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AKRON SCHOOLS NAMED BEST COMMUNITIES FOR MUSIC EDUCATION FOR 10th YEAR

AKRON, NEW YORK (May 2, 2022) - Akron Schools has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education. Now in its 23rd year, the Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. This is the 10th consecutive year that Akron Schools has been recognized.

To qualify for the Best Communities designation, Akron Schools 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.

"It is a tremendous honor for Akron to be recognized as one of the Best Communities for Music Education for the 10th consecutive year!" commented Superintendent Patrick D. McCabe. "This distinction speaks volumes of the incredible commitment and love of musicianship that our students, parents, and staff display daily. Together they have overcome many unanticipated obstacles associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and let the joy of music resonate throughout our school district and community. We are all very proud."

Since the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 and a stated emphasis on a well-rounded education, many school districts have re-committed to music and arts education programs. During the pandemic, music and arts programs were a vital component to keeping students engaged in school. ESSA provides designated funding for well-rounded educational opportunities through Title IV Part A Student Academic Success and Achievement grants. NAMM Foundation research has revealed that these grants are being widely used by school districts to address instructional gaps in access to music and arts education.

"Music works in harmony with many subject areas to positively impact a child's academic performance, creativity, and social skills – all crucial to developing a well-rounded student!" said Mrs. Kimberly Stachowski, one of Akron's elementary music directors.

Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational/cognitive and social skill benefits for children who make music: After two years of music education, researchers found that participants showed more substantial 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. Everyday listening skills are stronger

in musically trained children than in those without music training. Significantly, listening skills are closely tied to the ability to: perceive speech in a noisy background, pay attention, and keep sounds in memory. 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.

Akron musicians were pleased to be able to once again perform for in-person audiences following over two years impacted by pandemic restrictions. Students enjoy performing in Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day parades, annual Prism and holiday concerts, Santa Band tour and other ensemble performances for community groups, Cabaret Concerts, orchestra concerts, and this year's musical production of *The Theory of Relativity*.

About The NAMM Foundation

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. The foundation advances 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.

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