

From: [Danielle Kaplowitz](#)
To: [BOR AllReps](#)
Subject: DO NOT CUT ELEMENTARY MUSIC
Date: Monday, March 18, 2024 9:27:17 AM

Cutting elementary music is absolutely unacceptable! Music plays such an important role in the lives of these kids.

How can you cut a program like to this? This is shameful and not what the residents of Stamford want.

Do the right thing. Keep music in our schools!

Sincerely,

Danielle Kaplowitz
2 kids at Stilmeadow

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Jacqueline Sanita](#)
To: [Board of Representatives](#)
Subject: Music
Date: Monday, March 18, 2024 10:10:04 AM

Hello,

I am a parent with a small child in Stamford, CT. We love Stamford and hope to stay here to raise our family. I have heard about elementary music no longer being provided and this is incredibly disappointing news. Instruments are an amazing tool for a child's brain development with so many benefits. I hope the board will reconsider this.

Best,
Jackie Harnish

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Jess Casinelli](#)
To: [Board of Representatives](#)
Subject: Budget Cuts - Music Department
Date: Monday, March 18, 2024 1:51:16 PM

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jessica Casinelli, I was born and raised in Stamford, CT where my family and friends all still reside, and where I potentially plan to move back to in the future upon having kids. I am currently living in Los Angeles, CA as a singer/songwriter and Music Paralegal in the music industry.

It has come to my attention that the Stamford Board of Reps are looking to cut the music department from elementary (and possibly other) schools. I can assure you this will be a detrimental mistake. There is scientific proof that music is healing.. without it, you run the risk of creating an environment that contains a higher amount of hostility, violence and unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Children NEED art, music, creativity to help navigate the ways they express themselves. It WILL help them learn and become better people as they grow in the community.

I strongly and wholeheartedly disagree with this consideration to cut the music departments and would like to find out which ways I (and others who believe the same) can help to make sure it does not happen.

Please let me know as soon as possible.

Thank you,
Jessica Casinelli

jessicacasinelli7@gmail.com
(203) 962-4735

From: [Brianna Allen O'Connor](#)
To: [BOR AllReps](#)
Subject: Elementary instrumental music
Date: Monday, March 18, 2024 2:46:05 PM

Hello there

I am a resident of Stamford, CT and upon hearing about the cancellation of instrumental music in elementary schools I am appalled. It has always been a very important part of education and experience for young children. I hope this is changed.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Reischea Canidate-Kapasouris](#)
To: [Donoghue, Tracy](#); [Mahoney, Dennis](#); [Freedman, Richard](#); [Rinaldi, Mary Lou](#); [Alswanger, Geoff](#); [Burwick, Laura](#); [McMullen, J.R.](#); Mayoroffice@stamford.gov; [Simmons, Caroline](#); [Rosenson, Valerie](#); [Curtis, Jeff](#); [Board of Representatives](#); [Cottrell, Megan](#); [Watkins, David](#); [de la Cruz, Virgil](#); [Fedeli, Mary Lisa](#); [Sherwood, Nina](#); [BOR AllReps](#); [George, Andy](#); [Munshi-South, Versha](#); [Better-Wirz, Antonia](#); [Larobina, Michael](#); [Esses, Joshua](#); [Hyman, Michael](#); [Heftman, Jackie](#); [Hamman, Rebecca](#); [Koc, Gabriela](#); [Gonzalez, Jennifer](#); [Stamford Public Schools - Superintendent's Office](#)
Subject: Stamford Public Schools Budget Request
Date: Monday, March 18, 2024 10:06:06 PM
Attachments: [SPS Budget Letter for "24-"25 \(1\).pdf](#)

To: The Board of Finance, Board of Representatives, Board of Education, Dr. Lucero and Mayor Simmons

My name is Reischea Canidate-Kapasouris. My husband Alexandros and I are long time residents of Stamford with two children currently attending Stamford Public Schools. Our 13 year old son is a seventh grader at Scofield Magnet Middle School, went to Newfield Elementary School and even attended Apples for preschool. Our soon to be 8 year old daughter is in the second grade at Newfield Elementary School. Both also play hockey for the Stamford Sharks at Terry Conners Rink, we are a Stamford family through and through!

