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“This is a very powerful feeling. I myself have truly experienced this for the first time here at Bloomfield in just the past week or two.”

Lange wants to add more band and choir opportunities and competitions. She envisions students regularly achieving Superior ratings at competitions within five years.

“I want my students to grow an appreciation for all kinds of music,” she said. “I want my students to know what it feels like to play a piece of music that really touches our community in ways that they didn’t know a high school band or choir could. I want my students to appreciate the true effect that music can have and how to get there. I want my students to realize the hard work it takes to truly have this effect but to also understand what it feels like when they achieve this.”

Lange is turning more attention now toward the elementary music program. She has plans to begin teaching the intricacies of reading music as early as kindergarten, phasing in an elementary curriculum that directly correlates with that of the junior high and high school program.

“I am very excited to see the impact of the seamless music education these students will receive,” Lange said.

What the Future Holds for Public School Music Programs

With ever-tightening school budgets looking for sustainable ways to move forward, non-academic programs come under scrutiny in many school districts. So how can schools justify spending money in music when they’re looking to make program cuts?

“If music is taught correctly, it can teach the students things that other subjects don’t have the opportunity to,” Lange said.

Like sports, music teaches teamwork, work ethic, consistency, self confidence, emotional regulation, and other valuable life skills. However, rather than using competition to develop these skills, music teaches students to use creative expression.

“Our goal as musicians is to get the audience to feel what the music is saying,” Lange said. “This can be anything from sadness to happiness to sorrow to love to anger to disappointment and so many, many more.”

One life skill in which music excels in teaching is self discipline, Lange says.

“You can argue that you can practice every element of a basketball game on your own, but at the end of the day, you need an opponent,” she explained. “With music, you can practice every element of the song from articulation to dynamics on your own and bring it to the ensemble for refining. Not only that, but you can create a complete piece of music completely on your own and still reach the same emotions.”

Finally, involvement in music is timeless, Lange says. People eventually outgrow sports, even if they make it the professional level. The gift of music is a gift for life.

“You can be a part of music for life,” Lange said. “You never get too old to be a part of music. You can always participate in your church choir or community band. You never get too old to be a part of music. I see more students graduating from Bloomfield seeing the importance of music and finding ways for music to be a part of their lives after graduation even if they aren’t following a music career.”

■ by Rita Brbel



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