



## Letter of Notification (LON)

### *Policy A1.0 New Academic Programs: Approval Process*

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**Institution:** East Tennessee State University

**Proposed Academic Program:** Master of Music (MM)

**Proposed Implementation Date:** Spring 2023

**CIP 2020 Code:** 50.0901

**CIP Code Title and Definition:** Music, General

A general program that focuses on the introductory study and appreciation of music and the performing arts. Includes instruction in music, dance, and other performing arts media.

**LON Submission Date:** January 7, 2022

**Posted Date on THEC Website:** January 10, 2022

**Public Comment Period:** January 10-25, 2022

#### Letter of Notification Checklist

THEC Academic Policy 1.0 (Section 1.0.6A) Letter of Notification Requirements:

- ✓ Letter of Support from the President/Chancellor signifying institutional governing board or system office support for development;
- ✓ Program name, degree designation and CIP code;
- ✓ Proposed implementation date;
- ✓ Academic Program Liaison (APL) name and contact information;
- ✓ Purpose and Nature of Program;
- ✓ Alignment with state master plan and institutional mission;
- ✓ Feasibility Study;
- ✓ Program Costs/Revenues; and
- ✓ Existing programs offered at public and private Tennessee institutions.



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EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

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LETTER OF NOTIFICATION (LON)

MASTER OF MUSIC



# EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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# EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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## Academic Program Name, Degree Designation, Proposed CIP Code, and CIP Code Title:

Name:	Master of Music
Designation:	MM
Proposed CIP Code and Title:	50.0901 Music, General

## Proposed Implementation Date:

Spring 2023

## Academic Program Liaison (APL) Name and Contact Information:

Kimberly McCorkle  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academics  
P.O. Box 70733  
Johnson City, TN 37614  
(423) 439-4811  
mccorklek@etsu.edu



**East Tennessee State University  
Office of the President**

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January 5, 2022

Dr. Emily House  
Executive Director  
404 James Robertson Parkway  
Suite 1900  
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Dr. House:

In accordance with THEC Policy A 1.0, I am submitting a Letter of Notification for establishing a Master of Music (MM) degree at ETSU. Tennessee is recognized as a leader in the music industry and the Master of Music degree will be a compliment to the ETSU music program. It will provide future students in the region and across the state with opportunities to grow as a professional in this expanding field.

The ETSU Board of Trustees approved the Letter of Notification and financial projections (attached) at its November 19, 2021 board meeting. The LON addresses the criteria for review as outlined in Sections 1.0.2A1 and 1.0.2A2 of the THEC New Academic Programs: Approval Process.

Sincerely,

Brian Noland  
President

cc: Betty Dandridge Johnson, THEC Chief Academic Officer  
Kimberly McCorkle, ETSU Provost and Senior Vice President for Academics  
Joe Bidwell, ETSU Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

## Background Concerning Academic Program Development

The ETSU Department of Music has grown substantially over the past five years. The number of undergraduate music majors and minors has increased each year, despite extreme circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic. As our department has grown, we have also received an increasing number of requests from current students, alumni, and community members for a graduate degree program to further their education. On average, at least twenty inquiries are received every year by faculty and administration in the department about pursuing a Master of Music. The music faculty have discussed the addition of a graduate degree for many years, and it is now clear that we have the interest in enrollment, the interest and support among the faculty, and new facilities in the Martin Center that make this the ideal time to pursue the addition of the Master of Music in our department.

A committee was convened in the fall of 2019 to research the largest market areas of interest for Master of Music concentrations. The committee researched Master of Music degree programs in peer institutions and innovative programs across the country. The committee found that most Master of Music programs in the nation offer flexibility in choosing an academic focus (such as music performance, conducting, music history, etc). We will follow a similar model with one Degree Program, the Master of Music, with several concentrations. The committee developed a draft plan of study that was proposed and approved by the faculty at the start of the semester in spring 2020. The pandemic halted the continued movement of this proposal until the current semester (fall 2021), but we have now returned to the plans for adding the Master of Music to our department offerings. We hope to begin recruitment in the spring of 2023 and have our first graduate students matriculate in the fall semester of 2023.

