



Wakefield, MA (April 13, 2022) – For the tenth time in the past eleven years, the Wakefield Public Schools have been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education. Wakefield is one of 4% of districts across the nation and one of 12 school districts in Massachusetts receiving the prestigious award in 2022.

Now in its 23rd year, Best Communities for Music Education affirms school districts that have demonstrated exceptional efforts toward maintaining music education as part of schools' core curriculum. The Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. To qualify for the Best Communities designation, Wakefield answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

“I am very proud of the Wakefield Community, Wakefield Music Boosters and the Wakefield School Department for their continued support of music in the town of Wakefield. This is a K-12 designation, which shows the value that is put on music throughout the school system. Music education changed perhaps more than any other subject when school went remote in March of 2020. We have worked hard to return to normal, with a focus on diversity, inclusion and equity in the music department. The music staff, district administration and community have shown their dedication to providing a quality music education for all students. We will build back and be as strong as ever!” – Thomas Bankert, Wakefield Public Schools Director of Visual & Performing Arts.

Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational/cognitive and social skill benefits for children who make music: After two years of music education, researchers found that participants showed substantial improvements in how the brain processes speech and reading scores and that students who are involved in music are not only more likely to graduate high school, but also to attend college. Maybe the most important as we exit the pandemic are the social benefits in music education including conflict resolution, teamwork skills, and how to

give and receive constructive criticism.