

**In Search of
Collaboration • Cohesiveness • Comprehensiveness**

**North Salem School District Music Curriculum Study Project
Curriculum Consultant Report**

By

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November 7, 2008

Overview

The report summarizes the major findings and general themes to emerge from my work with the administration, faculty, parents and students at North Salem Central School District in their K-12 music education program self study.

Study Process and Report Structure

Data Sources

The report is based on the following four sets of data:

1. Music teachers' self study report of North Salem's K-12 music program
2. 5-Year Action Plan (generated out of the teachers' self-study work)
3. Individual interviews with District administrators, current and former Board of Education members, parents, and music teachers
4. Focus group discussions with PQ and MS/HS parents, and HS students

These data were collected over a 7-month period beginning in May 2008 and culminating in November 2008.

Analysis

The following resources were used in the analysis process:

1. All of the information contained in the data sets identified above
2. Comparative analysis of curricular, instructional and assessment structures drawn from New York State Music Standards and the MENC National Standards
3. *Goals for Student Performance in Music* as outlined by the template for self-study as provided by the administration
4. 5-Year Action Plan generated by the Music Teachers
5. Professional and Research Literature in Music Education

Report Construction

The report is presented in the same order as the *Goals for Student Performance in Music*. The components include:

Goal 1: K-5 Gen Music

Goal 2: NYSSMA Level 1 by Grade 5

Goal 3: Composition Grades 6-12

Goal 4: Middle School Electives

Goal 5: Music and Culture Grades 6-12

Goal 6: Reflection, Critique, Evaluation, Grades 6-12

Goal 7: NYSSMA Level 4 by grade 12

Miscellaneous Goals

The format of the report uses these 8 goals as a basis for discussion and includes the following:

1. Key areas for district attention (presented in bullet format for each goal).
2. Specific recommendations to consider targeting actions to address each keyed bullet point (presented adjacent to the bullet list).
3. Narrative summary that contextualizes recurrent ideas found in the data analysis, including brief commentary and rationales for suggestions.

Summary and Conclusion

The report ends with a general summary presented as “points” within the major themes as suggested by the analysis and findings. In addition, other observations / evaluations that reflect issues not specifically addressed or identified in the initial template, or teacher’s self study are included.

Closing Statement

A closing statement is provided that offers a set of 3 recommendations that the District should consider as significant if it wishes to move forward with an action plan designed to make an impact on the music learning of children who attend its schools.

Goals 1 and 2

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment at the K- 5 level

Goal 1: K- 5 General Music	Recommendations to Consider
<p>Key areas for focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Design • Scheduling • Equipment • Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin Curriculum Design / Development that includes a “phase by phase” approach with a target of completion by 2013. • Design Sequence of Focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Performing (singing, playing instruments in General Music) ○ Listening / Describing / Reading ○ Composing / Improvising

Goal 2: Grade 5 Ensemble NYSSMA Level 1	Recommendations to Consider
<p>Key areas for focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Design and Implementation • Data Collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate specific music production performance goals through current implementation (using methods books, solo and ensemble literature). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collect Data and Report <u>group</u> assessment ○ Collect Data and Report <u>individual</u> assessments (if possible) through “Benchmark” pieces selected from known (taught) repertoire • Articulate specific music Knowledge and Understanding goals.

Emergent Goals the work as “levers” on Goals 1 and 2	Recommendations to Consider
<p>Key areas for focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities = Auditorium / Classroom • Equipment • Administrative Talks / Professional Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin a professional development program for elementary teachers that focuses on curriculum and instruction. Consider an approach that ties into the District’s preferred design format or a more generic “Understanding by Design” format. • Establish on-going cross building (K-12) music department meetings focused on curriculum design and instruction. • Establish building focus group (arts and non-arts teachers, administrators, parents) to consider building a performing space (auditorium). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Begin discussion among music teachers and prepare a detailed report regarding room, equipment needs beyond current spaces.

