

## ***Personal Teaching Philosophy***

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### ***Why do you want to be a music educator?***

I want to be a music educator because I have had very positive experiences with music teachers and in music programs. I remember being so excited to go to eighth grade band with Mr. Bable, knowing each lesson would be productive and challenging. I also felt so supported in my oboe lessons with Mrs. Sundet, knowing I could go to her for advice both on the oboe and in my life. Music programs have always been such a positive experience for me – I want to give future students this sort of support and experience.

I believe a good teacher displays contagious enthusiasm for his subject; treats his students as human beings who deserve respect; works to make his teaching effective for all students; and acts professionally both in and out of the classroom, especially in regard to the administrative aspects of his work. A good teacher can leave a lasting impact on those who pass through his classroom. I enjoy explaining what I know in varied and humorous ways, and I want to help students find the joy in music that I've found.

I also want to be a music educator because music education is an ever-changing and multifarious field. Successful music educators must also be successful performers on multiple instruments, arrangers for traditional and non-traditional ensembles, and historians who can bring the past to life. Teaching music is a skill which I can constantly work to improve. Over time, my students will come and go, my programs will grow, my teaching style will evolve, and my environment will change. I will have to constantly work to make my program successful. In short, the complexity of the music education makes it a meaningful field in which to work.

Similarly, education can be a very rewarding field as educators work so closely with students who need guidance. When my students leave my program, I want them to view me as a motivator and a mentor whom they can still reach out to as needed—I want to have been a positive impact on their lives. I want the parents of these former students to view me as competent and fair. I want former administrators to view me as professional, punctual, and enjoyable to work with.

Finally, I want to be a music educator because I love music. I love figuring out how a piece works on a theoretical level and looking at the historical context that surrounded a piece's creation. I love connecting this context and theory to my own interpretation of a piece so that I can make the music my own. Creating entirely new music is also something I love to do, as the act of writing a good piece of music is insanely gratifying. Music has played a big role in my maturation as a person emotionally, and working to perform music in front of others has taught me how to keep a level head.

***What do you want to do as a music educator?***

As a music educator, I want to run a program that grows because it fosters an enjoyable musical experience. I want my students to enjoy coming to my class or rehearsals every day. My program should be one that grows because of word of mouth, meaning my students regard it highly and are vocal about their regard. I believe all students should study music in one way or another. No, not every student will go on to work as a musician, but all human beings enjoy music and can create it. Without music, we would have no way to decorate time.

Also, I want to create a safe space for my students. As a gay man, I know the positive effect a gay role model can have on LGBT students, especially in a society that continues to deny the existence of a healthy LGBT community. Music allows students to express themselves through art; music classrooms should help students feel comfortable to open up, be themselves, and express their own ideas through their language. If a student is struggling with her schoolwork, self-image, sexuality, gender identity, religious convictions, personal relationships, home-life, etc., then I want that student to feel able (not just *be able*) to come to me for help without the fear of being shamed or overlooked.

I also want to use music and my role as an educator to educate my students about various cultures and ethnicities around the world. A good education is one that allows students to understand and empathize with the lives of people they have never met. The problems of racism, sexism, and intolerance which still plague our country can be alleviated in part by teaching youth about how other people live and view the world. People of various cultures express their history, hardships, triumphs, values, and religious beliefs through their music. Therefore, a music classroom has the ability to introduce students to the beliefs of other cultures.

***What do you believe about the importance of music in the schools?***

As students grow and enter new sections of their lives, music should serve as a constant. Music classes can be taken every year with the same teacher and similar classmates, while classes in other subject areas change yearly. If music classes can help students better enjoy school and feel less stressed, then they will perform better in all of their classes and be more likely to attend school.

Playing music has been proven to improve cognitive function. Playing a concert successfully requires brain function as varied and as intense as that of playing sports: Performing students must access their fine motor skills to control the technique of their instrument. They must overcome nervousness and fear to play in front of friends and family. They must recall information that was covered in rehearsals and practice. They must use their senses of seeing and hearing to perform with other musicians and to follow their director. Their sense of internal rhythm and ability to self-evaluate must be intact. And to do all this, students must have developed problem-solving strategies and skills. I believe music serves a vital role in students' development.