

## **Instrumental and Vocal Music Board Report 2024-2025**

### **Multicultural Aspect:**

Music students in Arlington Public Schools K-12 are introduced to different cultures through the music classroom. In elementary music classes students are introduced to different cultures through song, instruments, and other representations of music in other cultures. There is a bulletin board in the classroom dedicated to representing minority composers. As students begin to develop as musicians in middle school and high school they learn how to perform music from an array of cultures, as well as learning about the culture of the piece. In the middle and high school ensembles we strive to perform or study at least one multicultural piece a year.

Examples include folk songs, folk dances, children's games, children's songs and instrumental music from various cultures. The selected method book for the elementary bands includes many folk songs from around the world. For the middle school and high school band the goal is to find quality literature that is inclusive of an array of cultures and people. In the middle school has been able to play several pieces from Africa, Brazil, and in the high school we have sight-read music from different cultures.

In vocal music, the middle school choir has performed the songs "Betelehemu," "Tumekuja Kuimba," "Wangolo," and "a la media noche." "Betelehemu" is a Nigerian Carol, "Tumekuja Kuimba" is in Swahili, "Wangolo" is from Haiti, and "A la media noche" is in Spanish. Students learned Nigerian, Swahili, and English lyrics as well as various African rhythms. The High School Choir rehearsed music in Latin, Swahili, Ndebele and Zulu (African), and French this year. Soloists, small groups, and honor choir students have rehearsed/performed in multiple languages including Latin, German, and English.

### **2. What do we want students to learn?**

In instrumental music the focus has been on building musicianship skills. Elementary band students work on foundational skills including reading notes/rhythms, producing characteristic sounds on their instrument and how to practice. Middle school students add to these skills by adding in ensemble skills such as dynamic and articulation contrasts and expanding the range their instrument plays. High school students work on developing emotional and empathetic musicianship to create the overall musical experience. With the addition of the Canvas learning platform all band students have had more opportunities to study music theory and as an instructor I have had more chances to hear students play individually to better direct instruction. Students continue to reflect on individual and group performance that helps lead students to understand how the ensemble works together to create a better sound.

The vocal department also strives to build musicianship skills and music theory knowledge. Sight Reading Factory is utilized at least several times per week to develop sight reading skills and the application of our music theory concepts.

With Canvas, high school vocal music sectionals can be student led and student centered. With the access of Canvas in the vocal classroom, students have had easy access to small group, solo, and sectional recordings from anywhere. All levels of students are provided with access to recordings on canvas to aid in practicing on their own at any time from anywhere.

At the elementary level the main focus is fostering a love for music and desire to be a lifelong learner and musician. We do this through music games that build music reading skills, music writing projects that instill creativity, instrument and song exploration, and singing a variety of fun songs that students can make connections to.

### **3. How do we know when our students are learning?**

All instructors continue to use rehearsal techniques such as full group, individual pull out, and sectionals during the school year as the main assessment style. In the past two years the music department has relied on recording programs and editing software (Striv, YouTube,

Canvas) not only for teacher and student assessment, but to show the community what we are doing in our classrooms. The music department continues to provide concerts throughout the year to parents and community members in person and when available through Striv. We also play for community events such as Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Arlington Fireman's Breakfast, and Washington County Fair. Each grade level and ensemble is able to perform at least one time throughout the year and the older students at least 3 times a year. We have several upcoming concerts including the High School Recital and Spring Concert, District Music Contest and the Middle School Spring Concert and Recital.

In Elementary band, each unit begins with a pre-assessment and finishes with a summative assessment. Throughout each unit, I refer back to the pre-assessment to ensure that each student is improving in their skills.

#### **4. How do we respond when students are not learning?**

In the music classrooms when students turn in assignments that are incomplete or incorrect they will be asked to redo the work until it is correct. Since music is largely a performed skill most re-teaching is done in the classroom either as a quick one on one instruction or in a large group review. Students in higher grade levels may be asked to come in before or after school to work in a sectional or one on one with the instructor for more help. In the secondary building we are able to use TA time to help students who are not meeting learning goals as well as GRIP and ESP except when elementary classes are scheduled over TA time. Elementary band students are also able to use their recess time to receive one on one instruction if needed. In the past year the elementary band recess lesson time has really bloomed with students coming in not only to make up lessons but to extend and improve beyond what we are learning in class.

Elementary general music students who are not improving in the skills taught get marked in my own notes and throughout the unit and the year I create lessons in which I can focus on the students individually, while making sure that the students don't feel singled out. This allows me to use mistakes as a teaching moment and correct skills that are being practiced incorrectly.

#### **5. How do we extend or enrich the learning for students who exceed proficiency?**

Students who are more advanced or wish for further instruction in their musical education are encouraged to participate in honor groups, outside ensembles, outside performances, and solos and small ensembles. Though most of these opportunities require work outside of standard class time, students are excited by the challenge. Students who participate in these groups and performances are often rewarded with new skills and knowledge and increase the overall performance ability in the musical ensembles at Arlington. This group of students is also used to lead sectionals or be section leaders in our ensembles which allows them to share their knowledge and provide support for the teachers.

Similarly, students in elementary general music are provided opportunities to be leaders in their classes through teaching, projects, or group work where they can help teach their peers.