As public school attendees ourselves, be it outside of Connecticut all together, providing our kids a diverse community and top notch education has always been of great importance to us. We both had that background in our respective school experiences and wanted to be certain our kids got the same rich exposure as well. We have achieved those goals within Stamford Public Schools. Unfortunately, as is the case with many public school districts, the necessary funds to continue growth and forward momentum are difficult to maintain. A school district the size of Stamfords is basically a small city in and of itself and the necessary budget to maintain that small city is significant. Which is why I am compelled to send this letter.

Our Superintendent, Dr. Lucero has presented a budget reflecting Stamford Public Schools overall needs. When COVID hit, everyone

made sacrifices, because we were in uncharted territory. When something of that magnitude happens, you band together as a community to support one another. We were proud that our schools did their part. That said, the sacrifices were necessities with some being met by a temporary fix with COVID funds. With those funds expiring, the necessities need to be addressed in order to be made whole. Dr. Lucero and SPS are looking to assure our students, teachers and staff are getting what is necessary to thrive in their learning environment. Anything less than the bare minimum requested sinks us further into the perpetual hole that SPS has been trying to scratch out of even **before** COVID hit.

Dr. Lucero's current budget request is not a suggestion in need of your further revision. Dr. Lucero and her team have done the extremely difficult work to make sure every dollar is accounted for. If you look at the past budget requests, 'wasteful' is not a term you can associate with the budget line items she has been associated with. Yes, the number is big, but when you are continually trying to make up for past cuts and add a pandemic on top, this 'ask' could easily be much greater.

SPS is not alone, and the circumstances have hit most districts the same. Danbury asked for a 20% increase, Bridgeport asked for a 22% increase. While it is easy to see how a school district could come to an increase of that size, those districts know that more work needs to be done to find a more manageable situation. Norwalk did their work and parred their ask down to 8.2%. Like Norwalk, Dr. Lucero and her team did the work and are asking for a 6.43% increase. Dr. Lucero is being fiscally responsible in asking for the absolute need to keep SPS moving forward and not falling behind.

Please do your part. We know this means raising the taxes of the residents of Stamford, but just as Stamford Public Schools sacrificed for our community, the community needs to respond in kind for the

betterment of the kids in our community. Maintaining and growing the type of diverse learning environment that has enriched the lives of so many kids, including my own, is worth every penny!

Respectfully,
Reischea Canidate-Kapasouris
Scofield & Newfield Parent
Stamford Community Resident

From: [Bette MocarSKI](#)
To: [BOR AllReps](#)
Subject: Stamford Elementary Instrumental Program
Date: Monday, March 18, 2024 10:45:22 PM

To the leaders in Stamford,

I am shocked and disappointed that our educational leaders and BOE and BOF members would consider eliminating our elementary instrumental program. It is well known that music and academics are related. Music impacts our students lives in positive ways that results in better attendance, better grades, and overall better students.

I am a parent of a Stamford Public School graduate. My child had the privilege of attending Westover Elementary School which had a music and arts focus, then attended Cloonan Middle school and played in the concert band, and finally finished at Westhill and participated in their very active and vibrant marching band, as well as the concert band and jazz band. She went on to participate in her college marching band for four years. Stamford Public Schools fostered her music from the beginning and it had a direct impact on the direction of her academic career.

Participation in the music programs help to shape the education and contribute to the success of students careers. The positive outcome and experience that comes from a strong music program can not be measured.

How can our public school systems expect that kind of participation if it does not begin in elementary school?

How can Stamford Public Schools compete with surrounding communities if we are cutting funding for essential programs?

What kind of citizens are our Stamford schools producing if the arts are not part of their background?

Where are our leaders? What board member or politician in Stamford has not benefited from the music and arts in our city?

I fully support keeping the Elementary Instrumental program and urge our leaders to work toward that result. I will be supporting elected officials in Stamford that support our music in our schools.

