



# News from the MNPS Communications Office

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools

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## **Study: Music Education Now Reaches 48,700 Metro Students**

*Music Makes Us has grown in numbers and benefits since beginning in 2012*

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** (Dec. 16, 2015) – In a study released today, Metro Schools’ collaborative Music Makes Us initiative is credited with increasing musical participation among Nashville students, as well as supplying them with the soft skills and character traits that will set them up for success in academics and life. The study shows growth in music programs at every level, particularly in the important middle school years, and 100 percent music participation at the elementary level.

“At a time when some cities are cutting arts programs, Nashville is doubling down,” said Interim Director of Schools Chris Henson. “Music education is bigger than it’s ever been in Metro Schools, and that’s because the district, the city and dozens of community partners are making the investment. Together we are making Music City the number one place for music education.”

Titled *Interlude*, this is the second study of Music Makes Us in two years. It was paid for through the generous support of the CMA Foundation and the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM). [The first, called \*Prelude\*](#), found a positive correlation between music participation and student engagement and achievement. That data was used as a baseline for future evaluations of the program. This new study shows that more students are participating in school music programs, which means more students are benefiting from the positive effects demonstrated in *Prelude*.

“Nashville is Music City, and we know the value of music to our community because we experience it – we hear it – constantly,” said Mayor Megan Barry. “Music is the very bedrock of our city’s identity, the river of creative expression that runs through everything. And music education in our public schools is where it all starts. Music Makes Us connects the city and our music and business communities to our diverse population of students, providing a foundation for future success and opening doors to higher education, workforce development and a better life.”

[Download both the \*Prelude\* and \*Interlude\* reports online.](#)

Across all grades, 48,700 Metro students are taking part in music programs – 56 percent of the total student population. That represents growth of more than 3,600 students since 2012, when Music Makes Us began, which is more than twice the rate of enrollment growth in district-run schools.

Increased student participation has been supported by increased music program offerings. Since the inception of Music Makes Us, band has been restored to all 33 middle schools. Ten new middle school choral programs have been developed. Over 45 new classes in mariachi, world percussion, rock band, and country/bluegrass are available to middle and high school students in 18 schools.

The expansion of these programs has been funded by public and private investments. Metro Schools spent approximately \$14 million on Music Makes Us during the 2014-15 school year. CMA Foundation, the largest single private contributor for music education in Nashville, gave \$1 million in 2014-15. Other private donors contributed a combined \$300,000.

In elementary schools, 100 percent of students – more than 32,000 of them – have access to music classes. Middle school participation is up nine percentage points since 2012, to 56 percent (11,200 students). High school participation is up two points to 26 percent (5,200 students).

“These results will make any music and education advocate happy,” said Laurie Schell, director of Music Makes Us. “The numbers show a positive trend, students are telling us they love music and our teachers are telling us how to make our programs even better. This study is exactly what we need at this point to ensure progress towards the Music Makes Us goals of access, equity and quality.”

Music participation is not limited by academic ability, ethnicity or economic level. In middle schools, a majority of students in every subgroup take part in music. The largest growth since 2012 is seen in English learner and Latino students, with 16 and 15 percentage points of growth respectively, while participation among economically disadvantaged students is up 10 percentage points. In particular, middle school choir participation has seen 300% growth since 2012 thanks to a strategic emphasis on and investment in these offerings at schools.

“We have invested intentionally in music at the middle school level because it’s such a key age for social, emotional, as well as cognitive growth,” said Schell. “Music and the arts connect students more deeply to school and keep them interested in their education. Music helps create a positive learning environment and fosters a good attitude toward learning. The more years a student is engaged in music, the more benefits we see.”

*Interlude* sought to examine the impact of music education for students. That meant speaking to hundreds of them through focus groups and surveys. They narrowed down the rewards of music to four key benefits:

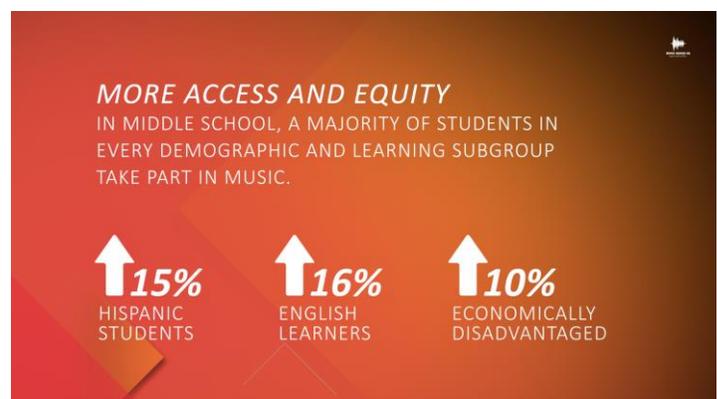
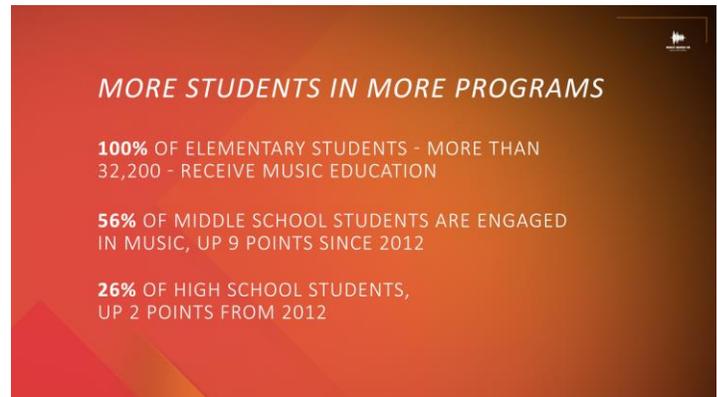
- Perseverance
- Patience
- Dedication
- Teamwork

