

HEALTHY STRING PROGRAM SURVEY 2004

The *Healthy String Program Survey* was handed out on paper at the Clinic and Luncheon and distributed via the MNSOTA e-mail Reminders. The purpose of this survey is to gather information useful to programs threatened with budget cuts.

Tabularized results are in the table on the next page. Comments on the table follow. Lastly are some effective strategies for avoiding cuts. Pat Kelly's article *Secrets*

to *Success* begins on this page.

Although there are some difficulties with the survey, the number of responses make it clear this is important to our membership.

For the question "number of preps" some teachers apparently answered with the number of paid open periods per day, or per week. Others answered with the number of groups they need to do preparation for. In

answering the questions about number of small group lesson each week and number of large group lessons each week, most teachers answered with the number that each child receives. Other teachers answered with the number that they teach.

The raw data has been presented in the way the questions were answered; please do your own interpretation and analysis.

[ed]

SECRETS TO SUCCESS OF STRING PROGRAMS

by Pat Kelly

To keep string programs healthy and strong, I ask three questions:

1. How to stay alive at all.
2. If compromised, (cut some, but not hurt too badly) — what to focus on and how to get back what you lost.
3. How to improve and grow no matter what happened.

The first part is mostly philosophical. You must keep a department flexible (some veteran teachers, young teachers, male, female, different styles) yet everyone must strongly believe in the basic philosophy. This is very important. At Ramsey we believe all kids have talent and are all equally deserving. We also believe they need to be grouped by playing/reading level.

Most of our parents also buy into this belief system. You must remind your most supportive parents that what they do also helps all the children, not just their own. These are the parents that do most of the work for you. Keep them happy because they are the ones that build the positive talk about your school. They can be your biggest supporters and also your biggest critics. Listen to their complaints because the challenges they present make you a better negotiator and teacher. Bottom line — the kids love us and we love them, therefore the parents love us too. It's the little things parents remember — give praise, share compliments and do the little extras.

Parents and students are your clientele. Pretend you run a small business. I believe that the buyer has the right to expect the very best from me most of the time. I am quick to help them and will go 'way out of

my way to get their trust. In return I ask them to support us, especially in our hour of need.

Parents must be organized and ready to be used. A booster club with an active e-mail list is essential. Have a strings newsletter and fundraising events that are fun. Be able to call on supporting parents at a drop of a hat!! Above all, make the principal look good!!!

Do the scheduling at your school, or be a huge part of it. Scheduling is almost everything.

Think bigger than big and have expectations that exceed anything you might think could really happen. We are only held back by our biases and preconceived notions.

When all else fails, work harder than anyone else and get other people to believe in your vision and dream. Don't stop talking up your program. If some people get jealous and begin to talk badly about you, remember to invite them to your concerts. Use a bit of your money to get them a half-day sub so they can see your concerts and make them the special emcee or guest. Win them over with food, attention and love. *Always inform your principal of everything you're doing.* They hate to be surprised.

Use the microphone judiciously but don't be afraid to talk to parents about how they can get involved. This is also a very good time to get your booster leadership moving. Parents need to talk to other parents. Have your boosters remind them that this is how a democracy works and it is up to active civic-minded citizens to keep the arts funded. Help them gather hard data at concerts like a survey, so when the chips

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Survey Questions

- Your name, school, district (optional) [this was included on the e-mail survey, but not on the paper survey]
- Are you full time or part time?
- Total number of students you teach
- Average number of students you teach in one day
- Total number of large groups or performing ensembles
- Average size of each large group
- Number of preps
- Number of buildings
- Describe the average instruction your students receive for each level you teach:
- Beginners: Number of small group lessons each week
- Number of large group rehearsals each week
- Middle Level: Number of small group lessons each week
- Number of large group rehearsals each week
- High School: Number of small group lessons each week
- Number of large group rehearsals each week
- Other considerations
- Is your current staffing sufficient to insure reasonable progress in your students?
- If not, what would you change?
- Do you anticipate cuts to your program next year?
- From past crisis situations, can you share your most effective defense tactic?

Help Improve the Survey

This is the first time we have done a String Program Survey and we hope to make this an annual feature of the winter issue of the newsletter. Please contact Faith Farr, editor, with suggestions on questions to keep, change, delete or add to make the survey answers more useful to you next year. Your help in finding good wording for the questions is greatly appreciated! faith@farrpublications.com.