The committee notes that there was a Master of Music Education degree offered in the 1980s and 1990s, but the degree was deleted in 1999. It was determined at that time there was not enough faculty to sustain both the undergraduate and graduate teaching requirements. Since that time the department faculty has increased from eleven to twenty-three, more than doubling our number of faculty and meeting all criteria for accreditation. Additionally, the new M.M. will offer a broader range of concentration areas and will be more marketable in our region than a specific Master of Music Education degree.

## Purpose and Nature of the Proposed Academic Program

Description of the academic program	The Master of Music degree provides students with an opportunity to pursue advanced study in specialized areas of music. This may include music performance, conducting, music education, or other areas within the broad field of music.
Target audience	The Master of Music degree is targeted at students who wish to hone their skills before auditioning for professional performance jobs and for music educators that need continuing study to maintain their certification.
Purpose	The Master of Music serves to primary purposes. For some students, it is preparatory for the pursuit of graduate studies at the doctoral level with a core focus on developing musicianship. In contrast, undergraduate degree programs like those at ETSU are designed to expose the student to many areas of study, which is reflected in the diversity of our general education requirements. The

	<p>Master of Music allows the student to spend the majority of their time improving performance and pedagogical skills that are required for admission to doctoral programs of study. We have many students from our own undergraduate program at ETSU and from universities throughout the state and region that are interested in the M.M. for this purpose.</p> <p>Another important purpose for offering the Master of Music is to help music educators in the region fulfill their continuing education requirements to maintain teaching licensure. We have hundreds of music educators in our region who are interested in taking graduate coursework directly related to music education and not generic education classes. The M.M. will provide these music educators with an opportunity for career-focused continuing education and a way to simultaneously increase their salary scale. We plan to offer the music education concentration classes at times that allow educators to pursue the degree while still keeping their teaching position. This will include summer classes, evening and weekend offerings, and even some asynchronous online courses.</p>
Program outcomes	The Master of Music will prepare students to audition for doctoral programs, perform at a higher level, and to learn better methodologies for teaching in public schools and in private studios.
Delivery method (on-ground, online, hybrid, etc.)	The primary method for delivery will be on-ground and on the ETSU main campus. Music performance is best taught when faculty can give immediate feedback to students. Some classes, such as music history, music theory, and research methodologies, may be taught in hybrid formats to allow students that are maintaining a job while in graduate school to more easily participate.
Any other pertinent information	The performance and conducting concentrations will primarily be “traditionally” structured degree programs that require on-ground participation on a weekly basis. The music education concentration will be structured to allow for more evening and summer classes with the understanding that many of the students enrolled in this program will continue to hold a full-time teaching position while pursuing the Master of Music.

**Alignment with State Master Plan and Institutional Mission**

The Master of Music offers an opportunity for advanced studies in one of our state’s signature industries: music business. Tennessee is home to one of the largest music recording industries in the nation. Many persons believe Tennessee is only a country music hub, but in reality, music of all genres and types is recorded in Nashville and throughout the state. We have outstanding classical orchestras, choirs, and bands here in Tennessee that recruit performers from across the nation.

We have an opportunity to train students here at ETSU to be professional musicians and remain in Tennessee. The [Bureau of Labor Statistics found that in 2018](#) Tennessee and Hawaii have the highest concentrations of musicians in the United States per capita. Rather than import musicians from other parts of the country, we can prepare students to be a part of our state’s thriving music industry. Tennessee currently only offers graduate degree programs in music at a few state institutions, none of them in northeast Tennessee. We are uniquely situated to help grow the musician economy right here in our region. [The Recording Industry Association of America \(RIAA\) U.S. Jobs Benefit Report 2020](#) identifies six state economies that benefit significantly from the music industry (California, New York, Pennsylvania, New York, Florida, and Tennessee). The music industry contributes 1.8% to the annual state GDP in Tennessee, the highest of any of the top six states (p. 28) and in 2020 employed 61,617 people in the state (p. 29). ETSU has a huge opportunity to provide education for one of our state’s most important industries. Many of our undergraduate students finish Bachelor’s degrees here, then go out of state for a graduate degree, and then return to work in Tennessee. We can offer them a place to study and stay in the state in which they want to find employment.