Narrative Summary of K- 5 Goals (Goal 1 and Goal 2)

Curricular design and instruction (including assessment) appears across all six years (K-5) as the main department (grade /building level) goals.

Overall at the elementary level, the students’ musical lives would be greatly enhanced if departmental focus were directed to clearly articulated learning and performance goals. Especially worthy of consideration (in general music and the ensemble) are Musical Knowledge and Understanding Goals. Initially construct “exit goals” for Grade 5, and then move toward individual grade level goals that are focused on four primary ways of understanding music: Performing, Creating, Listening, and Cultural Context. For example, a Knowledge and Understanding Exit Goal focused on Creating, and achievable for Grade 5 general music, students might be:

Is aware of, and can describe and use qualities of musical sound (timbre, dynamics, articulation, pitch, rhythm and form) to express themselves through original compositions.

In instrumental music, an example that builds upon performing but is listening focused might be:

Is able to describe melodic construction of a piece of music using pitch movement (direction) and phrasing vocabulary (same, similar, different).

In the elementary band, student skills in musical production are most likely to be met using standardized methods and graded literature as identified in various professional compilations (NYSSMA, industry). I recommend that some sort of *conceptual framework* be considered as an anchor in curricular work in the ensemble that incorporates, but moves beyond, production. A format such as “comprehensive musicianship,” or “project design” might be examined for suitability and “connect ability” with 6-12 ensemble/general music curricular frameworks.

For example, in a *comprehensive musicianship* framework teachers would integrate the teaching and learning of performing, creating, and listening in music. One way to approach this would be for students to write short compositions using the performance knowledge/skills they have gained through instrument study. Another way might be for students to write a short descriptive paragraph about the ways melody, rhythm, dynamics, and form are used in a piece of music they plan to present in a concert. Another approach might ask students to discuss (describe conceptually and evaluative) their favorite piece of music and compare and contrast it with a piece in their method books.

Discussion among ensemble faculty is warranted in generating a conceptual framework for curricular work.

It is unknown whether new facilities (auditorium) would facilitate students’ achievement. More analysis of current classroom facilities would help determine whether a new configuration or additional room(s) would help meet curricular goals in general music. It appears, that a new performing space (auditorium) is needed for the ensemble to fulfill its function as a performing group. Concomitant with the needed performing space is a teaching /learning space that adequately supports the needs and requirements of equipment use and storage as well as literature storage. (This would include choral risers as currently employed in the general music program and the extra-curricular elementary chorus). Currently facilities usages impede faculty efficiency.

Literature and equipment (as identified in the report) for the ensemble is appropriate and necessary for meeting projected production (performance) goals.

Scheduling remains a continuing issue (especially in achieving parity with other “specials” including state mandates for minimum requirements for physical education) and needs to be looked at as an interactive force with the written curriculum and assessment goals. Leadership from faculty is suggested in providing options and rationales for increasing instruction time. It should be noted that curricular goals that are comprehensive in nature are not likely to be met given current time allocated to instruction (contact time). A minimum of 60 minutes a week would be considered a “starting point” for addressing rudimental (basic production) skill goals. Instructional time for K- 5 general music is currently insufficient to meet current state or national standards, yet sufficient in meeting district expectations for providing students a range of performing opportunities.

Staff development in the form of department wide collaboration is needed to address the above curriculum / instructional concerns. Observation of surrounding school district's (of similar enrollment) music programs would serve as an enhancement to faculty understanding of curricular/instructional practices and possibilities. Comparison to music programs in schools districts with larger overall enrollments is not recommended due to size differences, as well as curricular, instructional and philosophical differences. What would likely serve needs more substantively is for the district to consider ongoing or targeted consultancy opportunities that directly relate to curriculum design, and integration of technology into existing instructional practices.

Additional areas to consider as curriculum work proceeds would include an "interface" with the Enrichment Program that currently exists within the PQ's after school structure. Determine the purpose and role of the music faculty's involvement in the program, will it be advisory, partnership, consultancy, etc.