HEALTHY STRING PROGRAM SURVEY

Notes on the table entries can be found on the following pages. Abbreviations used: bldg building; cham chamber; EC Extra Curricular / after school; EL Elementary; GM General Music; Gr grade(s); HS High School; JH Junior High; MS Middle School / Middle Level; PO Pull Out; rot'n rotation; sm small; stu student(s); w/o without

Who	Full Time / Part Time	total # of students	avg # students per day	# large groups	average class size	# of preps	# of buildings	Beginners		Middle level		High School		Sufficient staff? Changes?	Cuts?
								# sm lsn/wk	# lg reh/wk	# sm lsn/wk	# lg reh/wk	# sm lsn/wk	# lg reh/wk		
Full Time Orchestra Jobs															
[1]	FT	240	75	4	32	1 per day	1	40 [1a]	2 [1b]	1 sectional	2-3			Could be better. [1c]	More than likely
[2]	FT	226	165-200	6 + 1 Extra Curr	38	1 47-min	3			9	21.5 (7 day rot'n)			No. [2a]	Yes
[3] [3a]	FT	211	105	8	35 [3b]	2	1	none	2-3	none	2-3			OK, not ideal. [3c]	
[4] [4a]	FT	200	125	8	25	1.5	1	none	2-3		5 Gr 8; 2-3 Gr 7			No. [4b]	[4c]
[5]	FT	185	95	4 JH, 2 Extra Curr, 4 EL	25	5 classes	3	1 25-min	1 30-min	none	5 Gr 8/9 45-min; 2-3 Gr 7 45-min			No. [5a]	Unsure
[6] [6a]	FT	180		9	20	5	3	none	6	none	6			Yes	No
[7]	FT	170	30-35	none		1	5	1	none					Adequate. [7a]	No
[8]	FT	170	80	6	20	1	2			16	2-3 per school			Barely adequate. [8a]	No. [8b]
[9]	3 FT + 1 very PT in district	100 HS; 80+ JH; 170 EL		4 HS; 3 JH 5 EL (1 per bldg)	34	number of groups + lessons	1 HS; 4 EL; 2 JH+EL	1	1	1	5	1 in Gr 9; none after that	5	Yes, but its tight. [9a]	No
[10]	FT	165	130	4	35	1 [10a]	2			5	5	0-5 depends on wk	5	Yes	No
[11] [11a]	FT	140-160	140-160	5	28	[11b]	2	1 (3 per group)	1	none	5	occasional	5	No. [11c]	No
[12] [12a]	FT	150		6			3	1 25-30 min PO	1 45-min PO	none	2-3 47-min			Depends on 3 bldgs. [12b]	Not sure
[13] [13a]	FT	145	60	6	25	3 classes	1			.5	2-3, or 1 [13b]			Yes	No
[14]	FT	84 HS, 55 Gr 6	100	2 lg orch + 2 cham	50 lg; 20 cham	1 per day	2	1 22-min; 3 stu	2 (I don't teach it)			2-3 per quarter	10 + 2 cham	Yes	No
[15] [15a]	FT	134	134	3	41	2	1					5	15 (3 orch)	Yes. [15b]	No
[16]	FT	132	30	5 (Gr 4 has 3 groups)	30	1 hr prep-lunch/day	3	1	0-1 [16a]					Yes	Hopefully not
[17] [17a]	FT	130	100+ [17b]	4 [17c]	35	1 [17d]	2	1 20-min	1 30-min EC [17e]	none [17f]	5 45-min [17g]	none [17h]	5	No. [17i]	Don't know yet
[18]	FT	125	110	6	20	6	4	1 [18a]	1	none	5	none	5	No. [18b]	I hope not. [18c]
[19]	FT	105	105	2	45	3 classes	1					0-1	5	Yes, mostly. [19a]	No
[20]	FT	105	60	2-3 [20a]	35	2 (10-min + 50-min)	1	1	1 starts in Jan.	1	2-3			Yes. [20b]	Yes but not sure
[21]	FT	104	20	6	20	5 hrs / wk	6	1 30-min	1 45-50 min						Yes
[22] [22a]	FT	102	30	5	28	none [22b]	8	1 20-min	1 45-min	1	2-3	0-1	2-3	No. [22c]	Possibly
[23]	FT	100	120 / 75 [23a]	2 HS; 2 MS	35 HS; 20 MS	1-3 [23b]	2			0-1	2-3	0-1	5	OK. [23c]	No
Full-Time Orchestra/Band or Orchestra/Choir															
[24]	FT orch, choir	67 orch; 230 choir	200+	6	80	1	1			none	2-5			No. [24a]	No
[25] [25a]	FT 5 orch, 2 bands	235	135	7	32	2 - 1.5 [25b]	1	none	2-3 47 min	none	2-3 Gr 7; 5 Gr 8; 47-min			It's not the best. [25c]	Yes
[26] [26a]	.8 orch; .2 band	120 orch; 60 band	30 orch; 60 band	7 orch, 1 band	20	4 [26b]	3	1 25-30 min	1 30-min	1	2-3 45-min	1 20-min [26c]	5 68-min [26c]	Yes. [26d]	Probably
[27] [27a]	2/3 orch 1/3 choir	97 orch; 75 band	172	2 orch, 1 band	45-50 orch; 75 band	2 [27b]	1					none	5	Yes	Possibly. [27c]
Part-Time															
[28] [28a]	.8	296	60	5	22	1 a day	1	1	0 Gr 1-2; 1 Gr 3-5	1	1			No. [28b]	Yes
[29]	4 days/wk	180	45	5	20	3	4	1	none	1 (some schools)	1			No. [29a]	Yes
[30]	PT	100	50	2 (1 per bldg)	60 HS; 38 JH	40 min/day	2			1 20-min	many [30a]	[30b]	5 or 2-3 [30c]	No. [30d]	No
[31]	.5 (M-W only)	100	33	none		45 min on Wed	6 [31a]	1 30-40 min	none or 1 [31b]						
[32]	.8 orch; .2 GM	95	varies	3	45, 45, 15	0 Fri; 1-2 M-Th	1	1 15-min	1	1 15-min	2-3	none	5	Yes. [32a]	Unsure. [32b]
[33] [33a]	PT	80	60	6	20	6	1	1	2	1	3	1	3	Yes	No
[34] [34a]	.5	70	14	2	JH HS 18; EL 50	none	1	1	2 per year [34b]	incl w/HS		none	5 [34c]	No. [34d]	Unknown. [34e]
[35]	PT	54	8	3	12	2 per day	2	1	2	1	2	1 w/o teacher [35a]	4	No. [35b]	Hard to say. [35c]
[36]	PT [36a]	32	32	mostly sm group		1	1	1	none	1	none			No. [36b]	

