

# MacPhail Center for Music Intensive Strings Program

## *2021-2022 Evaluation Results*

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## Key findings

This report provides information about the outcomes and implementation of the MacPhail Intensive Strings Program, which was delivered at Ascension Catholic School in the 2021-22 school year. Results from an evaluation of the MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra for the 2020-21 school year can be found in a separate, complementary report. A few key findings are presented below.

### *Students showed improvement in musical skills and had good practicing habits*

- Students demonstrated musical growth during the program. The instructor reported that a majority of students showed consistent musical progress and growth throughout their time in the Intensive Strings program.
- Most students consistently prepared assigned music in home practice. Progress reports showed that students engaged in more home practice over the course of the year.

### *Students showed a desire to learn, exhibited persistence, and were eager participants in group rehearsals*

- At end of program year, the instructor reported that all students demonstrated independent learning all the time and most students demonstrated an eagerness to learn.
- Students exhibited persistence in rehearsals when faced with difficult pieces or techniques.
- Students came prepared for rehearsal with all required materials. During rehearsals, they followed directions, were cooperative in the group setting, and demonstrated leadership among their peers.

### *Student attendance rates increased from the previous school year*

- During the 2020-2021 school year, Intensive Strings was mostly remote and had lower attendance than the pre-pandemic year. This school year the program returned to in-person programming. Attendance rates increased from last year, though did not reach pre-pandemic rates.

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## Program overview

MacPhail Center for Music's School Partnerships enrich the lives of young people and their families in Minnesota by providing in-person or live online instruction in partnership with Minnesota schools. MacPhail staff work with music educators and administrators at partner schools to develop customized programs that provide relevant and compelling music education to strengthen student learning. These programs are individually designed for each school to ensure custom supports are in place to enable children and youth to succeed.

A subset of these programs focuses on delivering intensive instrumental instruction to students with limited access to music education. During the 2021-22 school year, this was the Ascension Afterschool Strings Program.

The Intensive Strings Program provides students with specialized music education and instruction beyond the schools' general music education and, in doing so, supports students' highest level of artistic and school learning. Program funders include The Curtis L. Carlson Family Foundation, Minnesota State Arts Board, Patrick and Aimee Butler Family Foundation, Carolyn Foundation, Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation, George Family Foundation, and Aroha Philanthropies.

3rd-8th grade students who attend Ascension School may choose to play the violin, viola, or cello as part of the Ascension Afterschool Strings Program. Participation is voluntary but students who join must agree to behavior and attendance standards. Students participate in a levelled ensemble, a sectional, musicianship classes, compositions, and bucket drumming. MacPhail provides students with instruments and materials, and all instruction is delivered by MacPhail Teaching Artists. A team of teachers works together to make sure that each student pursues individual learning goals and makes a positive contribution to the community. Performance and educational mentorship from Minnesota Orchestra musicians provides motivation and focus for students. In addition to musical skills, students learn the importance of collaboration, teamwork, leadership, self-expression, and community. Students have multiple opportunities to extend and continue learning over the summer, including private lessons and participation in camps, group classes, and retreats. Eighteen Ascension students completed the program in the 2021-22 school year.

## Program changes in response to the COVID pandemic

The Intensive Strings program transitioned to online learning in March 2020 and continued to provide online instruction through the 2020-21 school year. The 2021-2022 school year was the first year to return to in-person programming.

# Evaluation

Wilder Research worked with the MacPhail program coordinators to develop an evaluation design for the program. The evaluation includes outcome and implementation components and gathers qualitative and quantitative data to answer the following research questions. A logic model reflecting the activities and outcomes of the program is provided in the Appendix.

## Outcome evaluation questions

- To what extent does student participation in the Intensive Strings Program affect student academic achievement and attitudes toward school?
- To what extent does student participation in the Intensive Strings Program affect student non-academic skills (persistence, motivation, leadership)?
- To what extent does student participation in the Intensive Strings Program affect student musical skills and knowledge?
- To what extent does school participation in the Intensive Strings Program benefit the school, including its music educator?
- To what extent does the Intensive Strings Program increase access to music education?
- What impacts does the Intensive Strings Program have on music education in schools, broadly speaking?

## Implementation evaluation questions

- How well is the Intensive Strings Program being implemented? What aspects of the Program can be strengthened or improved?
- How well does the collaboration between MacPhail and the schools function, and how can it be strengthened?

