

# HOMETOWN ADVOCACY

## “Where Are They Now” Stories

WMEA Advocacy Strategy



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Tapping into the experiences of former students can provide clear evidence of the powerful education happening in music classrooms. In this WMEA Advocacy Strategy, you gather information from past students to share how their time in the music classroom made a difference in their lives, long after leaving your school.

Short on time to do this? Maybe there is a strong music advocate in your community who has been there a while and would take this on.

### **Create list of possible interview questions:**

A suggestion - create a Google form with questions that could become the basis for a recurring format.

- Start with some basics - name, what are you up to these days, when did you graduate from our school, how were you involved in music experiences here?
- What is your current field of study or career?
- How do you think music prepared you for your path?
- What life lessons did you learn in your study of music?
- Where do you live?
- Do you currently create or perform music? How is music still a part of your life?
- Share a story when you felt you connected with others in your music making?
- What skills did you nurture in music that have served you well in your life?
- Do you ever look back on significant moments from your time in school music and see that impact now? Can you talk a bit about that?
- What advice would you give the leaders in our school about how they should understand the importance of music courses?

### **Create list of possible interviewers:**

- Current music educators in the community
- Former music educators who are still in the community
- Interested parents who would like to be involved in this effort to support music education
- Current students who find this opportunity fitting their interests

**Consider ways to share interview information:**

- If the interview responses are in print, these could be a recurring column in the local newspaper, or get posted in a prominent spot on your website.
- If the interview responses are in video format, share them online but determine how you will let people know a new one is posted each time.
- For a different twist, how about doing the interviews as a podcast, hosted by students??

**Create list of potential interview candidates:**

Consider alumni who were part of music classrooms in your school who have gone on to success in a variety of fields. Hearing about the power of music from an architect or a farmer or a business owner offers great perspectives for others to consider.

Some people who might provide ideas for interview candidates include current and former teachers, student services personnel, administrators, and music support group members.

**Editorial control:**

Determine who will review material before making it public to ensure it is accurate, appropriate and meets any and all school district policies.

It will ultimately be your responsibility to see this is done well so set up a system that will ensure every posting is clearly reviewed before making it public. This is much easier to do before posting than after.