Healthy String Program Survey — Comments on the Table

Survey answers that were too complex to fit into a box are given below. Numbers are referenced in the table.

1 Stacy Aldrich, Ramsey IFAC, Minneapolis; **1a** each child receives 1 small lesson; **1b** 1/wk Gr 4 & 5; 1/wk Gr 3; **1c** The scheduling is more the problem than staffing, although we have a band person doing .4 string in our building.

2 Connie Aiken, Mounds View Schools 621, Chippewa MS; **2a** Add more lesson time — about 6 more hours per week or 12 more small group lesson times.

3 Lisa Lawrence, Jackson Middle, Anoka Hennepin; **3a** We take more kids in 7th & 8th grade classes (usually 40-55) in “exchange” for smaller 6th/beginner classes (of 20-30); **3b** Combine 2 or 3 orchestras for concerts; **3c** Cut beginner classes in half or more than half, option or ability for sectionals or private lessons during the school day.

4 Julie Schmidt, Fred Moore MS, #11 Anoka-Hennepin; **4a** all mixed instruments; **4b** offer small groups or lessons during orchestra time for individual help; **4c** We are becoming a Fine Arts magnet school.

5 Julie Guerber, Oakland JH, Andersen Elem, Lake Elmo Elem, Stillwater District; **5a** We need lessons at the middle level. I would also like to have planning/prep time. I have to do it outside of school time. We used to have them. I see a change in student progress.

6 Thomas Pieper, Wayzata East, West, Central MS; **6a** Mixed group levels.

7 Elizabeth Pim, Fernbrook Elem, Osseo Public Schools; **7a** It would be great to have a large group lesson each week in addition to the small lesson. It would also be nice to see the students twice a week.

8 anonymous; **8a** Reinstate 4th grade program at elem and add that to HS orchestra contract; **8b** Lower \$ for department budget, but not staff cuts.

