K-12 Performing Arts
Strategic Plan
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Mission:

The Salem School District K-12 Performing Arts Department is a dynamic organization that embodies the belief that the performing arts hold transformative potential and is committed to serving students with the highest quality, most impactful, and authentic performing arts education possible. We strive to support student learning through the discovery and development of each individual's unique skills and talents, providing a comprehensive curriculum charged with robust, rich, and meaningful experiences.

Vision:

An integral part of the town of Salem, NH, the Salem School District K-12 Performing Arts Department seeks to nurture a vibrant performing arts community both within the schools and the greater commonwealth of Salem, foster and support artistic excellence, bring people together for powerful shared experiences that inspire a creative exchange of ideas, and promote discovery, learning, and cultural understanding within the performing arts. Through these experiences, students will be encouraged to think critically, take risks, collaborate, create, and become life-long lovers of the performing arts.

Values and Beliefs:

- **We Value:**
  - A curricular framework that is comprehensive and appropriately challenging where students are encouraged to take risks, think critically, and able to transfer their learning and knowledge in a variety of musical and performing arts experiences.
  - Empathy, tolerance, and the exploration of multiple perspectives, innovation, ideas, and creativity.

- **We Believe:**
  - That our performing arts programs educate the entire child in order to be positive contributors to society once they leave the Salem School District.
  - Solid social and emotional connections to learning and the learning environment provide a strong foundation for meaningful and impactful musical and performing experiences to take place that extend beyond the performing arts discipline.
  - In high academic, artistic, performance, and social expectations for our students.
  - A curriculum that provides scaffolds and is spiral-based enables students to build upon previously learned skills in order to be successful at the next juncture of their performing arts education.
Essential Questions:

What are the tangible outcomes we wish for our students in both the performing and non-performing sectors of the performing arts department?

What do we believe are the most essential parts of the curriculum that will enable our students to find success in band, chorus, theatre, and general music?

How can we work within the current and future structure of the school district to ensure that our programs remain vibrant, rich, and comprehensive?

How can we continue to educate the school and local community regarding the importance and impact of the arts?

How do the assessments that we craft ensure that we are supporting student growth, instructional strategies, and are both valid and meaningful indicators of student success?

How can we continue to develop effective communication, collaborative, and cooperative skills needed in order to become more cohesive and collective as a performing arts department?

Strengths:

Students are well supported in socially positive and nurturing learning environments.

Students are willing and able to take risks and to challenge themselves.

Dynamic and diverse experience exists within the teaching staff.

Teachers are open-minded and willing to try new things, see new perspectives, and take risks.

All teachers want to continue to grow and develop as educators.

It is obvious that students have been presented with a large array of options and performing arts opportunities.

Developing an understanding of teachers’ responsibility, impact, and connection district wide vs. individual teaching responsibilities.

Developing an understanding of the essential parts of the curriculum (non-negotiable skills) that students will leave the program with.
**Areas of Focus:**

Inconsistency between expectations - grading, participation, program expectations, communication and communication tools.

Stronger relationship is needed between curricular goals, standards, and outcomes with regards to learning and instructional activities in the classroom.

Servicing students in a way that is *authentically* student centered enabling them to find success both socially AND through literacy (competencies/standards) activities and learning experiences, which in turn, garner academic and emotional success regardless of student’s background, history, abilities, etc. Students need these skills to be successful as they develop. Without providing them the necessary supports, we are doing a disservice to our students.

Breaking down the assumption of what we believe students actually know and understand through the development of meaningful and valid assessment and data.

Creating a more cohesively aligned curriculum K-12 in theatre, general music, and performing ensembles (band, chorus, and strings).

Continuing to develop an understanding of what non-negotiable skills are needed for students to progress in the most successful way possible.

Continued collaboration and sharing of professional practice, instructional strategies, and professional dialogue: peer observations, teacher evaluation.

Continued advocacy connected to fellow educators, administrators, and the community at large.
Goal 1:

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment – To align curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices vertically and horizontally providing a cohesive, comprehensive, and logical trajectory of learning.

Objectives:

To determine what the most essential parts of our K-12 performing arts curriculum are and what is needed to be successful in a variety of instructional pathways (general music, band, chorus, orchestra, and theatre).

To align curriculum to the National Core Arts Standards, competencies, and student learning outcomes, objectives, and expectations with a shared understanding of what kind of performing arts education we want our students to graduate with.

To develop common (diagnostic) and individual assessments that reflect student learning, progress, and understanding and use this data to inform instructional practice.

To determine what our students actually understand and are able to demonstrate versus an assumed understanding.

