**Op-Ed/Letter to the Editor Template #2**

A Sound Investment

By [name]

As any successful business owner can attest, to build a business that can stand the test of time, one must make critical investments in its infrastructure and product to stay competitive. Such investments provide stability and longevity, setting up a business for success.

The same philosophy of investment can be applied to our schools and students, albeit a bit more creatively, through music and the arts. In 2015, the U.S. Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which gives states and school districts more local control, and recognizes music and arts as part of a “well-rounded” education for every student. It also protects the classroom time for these classes.

Currently, policy recommendations outlined in ESSA will be implemented based on our state level plan; and represents our ongoing investment in our students. However, our school/district has already made the investment for our students to learn and perform music, and we’re honored to say that it’s been recognized with a 2018 [SupportMusic Merit/Best Community for Music Education] award. The NAMM Foundation, a global non-profit organization that promotes opportunities for people of all ages to make music, in cooperation with researchers at The University of Kansas, examined information on hundreds of schools and school districts across the nation to identify those, like ours, who are making investments in arts education.

At school/district name, we recognize that the impact of arts education well exceeds the school years. In fact, research demonstrates that students who are involved in music are not only more likely to graduate high school, but also to attend college, and only a few years of musical training early in life improves how the brain processes sound, even later in life. Social benefits include conflict resolution, teamwork skills, and how to give and receive constructive criticism. This research-based evidence means that through (detail school/district’s programs, eg. The Band, guitar class, mariachi,) at/in our school/school district, we’re giving our students cognitive, social and physical benefits that will last a lifetime.

Music is an essential part of life, and we couldn’t be prouder of the students, parents and teachers in our community who have worked so hard to make sure that in our students, we’re making a sound investment.