

ABILENE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

AISD RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

Abilene ISD has been honored with the 2018 Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education.

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.

"This designation validates the strength of the fine arts programs in AISD," said Jay Lester, AISD's Executive Director of Fine Arts. "It is also reflective of the commitment to excellence as displayed by our students and their dedicated teachers."

To qualify for the Best Communities designation, Mr. Lester 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.

AISD has been vested in music education throughout its history, Lester said. Abilene High School fielded the first high school marching band in Texas, and since that time, both AHS and Cooper High School have participated in the UIL State Marching Band Contest. Countless band, choir, and orchestra students have earned TMEA All-State honors as well as the UIL State Solo Outstanding Performer designation. As recently as 2016, the Craig Middle School girls' choir was chosen as a TMEA Honor Choir and performed at the state convention.

"Our secondary students would not be able to perform at such a high level without the foundation laid at the elementary campuses," Lester said. "It is there that students receive a sequential music education based in the Kodaly and Orff methods."

According to the NAMM Foundation, this award recognizes that AISD is leading the way with learning opportunities as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA recommends music and the arts as important elements of a well-rounded education for all children. The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit supported in part by the National Association of Music Merchants and its approximately 10,300 members around the world.