This report describes the methodology and findings of the evaluation.

# Methodology

In the 2021-2022 school year, MacPhail and Wilder Research worked together to collect information on the program through a variety of surveys, interviews, and program records. Descriptions of these tools are listed here according to which component of the evaluation they addressed.

## Outcome methods

**Lesson progress report:** A progress report was designed to help assess students' musical skills, knowledge, and non-academic skills (persistence, initiative, and leadership during the program). Progress reports were completed by Teaching Artists at the end of the fall 2021 and spring 2022 semesters. Progress reports for twelve participants were completed at the end of the fall 2022 semester and eleven at the end of the spring 2022 semester. Of those, seven students had a completed progress report for both semesters, allowing for comparisons across both semesters.

**Parent survey:** The survey gathered parents' perspectives on their child's practice skills, their own involvement and encouragement at home, the impact of music lessons on their child's education, and whether they want their child to continue music lessons. Two parent surveys were collected. Parents who completed the survey were given a \$10 gift card as an incentive for participation.

## Implementation methods

**Program records and lesson progress report:** MacPhail worked with Ascension to collect information about the students participating in the program throughout the school year. Additionally, Teaching Artists were asked about the frequency of student attendance.

# Results

## Outcomes

### *Instructor reported progress in students' musical skills*

The Intensive Strings instructor completed progress reports for 11 participating students at the end of the program year; within these progress reports, they were asked to report on students' musical progress and growth, as well as students' practice outside of rehearsals. All 11 students were reported to have shown consistent musical progress and growth (82% "always" and 18% "most of the time"). Most students prepared assigned music at home most of the time (27% "always" and 55% "most of the time;" Figure 1). For the seven students who had progress reports after each semester, they showed improvement in preparing music at home, with an average rating change of +0.43 (Figure 2).

When asked for comments on student musical performance, the instructor shared many students are growing in their musical skills and interest, noting that a few practice on their own at home.

### *Instructor reported progress in students' non-musical skills*

Progress reports also asked the instructor to provide feedback on students' non-musical skills, such as social-emotional skills or executive functioning skills. These reports showed students have a desire to learn, with all students "always" demonstrating independent learning and 73% "always" showing an eagerness to learn (Figure 3). For students with both a fall and spring progress report, there was improvement in both of these areas over time (Figure 4). In fact, students demonstrating independent learning is the area with the most improvement over time with a +0.86 change in average rating between fall and spring. The instructor also reported that almost all students "always" persist when experiencing difficulty in rehearsal (91%; Figure 3).

As for participating in group rehearsals, almost all students were cooperative in the group setting, follow directions during rehearsals, and came prepared with required materials at least most of the time (Figure 3). Most students demonstrated leadership in class at least most of the time, though 18% "sometimes" showed leadership. Leadership was another area that showed improvement for students over time, with +0.43 increase in average rating from fall to spring semester (Figure 4).

When it comes to being focused during group rehearsal, 72% showed focus at least most of the time, while about one quarter were focused "sometimes" (Figure 3). In instructor notes,

they mentioned multiple students had problems focusing if class wasn't moving fast enough or if they got bored.

### ***Parents showed musical engagement at home through regular participation and encouragement***

Parents of Intensive Strings students were asked to complete an end of year survey to learn more about children's music practice and encouragement at home. This survey had a minimal response this evaluation year. For the two parents who participated, they reported that their student had a place to practice at home and that they encouraged them to practice at home. They also exhibited engagement in the program by reviewing their child's yearly progress reports and having themselves or another important adult attend their child's music performances.

## **Implementation**

### ***Student attendance has improved from last year, though hasn't recovered from the COVID pandemic***

The Intensive Strings instructor provided attendance data for students for both the fall and spring semesters. There were a few students who did not have attendance data available or left the program after less than five sessions. These students were removed from the average to better reflect typical student participation. In all, the instructor reports that five students left the program over the course of the year.

On average, students attended over half of program sessions; 67% of sessions in the fall and 53% in the spring (Figure 5). In the previous 2020-21 school year, student participation was relatively low, presumably due to the challenges of the COVID pandemic and a transition to remote programming. For that year, students attended 60% of lessons in the fall and 27% in the spring. The 2021-22 attendance rate shows an improvement in lesson attendance from the previous year, though numbers have not returned to pre-pandemic levels from the 2019-20 school year where students attended approximately three-quarters of their lessons in both spring and fall. The 2021-22 school year still faced many pandemic-related and non-pandemic-related challenges that may have impacted overall attendance and participation. It is worth noting that in the parent survey, one parent mentioned they felt that MacPhail's presence and engagement with this program has dwindled since the pandemic, leading to a decrease in school and student interest.

