



## Acton Boxborough's Music Education Program Receives National Recognition

**Acton, Massachusetts May 22nd, 2019**– The Acton Boxborough Regional School District 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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. To qualify for the Best Communities designation, a district administrator answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, and support for our music programs. Responses were verified and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas. Acton Boxborough is one of 14 communities in Massachusetts that received this designation this year.

This award recognizes that Acton Boxborough is leading the way with learning opportunities as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This federal legislation recommends music and the arts as essential elements of a well-rounded education for all children. Acton Boxborough's ongoing investment in curriculum, faculty, resources, and programming are a sign of our commitment to provide opportunities that will support the cognitive development, emotional wellness, and lifelong engagement in meaningful creation and awareness of the arts for every child in our district.

“Both music and language are complex communication systems, in which basic components are combined into high-order structures in accordance with rules. Whether music was an evolutionary precursor to language or merely a byproduct of cognitive faculties that developed to support language, music is pervasive across human cultures and throughout history...”

*Nina Kraus, Jessica Slater, “Music and language: relations and disconnections,” The Human Auditory System: Fundamental Organization and Clinical Disorders, Vol. 29, 3rd Series, 2015.*

Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational/cognitive and social skill benefits for children who don't just study music, but actively make music in authentic and sustained ways. After two years of music education, research 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.

Acton-Boxborough's ongoing commitment to meaningful music education is an example of ways we can achieve our district goals of wellness, integrity, and equity by providing authentic music education for all of our district's students.