



BURGETTSTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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September 25, 2020

To those who recognize excellence:

I am writing on behalf of the Burgettstown Area School District in support of Rural Arts Collaborative project and its outcomes for students.

In Burgettstown, we recognize how the Rural Arts Collaborative delivers high-quality, engaging, project-based education programs rooted in the arts. We have benefitted greatly from the "Midnight Radio Education Program," which engages students in an inquiry-rich, project-based learning initiative where they research, develop, write, rehearse, and perform radio plays and commercials based on our own curriculum. We have also had a magnificent year-long experience with Calvin Stemley, artist in residence in our instrumental music program.

We could not be more proud to support the Rural Arts Collaborative in their efforts to enrich the educations and lives of our youth. As a beneficiary of their Midnight Radio Education Program, the Burgettstown Area School District's eighth grade students experienced the creative, problem-solving process first-hand. The students had access to teaching artists and resources including sound and Foley sound-effect equipment, and the opportunity to dive deeply into their subject matter in a way they do not have access to without this program. With Mr. Stemley, our students were exposed to jazz music from a legendary artist, and collaborated with him to create a CD of their own music. What an experience for the beginner musician!

With 40% of students in Burgettstown qualifying for free or reduced lunch, we recognize how our student body does not have equal access to arts and cultural resources. By bringing the R.A.C. programs into our school, students not only experience first-hand how arts deepen their understanding of their subject matter, but they also receive exposure to new skills and career paths in the arts—such as composing, writing, directing, design, performing and acting. I am pleased to report our student attendance improved because the artists were here. Moreover, the multi-disciplinary nature of the programs allow students who do not normally thrive in more traditional classroom settings to find their voice and an opportunity to shine in the classroom to everyone's delight, including their own.

It is without any reservation that I offer the Burgettstown Area School District's support of the Rural Arts Collaborative.

Sincerely,

James M. Walsh, Ed.D.
Superintendent