## Issues to consider

The findings suggest that students are largely doing well in the program. They showed progress in musical skills and interest, as well as a desire to learn, engaged participation in rehearsals, and improvements in leadership. This school year was the first year since the pandemic that lessons were in-person, which seems to have had a positive impact on overall attendance and engagement.

Based on the results available to date, the following are a few points that can be taken into consideration in future planning for the program. MacPhail leaders and staff may have already made adjustments in some of these areas.

- Consider ways to improve student participation and engagement. Though enrollment and attendance rebounded from the previous year, presumably because of the return to in-person programming, there was still some room to grow to reach pre-pandemic numbers. Finding ways to do more outreach within Ascension, such as teachers, students, and their families, may help increase participation and engagement.
- The area that students seemed to struggle with the most was focusing during group rehearsals, particularly if class wasn't moving fast enough or not challenging enough. One-on-one lessons may be a good way to support these students in their individual music development and keep them engaged. Consider ways to quickly identify students who may be a good fit for individual instruction and connect them with potential resources.

# Appendix

## A. Figures

### A1. Instructor report of students' musical skills (N=11)

	Always (4)	Most of the time (3)	Sometimes (2)	Never (1)	Mean
Student has shown consistent musical progress and growth.	82%	18%	0%	0%	3.82
The student prepares assigned music in home practice	27%	55%	18%	0%	3.09

Note: this is for all progress reports completed for all students at end of spring 2022

### A2. Changes in musical skills from mid-year to end of year (N=7)

Behavior		Always (4)	Most of the time (3)	Sometimes (2)	Never (1)	Mean	Change
The student prepares assigned music in home practice	Fall	2/7	3/7	1/7	1/7	2.86	+0.43
	Spring	3/7	3/7	1/7	0/7	3.29	
The student has shown consistent musical progress and growth	Fall	5/7	2/7	0/7	0/7	3.71	+0.0
	Spring	5/7	2/7	0/7	0/7	3.71	

Note: this is for students who had a progress report completed at end of fall 2021 and at end of spring 2022

### A3. Instructor report of students' non-musical skills (N=11)

	<b>Always (4)</b>	<b>Most of the time (3)</b>	<b>Sometimes (2)</b>	<b>Never (1)</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Student demonstrates independent learning.	100%	0%	0%	0%	4.00
Student persists on tasks even when experiencing difficulty.	91%	0%	9%	0%	3.82
Student demonstrates eagerness to learn.	73%	18%	9%	0%	3.64
Student is cooperative in a group setting.	55%	36%	9%	0%	3.45
Student brings all required materials (method book, instrument, etc.) to rehearsals.	46%	46%	9%	0%	3.36
Student follows directions in the rehearsals.	46%	46%	9%	0%	3.36
Student demonstrates leadership in rehearsals.	27%	55%	18%	0%	3.09
Student demonstrates focus in rehearsals.	27%	45%	27%	0%	3.00

Note: this is for all progress reports completed for all students at end of spring 2022

### A4. Changes in non-musical skills from mid-year to end of year (N=7)

<b>Behavior</b>		<b>Always (4)</b>	<b>Most of the time (3)</b>	<b>Sometimes (2)</b>	<b>Never (1)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Change</b>
Student demonstrates independent learning	Fall	2/7	4/7	2/7	0/7	3.14	+0.86
	Spring	7/7	0/7	0/7	0/7	4.00	
Student demonstrates leadership in class	Fall	3/7	0/7	2/7	2/7	2.57	+0.43
	Spring	2/7	3/7	2/7	0/7	3.00	
The student demonstrates eagerness to learn	Fall	5/7	1/7	1/7	0/7	3.57	+0.29
	Spring	6/7	1/7	0/7	0/7	3.86	

