



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **BCPS music education program receives national recognition – for the 19<sup>th</sup> consecutive year**

Towson, Md. – Baltimore County Public 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 25th year, the Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to school districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in providing music access and education to all students.

To qualify for the Best Communities designation, BCPS 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 by school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

“The continued recognition of excellence in our BCPS music program is a testament to the incredible music educators in our district and the power of music education to foster community and belonging,” said Sherri Fisher, BCPS director of Career and Technical Education and Fine Arts. “This award represents the continued hard work, collaboration, dedication, and creativity of students, families, teachers, and school system and community leaders. I am grateful to the staff in the Office of Performing Arts.”

Sonia Synkowski, BCPS coordinator of Performing Arts, added, “Our BCPS music educators continue to foster musical excellence in their daily practice, and because of their commitment to our students, we continue to be recognized at both the state and national level. BCPS provides a supportive, nurturing environment for our community of more than 350 music educators. I am thankful for the continued support of our music programs in all schools and for the leadership of our dedicated staff in the Office of Performing Arts.”

BCPS students can choose among extensive offerings including courses in music and audio technology, world music, and Advanced Placement Music Theory. Students perform throughout the community in choral groups, jazz ensembles, steel pan ensembles, orchestras, marching bands, ukulele groups, and as student composers. In addition, partnerships with the area's leading arts organizations provide opportunities to see and interact with professional musicians.

Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational/cognitive and social skill benefits for children who make music. Researchers found that those with two years of music education showed more substantial improvements in how the brain processes speech and in their reading scores than their less-involved peers. They also found that students who are involved in music are more likely to graduate high school and to attend college. In addition, 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. Social benefits include conflict resolution, teamwork skills, and giving and receiving constructive criticism.

### **About The NAMM Foundation**

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit organization supported in part by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) and its 15,000 member companies and individual professionals worldwide. The foundation's mission is to advance active participation in music-making across the lifespan by supporting scientific research, philanthropic giving, and public service programs.

*(Editor's note: [The Best Communities for Music Education logo](#) can be found on Flickr.)*

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[Baltimore County Public Schools](#), the nation's 22nd largest school system, engages and empowers its talented students, teachers, staff, and stakeholders and strives to build an innovative and collaborative learning community where all students excel and reach their highest potential.

*Engage. Empower. Excel.*