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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kimberly Area School District Named One of the Nation's Best Communities for Music Education

Kimberly is one of only 24 Wisconsin school districts to receive distinction

Kimberly, Wis. – April 3, 2019 – The [Kimberly Area School District](http://www.kimberly.k12.wi.us) (KASD) has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from [The National Association of Music Merchants \(NAMM\) Foundation](http://www.nammfoundation.org) for its outstanding commitment to music education. [KASD is one of only 623](#) districts across the nation and only 24 Wisconsin school districts to receive this prestigious award in 2019.

Now in its 20th year, 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, the Kimberly Area School District answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, and support for the music programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.



“We are proud to receive the NAMM Award again this year,” said Craig Hietpas, band teacher at J.R. Gerritts Middle School. “The award recognizes the great work being done in the area of music in the Kimberly Schools.”

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This award recognizes that the Kimberly Area School District is leading the way with learning opportunities as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The legislation guides implementation in the states and replaces the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which was often criticized for an overemphasis on testing-while leaving behind subjects such as music. ESSA recommends music and the arts as important elements of a well-rounded education for all children.



The J.R. Gerritts' band performing at their winter concert under the direction of teacher Craig Hietpas.

“Our vision is that all students will reach their potential and this includes pursuing opportunities in the arts,” said Robert Mayfield, Superintendent of the Kimberly Area School District. “The award belongs to our entire community for providing music education opportunities for students of all ages. I am especially proud of what our students and staff are accomplishing in vocal and instrumental music at all of our schools. ”

Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational/cognitive and social skill benefits for children who make music. After two years of music education, research found that participants showed more substantial improvements in how the brain processes speech and reading scores than their less-involved peers, and that students who are involved in music are not only more likely to graduate high school, but also to attend college as well. Everyday listening skills are stronger in musically-trained children than in those without music training. Significantly, listening skills are closely tied to the ability to perceive speech in a noisy background, pay attention, and keep sounds in memory. Later in life, individuals who took music lessons as children show stronger neural processing of sound; young adults and even older adults who have not played an instrument for up to 50 years show enhanced neural processing compared to their peers. There are also social benefits which include conflict resolution, teamwork skills, and how to give and receive constructive criticism.

A 2015 study supported by The NAMM Foundation, [“Striking A Chord,”](#) also outlines the overwhelming desire by teachers and parents for music education opportunities for all children as part of the school curriculum.

About The NAMM Foundation

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit supported in part by the National Association of Music Merchants and its approximately 10,400 members around the world. The foundation advances active participation in music making across the lifespan by supporting scientific research, philanthropic giving, and public service programs. For more information about the NAMM Foundation, please visit www.nammfoundation.org.

About the Kimberly Area School District

The Kimberly Area School District is a progressive public school district committed to providing the best possible education available to students. Its responsibility is to help lead the way in developing well-rounded students and future citizens. The District wants every student to be given the opportunity to reach their potential through academics, the arts and co-curricular activities. It encompasses approximately 17 square miles and serves over 5,100 students in one 4K center, four elementary schools (5K-4), two intermediate schools (5-6), one middle school (7-8) and one high school (9-12). To learn more about the Kimberly Area School District, call (920)788-7900 or visit www.kimberly.k12.wi.us.