Bette MocarSKI
203-536-8175

From: [Cuesta, Rachel](#)
To: [Donoghue, Tracy](#); [Freedman, Richard](#); [Rinaldi, Mary Lou](#); [Alswanger, Geoff](#); [Burwick, Laura](#); [Mahoney, Dennis](#); [McMullen, J.R.](#); [Simmons, Caroline](#); [Board of Representatives](#); [Curtis, Jeff](#); [Gonzalez, Jennifer](#); [Mayor's Office](#); [Koc, Gabriela](#); [Heftman, Jackie](#); [Hamman, Rebecca](#); [Hyman, Michael](#); [Esses, Joshua](#); [Larobina, Michael](#); [Better-Wirz, Antonia](#); [Munshi-South, Versha](#); [George, Andy](#)
Subject: Music Cut in Education
Date: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 2:04:57 PM

Dear Board of Education and Finance

I am a 2nd grade teacher at Strawberry Hill School and mother to two boys in Stamford Public Schools (2nd and 4th grade). Music is very imperative in elementary school! Many studies and research has shown improvement in math and reading when students are encouraged to learn, play and read music. My son, Charlie, is in 4th grade. The joy in his face when he was able to begin instrumental lessons this year was tremendous. I have seen much improvement in his literacy and writing as well.

I am from a family of musicians. My dad played the saxophone and clarinet and my uncle is a music teacher and performer in Florida. It allowed myself to connect to my elders as well as my son. I played the clarinet when I was in elementary school and through high school. It was a key factor in some of my extra curricular activities. It was always a highlight in my year to have my band concert. My son is feeling similar as well right now. They are busy preparing for their concert.

It has taught him discipline and structure in his school day as well as at home. It allows him a creative outlet that he may not otherwise have an opportunity to have.

I feel as though it would be a travesty to our students and district to lose this role in elementary schools. It would put our students further behind in many aspects of school as compared to other districts in our area.

Please consider helping preserve our budget so our instrumental program can stay intact.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Rachel Cuesta

2nd Grade Teacher
Strawberry Hill School

From: [Reina D](#)
To: [Donoghue, Tracy](#); [Freedman, Richard](#); [Rinaldi, Mary Lou](#); [Alswanger, Geoff](#); [Burwick, Laura](#); [Mahoney, Dennis](#); [McMullen, J.R.](#); [Simmons, Caroline](#); [Board of Representatives](#); [Curtis, Jeff](#); [Gonzalez, Jennifer](#); [Mayor's Office](#); [Koc, Gabriela](#); [Heftman, Jackie](#); [Hamman, Rebecca](#); [Hyman, Michael](#); [Esses, Joshua](#); [Larobina, Michael](#); [Better-Wirz, Antonia](#); [Munshi-South, Versha](#); [George, Andy](#)
Subject: Proposed Cuts to Elementary Instrumental Music Program
Date: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 7:47:44 PM

Dear Elected Officials of Stamford,

I hope this message finds you well. I am reaching out to in regards to the concerning news about the proposed cuts to the Elementary Instrumental Music Program in the Stamford district. As educators, we understand the value that music education brings not only in developing musical skills but also in enhancing overall academic achievement. Research shows that learning to play an instrument can improve cognitive development, focus, and discipline among students.

As a parent, I believe that preserving the Elementary Instrumental Music Program is crucial for the holistic development of our children. I speak on behalf of my daughter when I say, it provides her with a creative outlet, fosters teamwork, and cultivates a love for music that can last a lifetime. The benefits of music education extend far beyond the notes on a page, enriching students' lives in profound ways.

I encourage you to explore other potential avenues to save cost for taxpayers rather than sacrificing opportunities for our youth to develop and grow. Please advocate for the continuation of the program. Your support and collaboration in this effort are invaluable.

Thank you for your attention and service to our city.

Warm regards,

Reina Di Nino

Parent and Staff Member of Stamford Public Schools

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Nolan Zeide](#)
To: [Board of Representatives](#)
Subject: Music Education
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 6:50:23 AM

To the Board of Representatives,

as a life long Stamford resident and current business owner in this city i am appalled at the possibility that music education is on the docket to be cut.

This is shameful. Music is a MAJOR part of my life, my solace. My children understand the fun and beauty that playing an instrument brings. My heart weeps at the possibility that they may lose this opportunity.

Let's do better Stamford.

i am happy to speak and politic or do whatever is needed to ensure that the music programs in Stamford can continue.