Additionally, music educators need continuing education credits each year to maintain their state teaching license. Our Master of Music program will allow us to work with music educators from throughout the region to develop their skills and become better educators. Building these relationships with current high school teachers provides a secondary benefit by increasing our contact time with educators that send high school students to ETSU. These relationships increase the number of high school students they will advise to consider ETSU for undergraduate study. The M.M. provides an opportunity for increased undergraduate recruitment through these channels. This aligns with the institution’s goal of outreach in the community and a continued path for undergraduate student growth.

**Institutional Capacity to Deliver the Proposed Academic Program**

The Master of Music will only have a positive impact on student enrollment. There is great opportunity for student enrollment in this program, and no competition with other current graduate degree programs at the university. Further, our contact with current music educators who are pursuing the M.M. will help us to build relationships with high school teachers and grow our undergraduate numbers accordingly. This is a gain in every way for ETSU.

**Existing Programs Offered at Public and Private Tennessee Institutions**

Degrees Conferred:

<b>Institution</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
Austin Peay State University: M.M.U.	12	14	6	6
Middle Tennessee State University: M.M.	7	9	10	19
University of Memphis: M.M.U.	22	20	20	22
University of Tennessee, Chattanooga: M.M.			2	6
University of Tennessee, Knoxville: M.M.	31	28	37	30
Belmont University: M.M.	Private Institution – Not available			

Source: IPEDS



## Feasibility Study

Student Interest	Faculty and administration have tracked contacts regarding a graduate degree program for the past several years. On average, we have at least twenty contacts made to the department each year from persons outside the university that are interested in pursuing the M.M. Further, we have current undergraduates that express interest each year in staying at ETSU for the M.M. degree instead of applying to other institutions. We send approximately 15-20% of our undergraduates each year to M.M. degree programs at other institutions. We have great student interest throughout the region.
Local and Regional Need/Demand	There is great demand in our region from music educators that need continuing education credits and wish to pursue the Master of Music to advance their salary. We also have many undergraduates who pursue the M.M. at other institutions after ETSU. There is a need for the M.M. both in our region and throughout the state for those that are interested in pursuing graduate music study. Over the course of five to seven years, we send many of our undergraduates to M.M. programs at other institutions. We should be able to offer that here at ETSU.
Employer Need and Demand	Tennessee is home to one of the nation's largest music industry businesses. We have the opportunity to train studio musicians, classical performers, and music educators here at ETSU and fill positions in one of our state's signature markets. We have graduates from our undergraduate program working in the music industry Nashville and throughout the state. Almost all have pursued the M.M. at some other institution to be qualified for these jobs. ETSU should be situated to provide the M.M. and provide students with an opportunity to be qualified for these employer needs.
Future Sustainable Need and Demand	The letters of support for this program demonstrate that there is both a considerable current need for the M.M. and there will be a continued need for the degree program. The music industry growth in Tennessee continues annually, and there is a considerable increase in the need for qualified musicians to record and perform. Additionally, there will always be a need for continuing education credits among our music educators in the region. We have a unique opportunity to fill a very large void in our region.