Create and make visible informational sources (Website, brochure, weekly newsletters, etc.) that communicate to the parents and community the nature and scope of the K-12 music program—including overall goals and course/grade level goals. Images, sound files, student work/testimonials, along with more detailed policy and procedures for participating in various offerings should be generated. Plus, consider an action plan for communicating how the community / parents can access information on a continuous basis.

Goals 3- 7

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment at the 6-12 level

Goal 3: Composition Grades 6-12	Recommendations to Consider
<p>Key areas for focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Collection (ongoing) -- current composition program • Curriculum Design • Differentiated Instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue use of current assessment tools (current program). • Report student achievement and then adjust curricular/ instruction based upon analysis of student achievement. • Begin Curriculum Design / Development that includes a “phase by phase” approach with a target of completion by 2013. Use a thematic focus that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sounds / Sources ○ Organization / Forms ○ Contexts / Meanings • Look nationally for similar composition programs for comparative analysis. • Analyze teacher-student ratio in class and develop optimal number of special learners in a class that can be accommodated. Analysis of support services with recommendations for services required for optimal learning for special learners within the composition class. Coordinate with district personnel in charge of exceptional/special students’ services. • Begin a professional development plan (in-service seminar/clinic, curriculum consultant) for secondary teachers that focuses on differentiated instruction, emphasizing gender interest and “special

	<p>learners.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and articulate venues for student exhibitions of compositional work.
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Goal 4: Middle School Electives (Grades 6-8)	Recommendations to Consider
<p>Key areas for focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling • Curriculum Design • Create new (other) performance electives for students (grade 8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For band: Preserve 6, 7 and 8 grades as separate band units in order to ensure a curricular structure and workable class that promotes comprehensive activities (creating, listening, and performing). • Devise a “push in” schedule to accommodate individualized or sectional instruction by instrument or ability. • For 6-8 band/choir students. Devise or construct opportunities for students to enroll in both band and chorus. • For chorus: Preserve 6, 7 and 8 grades as separate choral units in order to ensure a curricular structure and workable class that promotes comprehensive activities (creating, listening, and performing). • Consider offering other vocal (e.g., popular, historical, ethnic,) music performance offerings and begin curriculum design. • Explore other instrumental performance electives based on popular / contemporary groupings as potential curricular offerings and begin curriculum design. (See below: Emergent Goals that work as “levers” on Goals 3-7).

Goal 5: Music and Culture Grades 6-12	Recommendations to Consider
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<p>Key areas for focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling • Curriculum Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a conceptual framework for envisioning curriculum work. Consider an approach that ties into the District’s preferred format or a more generic “Understanding by Design” format. Also consider a format that “cuts” across current course/class offerings. • Begin process with choral area building upon the “Madrigal Feast” and the “40s Era-/ Inter disciplinary Project.” Identify Knowledge and Understanding Goals.
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<p>Goal 6: Reflection, Critique, Evaluation, 6-12</p>	<p>Recommendations to Consider</p>
<p>Key areas for focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect data of current student achievement within current classes using existing teacher assessment tools: Band, chorus, general music (grades 6,7,8), electives (Foundations of Music, Composition & Improvisation, Digital Audio & Video, Music Theater Performance). Determine District level of proficiency. • Articulate clearly what <i>reflection, critique, and evaluation</i> mean in the different course offerings. Consider linking these ideas to the District’s preferred curricular design format or a more generic “Understanding by Design.” • Begin process of designing assessment tools focused on <i>reflection, critique, and evaluation</i> for each class offered. • Collect and review professional resources currently available in the literature. • Begin a professional development plan (in-service seminar/clinic, curriculum consultant) for secondary teachers that focuses on assessment, emphasizing use

	and analysis of data acquired.
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Goal 7: NYSSMA Level 4 6-12 -- instrumental / band	Recommendations to Consider
<p>Key areas for focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction –“Push in” model • Curriculum Design— focus on skill proficiencies as delineated by specific instrument • Data Collection (ongoing) – within current program focused on skill proficiencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire an instrumental specialist to address students’ skill learning within the band. • Conceptually articulate the rationale and procedures for organizing skill instruction around the “Push – In” model. • <i>Note</i> see document prepared by 6-12 instrumental teachers.