Respectfully

Nolan I.Zeide DVM

Student of Phil Schutzman-he taught me saxophone at Westover Elementary School and then Jazz Band at Westhill High School

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Ferrante, Laurie](#)
To: [Donoghue, Tracy](#); [Freedman, Richard](#); [Rinaldi, Mary Lou](#); [Alswanger, Geoff](#); [Burwick, Laura](#); [Mahoney, Dennis](#); [McMullen, J.R.](#); [Simmons, Caroline](#); [Board of Representatives](#); [Curtis, Jeff](#); [Gonzalez, Jennifer](#); [Mayor's Office](#); [Koc, Gabriela](#); [Heftman, Jackie](#); [Hamman, Rebecca](#); [Hyman, Michael](#); [Esses, Joshua](#); [Larobina, Michael](#); [Better-Wirz, Antonia](#); [Munshi-South, Versha](#); [George, Andy](#)
Cc: [Jay, Jonathan](#); [Goldstein, Seth](#); [Errico, Alexandra](#); [Rodriguez, Frank](#); [Carlton, Sandra](#); [Bianco, Jeffrey](#)
Subject: Budget cuts
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 10:26:40 AM

Good Morning,

How does a district that takes pride in fostering the Mind, Body and Heart of it's students and staff think about eliminating Elementary Music Positions? How are we to "reimagine" what that looks like when it is so vital to the mind, body and heart of our students, our community and our nation?

I have been teaching art for a very long time. It is a lonely occupation as it is not deemed important until there is a contest or an exhibit needed. Our budgets are cut and we are expected to produce. Our positions get cut but the expectations are the same, we work magic every day.

My daughter asked me, "How do you do it mom?", so much bad press out there. I told her I hold on to the good I know I'm doing for my students. I know I'm helping their mental health even if I do it quietly, while no one is watching. I know it's important.

The thought of eliminating the introduction to instrumental music on the elementary level would cause a ripple effect that would last longer than one fiscal year. Let's face it, we're not dumb, once it's gone, it's not coming back. Then we'll be asked to rally, which we always do, and what will be cut next?

Those elementary band kids catch the bug and it stays with them through middle and high school. You need the hook when they are young and impressionable, not teens who want to be cool. Those band kids grow to have a higher graduation rate and many of them use their skills to acquire scholarships for higher education.

In a district that struggles with attendance and graduation rates can we afford to not support those kids before they even start? NO!

I implore you all to look to other areas that can be trimmed, support the arts, save instrumental music!

Have a great day!

Laurie Ferrante

IB Design

Strawberry Hill

From: [Morgan Walton](#)
To: [Donoghue, Tracy](#); [Freedman, Richard](#); [Rinaldi, Mary Lou](#); [Alswanger, Geoff](#); [Burwick, Laura](#); [Mahoney, Dennis](#); [McMullen, J.R.](#); [Simmons, Caroline](#); [Board of Representatives](#); [Curtis, Jeff](#); [Gonzalez, Jennifer](#); [Mayor's Office](#); [Koc, Gabriela](#); [Heftman, Jackie](#); [Hamman, Rebecca](#); [Hyman, Michael](#); [Esses, Joshua](#); [Larobina, Michael](#); [Better-Wirz, Antonia](#); [Munshi-South, Versha](#); [George, Andy](#)
Subject: Music Programs at SPS
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 7:54:28 PM

Dear Board of Education and Finance,

My name is Morgan Walton and I am teacher in SPS as well as have 3 students enrolled at Roxbury Elementary School. I truly can't imagine my student's elementary school experience without the amazing music program. My daughter Sienna is in 5th grade and has been playing flute for the past 2 years. She is so excited to continue band in middle school next year. Without the elementary school band program, there would be no students to feed into the middle school! This year the 5th grade put on an amazing performance in collaboration with the 2 music teachers at her school as well as the band teacher. The performance included dancers, singers, actors and a performance from her "rockchestra". They are also planning to march in the parade on Memorial Day. They have performed at the Stamford Mall for the holidays, an all school sing-along Veteran's Day celebration, and so many other amazing seasonal concerts. These concerts have allowed me as a parent to feel a part of the school community. My daughter's love and joy of music has also transferred to her younger siblings who are now so excited to be part of band next year. They also have been in awe of watching these performances. SPS's slogan is "mind, body, heart" and the band program has truly developed all of those areas in my children. Please consider the positive impact that band and music programs can have on our students when making decisions for budget cuts for next school year.

Thank you for reading.