Letters of Support: See Appendix A, beginning on pg. 14

Name	Business/Organization	Position
Robert Seebacher	Johnson City Symphony Orchestra	Conductor
Cornelia Laemmli Orth	Symphony of the Mountains	Conductor
J. Scott Eddlemon	Symphony of the Mountains	Executive Director
Ben Adamo	Full Sail University	Associate Course Director
Matthew Brickey	Cherokee Elementary School	Music Teacher
Clinton Long	Lyle Creek Elementary School	Music Teacher

Nick Routh	West Ridge High School	Band Director
Amber Moore	Hampton High School	Band Director
Isaac Saults	Johnson County High School	Band Director
Hunter Mullins	University School	Band Director/Elementary
Jean Burkhart	Seymour High School	Choir Director
Derrick Epps	Northwest Middle School	Choir Director
Brandon Woods	North Greene High School	Band Director
David Semones	Tennessee High School	Band Director
Cory Seguin	Austin Peay University	Grad Student
Jacob Pitts	East Ridge Middle School	Band Director
Allie Mitchell	Volunteer High School	Band Director
Jensen Gonzalves	Johnson County High School	Woodwind Teacher
Jessilyn Slagle	Holston Middle School	Music Teacher
Morgan Tingle Sharp	Nashville Elementary	Music Teacher

### Program Costs/Revenues

The M.M. has a relatively low start up cost. All required equipment is already owned by the university as part of the undergraduate program. Offices will be repurposed in Mathes Hall. We will need funds for two new faculty computers and office equipment. Marketing and recruitment will be handled by the same staff and processes in place for our undergraduate marketing and recruitment. Accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) will not require additional fees.

We are requesting two tenure track faculty lines to meet the teaching needs of the degree program. The associated salaries and benefits are listed accordingly. The addition of the M.M. will allow our current faculty more flexibility in their teaching loads through utilization of graduate students in undergraduate instruction. This is a synergistic benefit that allows us to add the M.M. with minimal faculty hires in the first few years of the program. We will add the first new faculty line in year two of implementation and the second in year four.

We will appoint one faculty member as the Director of Graduate Music Studies and increase their contract time to ten months from nine months for the appropriate salary amount. This faculty member will also be given teaching load release time.

We are requesting five GA positions the first year, with an additional added the next three years. We are requesting eight GA positions from year four forward. The stipend and fees are listed below.

Revenue will be generated through tuition and fees. Additionally, though not listed in the following tables, we anticipate increased undergraduate enrollments when we add the graduate program. Grad students can teach some undergraduate courses and lessons, and they will also assist with recruiting coordination efforts at local schools. This is not easy to reflect in the charts below, but there will be additional indirect revenues with the addition of the M.M.

## Projected Enrollments

Projected Enrollments by Year Break Down							
Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Incoming	5	8	10	12	14	16	18
Continuing	0	5	8	10	12	14	16
TOTAL	5	13	18	22	26	30	34

## Determination of Calculations

These numbers were determined based on current student interest in the region and based on areas of study. In the performance area we expect at least one to two students to enroll each year per instrument/voice. That means one in violin performance, one in piano performance, one in trombone performance, one in vocal performance, and etc. Additionally, we anticipate one to two new students each year in choral conducting and instrumental conducting, plus at least three to four new students in music education each year. Based just on a single student enrolling in each area, we can achieve an annual enrollment of ten new students by year three.

## Expenses

One-Time Expenditures		
Item	Expenditure Description	Total Expenditure
New/Renovated Space	N/A	\$
Equipment	Faculty and graduate assistant computers/technology -Assuming implementation in fall 2023, this will be purchased in summer 2023	\$3500
Library	N/A	\$
Consultants	One day	\$1000
Other	N/A	\$
TOTAL	One-Time Expenditures	\$4500
Recurring Expenditures		
Item	Expenditure Description	Total for Years 5
Administration Salary	Director of Grad Studies – contract extension from 9 months to 10 months. Depending on appointee, this will be a percentage of current salary.	\$5,500

