

Dear Members of the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District,

As principal of Middleton High School, I consider it an honor to congratulate the MHS 7 O'Clock Jazz Band for being selected as one of 15 finalists to perform at the 24th annual Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival in New York on May 9-11.

As a former music teacher and current Wisconsin School Music Association Board Member, I am able to deeply appreciate the tremendous dedication and commitment from MHS jazz band director Doug Brown and the passion and sacrifice of these amazing jazz students. As a community, I know that we are all full of pride for these young musicians, who with respect and admiration, represent the school district and community.

It goes without saying that Middleton High School is home to one of the finest music programs in the state. We strive to develop an experience that helps students to develop a lifelong appreciation for music and the arts...and many have gone on to professional music careers. Our high-quality, comprehensive music curriculum is a result of the strong culture for the arts at MHS. We celebrate that our music program serves nearly 600 students or more than a quarter of the MHS student body. To be selected as one of the best jazz ensembles in the country is an incredible achievement, a wonderful learning opportunity for our students and yet another example of this excellence.

At a time when education is being highly scrutinized and many are more focused on accountability rather than the development of the whole child, Middleton High School recognizes and celebrates music as a positive driver of school climate and community life. Additionally, the arts allow us to deeply explore who we are as human beings, individually and collectively helping us to be more sensitive and understanding of others. They enrich life, make us happy, are an incubator for creativity and help to feed our souls.

Special thanks to our Superintendent of Schools, Dr. George Mavroulis; the members of the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District Board of Education; and our accommodating music booster organizations for continually placing value on our artistic endeavors.

Congratulations once again!

*Stephen T. Plank*

Stephen T. Plank, Principal

