 2018.

The Best Communities Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. To qualify for the Best Communities designation, West ISD answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

This award recognizes that West ISD is leading the way with music learning opportunities as outlined in the new federal education legislation, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The legislation, signed into law in December 2015, and awaiting state implementation designates music and the arts as important elements of well-rounded education for all children.

As West ISD finalizes its 2018-2019 budget, The NAMM Foundation's Best Communities for Music Education Award and the state level implementation of the federal ESSA law bring attention to the importance of keeping music education part of curriculum offerings and available to all students. It also highlights music's vital role in students' overall success in school and the personal benefits of making music.

Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational/cognitive and social skill benefits for children who make music. In a series of landmark studies by scientists and researchers at Northwestern University a link was found between students in community music programs and life-long academic success, including higher high school graduation rates and college attendance. In another study from the University it was discovered that the benefits of early exposure to music education improves how the brain processes and assimilates sounds, a trait that lasts well into adulthood. Beyond the Northwestern research, other studies have indicated that music education lays the foundation for individual excellence in group settings, creative problem solving and flexibility in work situations, as well learning how to give and receive constructive criticism to excel.

"West ISD is truly honored to receive this national distinction from The NAMM Foundation," said David Truitt, Superintendent. "I would like to thank our outstanding music teachers across West ISD: Ms. Caitlin Leslie, Mr. Jason Dalrymple, Mr. Mark Dorsey, and Mr. Matt Reilly, he continued. "To be included in the list of school districts on this prestigious list is quite the honor for the West community. The work of our music teachers should be commended. The concerts, musicals, and special programs are some of the highlights of our school year. We have amazing singers, song writers and composers, actors, and musicians in West. The talent and gifts of our students is truly amazing," stated Truitt.

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit supported in part by The National Association of Music Merchants and its approximately 10,300 members around the world. Its mission is to advance active participation in music making across the lifespan by supporting scientific research,

philanthropic giving, and public service programs. For more information about The NAMM Foundation, please visit www.nammfoundation.org.