Administration Benefits	20%	\$1,100
Faculty Salaries	Two new tenure track faculty lines One will start the SECOND year of the program One will start the FOURTH year of the program	\$100,000
Faculty Benefits	Two tenure track faculty line benefits packages, starting as stated above	\$50,000
Support Staff Salary	N/A	\$
Support Staff Benefits	N/A	\$
Graduate Assistants	Based on 8 GA positions from year 4 forward  Year one will be 5 GA Year two will be 6 GA Year three will be 7 GA	\$60,000 (for 8 stipends)  \$6,000 Benefits  \$70,272 (for 8 waivers)
Operating	Annual expense estimate, starting fall 2023	\$10,000
TOTAL	Recurring Expenditures from year 7 forward	\$302,872

## Revenues

Item	Revenue Description	Total Revenue
Tuition and Fees (tuition)	\$8784 per student (for 18 hours per year), 34	\$298,656
Course Fees	\$10 per hour/\$180 a year (18 hours per year) Additional \$250 lesson fee each semester/\$500 a year \$680 in fees per year/34 enrolled students (no fee waivers)	\$23,120
Institutional Reallocations		\$18,904
Grants/Gifts	\$15,000 Year 1, \$22,500 Year 2, \$30,000 Years 3+	\$30,000
TOTAL	Revenues	\$370,680

## Expenditure/Revenue Summary

Year	Expenditure	Revenue
1	\$106,270 (startup costs/annual expenses/5 GA)	\$106,270 (5 enrolled)
2	\$193,804 (annual expenses/6 GA)	\$193,804 (13 enrolled)
3	\$210,838 (annual expenses/7 GA)	\$210,838 (18 enrolled)
4	\$302,872 (annual expenses/8 GA)	\$302,872 (22 enrolled)
5	\$302,872 (annual expenses/8 GA)	\$302,872 (26 enrolled)

## THEC Financial Projection Form

**Tennessee Higher Education Commission**  
**Appendix A: THEC Financial Projections Form**  
**East Tennessee State University**  
**Master of Music**

*Seven-year projections are required for doctoral programs.*

*Five-year projections are required for baccalaureate and Master's degree programs*

*Three-year projections are required for associate degrees and undergraduate certificates.*

*Projections should include cost of living increases per year.*

*Planning year projections are not required but should be included when appropriate.*

	Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>I. Expenditures</b>						
<b>A. One-time Expenditures</b>						
New/Renovated Space <sup>1</sup>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment		\$ 3,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Library	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Consultants		\$ 1,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Sub-Total One-time</b>	\$ -	\$ 4,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

<b>B. Recurring Expenditures</b>						
<b>Personnel</b>						
<b>Administration</b>						
Salary		\$ 5,500	\$ 5,500	\$ 5,500	\$ 5,500	\$ 5,500
Benefits	\$ -	\$ 1,100	\$ 1,100	\$ 1,100	\$ 1,100	\$ 1,100
<b>Sub-Total Administration</b>	\$ -	\$ 6,600	\$ 6,600	\$ 6,600	\$ 6,600	\$ 6,600
<b>Faculty</b>						
Salary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Benefits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
<b>Sub-Total Faculty</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000
<b>Support Staff</b>						
Salary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Benefits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Sub-Total Support Staff</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Graduate Assistants</b>						
Salary	\$ -	\$ 37,500	\$ 45,000	\$ 52,500	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000
Benefits	\$ -	\$ 3,750	\$ 4,500	\$ 5,250	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000
Tuition and Fees* (See Below)	\$ -	\$ 43,920	\$ 52,704	\$ 61,488	\$ 70,272	\$ 70,272
<b>Sub-Total Graduate Assistants</b>	\$ -	\$ 85,170	\$ 102,204	\$ 119,238	\$ 136,272	\$ 136,272
<b>Operating</b>						
Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Printing	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
<b>Sub-Total Operating</b>	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
<b>Total Recurring</b>	\$ -	\$ 101,770	\$ 193,804	\$ 210,838	\$ 302,872	\$ 302,872
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES (A + B)</b>	\$ -	\$ 106,270	\$ 193,804	\$ 210,838	\$ 302,872	\$ 302,872

