

Tacoma Public Schools School Board

Subject: Public Comment – Roosevelt Elementary Music Program

November 13, 2025

Dear Board Members,

My name is Meghan Torgeson, and I'm the parent of a kindergartner at Roosevelt Elementary. I spoke at the last meeting about the impact of losing our full-time music teacher and the importance of consistency, connection, and equity for our students.

Unfortunately, since that meeting, our situation has worsened — our half-time music teacher has now resigned without notice. This means Roosevelt, a Title I school serving many students of color and families in poverty, is currently without any music teacher at all.

I understand that staffing challenges exist district-wide, but this pattern — reassigning our full-time music teacher to another high-needs school and leaving Roosevelt unfilled — has left our students bearing the burden. Our children deserve the same consistent, high-quality enrichment that other schools receive, and right now, they simply do not have it.

Research consistently shows that access to the arts supports academic performance, attendance, and emotional regulation — outcomes that matter most in schools serving students with higher social and emotional needs, like Roosevelt.

It's also important to note that it is much more difficult to attract and retain qualified educators for part-time roles. Reinstating a full-time music position would likely draw stronger applicants and increase our chances of getting the level of support and stability Roosevelt's students need.

Right now, our students have had no music instruction at all since the half-time teacher left — not even a substitute has been provided. This means our school is currently unable to meet the state's 60-minute-per-week music instruction requirement for each class. In addition to being inequitable, this leaves our children without an important creative and emotional outlet that supports their learning and well-being.

I want to ask the board directly: What is the district's immediate plan to meet these curriculum requirements and restore equitable access to music at Roosevelt? Our students cannot afford to wait weeks or months for a solution.

As I shared before, music is not just an “extra.” For my daughter, it helped her find her voice after a delayed start to speech. For our school, it provides connection, predictability, and stability — things our students desperately need.

I ask the board to prioritize reinstating a full-time music position at Roosevelt and to ensure that smaller, high-needs schools are not left behind when staffing shortages occur elsewhere.

Thank you for your time and for keeping equity, consistency, and the whole child in mind when making decisions that affect schools like Roosevelt. I hope that soon, every child at Roosevelt can again come home saying, “It was the best day ever — we had music.”

Sincerely,

Meghan Torgeson

Parent, Roosevelt Elementary