



MEMORANDIUM

To: Mr. Chamberlin and the Hopkinton School Board
From: Christopher Kelley and the Music Task Force
Date: January 18, 2010
Re: Review of the District Music Program

In the fall of 2009, Mr. Chamberlin, Superintendent of Schools, requested a Music Task Force to be formed. The task force was charged with the following: To review the Hopkinton School District music program and make recommendations to the Superintendent, leadership team, and curriculum council regarding the future direction and best practices. The Task Force is made up of: Chris Kelley, Assistant Principal of Hopkinton Middle High School; Edna Marie Griffin, Harold Martin School Music Teacher; Michael Alberici, Maple Street School Music Teacher; Bridget Dornik, Hopkinton Middle High School Music Teacher. We have also had input by, Paul Silverman, previous music teacher at Hopkinton Middle High School, Amy Beth Gelineau, Drama Teacher at Hopkinton Middle High School, and Rebecca Briccetti, a parent in the district.

As part of the process, the committee considered the following essential questions.

- Does our current music program meet the needs of all students?
- What are teachers currently teaching at the different levels?
- How does a pending retirement impact the future of the program?
- What is the philosophy of the program?

Does our current music program meet the needs of all students?

When the committee addressed this question, it felt as if the music program did not meet the needs of all students. At the high school level for example, we meet the needs of instrumentalist and vocalists by offering concert band, jazz band, chorus and steel pan. However, those students wishing to pursue further music study after high school are at a disadvantage because we do not offer a Music Theory or Composition course. A strong foundation in Music Theory is as important as a strong foundation in Math for a student going on to study Engineering in college for example. A Music Theory class would offer students the ability to learn how music is structured and organized. It affords students the ability and opportunity to expand their music appreciation and to learn how music is communicated and created. If offered, this course would support the district music philosophy.

At Maple Street School and the Middle High School, the committee felt that the district was not meeting the needs of our vocal students. At Maple Street School, the participation in the chorus has dropped since the reduction of a 2/5 vocal teaching position. Prior to the cut in 2006, all students at MSS (253) were given vocal instruction in a weekly chorus classroom in addition to general music. Choral class included both preparation for two seasonal choral concerts and the production of a musical with the 4th grade. The chorus meets for forty-five minutes a week. A voluntary chorus becomes more of just a singing opportunity and is not educationally sound. The committee also felt the need to have the high school chorus meet for ninety minutes every other day instead of forty-five minutes every other day. The extra time would help to increase the musicianship within the ensemble.

At Maple Street School there is not an adequate space for the band or chorus to rehearse. There is however, a classroom for general music to be taught in. Not having an adequate space like a rehearsal room, means that set up and take down happens on a daily basis for band rehearsals. The gym is not an adequate space for band rehearsals. It becomes very difficult for ensembles to work on balance, intonation and other musical skills simply because the gym is not an acoustical space.

At Harold Martin School, the need for individual or small group rehearsals is not met. There is no dedicated rehearsal time to prepare for things such as the December Concert, 2nd Grade Musical, and auditions for the Celebration of the Arts and various class presentations. To prepare for such events, Ms. Griffin usually takes time during her lunch and prep time. Ms. Griffin will occasionally come in on her day off for additional preparation and rehearsals.

The district also does not meet the needs of those students who may play string instruments such as the violin, viola or cello.

What are the teachers currently teaching at the different levels?

The Committee examined what teachers were teaching at each of the three schools. At Harold Martin School, Ms. Griffin teaches music three days a week. Ms. Griffin teaches general music once a week to each class. Each class is offered for fifty minutes in grades one through three. Kindergarten students receive thirty-five minutes of music instruction a week. Ms. Griffin also team-teaches two preschool music and movement classes.

At Maple Street School, Mr. Alberici teaches General and Instrumental Music. General Music is offered once a week for each class and the class meets for approximately forty minutes. There are two sixth grade classes that rotate through and receive an additional music class where African Drumming is taught. Band is offered once a week for sixty minutes. Instrumental lessons are offered for students in Band. These lessons are scheduled throughout the normal school day and meet for approximately thirty minutes. Chorus is offered once a week for 45 minutes and it is voluntary. Chorus is directed by Mrs. Jenkins.

At Hopkinton Middle High School, Ms. Dornik teaches students in grades seven through twelve. Middle school students receive General Music every other day for one fifth of the school year. In seventh grade students study Guitar and in eighth grade students learn to play Steel Pan Drums. Middle school Chorus, Concert Band and Jazz Band meet for forty-five minutes every other day. At the high school level, Chorus, Concert Band and Jazz Band meet every other day for forty-five minutes respectfully. Steel Pan however, meets for a full ninety minutes every other day.

How does the retirement impact the future of the program?

The committee looked at where the middle high school program could expand after Mr. Silverman's retirement. The list was compiled with Mr. Silverman's input.

- Expansion of Music Technology opportunities.
- Promote and build the integration of both the Music and Drama Program.
- Improvement of the Chorus Program.
- Sustainability of the Steel Pan Ensemble.

What is the Philosophy of the Music Program?

The philosophy of the Music Program across the district is to provide all students with the skills and tools necessary to enjoy a life that is enriched with music, to perform and create quality music, and to continue musical instruction at higher levels.

Recommendations:

Short Term, 1 - 2 years:

- 1) Promote and build the integration of both the Music and Drama Program.
- 2) Improve the Chorus Program at both the middle and high school level.
- 3) Develop a schedule that would allow time for instrumental lessons to be given at the middle school level.
- 4) Investigate a means for students who play a string instrument to participate in a string program at another school.
- 5) Develop a plan for increasing the use of technology for music instruction.

Long Term, 3 - 5 years:

- 1) Hire 1 additional full time staff member. The new hire would teach 2/5 of the time at Maple Street School teaching Chorus. The remaining 3/5 of their time would be spent teaching at the middle high school. At the middle high school the new hire would teach middle school general music along with middle and high school chorus. This would allow Ms. Dornik to offer a Music Theory class and one additional elective such as an African Drumming class or a Guitar Class for example.
- 2) Develop a plan for creating a separate performance room at Maple Street School.
- 3) Develop a plan for creating a separate music classroom at Harold Martin School for General Music.
- 4) Implement the plan for increasing the use of technology for music instruction.
- 5) Implement a schedule that would allow time for instrumental lessons to be given at the middle school level.
- 6) Additional 1/5 added to Edna Marie's position. This addition would allow for increased music enrichment, music literacy, and rehearsal/preparation time for performances.

HOPKINTON HIGH SCHOOL

297 Park Ave. • Contoocook, NH 03229
Tel: 603.746.4167
Fax: 603.746.5109



MAXIMIZING POTENTIAL

Christopher J. Sousa, Principal
Christopher M. Kelley, Asst. Principal
www.hopkintonschools.org