**\*If tuition and fees for Graduate Assistants are included, please provide the following information.**

Base Tuition and Fees Rate	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	8,784.00	8,784.00	8,784.00	8,784.00	8,784.00
Number of Graduate Assistants	-	5	6	7	8

Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
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**II. Revenue**

Tuition and Fees <sup>2</sup>	\$ -	\$ 47,320	\$ 123,032	\$ 170,352	\$ 208,208	\$ 246,064
Institutional Reallocations <sup>3</sup>	\$ -	\$ 43,950	\$ 48,272	\$ 10,486	\$ 64,664	\$ 26,808
Federal Grants <sup>4</sup>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Private Grants or Gifts <sup>5</sup>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other <sup>6</sup>	\$ -	\$ 15,000	\$ 22,500	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000

**BALANCED BUDGET LINE**      \$                      **\$106,27**      **\$193,80**      **\$210,83**      **\$302,87**      **\$302,87**

**Notes:**

<b>(1) Provide the funding source(s) for the new or renovated space.</b>
Not applicable
<b>(2) In what year is tuition and fee revenue expected to be generated? Tuition and fees include maintenance fees, out-of-state tuition, and any applicable earmarked fees for the program. Explain any differential fees.</b>
2023-2024 (if approved on schedule)
<b>(3) Identify the source(s) of the institutional reallocations, and grant matching requirements if applicable.</b>
Funds from university, College of Arts and Sciences, and College of Graduate Studies
<b>(4) Provide the source(s) of the Federal Grant including the granting department and CFDA(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance) number.</b>
Not applicable
<b>(5) Provide the name of the organization(s) or individual(s) providing grant(s) or gift(s).</b>
Not applicable
<b>(6) Provide information regarding other sources of the funding.</b>
There are multiple organizations in the community that are interested in partnering with the university to give graduate music students professional experiences. In exchange, these organizations are willing to fund graduate assistantships for our students. These ongoing conversations have been started with the Johnson City Symphony Orchestra, the Mountain Empire Children’s Chorus, several local churches, and local music teaching programs. We believe there are four potential GA funding organizations within the first three years.

## Appendix A: Letters of Support



September 15, 2021

To the Administration of East Tennessee State University:

I write you today in enthusiastic support of a graduate program in music at East Tennessee State University. The growth of the Department of Music in recent years has been extraordinary. The world-class caliber of the faculty, prime location in a thriving community, and the already stellar undergraduate program in Music make ETSU an incredibly strong candidate for granting graduate degrees in music.

In my capacity as Music Director of the Johnson City Symphony Orchestra, I can attest, firsthand, how professional, virtuosic, and capable the music faculty is at ETSU. All of them hold advance degrees in their field of study and are committed to the growth of every student and ensemble. Truly, the JCSO would not exist at its currently high artistic level without the faculty from ETSU. Adding graduate students to these illustrious faculty members' studios and classrooms will allow for further mentorship opportunities as well as strengthen the overall educational experience in Mathes Hall.

The quality of instruction at the graduate level will be unmatched at ETSU. There are countless

opportunities at the University and in the community for these students. I would be proud to employ ETSU's graduate students with the Johnson City Symphony Orchestra and look forward to possible collaborative and internship possibilities. In short, being a graduate student at ETSU will mean a quality, relevant education with many chances for professional experience all while being mentored by the finest music faculty in East Tennessee. When compared to other institutions of similar size and scope, the Music Department at ETSU already outcompetes its peer and aspirant schools. The only missing component are graduate degrees.

Paramount to a successful graduate program, I believe ETSU's graduate students in music will secure fulfilling, lucrative careers after commencement. These students will feed deserving students back to the University and will, undoubtedly, enhance alumni and donor relations. Simply stated, the existence of graduate studies in music will have far-reaching benefits to ETSU and the Tri-Cities community.

