

Jeffco Performing Arts Advocacy Coalition May 28 Newsletter - Going Into Summer

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Meeting With Dan McMinimee

This afternoon, two members of the Jeffco Performing Arts Advocacy Coalition had coffee with Dan McMinimee, the upcoming superintendent of Jeffco Public Schools. We discussed Performing Arts in Jeffco as well as Dan's background in both Douglas County and the Salem-Keizer Public School District in Oregon.

Dan wanted to be very clear that he feels music is critical to education. He stated that it is equal in importance to other subjects, including STEM subjects. We discussed topics such as equity of access to Performing Arts across schools/demographics, teacher pay (many districts pay music teachers less than their STEM counterparts), cost challenges around instrument repair/replacement, and what roles JPAAC can play.

We found Dan to be very engaging, not just showing up and saying the right words, but also asking questions and suggesting possible avenues towards solutions to some of our challenges. He was also very clear that he appreciated the parents' involvement in an organization like this and specifically asked us to stay engaged with him directly. He is very interested in having a town hall meeting with our group in the future.

New Website Content

One of the things we would like to be to the community is a resource for information. Today, if you have a question about advocacy, research, or local, state, or national organizations, the process of finding answers can be difficult. If you don't know where to start, it's tough. One of our unwritten goals is to make that easier through our website. To that end, we have added a considerable amount of new content in the past week:

- [Multimedia](#): We have added samples of great Jeffco school performances, a recording of our May 20 meeting with Ken Witt and John Newkirk, a sample of the impact of music on a child's life, the webcast of the SupportMusic coalition 2014 national meeting, and notes from the May 22 AMP webinar "All Politics is Local".
- [Research](#): We added new research from major studies, compared across decades, regarding the state of arts education in public schools. These studies were commissioned by congress and performed by the National Center for Education Statistics.
- [Helpful links](#) to organizations: We have added many more links to local, state, and national Performing Arts advocacy organizations, along with descriptions of what these organizations can provide to people interested in advocacy.

- Links to more [booster organizations](#) in Jeffco. We would ultimately like to have a link to every booster organization so parents can share best practices. We are considering trying to get all booster presidents together for a half day to talk about successes, failures, and to share ideas. Let us know if you would be interested.

We continuously add content to the site, but we need your help. If you come across research, organizations, webcasts, performances, or booster links, please share those with us at jeffcopaadvocacy@gmail.com so we can post and share for the benefit of all community members.

May 20 Meeting With Ken Witt and John Newkirk

Thanks to all who turned out for this meeting. Although we did not have as many attendees as we had hoped, we did fill the room and had a great Q&A session talking about everything from 3A funding to teacher pay to instrument replacement, to equity of accessibility across schools - and many more subjects. With their permission, we video recorded and posted the entire meeting [here](#). It is split into 5 sections, with descriptions, for ease of viewing. (If the link does not work for you, it's under "Multimedia/Meetings" from the banner menu.)

What we Need Help With

We still need help in a few areas:

- Non-profit legal advice - whether it's you or someone you know, we could use some legal help. They don't even have to live in the district! We simply need an attorney who can spare a little time to help guide us on the nuances of becoming a non-profit. If you know of someone who may be able to help us, please reach out to them and let us know.
- We are looking for another leadership team member. If you can help in your spare time and are willing to share your ideas on how we can best serve the Jeffco community, we could use your help!
- Send us content! It takes a lot of time to research content. We have many hundreds of followers on Facebook, Twitter, and email. You can be the greatest source of content as you read stories in the news, interact with your booster organizations, and work with your music teachers. Think of us when you come across something and send it to jeffcopaadvocacy@gmail.com.

Going Into Summer

We are all volunteers. As we go into summer, expect to hear a bit less from us for the next few months. We are going to have a leadership planning meeting next week, and then many of us will be heading off on vacations at various points during the summer. Because of that, our newsletter frequency will likely slow down and our Facebook postings will not be as often. Be aware, though, that we haven't gone anywhere! We have some great ideas for next year:

- The Board of Education has asked us to pull together the top challenges facing Performing Arts in Jeffco. We will be working on this to present to the board in the near future.
- We have discussed with the board the significant cost issues around instrument repair and replacement and are working on an approach for this as input to the 2015-2016 budget process, which will kick off in a few months.

- We have discussed a number of ideas around how to work with booster organizations to help raise money for instruments and will continue to discuss feasibility and how to plan for that.

Enjoy the summer,

Kent Micho
President, Jeffco Performing Arts Advocacy Coalition

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Our Contact Information:

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