

OPINION

Cutting band classes short-changes our kids

Ralph Adamson, Bremerton Published 10:50 a.m. PT May 5, 2020

It's my understanding that the CKSD intends to cut the elementary school band and orchestra programs for the upcoming school year. I voiced my opposition and received a timely response. I understand that the letter was intended to soften the blow. It stated, "...the desire to continue providing strong music programs across our district has not wavered."

I think the response is disingenuous. This action deliberately weakens music programs. It's a ruse to try to convince me that it's going to be okay because "general music classes with still be offered."

The district is cutting the fifth grade band and orchestra program. In reality, nothing is offered to replace it. That's understandable. There is no adequate substitute for beginning band and orchestra training in elementary school.

I think the school district is short-sighted here and does not fully understand the problem or the impact of the action. The plan will negatively impact music students and programs as the effect ripples on through the middle school and high school.

You could compare the effect to cancelling fifth grade math. How would you prepare sixth graders and sixth grade math teachers for that? How are you going to prepare the middle school music teachers to teach beginning students, or high school music teachers for the lack of proficiency five years down the road? Outside, was there a conversation with Ted Brown music to prepare them for the loss of demand for instruments they've stockpiled to support the program?

Some other solution needs to be put in place. If over-staffing is the problem, I propose eliminating positions of administration rather than positions that directly reach the students, i.e., the band teachers. Put the money where the students are.

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