Indeed, the growth of the ETSU Music Department has been nothing short of exemplary over the past 7 years. I respect the faculty, staff, and administration in the Department greatly and have worked with the products of their studios. The undergraduate students are highly skilled, competitive, and equipped to enter any profession of their choosing upon graduation. Should ETSU begin educating musicians at the graduate level, they will be able to enter the worldwide community of professional musicians and educators confident that their knowledge and foundational skills are solid, complete, and immensely desirable.

I can be reached at 859-489-8664 should you require any additional information. I thank you for your kind support and consideration of a graduate program in music at East Tennessee State University.

Sincerely:

Robert J. Seebacher, D.M.A.

*Director of Instrumental Programs, Assistant Professor of Music: Centre College*

*Music Director/Conductor: Johnson City Symphony Orchestra*

*Assistant Conductor: The National Chorale (New York)*



Cornelia Laemmli Orth  
100 Intermont Lane  
Bristol, TN 37620  
claemmli@aol.com  
973 618 6521



Bristol, TN. September 12, 2021

To whom it may concern.

In my capacity as Music Director of the Symphony of the Mountains, I have had the pleasure of working with ETSU Music Department's faculty and students for the past fifteen years.

The growth of the department in size and even more so in quality over the past few years is remarkable.

Therefore, I would like to express my support for establishing the M.M in Performance and Music Education.

Dr. Matthew Potterton and ETSU's leadership have brought in highly talented new faculty members who in addition to their work as performers and teachers, distinguish themselves through their personalities. Their reliability, interpersonal and communication skills with conductors, fellow musicians, as well as with students are exemplary.

Symphony of the Mountains is a fully professional regional orchestra based in Kingsport, TN. In the past five years our partnership with the ETSU Department of Music has substantially grown. The chair of the department Dr. Matthew Potterton is the director of the Voices of the Mountains, SOTM's own choir. Dr. David Kovac is the director of Symphony of the Mountains' Youth Orchestras. ETSU's choir and string orchestra programs are now at such a high level, that collaborations between them and our orchestra take place every season. The faculty's willingness to accept extra work gives their students the opportunity to learn and perform in a professional setting.

ETSU's music faculty also plays a crucial role in the "music education" of our rural area. They have the skills to develop programs that speak to people of all ages and backgrounds. Learning this skill will be crucial for the success of the students in their future communities.

Also, all the new faculty members (Lisa Perry, Clarinet; Brett Long, Trumpet; Justin Waller, Trombone; Stephanie Frye-Clark, Tuba; David Kovac, Violin/Viola; Sean Hawthorne, Violoncello; Matthew Geiger, Percussion) plus some of their best students perform with Symphony of the Mountains on a regular basis. When working with these young musicians, it is obvious that they are getting an outstanding education. They not only know the music very well, but also have a clear understanding of musical styles, history, and context of the work, plus show a high level of professional behavior.

Unfortunately, many students who would love to take advantage of ETSU's high class music education for a master's degree are forced to study somewhere else. Clearly there is a need for the M.M program!

Without any hesitation, I would highly recommend ETSU for the M.M in Performance and Music Education. Please feel free to contact me for any further information.

Sincerely,

**Cornelia Laemmli Orth**

Music Director Symphony of the Mountains, Kingsport, TN  
Music Director Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, Ithaca, NY

# Symphony<sup>of the</sup> Mountains™

*Entertaining, Educating, Enriching*

September 2, 2021

East Tennessee State University  
Department of Music  
Box 70661  
Johnson City, TN 37614-1701

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in support of the creation of a Master's Degree Program in Music at ETSU. Symphony of the Mountains is a regional orchestra serving NE Tennessee, SW Virginia and W North Carolina. Our orchestra currently draws two thirds of our musicians from out of the region. A Master's Program at ETSU would draw qualified musicians to the area who could bolster our orchestra both as students and after graduation, enabling us to continue to build the orchestra with local musicians.

