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For Committee Review:

This letter is intended to support and confirm the educational merit afforded public school organizations through the efforts of Brass FX. Recently, I have had the opportunity to meet the musicians individually, to observe their ensemble presentation, and to dialogue with them regarding the values of music in the lives of children.

Brass FX is a very unique ensemble that has set as a priority the support and assistance to those persons engaged in the educational component of music. While each member is an accomplished performer, their ensemble intent is to assist educational organizations with opportunities that allow more students to become active participants in music programs.

The concert presentation observed was incredible. Survey feedback from district staff in attendance for the presentation supports and verifies this statement. The presentation allows staff and students to learn about the music instruments of the band, the value of belonging to such an organization, and perhaps most important..... to have fun during the concert and to laugh along the way. Each performer models their instrument in a most professional manner, with exceptional music skills. In addition, the script is intertwined with humor and audience interaction.

The script takes the audience through the instruments of the band, the opportunities available through participation in band, and the benefits to the student. Data gathered from our 14 middle schools this past year reflect concerns that can be targeted by Brass FX. Currently, 12 of our middle school band programs are experiencing an attrition rate ranging from 27% - 54%. This attrition is occurring at both the entry level for instruction (grade 6) as well as within the middle school program (grade 6 to 7 and 7 to 8).

It is the hope of NISD personnel to utilize the Brass FX presentation to reach more students in our huge district (59 elementary schools, 15 middle schools, and 9 high schools). Most importantly, we see the need to "educate and inform" our parents regarding the opportunities available through a rich band experience. Parents and students must become more aware of the marked academic and personal growth that results from participation in music programs. This is most critical in our special needs populations.

Research data spanning decades of study now clearly identifies the positive impact a rich fine arts education has on a child's development. In addition to the individual student mental development, NISD personnel believe that Brass FX is a key component in the development of larger, stronger, and more meaningful student / parent participation groups across the district. This is most critical to a district that will eventually become one of the largest school districts in Texas.

Brass FX provides a direct "plug in" to our existing curriculum and the vertical alignment that our curriculum already has in relation to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Fine Arts (TEA) and the National Standards for Music (MENC).

Respectfully submitted,

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