<b>Behavior</b>		<b>Always (4)</b>	<b>Most of the time (3)</b>	<b>Sometimes (2)</b>	<b>Never (1)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Change</b>
The student brings all required materials (method book, instrument, etc.) to the group lesson	Fall	3/7	2/7	2/7	0/7	3.14	+0.15
	Spring	3/7	3/7	1/7	0/7	3.29	
Student demonstrates focus in class	Fall	3/7	1/7	3/7	0/7	3.00	+0.0
	Spring	2/7	3/7	2/7	0/7	3.00	
The student follows directions in the lesson	Fall	3/7	2/7	2/7	0/7	3.14	+0.0
	Spring	2/7	4/7	1/7	0/7	3.14	
The student is cooperative in a group setting	Fall	4/7	1/7	2/7	0/7	3.29	+0.0
	Spring	3/7	3/7	1/7	0/7	3.29	
Student persists on tasks even when experiencing difficulty	Fall	5/7	2/7	0/7	0/7	3.71	+0.0
	Spring	6/7	0/7	1/7	0/7	3.71	

Note: this is for students who had a progress report completed at end of fall 2021 and at end of spring 2022

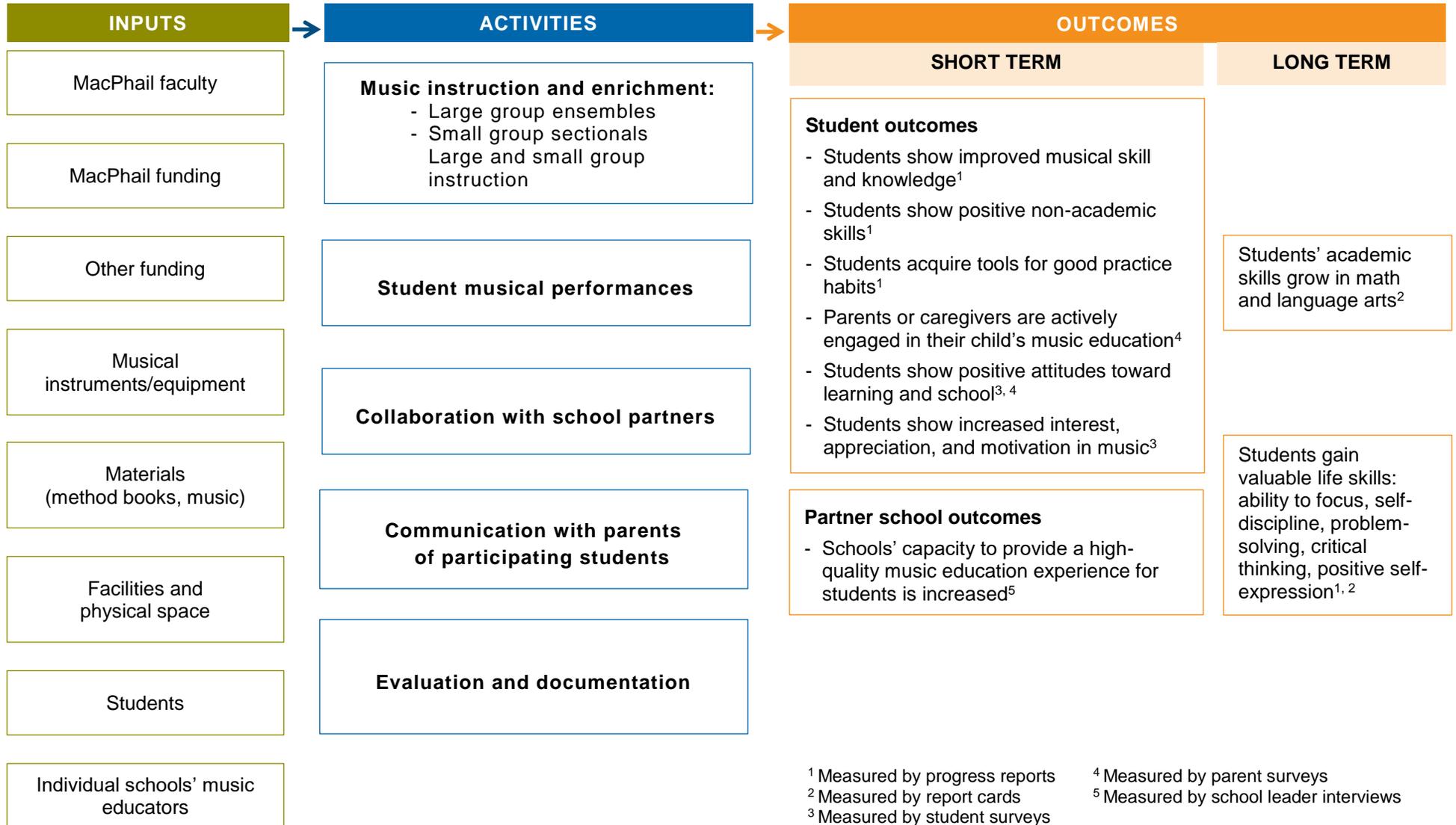
#### **A5. Attendance data for 21-22 school year**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Average percentage of lessons attended</b>
Fall	12	67%
Spring	11	53%

Note: attendance data were unavailable for two students and two students left the program after attending less than five sessions. These four students were not calculated into the N or the average.

