4 December 2016

To the Rules Advisory Committee:

The Teaching Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) is currently considering a rule change that has the potential to negatively affect our music teacher education programs and Oregon’s public school music programs. At a recent Commission meeting there was a concern about specialty programs inclusive of music. There was a request to explore the possibility of not requiring a full program to add an endorsement in Music and other specialty areas like Art, PE, and Drama. Speaking on behalf of the Music Education Area at the University of Oregon, we have major concerns about this. What follows below is our thoughts as a department.

Removing music as a specialty area has the potential to lower the standard of music teacher preparation in the state, and imperil the state by certifying underprepared music teachers. We see this as an erosion of quality music programs, and thus negatively impacting existing music programs, and stifling those that are trying to grow or start. This devalues our work as professionals and places the future of music education in peril in many communities.

Part of the requirements for the music teacher license is to complete an approved music education program (along with passing the required tests). This is a requirement that the candidate needs to complete in a music teacher program at an accredited teacher preparation school. Getting a license with an endorsement in the subject area is a requirement for all licenses. In our subject area, teachers need to show proficiency in these areas (to name a few):

1. Teacher’s ability to arrange music
2. Improvise melodies and accompaniments
3. Read music notation (and iconic notation), and be able to teach this to children
4. Write and notate music
5. Teach pedagogically, knowing different music teaching methods (e.g., Kodály, Orff, Music Learning Theory, Dalcroze, etc.) and classroom management
6. Child development as it pertains to music “readiness"
7. Musical development across the lifespan
8. Sociological foundations of music and music learning
9. Music history and music theory as it pertains to pedagogy and curricular design and development
10. Training specific to the primary instrument of study
11. Training in secondary instruments
12. Vocal training
13. Assessing music learning
14. In situ observation and implementation of the aforementioned skills
Music teacher education is not merely content-based knowledge (as you know), but acquisition of skills from theory, music history, techniques courses, conducting classes, and learning all different methods for music teaching. Competency cannot be achieved merely by taking a test or completing a series of abbreviated courses to complete these requirements.

The Music Education Area at the University of Oregon looks forward to the opportunity to share our concerns with you regarding this potential rule change.

Best regards,

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