9 Mark Gitch, Owatonna; **9a** We need either a slight increase in staff or a slight decrease in enrollment.

10 Michelle Stivers, Willmar; **10a** I have 1 prep but I use it for lessons.

11 Kristine Granias, Century and SW JH, Forest Lake; **11a** We begin in 6th grade; way too late for this Suzuki trained teacher! **11b** I teach 2 Gr 7, 1 Gr 8, 1 Gr 9 and 1 Gr 8/9 orchestra every day. **11c** This is the first year I have had to teach an 8/9 orchestra without someone team-teaching with me. (Band teacher, but he plays bass.) That way we can get the Gr 8 students more up to

speed and work on things like vibrato with older students. Few students take private.

12 anonymous; **12a** Extreme variation between 4 programs in 3 schools; **12b** Time is adequate at 2 of my schools at current numbers. I would take on more if I had greater time allocation. My third school is suffering from declining enrollment, my time was cut to 1/2 day per week and it is very difficult to maintain the numbers and quality I had there in the past. They also cut classroom music completely, so student readiness will be greatly reduced in future.

13 Kevin Martin, Sandburg MS, Robbinsdale; **13a** Some of my large group classes meet every other day, while some meet every 4th day; **13b** Some receive only 1 rehearsal/wk.

14 Sue Radloff, Austin HS.

15 Jon Larson, Moorhead HS; **15a** After school select ensemble ~20 students meets once a week for 2 hours, performs for about 50 events during the school year; **15b** I'm working to bring in more private teachers to give lessons during the school day.

15 Lisa Zeller, Willmar Public Schools; **16a** Some 4th graders get 1 large rehearsal every other week due to not having sufficient space.

17 Clare Chopp, ISD 709, Duluth Public Schools; **17a** Some of the students are in chamber, run before school, which meets 2-3 times per week 45 minutes; **17b** 100 every day + 30 beginner lessons; **17c** 3 every day; 1 rotates; **17d** I usually see kids during the one prep listed; **17e** Students are only started in 6th grade!; **17f** MS students have to sign up and come after school for help when they can and I am open; **17g** I do have a chamber ensemble of more advanced MS students meeting once per week after school (this is all on my “prep” time essentially); **17h** I have tried HS sectionals but run in to so many conflicts before school with them retesting for other classes and after school is a job and sports nightmare! A/B students are expected to sign up for a 15-minute lesson to work on solos and etudes 2-3 times every 6 weeks. (Before and after school which would be any spare prep time I have); **17i** Staffing is *not* adequate, unless students do a lot of practicing on their own and take private lessons. Students need more individual time with qualified instructors!

18 Diane Wright, Marshall Public

Schools District 413; **18a** Grade 4 students have two 30-minute classes each week. Grade 5 & 6 alternate every other day with 45-minute large group classes. I excuse most of the students after 25 minutes and use the last 20 minutes to work with smaller groups on skills. Grade 7 & 8 students each have a 25-minute class daily and no lessons. We have 2 HS orchestras. Orchestra grades 9/10 rehearses 25 minutes daily. Orchestra grades 11/12 rehearses 40 minutes daily. Students in grade 7-12 who are in band, choir, and orchestra have class 2-4 days a week; **18b** Prior to this year students in grades 5-8 received one small group lesson every 6 days. This year our program was cut from 1.5 FTE to 1 FTE. Students no longer have the small group lesson. I drive to 5 different locations daily for classes. I have 5 of 6 classes before lunch. There is no time in my daily schedule to start students who decide to play after the initial beginning class in 4th grade. Bass students practice after school at school. I am working on getting HS students to coach younger students after school. I teach 12 private students and work with a fiddle group one night after school. We have need in our community for more private teachers; **18c** Cuts may happen when I retire in a few years.

19 Christopher Jannings, Roseville Area HS; **19a** It would be nice to have someone come in to teach some lessons for me. I started a new music theory course this year and it has cut some of my lesson program.

20 Bethany Brunsell, Fine Arts Interdisciplinary Resource (FAIR) School, West Metro Education Program, Joint Powers District 6069; **20a** Sept-Dec = 2 lg ensembles, Jan-Jun=3; **20b** Staffing is sufficient as long as participation does not continue to increase. Due to budget cuts, the music department lost a 0.6 FTE support staff person who assisted Band, Orchestra, and Vocal/General music teachers.

21 Cassandra Herold, Edina.

22 Rhonda Johnson, Cathedral HS/John XXIII MS; **22a** I teach grades 3-12 every day. I am at three schools per day starting out with the same MS every morning. I then travel to one of my elem schools and end up at the HS every afternoon; **22b** My prep is generally in my vehicle traveling from one school to the next; **22c** My school bases the teaching load on the number of students enrolled, not on the teaching load

of being in eight different buildings covering nine schools.