To develop strategies to integrate technology into curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Action Plan:

- Review and unpack current curricular units within each pathway (general music, band, chorus, orchestra, and theatre) determining the most essential parts and units of the curriculum at each grade level
- Consult with Marcia McCaffery, Arts Liaison for the New Hampshire Department of Educational
- Training in Understanding by Design focusing on unit and lesson development
- Development and implementation of performance ensemble/theatre competencies (anchor standards/competencies from NCAS)
- Development of a departmental curriculum and lesson plan structure (tentative template) that outlines the curriculum from a standards, goals, objectives, and competency based approach and also highlights learning activities and assessments
- Development and implementation of diagnostic assessments administered in grades 5, 6, 8, 9 and 12 and use this data to drive curricular decisions, units, and edits
- Development and implementation of formative and summative assessments that are deemed authentic and genuine indicators of student performance in the arts
- Development of standards based report card for elementary and middle school
- Development of district-wide rubrics: performance, rehearsal techniques, literacy, sight reading
- Sharing and use of assessment data between elementary, middle, and high school performing arts teachers to inform instruction, goals, and outcomes (demonstration of how this has influenced instructional practices)
- Video-taped teacher evaluation (non-evaluative purposes)
- Teacher evaluation follow up conversations - CIA focused
- Development of curricular pathways diagram - theatre, music (ensembles, general music, electives)
Goal 2:
Aligning program expectations and structure – To determine a broad perspective and structural alignment of what our performing arts program provides and how each part is connected to each other

Objective:
To develop consistent grading, participation, and program expectations
To implement a stronger line of communication between members of the department as well as parents, other teachers, administrators, and the community at large
To develop a shared understanding of what kinds of experiences we want our students to leave our program with
To ensure that all students are receiving a quality and similar performing arts education at all schools and at each grade level
To determine the long-range budgetary needs for our performing arts programming
To determine what kinds of performing arts experiences we would like our students participating both in district (number of performances, private lesson program, guest artists, etc.) as well as out of district (festivals, travel, adjudications, community events, etc.)

Action Plan:
- Integration of Peer Observations (one per semester) within our department
- Integration of Learning Walks - principals, teachers, SAU admin
- Observations of other school district’s performing arts programming
- Teacher led presentations/sharing of work (curriculum, assessment, and instruction) during professional development days and AI Meetings
- Development of a district-wide set of program handbooks (general music, chorus, band, orchestra, and drama), which outlines all expectations, handouts, ensemble contracts, etc.
- Vertically aligned theatre program between middle and high school
- Fully integrated strings program within the school day at the elementary school level
- Inclusion of 4th grade band into the school day
- Hiring an additional elementary school music teacher as the increase in Kindergarten continues to grow (dependent on budgetary allocations)
- Development of a five year equipment replacement cycle that will be used to inform our annual budget
- Development of an articulated middle school music appreciation curriculum as well as a clearly outlined purpose for high school performing arts electives
- Schedule open and on-going discussions with school principals and SHS guidance department, regarding performing arts programming (concerns, expectations, progress, etc.)
- Development of communication strategies to advocate and inform the community: newsletters, Spotlight on the Arts series, email communication (weekly)
- Selection of musical and dramatic repertoire used to support instructional goals of the curriculum as well as the overall performance experience of the students
- Determination of what we see our program offering and what our band, chorus, theatre, and music appreciation/music electives look like at the high school level
- Development of a skill sequence by grade level that is aligned to the performing arts literacy curriculum map
- Determination of district wide performing arts calendar of events
Other Action Items:

- **General:**
  - Learning Walks with Administrators (Principals/SAU) and Teachers
  - Peer Observations - once a semester - in-district
  - Video-taped observations - non-evaluative and only between director and teacher
  - Continue informal teacher observations and follow up conversations with the ability to informally state:
    - Essential questions from the lesson that were/weren’t answered
    - Goals and purpose of lesson
    - Did the students find success? How do you know?
    - What would you have done differently?
    - Lesson plan
  - AI Meeting teacher share outs - assessment, instruction, etc.
  - District-wide performance adjudication
  - Performance expectations - do not settle for anything less than you want!
  - Clearly articulated LibGuides
  - Fully integrated private lesson program - all grade levels at SHS Performing Arts Center

- **Elementary**
  - Elementary Sharing Festival
  - Elementary Honors Chorus
  - Aligned Chorus Contract, Concert Information/Expectations and Parent Communication
  - Elementary Band and Chorus Handbook
    - Expectations, grading, concert, parental communication, etc.
  - Elementary Band - Full Rehearsals Once a Month?
  - District Strings - Full Rehearsals Once a Month?
  - Continue with Instrument Test Drive and Instrument Rental Evenings

- **Middle School**
  - Participation in Large Group Festival
  - Being participation in Middle Level Honors Band
  - Continue participation at South Central District Music Festival
  - 8th grade band sectionals
  - Sectional rotations between both band directors
  - Band - team teaching/planning model
  - Chorus - full rehearsals once a month
  - Band - full rehearsals once a month
  - Music appreciation - revamp and align curricular units and goals
    - Music Electives instead of appreciation
  - MS/HS aligned performance ensemble handbooks
    - Expectations, grading, concert, parental communication, etc.
● High School
  ○ Participation in Large Group Festival
  ○ Granite State Music Festival
  ○ All New England Band and Chorus Festivals
  ○ NHETG Theatre Festivals
  ○ Continue after school Wind Ensemble
    ■ 2018-2019 - this group will be auditioned
  ○ Students in marching band must be in concert band (2018-2019)
  ○ After school jazz ensemble (preferably during the school day)
  ○ MS/HS aligned performance ensemble handbooks
    ■ Expectations, grading, concert, parental communication, etc.