On the following pages are an example of a “Swiss cheese” school board letter – there are plenty of holes, and you can fill them in to suit your particular circumstances. You might find that some or many of the details in the letter don’t apply to your family or situation. Feel free to omit or modify those sections as you see fit! Make this template work for YOU. This document is a helpful place to get started if you’ve never written to the school board before, but it is important to note that what is most important are the thoughts and experiences of you and the music students in your life.

123 Street address

City, ST ZIP

Date

\_\_\_\_\_, Superintendent of Schools

\_\_\_\_\_, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education

\_\_\_\_\_, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education

\_\_\_\_\_, School Board President

\_\_\_\_\_, School Board Vice President

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\_\_\_\_\_, Student Representative

\_\_\_\_\_, Student Representative

\_\_\_\_\_, Building Principal(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ School District

123 Street Address

City, ST ZIP

I am the parent of <student name>, a \_\_\_\_\_-grader at <school> and <student name>, a \_\_\_\_\_-grader at <school>. I am writing to THANK YOU for supporting such a strong education in the arts for the students at <school district>.

From the moment <he/she/they> started <music class> in August with <instrument, if applicable>, I could tell that <student> was going to have a wonderful experience. <Music educator> is one of the most energetic, dynamic, and just plain FUN teachers I've ever met. I have been involved with band programs since I myself was in fifth grade in the mid-eighties. I have to tell you that he had that ragtag bunch of students sounding the best I have ever heard a beginning band sound, and that was only after about 15 hours of instruction at band camp!

<Student> recently also had the privilege of <role> in <perfoming arts opportunity>, which recently brought the house down. I can't tell you what a valuable experience this was for <student>. At the beginning of the school year <he/she/they> had been understandably nervous about attending a new school, but as she became involved in this program, her fears dissipated. Surprisingly for my shy child, <he/she/they> agreed to audition for a speaking part. Throughout the process, <arts educators> worked tirelessly to give the kids a wonderful experience, and a place to belong. They crafted an impressive performance that brought the entire community together.

These educators and performance opportunities have changed my child FOREVER—in the best possible way. Not only did my child learn to play an instrument, dance, act, and sing; <he/she/they> learned so much more. Over the course of both band and drama rehearsals, <he/she/they> made new friends and saw the fruits of the performers’ hard work. In the process, <he/she/they> learned teamwork, discipline, problem-solving, and creativity. <he/she/they> learned to effectively budget <his/her/their> time, and <he/she/they> learned personal responsibility.

As I'm sure you're aware, these are some of the most important things we can teach our children as they enter the 21st-century workforce. According to Daniel Pink, "The era of 'left brain' dominance, and the Information Age that it engendered, is giving away to a new world in which 'right brain' qualities - inventiveness, empathy, and meaning predominate. That’s what business is about today. This is a hard-headed argument that arts education is not ornamental but fundamental for economic reasons. We should be adding and not cutting the arts."

Besides these benefits, there are dozens of others! Among these: "Students who participate in school band or orchestra have the lowest levels of current and lifelong use of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs among any group in our society." (H. Con. Res. 266, United States Senate, June 13, 2000) Who knew that the war on drugs might be won in our music rooms and on our stages?

I am aware of the growing interest in STEM education. In light of my recent research into the subject, however, I would respectfully ask that you consider modifying STEM into STEAM: Science, Technology, Engineering, ARTS, and Math. As you know, arts education fosters creativity, which spurs innovation. Innovation is what creates new products and industries, which fuel the American economy. In addition, artists and designers humanize technology, which then makes it capable of changing the world. Consider the legacy of Steve Jobs, on whose invention I am now typing, and whose products very literally changed the world. One design class forever changed the way he looked at the world; the same will be true of our students.

As a school board member, you are in a unique position to craft, implement, and fund policies that encourage administrators and educators to improve the quality and delivery of instruction. Please support a strong arts education program based on national or state standards.

Thank you for all that you do on behalf of <student name(s)>, and the other students. Please continue to support a strong arts education program and let me know how I can further support your efforts.

We chose to move into the <school district> area over <number> years ago based on the strength of your music and arts programs. Thank you for confirming that we made the right decision.

Gratefully,

<Name>