

## **Northwest Music Mentors**

### **Why are school music programs important?**

Studies show that studying music has many positive effects on children. Music education affects mood, including a person's emotional well being and state of mind. Studying music has been shown to increase problem solving abilities, general aptitude, and overall brain function. Music also provides each person a creative output, and creates community, cooperation, and a sense of belonging and purpose.

But more importantly, music as a part of public school curriculum supports children as they progress through some of the most challenging years of their lives. Many students find that participating in school music programs provides them with a purpose for staying involved and engaged throughout school. We believe that every person should have the opportunity to realize their full self-expression, and Northwest Music Mentors helps to provide a path for those who find their self-expression through music.

### **Our History**

Northwest Music Mentors was founded in June of 2018 under the name Music First, and as we spoke to music educators as we developed our programs, we learned that a mentorship model would be the best path to increasing engagement and providing support and encouragement for students to continue with their music studies. In March of 2019 we changed our name to Northwest Music Mentors to better reflect this approach and vision.

Our 2019 budget is approximately \$5000 a year, which covers the cost of insurance required to work with students in school settings, operating expenses, and pays our mentors. We have a roster of 12 mentors located in King and Snohomish Counties, with our mentors specializing in instruments used in school music programs. Our 2019 funding is provided entirely through individual donations, while we are actively seeking grants and business sponsors to support our programs. Since our inception we've raised approximately \$5300.

### **Our Vision**

Northwest Music Mentors is a community aided education system in Washington State where students are provided access to robust music education and mentorship, resulting in an inspired youth and a healthier generation.

### **Our Mission**

Inspiring a lifelong passion and participation in music through mentorship.

Bridging the gap as music students transition from grade to grade and school to school throughout their primary and secondary education, through logistical and instructional support.

### **Our Goals**

In our public schools up to 60% of music students discontinue music studies when they are promoted from one school to the next. In many areas, students don't have access to private lessons or after school music programs, which help students to grow and improve as musicians. Our primary goal is to increase the rate of continued participation in school music programs, reducing attrition by 5% a year\* with the long-term goal to cut attrition by half.

### **Our Future**

In the fall of 2019 we launched a pilot program in the Highline School district with mentors in seven classrooms across five schools. We plan to expand this pilot after the first of the year, and will also expand to other schools across the state. As we extend our reach to more regions in the state, we will recruit additional mentors who are able to service the schools in those regions.

In 2020, obtaining funding to reach more eligible schools will be our primary focus. Our target schools are in underserved communities where participation in free and reduced lunch programs is 65% and higher. In King, Snohomish and Pierce counties, there are approximately 120 schools that meet this requirement and also meet minimum enrollment standards. Providing a minimum number of mentors to these schools to be effective requires a budget of approximately \$200,000 annually, and as our funding grows we will expand across the state and provide additional mentors for participating school.

Our plans include introducing a sliding scale so schools that don't qualify for full funding can still take advantage of our programs by contributing a portion of the cost of the mentors – contributions that can come from directly from the music department budget or from the school's music booster organization. The ability to provide a sliding scale will be based on our overall funding capabilities.

\* Among students participating in our mentorship programs