



In photo above, front row from left: Maria Walton, Mary Lou Bonnell, Brooke Hartpence and Libby Brozik. Back row from left: Robert Humphrey, Kate Flock, Cindy Briggs, Rebekah Valerio and Mike Ciranni.

Outstanding!

CARLSBAD, Calif. _Once again this year, the Newark Central School District has been designated as one of 527 Best Communities for Music Education in the United States by the NAMM Foundation.

This is the fifth consecutive year the NCSD has received the BCME designation. The BCME program of the NAMM Foundation recognizes and celebrates schools and districts for their support and commitment to music education.

The NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) Foundation is a nonprofit organization with the mission of advancing active participation in music making across the lifespan by supporting scientific research, philanthropic giving and public service programs from the international music products industry.

Now in its 18th year, BCME program recognizes outstanding efforts by teachers, administrators, parents, students and community leaders who work together to ensure access to music learning for all students as part of the school curriculum.

“Music is such an important part of our students’ education here in Newark,” said Cindy Briggs, K-12 Music Department Leader.

“Not only are students given the opportunity to participate in high quality performing ensembles but also given the opportunity through our General Music program to learn everything from musical cultures and how it relates to the world today through music technology. These opportunities exist and support our children in so many other aspects of their education including Social Studies and ELA as well as other core academic areas.

“Here in the Newark schools, we are fortunate to have the support of our District Administration and Board of Education, past and present, as well as the support of the community members and fellow colleagues,” Briggs continued. “This support highlights the importance of the arts in our community and is proof of the difference it makes in the lives of our Newark students. We have been fortunate these last 5 years to be recognized by the NAMM Foundation with this award. As a music staff member in the NCSD, I am very grateful for the recognition and support from our district.”

The NCSD received this prestigious designation again after the NCSD music department completed a detailed questionnaire about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program and other factors in the community that affect access to music education for all students.

The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas verifies responses with district officials and advisory organizations review the data.

Briggs credited Perkins School Music teacher Maria Walton with doing the lion’s share of work to prepare the application. “Maria did all the leg work for this which is very time consuming,” she said



The designation takes on added significance this year with new research showing strong ties between K-12 school students who actively participate in school music education programs and overall student success. A recent study of students in the Chicago Public Schools by brain researchers at Northwestern University, detailed in [Neuroscientist and Education Week](#), builds on previous findings that participation in music education programs helps improve brain function, discipline and language development.

“Studying music has intrinsic benefits and, on its own, is core to learning. Also, the links between student success and music education have now been demonstrated by brain researchers in multiple studies,” said Mary Luehrsen, Executive Director of The NAMM Foundation. “The schools and districts our foundation recognizes are building on that connection between music and academics. These schools and districts are models for other educators who see music as a key ingredient in a well-rounded curriculum that makes music available to all children, regardless of zip code.

“We have been awarding the Best Communities for Music Education for 18 years,” Luehrsen continued. “And it is heartening to see how many parents and community members check to see if their schools have been recognized. Parents are choosing to live where schools are committed to music education offerings that are part of the curriculum.”

Palmyra-Macedon Central School District and Wayne Central School District in Wayne County also received the

designation, as did the Honeoye Central School District and Honeoye Falls-Lima Central in Ontario County.

Eight Monroe County school districts _ Brighton Central, East Irondequoit Central, Greece Central, Penfield Central, Pittsford Central, Rush-Henrietta, Webster Central and West Irondequoit _ also received NAMM’s BCME designation.

Briggs, once again, commended the entire music department staff for its great work. The staff and its responsibilities include:

• [Robert Humphrey](#): NHS instrumental music teacher who also directs Concert Band, Wind Ensemble and Jazz Band. He directs the Pit Band for the NHS musicals; and gives grades 9-12 instrumental lessons.

• [Kate Flock](#): NHS vocal music teacher who also directs Mixed Chorus, Concert Choir and Vocal Jazz. She gives grades 9-12 vocal lessons and is the musical director for the NHS musicals.

• [Mike Ciranni](#): NHS television production teacher who also teaches Music In Our Lives, Audio Production and teaches general music at Newark Middle School.

• [Rebekah Valerio](#): NMS instrumental music teacher who directs sixth, seventh and eighth grade band and jazz band and gives grades 6-8 instrumental lessons.

• [Brooke Hartpence](#): NMS Vocal Music teacher who directs sixth, seventh and eighth grade chorus and teaches grades 6-8 general music.

• [Cindy Briggs](#): Kelley School instrumental music teacher who directs

Beginning Band, Continuing Band and gives grades 4-5 instrumental lessons.

• [Libby Brozik](#): Kelley School vocal music teacher who directs fourth and fifth grade chorus; teaches grades 3-5 general music.

• [Mary Lou Bonnell](#): Lincoln School general music teacher who also provides K-12 music therapy.

• [Maria Walton](#): Perkins School general music teacher.



In addition to music instruction provided daily by music staff and many music performances throughout the school year, Briggs highlighted some of the music-related activities the NCS D Music Department is connected with:

- Homecoming
- Memorial Day Ceremony
- Veteran's Day Ceremony
- Eastview Mall holiday performances
- Performances for adjudication at NYSSMA majors
- Participation in junior and senior high-level ensembles at the Hochstein School of Music in downtown Rochester.
- The Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra Holiday performance each December
- The ELENBE awards for the Performing Arts that are presented in May
- Community parades
- The Kelley School Veteran's Day Celebration each November
- Rotary Club performances
- The Newark High School & Newark Middle School musicals each Spring
- The Lincoln School Second Grade Holiday Performance
- The Lincoln School Field Day
- Lincoln School "Farewell Fridays"
- "The Young Americans" outreach tour and group workshops at NCS D every three years
- The Winter Jazz Guest Artist Performance
- Cabaret Night
- Chamber of Commerce performances

- Newark students participating in the RPO Holiday Pops Festival Chorus
- The Rochester International Jazz Festival performance
- Kelley School RPO field trips to the Eastman Theatre
- Newarkfest/Family Festival performances each year
- Representation in All-County
- Representation in Area All-State
- Representation at the state level in Conference All-State
- Representation at the Regional level in All-Eastern
- Participation in local and state sponsored solo festivals
- Evaluation of ensembles at the State level

"Newark Central School District's receiving NAMM's Best Communities for Music Education designation for the fifth year in a row is truly a well deserved honor for everyone in our music department," Superintendent Matt Cook said. "It is also outstanding because our talented staff engages hundreds of students, parents and other community members every year who contribute in so many ways to make it a great success."