“It taught me that no matter how frustrated you get, you shouldn’t give up,” said one ninth grade student.

“I learned a lot of teamwork, like it’s not all about me, and that applies to other classes. And I’m also learning patience,” said another.

“I’m proud because I wasn’t always a good clarinet player. It’s somewhere I’ve gotten to with just practice and perseverance and not giving up,” said a twelfth grader. “Everything I do, I try to persevere – classroom, anything I do, I think that’s something music has taught me.”

In an attempt to quantify these qualities, researchers measured student mindsets around intelligence, talent,



personal growth and music. Measuring mindset is done by asking students to rate their belief in themselves to grow and learn on a scale of one to six. For example, a six on the intelligence mindset scale means a student believes he or she can take steps and work hard to increase intelligence, while a one on the intelligence mindset means a student believes intelligence is inborn and cannot change.

Students in music showed consistently higher scores on the mindset measure, meaning they are optimistic, confident and see great potential to improve themselves through hard work. Ninth grade music students had some of the highest mindset scores, affirming the theory that the longer students are involved in music, the more benefits they reap.

	Intelligence Growth Mindset	Talent Growth Mindset	Personal Growth Mindset	Overall Growth Mindset	Music Mindset
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Music Students <sup>1</sup> (n=91)	4.98	5.16	4.13	4.76	4.03
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Music Students (n=18)	5.05	5.35 ↑	4.78 ↑	5.06 ↑	3.62
Non-Music Students (n=29)	4.43 ↓	4.36 ↓	3.91 ↓	4.23 ↓	2.98 ↓
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Music Students (n=15)	5.05	5.10	4.74	4.96	5.07 ↑
Non-Music Students (n=12)	5.00	4.81	4.27	4.69	3.15
≤ 1 Year HS Music (n=9)	4.92	4.75	4.20	4.62	3.12
> 1 Year HS Music (n=18)	5.09 ↑	5.08	4.70	4.96	4.83
Elementary through High School Music (n=38)	4.91	4.93	4.37	4.74	3.83

Scale: 1 = fixed mindset, 6 = growth mindset  
 Arrows highlight the highest (↑) and lowest (↓) ratings in each mindset column.

“Measuring mindset is gaining use as a way to measure the effects of social and emotional learning in education, including on the next generation of the National Assessment of Educational Progress,” said Schell. “We are thrilled that overall our students seem to have a positive mindset, but particularly with music students. This means we are on the right track. This gives us the data to support continued growth of the Music Makes Us initiative.”

The keys to that growth, according to *Interlude*, are both operational and strategic. The study makes several recommendations, including a close look at scheduling practices to help students make room for more music classes, as well as finding ways to attract more African American students and developing an instructional technology plan for music. It also makes recommendations around teacher professional development and strengthening music infrastructure like dedicated music rooms and increasing instrument inventory to meet growing demands. Continued and deepening engagement of our community as a hallmark of the program is also vital to the next phase of growth.

“We are grateful for these recommendations. They are a great guide for us to use in making the big decisions in our district,” said Henson. “When we look at the capital budget or processes for class scheduling or developing learning opportunities for teachers, we can always keep in mind how our decisions can make a positive impact on music education programs in our schools.”

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### Metro Nashville Public Schools

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools is the nation’s 42<sup>nd</sup> largest district, preparing more than 86,000 students to excel in higher education, work and life. With the goal of being the first choice for Nashville’s families, Metro Schools is committed to providing a high quality education to every student. The district is earning a national reputation for urban school reform, its commitment to social and emotional learning and rising academic achievement. Its strategic plan, *Education 2018: Excellence for Every Student*, sets the goal of becoming the nation’s top performing urban school system by 2018. The governing body for Metro Schools is the Metropolitan Nashville Board of Public Education, a nine-member elected body. For more information, visit [www.mnps.org](http://www.mnps.org).

**Music Makes Us**

A joint effort of Metro Nashville Public Schools, the Mayor's Office and music industry and community leaders, the Music Makes Us® initiative aspires to be a national leader in music education. With a focus on music literacy and student participation, Music Makes Us® is strengthening traditional school music while adding a contemporary curriculum that embraces new technologies and reflects a diverse musical landscape.