23 Sarah Chelgren, Cooper HS; Robinsdale Area Schools; **23a** One day I teach 100 plus sectional students in the other grade, for a grand total of 120. The opposite day I see approx 75 students; **23b** 1 on even days; 2-3 on odd days; **23c** I feel we are lucky in comparison to what is happening in other districts, but it is still not ideal. I would ideally be full-time in one building.

Full-Time Orch/Choir, Orch/Band

24 anonymous; **24a** More time for small group lessons.

25 Sylvia Wilson, Anoka-Hennepin School District #11, Northdale MS grades 6-8; **25a** Our district totally revamped their MS curriculum requirements this fall because of the No Child Left Behind legislation. The arts are no longer required after 6th grade, which has led to a decrease of 50% in our 7th grade enrollment. I started 125 beginning string students last fall and now have only 58 for their second year. Due to scheduling conflicts or reading or math “double scoop” requirements depending on a student’s state testing scores, our music enrollment got hit hard; **25b** 2 class period preps 1st semester, 1.5 2nd semester; **25c** I would change the No Child Left behind law so that it isn’t so poorly written. I would also change the curriculum structure in our district to what it used to be. I think our school board over reacted to the NCLB law and students are the losers for it.

26 Alta Thoreson, Gr 4–8, Roseville; **26a** Preps are 1 beginning orchestra in each school (3), 1 intermediate orchestra in each school (3), Gr 7/8 orchestra, Gr 5/6 Band; **26b** We start 4th graders on violin; viola, cello and bass in 5th grade; **26c** Another teacher teaches the HS level; **26d** I wish we could start all string players in 4th grade or earlier.

27 Jason Etten filling out for Bill Sucha, Irondale HS; **27a** Right now the IHS program is growing but the future is a bit scary because of cuts in the program at lower levels and changes in personnel because of those cuts. I know that our lack of stability in the elem and MS levels will hurt our chances of maintaining the size of the HS program — time will tell. Additionally, shifting teachers at the HS may have long-term negative consequences; **27b** 1 hour of lunch room duty; **27c** Cuts certain in 2-3 years.

Part-Time

28 anonymous; **28a** We have 3.0 for 11 large ensembles, 3-4 chamber ensembles,

600 kids in group lessons; all upper school orchestra kids in sectionals *during our prep* or before school; **28b** I would endow the string positions so they can not be cut.

29 anonymous; **29a** I need to see beginners more than one time per week. Some of my second and third year students only get orchestra—no small groups. A minimum of 2 lessons (1 large and 1 small) per week would be reasonable.

30 Kurt Hoesly, St. Cloud Tech HS/South JH; **30a** 2 lg rehearsal with each Gr; 1 with Gr combined; **30b** HS lessons taught on a sign-up basis; 3 required per quarter (unless taking private lessons, then only one required); **30c** about 20 students are in orchestra every day, the rest of the group attends every other day (alternating with a required health class); **30d** In order to provide adequate lesson time, my position needs to be made full-time. The current .8 FTE split between two buildings makes lesson scheduling extremely tough, especially at the HS.

31 Debra Linnes, Austin Public Schools, 5th grade beginning string program; **30a** I teach in 4 different elem buildings but students from 2 other private schools come to me at one of the buildings, therefore I service 6 elem buildings; **31b** 1 large group lesson a week Mar. 1 through May 10th (for 10 weeks) for after school 5th grade all city orchestra.

32 Kim Evander, Northfield MS; **32a** Staffing is very low in comparison with the band program; **32b** possibly some cuts in elementary.

33 Rosa Glade Arnold, Mounds Park Academy; **32a** 2 string quartets, each rehearse twice a week.

34 Nina Westbrook, Open School, St. Paul Public Schools; **34a** .1 of my job

is lunch room duty because my job got downsized to .4 and the principal paid the other .1 of my job from her building monies to keep me at .5, but then I had to do lunchroom duty; **34b** 1 lg rehearsal before each concert—2 concerts per yr; **34c** HS has one large group rehearsal per day, some days we break up into small groups; **34d** I would change my lunchroom duty to one extra hour of time teaching strings and use it for elem string group practice; **34e** This building has no other activities for students to become involved in other than strings. There is no art class for elem, no general music class for elem, no band, no foreign language for elem, no swimming pool; strings is it. To take that away would be really catastrophic.

