**Op-Ed/Letter to the Editor Template #1**

More than Music

By [name]

At [school/district], we are honored to be recognized as [SupportMusic/BCME] by The NAMM Foundation for our [school/district]’s commitment to music education for our students. 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. With the support of our parents, teachers and our community, our students are benefitting from music education in more ways than meets the eye, or the ear.

Leading research continues to demonstrate that music education builds skills which span a lifetime, enriching our children beyond their school years. After two years of music education, researchers found that participants showed larger improvements in how the brain processes speech and reading scores than their less-involved peers\*, and that students who are involved in music are not only more likely to graduate high school, but also to attend college as well\*\*.

Later in life, individuals who took music lessons as children show stronger neural processing of sound: young adults and even older adults who have not played an instrument for up to 50 years show enhanced neural processing compared to their peers\*\*\*. Not to mention, social benefits include conflict resolution, teamwork skills, and how to give and receive constructive criticism.

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. As our state readies for implementation in the coming 2018-2019 school year, [school/district name] remains committed to keeping music education as part of our core curriculum.

Music is an essential part of life, and we couldn’t be prouder of the students, parents and teachers in our community who recognize that the cognitive, social and behavioral benefits of music education are designed to last a lifetime. -

\* Nina Kraus, director of Northwestern’s Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory, quoted in Melissa Locker, "This Is How Music Can Change Your Brain," Time, December 16, 2014.

\*\*[Source: Krause N., Slater J., Thompson E.C., Hornickel J., Strait D.L., Nicol T. & White-Schwoch T., (2014), “Auditory learning through active engagement with sound: Biological impact of community music lessons in at-risk children.” Frontiers in Auditory Cognitive Neuroscience.]

\*\*\*(2017). Music, hearing, and education: from the lab to the classroom; quoted in Northwestern University, September/October, 2017.