Statements of Philosophy

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**Teaching Philosophy.** All humans have the capacity to learn. The objective of teaching is to elicit change in students. Whether attempting to change the conceptualization of complex ideas or changing a specific performance technique, change does not come easily so teaching, as a result, is a difficult task. Teachers must be prepared to identify and address varying levels of knowledge and skill, varying stages of readiness to learn, and varying learning styles when attempting to affect change in students. They must also be cognizant of socioeconomic inequalities, personal conflicts, and family dynamics that impact learning. They must then plan and deliver instruction accordingly. The realization that all students can learn, but not necessarily at the same level or rate, or in the same way, should persuade teachers to use varying methods of delivery, present the same content in multiple ways, and offer opportunities for remediation and enrichment. By doing this, all students are given the opportunity to learn.

**Music Philosophy.** Music is a vital component of the human experience. All humans experience music in some way. Whether singing, playing an instrument, composing, writing about music, or active or passive listening, music functions as an enriching agent in all lives. Even people who claim to not be musical benefit from the presence of music in their environment. Music acts as a soothing presence in times of stress, can alter the perception of time when waiting, and can help us to express emotions that are difficult to express verbally. Music’s power to reach the depths of the human psyche increases with a better understanding of the mechanics of music. Therefore, the development of the whole person is dependent upon the delivery of a comprehensive music curriculum.

**Philosophy of Music Education.** The belief that all students can learn coupled with the importance of music in the development of the whole person demands that music education must be available to all students. The current curricula in most secondary schools consist of band, orchestra, and/or chorus classes for a select few students. Music educators often perpetuate the myth that music education is only about the “gifted” or “talented” and not about educating all children in the deep effects of artistic experience that are important for all young people as they become adults. The view that music represents the “specials” in the curriculum simply must be jettisoned. This can only be accomplished when music educators design curricula that provide opportunities for all students to participate in music.