#### **6. Other Information**

Music Trip: Last year the High School Band and Choir students took a trip to Minneapolis and the Middle School Band and choir traveled to Kansas City for a day. High School students saw Beautiful: A Carol King Musical and performed at ValleyFair Amusement Park.

Honor Bands: Participation in honor bands was up this year with many students electing to participate and/or audition.

Doane Honor Band: November, 4 participants (auditioned)

Underclassman Honor Band: January, 2 (selected)  
Wayne State Honor Band: January, 6 participants (auditioned)  
Iowa Western Honor Band: January, 13 Participants (HS and HS selected)  
Stanton Middle School Honor Band: February, 8 participants (selected)  
NCC Honor Band: March, 11 participants (selected)  
Blair Middle School Honor Band: March, 3 participants (selected)  
Class B All-State: March, 3 participants (auditioned)  
Pender Elementary Honor Band: May, 23 participants

Honor Choirs: We had many students selected to honor choirs this year!

Nebraska Middle Level Allstate: 10 participants (auditioned)  
Sing Around Nebraska Honor Choir: 8 participants (auditioned)  
Singing Youth Festival Choir: 7 participants (nomination)  
Midland Festival Choir 7 participants (audition) 1 special select  
Fremont Festival Middle School Choir 11 participants (nomination)  
Nebraska Allstate Choir 5 participants (auditioned)  
Nebraska Honor Choir Middle Level 10 participants (auditioned)  
Doane Honor Choir 7 participants (Nomination/selection)  
Wayne State Honor Choir 10 participants (auditioned)  
Stanton Middle School Honor Choir 7 participants (nomination)  
Nebraska State FFA Choir 3 participants (audition)  
Nebraska Theatre Awards soloist callback: Kolby Tighe (callbacks April 12)

Screamin' Eagles Marching Band: In the 2024-2025 school year the marching band performed at the Washington County Fair, Nebraska State Fair, four home football games, seven basketball games, one volleyball game, The Village Pointe Lighting Ceremony and several pep rallies. We also hosted our second alumni pep band in January with 12 participants.

Veteran's Day: High School Band, Choir, and Elementary music ensembles performed at the Annual Veteran's Day Assembly.

Conference Choral Clinic: Logan View hosted Conference Choral Clinic this year. Students were able to rehearse with all conference schools with director A.J. Reimer. Each school, including Arlington, was featured individually in the concert as well.

Soaring Sound Show Choir: Show choir attended Peru Show Choir Festival, Blair Show Choir Workshop, Midland Festival of the Arts where they were awarded "Best Choreography." We were unable to attend NCDA Skutt Show Choir Festival due to a blizzard. They performed at the Middle School concert in October as well as all of our high school concerts. They will be performing at District Music Contest as well.

Community: Many students performed at the Arlington Fall Festival in October. Soaring Sound Show Choir performed at the Fireman's Pancake Breakfast in December.

District Music Contest: On April 25-26 the Arlington Music Department will perform at the District Music Contest at Wahoo. This year we will have 8 instrumental solos/ensembles, 14 vocal solos/ensembles, and two piano solos performing as well as the Arlington High School Band, Arlington High School Choir and Soaring Sound Show Choir.

Middle School Recital: Middle school vocal/instrumental students will soon begin their preparations for their recital in May. Many solos and ensembles are in progress for this performance.

Music Technology: The addition of Music Technology I and II has opened opportunities

for students not involved in a music ensemble to foster an appreciation of music. With an enrollment of 6-8 students each semester students have worked on creating music with loops (pre-made music) and currently are working on writing original melodies on computers with accompaniment. I have found project based learning is a challenge for students because the answer is not always clear but I have enjoyed hearing what students can come up with.

Musical: The Arlington Music Department just wrapped their production of Meridith Wilson's *The Music Man*. There were close to 100 students involved in the production on stage and behind the scenes. Even with the rescheduled performances there were a minimum of 200 audience members each performance. Our male lead was also selected as a callback finalist for the Jimmy Awards which is a solo competition only offered to the participating schools lead role students. Kolby will participate in callbacks on April 13th to see if he is one of 12 male finalists.

Canvas: The Canvas Learning Platform continues to be a huge asset to classroom instruction. Especially in our secondary classrooms it has allowed us to create online spaces to house a lot of our materials and made assessment more streamlined. This included the one to one access of computers. When computers were on carts for specific classrooms we were not able to utilize technology due to our large class size numbers.

New Curriculum: We are very excited to start implementing our new MusicFirst Curriculum for next year. In the high school classrooms we have been using SightReading Factory to collect data on our students' performance ability as part of our SLO goals. The addition of the MusicFirst Curriculum will allow us to use the same software in middle school and add other educational opportunities such as composition, vocabulary, music notation, history and composer information. Our plan is to utilize our work day on May 9th to go through the training and start planning for next year.

Leadership: Mrs. Mastny and Mrs. Crosland serve in leadership roles outside of the classroom. Mrs. Mastny was selected to chair the committee for the 2027 revision of the Recommend Repertoire list for the Nebraska State Bandmasters Organization. Mrs. Crosland serves as the president-elect for Nebraska Choral Directors Association where she will take the role of president this coming September. She also served this year as part of the nominating committee for elected offices of the Nebraska Music Educators Association.