Emergent Goals that work as “levers” on Goals 3-7	Recommendations to Consider
<p>Key areas for focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electives – that are non-performance at HS • Electives that are performance at HS • Visibility of current electives at 8- 12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptualize, design, and organize a set of non-performance electives. Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Listening – Appreciation class ○ Theory – Culture/History Class ○ Combination of the above • Conceptualize, design, and organize a set of performance electives. Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guitar Fundamentals ○ Guitar Advanced Performance ○ Rock Band ○ “Ad hoc” / “Pick up” bands based upon student skills, choice of instruments, and/or friendship

	<p style="text-align: center;">groupings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Latin / African Drumming Groups ○ Jazz / Pop Singers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish a highly visible presence of student work based upon the activities and projects accomplished in the general music class (6-8), and the 8-12 electives.
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Narrative Summary of 6-12 Goals (Goal 3 through 7)

Curricular design and instruction (including assessment) appears within the MS and HS as the main department (grade /building level) goals Design and instruction is coupled with specific elements/ components as described below.

Hire an instrumental music specialist (goal 7) with the specific goal of addressing the skill/performance level of students electing to learn music through the ensemble (band). Create a job description that delineates two to three ways in which this specialist’s expertise might be used and interfaces with current faculty expertise and loads. For example, decide course loads and focus, including potentials for teaching electives or “interfacing” with PQ elementary program.

Parents and faculty along with a few students from the student focus group have indicated the need to address the skill levels of students studying in the performance offerings in the MS/HS (band). The goal of adequately preparing students for college admittance that lead to careers in music remains nearly impossible given current curricular and staffing structures. The faculty at the MS/HS have (for the past several years) devised an instructional model, which they call a “push-in” model, for addressing the basic proficiencies necessary for any student wishing to pursue collegiate admission/instruction. This push-in model seems quite practical, doable, and educationally sound. Plus, it is virtually non-disruptive to existing instructional structures and curricular offerings already in place at the MS/HS. The plan utilizes the expertise of the existing faculty, plus addresses other curricular needs (maintenance of the general music core and current elective offerings) but requires that additional faculty become a member of the team. The new team member would have the dedicated responsibility of focusing primary on the skill development of students participating in the ensemble.

Articulate conceptually and practically how a “push-In” model for instruction works, especially as it compares to the “pull-out” model. Include rationale and description of how the model solves the problem of addressing student skill development. Suggest ways in which the new hire/instrumental specialist or current faculty will implement the approach. Address load and provision of electives where/if appropriate, for new hire/instrumental specialist. Develop a list

(cost) of resources, materials, and equipment necessary to facilitate students' learning in the "push-in" model and large ensemble model.

Collect student achievement information in order to assess current level of student performance in existing classes. An assessment matrix that identifies current skills, knowledge and understanding of music for each of the middle school general music classes should be generated. Results from teacher testing based on the skills, knowledge and understanding goals should be recorded and analyzed for current proficiency levels, along with percentages of students meeting proficiency. The same process should be implemented in the high school (and grade 8) electives: Foundations of Music, Composition & Improvisation, Music Theater Performance & Digital Audio & Video (goal 3). Collect student achievement data specifically focused on "reflection, critique, and evaluation" following the same matrix generating procedure (goal 6).

Create curricular experiences that will address the music and culture goal (goal 5). As a goal, this type of learning might best be explored with experiences that are primarily thematic in design and cut across disciplinary boundaries. Consider looking at the "Understanding by Design" format as a framework for conceptualizing curricular experiences and student achievement-performances. The initial work in the Choral area (Madrigal Feast, "War Music") might serve as prototype for curricular work in the choral area, but may also be an appropriate model for the core 6,7 and 8 general music area. Continued development and refinement are encouraged.

