



## Statement by the Music Education Policy Roundtable On Hazelwood School District Music Cuts

In response to a projected \$12.7 million budget deficit, the Hazelwood School District (HSD) of St. Louis County, Missouri, has recently announced a \$6.6 million planned budget cut for the 2016 – 2017 school year. The cuts include an elimination of band and orchestra classes during the school day in their elementary schools. An estimate of twenty-eight music and physical education teacher positions would be eliminated in the school district under these cuts. If these cuts were to be enacted, it would impact over 800 elementary school students, 850 of whom are participating in orchestra and band programs in Hazelwood this year alone.

The Music Education Policy Roundtable recognizes that the Hazelwood School District Board has made efforts to maximize the effectiveness of limited funds by retaining band and orchestra programs at a middle and high school level, and by providing after-school music instruction when possible. However, we call on HSD to reconsider the elimination of music programs at the elementary level. While some studies have suggested correlations between music study and positive academic outcomes, the benefits of music education also reach beyond these quantifiable markers of achievement. Music education at all grade levels encourages the development of essential 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creative problem-solving. By eliminating these programs, students risk losing the benefits of these skills that would serve students in school and throughout their lives.

It is the Roundtable's continued vision that more resources should be made available to provide all students, regardless of personal circumstance or background, the access to a broad curriculum that includes a dedicated, rich experience with music. Our vision is reflected in current federal priorities in the "Every Student Succeeds Act" (ESSA), a historic piece of legislation that replaces "No Child Left Behind," and also includes "music" as part of a "Well-Rounded Education." This major overhaul of federal education policy provides an enormous step forward for music education, focusing on what makes a student whole, and nurturing the skills and assets that

are critical to their future success within the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With music's strengthened federal status, we have the opportunity to ensure every child has access to a broad and rich curriculum and the ability to become well-rounded students.

The Music Education Policy Roundtable encourages the Hazelwood School District to reflect current federal education priorities and allocate future resources to enrich and strengthen music programs that will most benefit students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Further, we strongly encourage all teachers and supporters of the music and arts community to help the School Board recognize the benefits of early music education for students. We welcome the opportunity to engage in further dialogue with the Hazelwood School District regarding this important matter.

Sincerely,

**The Music Education Policy Roundtable**

**National Association for Music Education  
American String Teachers Association  
American Choral Directors Association  
American Orff-Schulwerk Association  
American School Band Directors Association  
Barbershop Harmony Society  
Chorus America  
College Band Directors National Association  
Conn Selmer  
Drum Corps International  
Education Through Music  
El Sistema USA  
The Gordon Institute for Music Learning  
Guitar and Accessories Marketing Association, Inc.  
Jazz at Lincoln Center  
J.W. Pepper & Son, Inc.  
League of American Orchestras**

**Little Kids Rock  
Music for All  
Music Teachers National Association  
Music Publishers Association  
Music Sales Group/MusicFirst  
National Association of Music Merchants  
National Association of Music Parents  
National Music Council  
Organization of American Kodály Educators  
Percussive Arts Society  
Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia  
Progressive Music  
Quadrant Arts Education Research  
Strathmore Hall Foundation  
VH1 Save The Music Foundation  
Winter Guard International**