35 Brenda Lund, Fairmont Area; **35a** HS students have 1 small group lesson each week but I am not there for it—they are on their own; **35b** I would make it full-time. I am not here on Fridays at all, and I have limited time to give lessons because I travel and because I have quite a bit of non-contract time during the day, even though I am here. It makes it really hard to schedule lessons with the junior high kids. I think I will lose a lot of kids because of scheduling, yet they want me to build the program, but they won’t give me more time so that I can build the program; **35c** It depends on the numbers. They will try to combine elem orchestra with band when that teacher retires.

36 Beverley Williams, St. Cloud 742; **36a** I am one full day per week; there are four other teachers. (I came out of retirement to teach due to shortage of string teachers); **36b** Teachers need to see students twice a week once for small group and one for rehearsal. †

Most Effective Defense Tactics

Here are the defense tactics suggested on the survey responses.

I write out a detailed list of my schedule for the week (many years I had no preps and even shortened lunch times) and give it to my administrator. The schedule does the talking.

Work together with other music teachers even though we tend to compete for the staffing points. Keep parents informed. Run a quality program so that it is something parents will fight to keep.

Be sure other teachers, principals, parents all know what you do. Do perform

often. Work well with other staff.

Offense. The community needs to know that you are there and are valuable to them. The administration needs to see you and hear you well before a crisis ensues. Be involved in whatever positive ways you can. Have data that backs up your position, and organized parents to watch your back! More than anything else, you have to do your job as well as possible and not get too uptight about decisions you can’t control.

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Secrets to Success *Continued from first page*

come down you can say what % of parents feel pull-outs don't hurt their child's academic performance for example.

Have a great program where the kids like it and where they sound and look good. Nothing speaks louder than the authentic experience of a fabulous performance. Use your most talented kids as showpieces and pick music that is rich and full. Use the piano, especially for young groups to fill out the sound and keep a steady pulse.

Keep it balanced. Before you pull out all the "stops," administrators from the superintendent on down better already respect you and love your program. Please notice that I did not say they had to like you. Always promote your school and your district and call newspapers regularly to come and cover

your events. Try to spin a cool reason for them to come.

You might rattle a few people when you advocate passionately for the arts and use surveys, newsletters, phone calls, e-mails, invitations to concerts, showcase concerts, and plain talk. But, in the end it takes everyone using all the avenues of persuasion to keep string programs alive. Sometimes good cop, bad cop and the "squeaky wheel" can be very effective.

But most important of all — it's all about keeping the availability of superior string study open to every child. As long as you can say it's about the kids and stay focused on what is right for them, you can feel safe that what you need to do, even if controversial and scary at times, is OK.

Keep the faith and don't waver from what's right for all people — kids and adults alike — respect, honesty, equity, high standards and fun!!

Just remember what Nelson Mandela said in a speech, "There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that others don't feel insecure around you."

Pat Kelly teaches elementary and middle school strings at the Ramsey Fine Arts International School in the Minneapolis School District. As a magnet school, every child at Ramsey studies strings from 1st through 6th grade. Strings become optional starting in 7th grade. Ramsey is an urban school where 60% of all students receive free or reduced lunch. ‡

Defense Strategies *Continued from previous page*

Budget within our own department — cut music and instrument purchases, not staff. Also, parents have been great.

Get the parents involved. Have them bug the principal, the school board and anybody else they can think of.

Lobby the school board, superintendents and principals. Go to the media with our problem, but with parents in the lead.

Get parents involved to try to influence the Board and community as to our importance, that usually however is in the form of "music" in the broad sense. A lot is up to building principals and how much they can/will or won't support you.

Get parents organized with calling trees if cuts are proposed. Advocate, advocate,

advocate!

Parental ownership of the string program is most important. If parents are actively involved in the program (parent meetings, chaperoning trips, providing treats, ushering concerts, fundraising, etc.) they are very vocal and influential with administrators.

Parents calling School Board members.

Support from parents — willing to visit with school board members.

Lots of parent engagement. Work with administrators by offering ways to pare back some without destroying the future of the program.

Tenacious parent making phone calls and protesting. Inviting decision makers

before there is a crisis. Part fear and shame, and part making principals look *fabulous*. Have their *respect* and have the kids sound *great* and have parents willing to *die* for you and the program.

I have written proposals and visited with the Superintendent and Principals. Our situation has not changed.

As a music staff, we have contacted John Benham to help us avoid further cuts. We are going through a formal curriculum review process and he will be part of it. The District is even paying him to be a consultant in this capacity! He has saved many music programs in Minnesota in the past. ‡