Current elective offerings at the MS/HS are exemplary, given current staffing and scheduling procedures. Students and parents, in addition to the stated goal of the teachers' self study, recognize a need for the music program to be relevant and meaningful to the lives of people living and functioning in a 21st Century society. Performance electives that go beyond the traditional band and choir must be considered. As a long-range goal, generate and offer music electives throughout the entire MS/HS program that tap into the vast areas and arenas in which music is made informally. (See the "emergent goals section above for specific ideas to consider).

In addition, consider utilizing the various artistic and cultural resources available in the community. Articulation with the "Arts Advocates" group would be a logical interface. At best, a representative from the music department would also be a member of the Arts Advocates group. Determine how representation would be configured. For example, a teacher from PQ might serve one-half year as the representative, with a teacher from the MS/HS serving the remainder of the year. As a body, the Arts Advocates group would serve as a "broker" of opportunities and information, while faculty would serve as evaluators of educational worth and curriculum connection-coordination of potential opportunities.

Begin an in-service music teacher development program coordinated with consultancy opportunities that directly relates to curriculum design, integration of technology into existing instructional practices, and instructional study and improvement. As noted in the K- 5 narrative, observation of surrounding school district's (of similar enrollment) music programs would serve as an enhancement to faculty understanding of curricular / instructional practices and possibilities. Comparison to music programs in schools districts with larger overall enrollments

is not recommended due to size differences, as well as curricular, instructional and philosophical differences.

Summary and Conclusions

POINT 1 Create Coherent and Cohesive Curriculum

A. Comprehensive Music: CORE Curriculum K- 8, ELECTIVE Curriculum 4-8 and 9-12

Create a conceptual framework in which to discuss, create, and design curricula. I recommend that you think cross-district and generate a framework that will serve the entire school population, K-12. From this I would look at the framework and decide how specialized (elective) courses offerings fit. For example:

K-5 and the 6-8 general music structure might be seen as an *integrated* three-pronged (production, creation, listening or response/reflection) comprehensive curriculum.

The 4-12 elective structure might be seen as *personalized* curriculum, with course offerings emanating out of any one of the three prongs: 1. Courses in production; 2. Courses in creation; and 3. Courses in listening or response/reflection. The current offerings in Band (4-12) and Chorus (6-12) might be seen as production options. The current composition class (HS) might be seen as a creation option. Consider more culturally relevant and student driven options in all areas (World Music, Popular Music, Technology Music). Perhaps think about requiring MS/HS students to take courses in 2 out of 3 areas during grades 6, 7 8 or take 1 course within each area (production, creation, listening).

Looking long-range, consider an 8-12 structure that is conceived around a *personalized* and *individualized* curriculum, with course offerings working within the elective 6-8 structure, and with content individualized to students seeking experiential opportunities at both entry and advanced levels.

B. SPECIALIZED Supplemental Music Curriculum

Current band (4-12) and chorus (6-12) programs should be viewed as specialized and meeting the needs of learners who elect to participate. In both the band and chorus programs there is a need to create a cohesive and coherent set of knowledge and understanding goals with performance targets for each grade. Plus there is a need for a planned sequence of skill learning outcomes. The skill sequence can be thought of in terms of grades, or the NYSSMA sequence of skill level proficiencies. The knowledge and understanding goals might emerge out of the performance literature and be thought of in terms of integrative/conceptual spiral with the metaphor of “Conceptual Doorways In” used as focuses. Consider also, a full implementation of the comprehensive musicianship framework (4-12). Understanding by Design model is another option for constructing student knowledge and understanding goals via literature.