## B. MacPhail Intensive Strings Program Logic Model

**Overview:** The MacPhail Intensive Strings Program was established to create a complete music education experience to support every student's highest level of artistic and academic achievement. The program works closely with school community partners to ensure that students receive high quality, intensive, and specialized music education and instruction beyond general music education.



## C. Evaluation tools

### MacPhail Center for Music Intensive Strings Program – Parent Survey

We hope that your child's involvement in the MacPhail Intensive Strings Program has been rewarding. In order to better serve your child and make improvements to our program, we would appreciate your feedback on your child's experience. Thank you.

If you have more than one child in Intensive Strings, please answer the survey for the child who most recently had a birthday.

Child name(s) (optional): _____	Child's grade: [drop down list with 3-8 + an "other" option]
Your relationship to the child(ren): _____	
What musical instrument does your child play?	
<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup> Violin	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup> Viola
<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup> Cello	

	Yes	No
1. Does your child have a place to practice at home?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>
2. Do you encourage your child to practice at home?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
3. My family has access to the necessary technology to do online music lessons.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>5</sup>

	Yes	Sometimes	No
4. Do you or another important adult in your child's life attend your child's music performances?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>
5. Do you read the yearly progress reports about your child's performance in music class?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>

Has participation in the MacPhail music program helped to improve your child's...	Yes, a lot	Yes, some	No	Don't Know
6. Attitude towards school?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>5</sup>
7. Ability to focus on a task?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>5</sup>
8. Mental health?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>5</sup>
9. Social skills?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>5</sup>
10. Math skills?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>5</sup>
11. Literacy skills?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>5</sup>
12. Other academic skills?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>5</sup>

13. Would you like your child to continue with the MacPhail music program next year?  
 <sup>1</sup> Yes     <sup>2</sup> Maybe     <sup>3</sup> No, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Are there other instruments you would like MacPhail to offer in its School Partnerships program?  
 <sup>1</sup> Yes, please list: \_\_\_\_\_     <sup>2</sup> Maybe     <sup>3</sup> No

15. What is the best way for MacPhail staff to contact you with information about your child?  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Something else, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Please add any additional comments or concerns you have about the MacPhail music program.

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*Thank you!*

# MacPhail

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School Partnerships Progress Report | Completed by Music Instructor

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

MacPhail Instructor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

School: <sup>1</sup> Ascension School <sup>2</sup> Harvest Best Academy

Student studies:  
<sup>1</sup> Violin <sup>2</sup> Viola <sup>3</sup> Cello

Student's year in MacPhail program:  
<sup>1</sup> One <sup>2</sup> Two <sup>3</sup> Three <sup>4</sup> Four <sup>5</sup> Five <sup>6</sup> Six

Attendance:  
 Student attended \_\_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_\_ classes during the \_\_\_\_\_ session.

Please rate the student's preparation for and behavior during class.	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never	Not applicable
1. Student brings all required materials (method book, instrument, etc.) to the group lesson.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>9</sup>
2. Student prepares assigned music in home practice.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>9</sup>
3. Student is cooperative in a group setting.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>9</sup>
4. Student follows directions in the lesson.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>9</sup>
5. Student demonstrates eagerness to learn.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>9</sup>
6. Student demonstrates focus in class.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>9</sup>
7. Student has shown consistent musical progress and growth.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>9</sup>
Comment:					
8. Student persists on tasks even when experiencing difficulty.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>9</sup>
9. Student demonstrates leadership in class.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>9</sup>
10. Student demonstrates independent learning.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>4</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>9</sup>

Please comment on the student's ability to participate in the online setting (ex: ability to focus, technical abilities, ability to receive feedback and instruction, etc.)

MacPhail Center for Music report modified December 2016 based on a Wilder Research form created February 2009

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