

Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

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D200 recognized for outstanding music education

Woodstock Community Unit School District 200 has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The National Association of Music Merchants Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education.

The Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in providing music access and education to all students. Woodstock High School earned the recognition in 2021 from the NAMM Foundation, but this is the first recognition for all of District 200 — one of 22 school districts in Illinois to receive the honor.

“We’re proud of this distinction and very conscious of our music teaching staff’s dedication at all levels. They’ve made music such a joyful and important part of education here. It’s a wonderful gift for our community to foster the talents of hundreds of students and see their hard work pay off,” District 200 Superintendent Mike Moan said.

Several hundred students participate in band, orchestra and choir across District 200, some beginning as early as 4th grade. Each year, musicians at the high school and middle school level are selected for statewide performances for the Illinois Music Education Association.

To qualify for the Best Communities designation, District 200 music staff members answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program and community music-making programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

Lyndra Bastian, orchestra director at Woodstock High School, said she and her colleagues are proud to have received the honor and to be part of a wonderful team.

“The music teachers truly care for and have the best interest of each child in mind. It’s not the goal to create future musicians, but instead to change students’ lives for the better through music. Not only do we have some extremely dedicated students, generous and supportive families, but we all do our best as teachers to support and lift each other up,” she said.

Debbie Schweihs, elementary school band director, said she was pleased to see that others are noticing the great things happening in District 200 music programs and grateful for her colleagues and families.

“They encourage their kids through the bumps in the road and celebrate when our hard work comes together. Our music programs are about growing music skills, but also about nurturing well-rounded and grounded human beings,” Schweihs said.

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit supported in part by the National Association of Music Merchants and its approximately 10,300 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.