



June 10, 2020

Good afternoon Mr. Ferron and members of the School Committee. I would like to make a statement on behalf of the Friends of Hanover Music and Theater. The mission of the Friends of Hanover Music and Theater is to foster educational awareness of the music and theater programs among the schools, parents, and the community, and to advocate for excellence in music and theater education on behalf of the children of the Hanover Schools.

We feel that our Music and Theater programs in Hanover are among the best around. Our programs build confidence as students are taught the necessary life skills of collaborating with others, presenting in front of people, encouraging a sense of self, and becoming contributing members of their community. As a result, they help develop well-rounded young adults. A love of music is fostered beginning in elementary school, as students and teachers prepare performances and students are introduced to different instruments. Teachers of the performing arts at all schools work hard to prepare students for the Friends of Hanover Music and Theater Winter Gala Fundraiser, that allows FHMT to give money back to these programs. The elementary programs prepare our students for the strong middle and high school programs, where students are encouraged to take risks and participate in regional competitions such as SEMSBA and METG. Our music and drama students are ambassadors not only here in Hanover, but all across the east coast. They have the opportunity to perform at the Massachusetts State House, the Lincoln Memorial, Williamsburg Virginia, and Disney World in Florida. At Hanover High School, music and drama are career paths for many students, who need these courses and connections to prepare them for college and future careers. Our teachers work tirelessly to help these programs become ingrained not just in our schools, but in our unified community. Programs such as marching band, jazz ensemble, chorus and VOX, just to name a few, are a big part of our community events in Hanover. They partner with other town organizations to perform in the town Halloween parade, football games, Christmas tree lightings, Four Corners Winter Stroll, Memorial Day Parade and Hanover Day celebrations. The school plays put on by the theater department with students of all ages are events that are

anticipated every year and enjoyed by many. Our programs are truly exceptional, and we are proud to live in 02339, a community that values everyone.

Most importantly, we would like to emphasize the social-emotional benefits that the performing arts programs have had on our children in this time of unrest. Even though teachers and students cannot be together physically during this time, the virtual experiences the teachers have provided have given our children a creative outlet to feel more connected. The teachers have collaborated together as adults to sing for our children, to validate their feelings and to let students know they never walk alone. They have carried on with the tradition of the Performing Arts Awards Ceremony, holding it virtually. Students have taken a deeper look at music theory to improve their craft, and activities such as Virtual Band have provided the children in our community an opportunity to come together with other communities to make music and to feel interconnected. Digital Drama has allowed our students to connect with other students across the country who are in the same boat. These opportunities have provided a sense of normalcy as the children are able to practice their passions and get to see their friends; this normalcy that they would not have otherwise had without the hard work of the teachers and our excellent programs.

We realize that you, as administrators and the School Committee have some difficult decisions ahead, and we appreciate all of the hard work you have done for the students of Hanover. There is no perfect solution to the situation the pandemic has forced upon us all. We just felt it would be remiss not to express what a positive impact the dedicated staff and phenomenal performing arts programs in Hanover have had on our children.

Thank you for your time.

Friends of Hanover Music & Theater
2019-2020 Executive Board