



May 31, 2025

An Open Letter to the Regina Public School Board Regarding Elementary Band Program Cuts

To the Members of the Regina Public School Board:

I am writing to express my profound concern regarding the proposed cuts and restructuring of the elementary band programs within the Regina Public School Division. I implore you to reconsider the long-term ramifications of diminishing a program that is so vital to the holistic development of our young people and the cultural fabric of our city.

As the Music Director of the Regina Symphony Orchestra, I have a unique perspective on the value of early music education. The elementary band program serves as a foundational stepping stone for countless aspiring musicians, fostering not only instrumental proficiency but also critical skills such as discipline, teamwork, creative expression, and problem-solving. These are not merely "arts" skills; they are life skills that contribute to academic success, emotional well-being, and active citizenship.

Many of the musicians who grace the stage with the Regina Symphony Orchestra, and indeed, countless others who contribute to the vibrant cultural landscape of our province and beyond, began their musical journeys in school band programs. These programs provide an accessible entry point to music education, offering opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach for many families. By reducing the number of dedicated band teachers and restructuring the program in a way that limits student access and specialized instruction, we risk creating an insurmountable barrier for the next generation of artists, innovators, and engaged community members.

Education, in its truest sense, should aim to cultivate well-rounded individuals. Music education has been demonstrably linked to improved academic performance in other subjects, enhanced cognitive function, and increased student engagement. It provides a unique outlet for self-discovery and builds a sense of belonging and accomplishment that is invaluable during formative years. As organizations like SaskMusic and the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance (SAA), along with many concerned parents, have highlighted, these cuts threaten student access to quality music instruction and undermine the overall quality and equity of education.

The arts are not a luxury; they are an essential component of a thriving society. Investing in elementary band programs is an investment in the future of Regina and Southern Saskatchewan—in its creativity, its cultural vibrancy, and the potential of its youth. I offer the support and partnership of the Regina Symphony Orchestra in exploring creative ways to sustain and strengthen music education in our community. I respectfully ask that you walk back these cuts and commit to maintaining the quality and accessibility of music education for all students in Regina Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Gordon Gerrard
Music Director
Regina Symphony Orchestra