My Music Education Philosophy

I believe that music education is a vital part of a child's education. I want my students to develop a sense of community and a love for music as I have. I plan to educate my students about the importance of music education through my instruction. Every student who finishes my classes will understand why, as a human, they need music, the importance of both performance and non-performance classes, will have experienced my ideal classroom environment, and will love and support music throughout his life.

I believe that every child has the capacity and the need to be a musician. It is left to music education to help students discover and nurture this natural ability. Music education must begin with parents. It is important for children to be exposed to music early in their childhood. It is then the school's responsibility to continue this education by giving children the opportunity to explore their musical talents. I believe music is ingrained in us; without music life would be meaningless. There would be no prom, cantatas, mass, first dances, radio, soundtracks, rock concerts, love songs, elevator music, etc. Some people do not realize how much they rely on music. Part of this reliance can be linked to aesthetic experiences. In their book, Foundations and Principles of Music Education, Charles Leonhard and Robert house state that, "An experience is aesthetic when resistance, tension, excitement, and emotion are transformed into a movement toward fulfillment and completion." As humans we are constantly searching for resolution. Composers write music to be emotional, constantly changing tonalities, dynamics, keys, rhythms, etc. When all of these changes are resolved in the music, tension is released and both the performer and the audience have an aesthetic experience.
It is important for children to be in both performance and non-performance classes. Not only do performance classes provide aesthetic experiences, they also provide students with the experience of working together to achieve a common goal. The feeling of accomplishment in putting together a concert and playing beautiful music together, or performing an individual solo makes the entire musical experience worth while. Not only do the performers have incredible feelings of accomplishment, they provide their audience with a wonderful musical experience. There is nothing a parent would rather see than their child succeeding, and music education creates an opportunity for students to work hard and achieve excellence.

Non-performance classes are as important as performance classes. In order for a student to fully understand music, they must learn all of the aspects which make up the music they play in an ensemble or solo. Non-performance classes include music theory, music appreciation, general music, etc. In these classes students should learn about musical syntax, or the way the musical elements are put together, repertoire, and composition. These concepts should not only be covered in non-performance classes, but also talked about in performance classes. I believe there should be a requirement for all students to be in a general music and music appreciation classes throughout grade school and high school. Students in performance classes should have the option of continuing their musical knowledge by taking music theory, music history, or analysis courses. It is very important for performance students to know about the pieces they are playing, the composers, musical elements, composition/improvisation, etc. The national standards include everything that should be taught in performance and non-performance classes, and should be followed closely and creatively by the music educator.

Classroom environment is an extremely important aspect of music education. In both non-performance and performance classes, it is important that the environment is welcoming but serious. As an ensemble director, I plan to be authoritative but flexible. I want to be seen as a respected, strong leader. My students will need to understand that I am serious about our rehearsal time and
how important it is to reach our highest potential. I will acquire this respect by letting my student know exactly what I will expect from them. I will have a distinct behavior management system and be as prepared for every rehearsal, as I expect my students to be. Being in a music ensemble is a unique experience. In high school the students will be together for three or four years. This provides an opportunity for the students to form bonds that do not occur in any other academic subject. Ensembles also provide unique bonds to form between the teacher and the students. I believe these connections and feelings of "family" are very important in an ensemble setting. There must be a combined feeling of trust, reliance, and responsibility in a performing ensemble. If all of these elements are present in performing ensemble it allows the ensemble to reach its full musical potential. By trusting the conductor and other players a student feels more comfortable to try something new or, for example, experiment with the dynamics. Also, a student must feel great deal of reliance and responsibility from the ensemble so they will continue to grow and improve. I will strive to provide an atmosphere which will allow my students these feelings. I hope through my class environment, my students will have a feeling of responsibility for the future of music education.

Learning about music in school will affect a person's entire life and in return, help better the future of music education. If a child grows up surrounded by music, she will learn the importance of music education for herself. She will either continue to perform music or will attend local concerts. Along with experiencing music for themselves, they will support music. I hope my students will learn how important it is to pass music onto their children. They may also help out with their local high school music ensemble or even conduct a community group themselves. This support is what music education needs most. With nationwide support there would be no thought about cutting music funds or programs.

Music education is an imperative part of a student's education. My goal as a music educator
is to teach people to love music as much as I do. My philosophy is, that every child should be given a chance to perform and learn music, needs performance and non-performance classes, requires a certain classroom environment to be successful, and should continue to have a love for music their entire life.