POINT 2. Create Leadership Structures as Means to Creating Cohesiveness

Devise a leadership structure that facilitates cross building (PQ and MS/HS) and K-12 curriculum development and design. Articulate the role and responsibilities, including the mechanisms for compensation, of individuals who assume leadership functions. Consult with other stakeholders (teachers' association, etc.) for appropriate configurations. The following four structures seem feasible: 1. K- 12 Music Leader: Identify a current faculty member to serve as a K- 12 Music Leader who assumes part-time administrative functions, while retaining teaching responsibilities. 2. Building Leaders: Identify two individuals to serve as Building Level Leaders (one faculty member at PQ, another at MS/HS) who coordinate building level work and then meet regularly in "cross-building" meetings; 3. Building Leaders with Project Leaders: Employ the Building Leadership model (see number 2 above) coupled with Rotating Project Leader structure where each member of the department could have the opportunity to assume leadership for a particular curricular project, seeing to it that project goals are brought into fruition. This option would likely be more effective if coupled with consultancy-especially with projects that are curriculum design or assessment oriented. 4. Current Structure with Project Leaders: Retain current leaderships structure coupled with the Rotating Project Leader structure where each member of the department could have the opportunity to assume leadership for a particular curricular project, seeing to it that project goals are brought into fruition. This option would likely be more effective if coupled with consultancy-especially with projects that are curriculum design or assessment oriented.

POINT 3. Engage in Departmental Professional Development and Collaboration

Put into motion the necessary procedures and protocols to establish an ongoing bi-monthly departmental meeting with the distinct purpose of discussing and developing action plans for enacting curriculum, instruction and assessment activities. These meetings should be chaired and lead by the chair of the department. Initial focus of meetings should be geared to: 1. Addressing the issues in POINT 1 Curriculum; 2. Carrying out the data collection, analysis and student achievement reporting activities as indicated in POINT 4 and detailed in year 1 of the Five-Year Plan document; and 3. Projecting and generating equipment/literature needs for the year (using the equipment needs assessment found in the Five-Year Plan).

POINT 4: Document and Report Evidence of Achievement

Move forward with collecting and analyzing achievement data as outlined in Five-Year Plan. Prepare reports for all stakeholders in district. Report 1 – *Current Achievement Data and Performances*; Report 2 – *Establishment of Baseline and Proficiency Data*; Report 3 – *Action Plan for Full Implementation of Achievement Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting*.

POINT 5: Coordinate Community/Cultural Assets Groups

Coordinate community/cultural assets as a re/source for curriculum enhancement. Identify and define purposes and roles existing and potential sources of music-arts groups. Consider the idea of a "broker" metaphor for the role a community individual might play in addressing the potentials inherent in including these assets in curricular opportunities.

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POINT 6: Celebrate Current Excellence and Best Practices

Make visible to school and community current best practices occurring within the department. Especially highlight: 1. Priority and value of general music as the core music education experience of students, K-8. 2. Range and diversity of middle school and high school non-performance electives; 3. Technology and creativity focus in the general music 6- 8; 4. Comprehensive musicianship thread that permeates the HS band program; and 5. Growth of participation among elementary students in the band.

Closing Statement

North Salem School District's Music Curriculum Study Project suggests the following sets of commitments be made if the District wishes to build upon its current strengths and best practices and move forward toward the excellence envisioned in the self-study. Look seriously and carefully at:

1. The creation of a leadership structure that facilitates cohesive and comprehensive K-12 curriculum development and design. Current arrangements produce fragmentation in program, misalignment of learning goals, and inconsistent student achievement. Commit to creating a leadership structure so that curricular potentials and student achievement can be maximized.
2. The interaction of facilities and curriculum design/development at PQ. The allotment of time for instruction at the K- 5 level is inadequate for bringing about significant musical learning. A change or increase in contact time is not likely to occur until facilities (such as provision for an additional room for general music and storage) are addressed. Commit to making possible increased student learning through curriculum design and development coupled with facilities/equipment provision.
3. Staffing the MS/HS with an instrumental specialist. Current excellence in the MS/HS must be preserved in its dedication to comprehensive musicianship and broad selection of electives. Current levels of skill achievement by students participating in the instrumental program, however, are insufficient for admittance into college music programs. A specialist is essential for a fully viable instrumental program. Commit to hiring an instrumental specialist who can address the skill achievement of students in the program.

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