Sincerely,
Morgan Walton

From: [Mohammed Mahdi](#)
To: [Donoghue, Tracy](#); [Freedman, Richard](#); [Rinaldi, Mary Lou](#); [Alswanger, Geoff](#); [Burwick, Laura](#); [Mahoney, Dennis](#); [McMullen, J.R.](#); [Simmons, Caroline](#); [Board of Representatives](#); [Curtis, Jeff](#)
Cc: [Gonzalez, Jennifer](#); [Mayor's Office](#); [Koc, Gabriela](#); [Heftman, Jackie](#); [Hamman, Rebecca](#); [Hyman, Michael](#); [Esses, Joshua](#); [Larobina, Michael](#); [Better-Wirz, Antonia](#); [Munshi-South, Versha](#); [George, Andy](#)
Subject: Keep music in our schools
Date: Thursday, March 21, 2024 9:24:53 AM

Dear Members of the Boards,

I am a father of four children go to Strawberry Hill school in Stamford.
I strongly believe that the arts are fundamental to student growth and creativity and it would be a devastating loss if it were to be cut.

I am kindly asking the boards members to keep art and music in our schools.

I strongly believe that cutting arts and elementary strings and instrumental music is a step backward that will damage the development of our children and future society.

Cutting the art and music in school represents a resignation of our society and nation from the leading position to build a better future.

Best Regards,
Mohammed Mahdi

From: [Eugenio Pirri](#)
To: [Gonzalez, Jennifer](#); [Mayor's Office](#); [Koc, Gabriela](#); [Heftman, Jackie](#); [Hamman, Rebecca](#); [Hyman, Michael](#); [Esses, Joshua](#); [Larobina, Michael](#); [Better-Wirz, Antonia](#); [Munshi-South, Versha](#); [George, Andy](#)
Cc: [Donoghue, Tracy](#); [Freedman, Richard](#); [Rinaldi, Mary Lou](#); [Alswanger, Geoff](#); [Burwick, Laura](#); [Mahoney, Dennis](#); [McMullen, J.R.](#); [Simmons, Caroline](#); [Board of Representatives](#); [Curtis, Jeff](#)
Subject: Opposed to any Budgets Cuts towards our Elementary schools music program!!!!
Date: Thursday, March 21, 2024 1:53:39 PM

To whom this may concern,

I, along with many other family, parents are opposed to the possible budget cuts of our elementary schools, and how elementary string and musical instruments may be cut out.

This would be such a devastating loss!!!

Music is essential as it is fundamental at such a young age for children!

What does come in about with the city and their decisions that are really being made! I'm sure there are a few board members that should have their pay cut! We have parents have been providing our children's schools with supplies since Covid! In the past, we've never had to supply our schools with so much inventory of paper, pencils, pens, crayons, paper, towels, stationary, and etc. where have those funds gone!

Music is essential in many ways where it helps children with their depression and possible anxiety disorders along with many other issues that they may have going on in their lives. The children who are in the music chose to be! And it's a time that they can be away from their iPads or electronics. It's good for their brain and their well-being! Please keep music and sports off the chopping block.

I must say though some schools actually need better music teachers that are qualified.

Thank you for taking the time to have read this.

Hopefully I along with many other Family parents will not have to worry about this matter any further than it being discussed about .

Cordially,
Eugenio Pirri

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Jess Casinelli](#)
To: [Board of Representatives](#); [BOE - Elected Officials](#); [Stamford Public Schools - Superintendent's Office](#)
Subject: Re: Budget Cuts - Music Department
Date: Thursday, March 21, 2024 3:55:44 PM

Hi there,

Kindly following up on the below and adding in Board of Education and SPS Super.

Please let me know what we can do to help make sure this does not happen.

Thank you,
Jessica Casinelli

On Mon, Mar 18, 2024 at 10:50 AM Jess Casinelli <jessicacasinelli7@gmail.com> wrote:

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jessica Casinelli, I was born and raised in Stamford, CT where my family and friends all still reside, and where I potentially plan to move back to in the future upon having kids. I am currently living in Los Angeles, CA as a singer/songwriter and Music Paralegal in the music industry.

It has come to my attention that the Stamford Board of Reps are looking to cut the music department from elementary (and possibly other) schools. I can assure you this will be a detrimental mistake. There is scientific proof that music is healing.. without it, you run the risk of creating an environment that contains a higher amount of hostility, violence and unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Children NEED art, music, creativity to help navigate the ways they express themselves. It WILL help them learn and become better people as they grow in the community.

I strongly and wholeheartedly disagree with this consideration to cut the music departments and would like to find out which ways I (and others who believe the same) can help to make sure it does not happen.

Please let me know as soon as possible.

Thank you,
Jessica Casinelli

jessicacasinelli7@gmail.com
(203) 962-4735