Over the years we have enjoyed a close relationship with ETSU and would certainly welcome this addition to the music department.

Please let me know if you have any questions, or if there is anything else I can do to help establish this valuable program.

Sincerely,



J. Scott Eddlemon  
Executive Director

1200 East Center Street • Kingsport, TN 37660 • 423.392.8423  
[www.SymphonyoftheMountains.org](http://www.SymphonyoftheMountains.org)

To Whom It May Concern:

I am an alumnus from ETSU's music education bachelor's program and was part of the department during a time of transition. As Dr. Thomas Jenrette, the head of choral activities, retired, the department began reshaping itself. Within several years they had two new choir directors, a wide variety of choirs and student-led ensembles, and various changes in department leadership and faculty. Simultaneously, ETSU itself was changing: under the direction of Dr. Brian Noland, the university regained its football team, built a new stadium, added a marching band, and lost its status as being a majority-commuter campus. Moreover, Johnson City has seen similar changes in the past decade with the drastic revitalization of the downtown area and businesses.

As part of Appalachia, the East Tennessean region is one that has historically fed into itself. Most students prefer to stay close-to-home and the availability of a large state college on their doorsteps makes ETSU an attractive school within the region. However, as the school has undergone changes in its culture (partially detailed above), it also entered the much larger collegiate arena – attracting more students than only those from the region. As the college's overall culture evolves, so to must the departments within.

With the addition of the school's new performing arts building, the music department looks towards *the next step*. How does the department continue to improve, grow, and make professional-tier music? The answer comes with the addition of a graduate music program. With a master's program, ETSU will retain and hone their competitive edge: attracting students from across the country, rather than only from the region. Moreover, I personally believe that graduate students are incredibly important members of the collegiate ecosystem. Not only due to their extracurricular efforts such as serving as graduate assistants, but because they are student leaders who are in the program thanks to their experience, dedication, professionalism, and knowledge.

I wholeheartedly believe that with a graduate degree path, the music department will continue to expand, and will better serve not only University and the region, but the student body, both present and future. Under the department's leadership, the addition of a master's program will undoubtedly be an incredible addition to what is already a wonderful program.

With Warm Regards,

Ben Adamo

Associate Course Director

Music Production

Phone 423.525.6308

Full Sail University

3300 UNIVERSITY BLVD. WINTER PARK, FL 32792

September 14th, 2021

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to you today to express my support for the addition of a Masters of Music degree program at East Tennessee State University. ETSU and the Appalachian Highlands region are known for their excellence in fine arts, most notably, music. ETSU and its Department of Music is one of the driving reasons for the plethora of musical talent we can enjoy in this area. ETSU was dedicated in 1911 to educate the people of this region so that we all may have a better quality of life. To continue that mission, we must explore how we can innovate and expand the educational opportunities for those in our area. I believe an addition of a Master of Music degree program at ETSU would benefit this region most by providing professional development to local educators like myself, so that we can in return educate the citizens of this region for generations to come.

I am a life-long citizen of East Tennessee. My life is centered around music. I began studying piano at the age of seven. I am now an alum of ETSU. I teach music to elementary students in Johnson City, as well as serve as organist in a local church. I have connections with musicians from all over the region. We all share the same passion for music education. We strive to be lifelong learners. We believe music is vital to the human experience. It is our passion to share the joy of music with all we are privileged to teach.

My time at ETSU is where many of the most inspiring musical experiences occurred. I was drawn to ETSU's music program because of the highly qualified faculty, ETSU's designation as an All-Steinway piano school, and the vast options for scholarship funding based on musical talent. My educational experience was personal. The course work and performance opportunities were something you would expect from a much larger institution. During my time at ETSU I was able to perform all over the world, compete in piano competitions throughout the US, and learn from guest artists of world renown.

At the completion of my Bachelors studies, I pursued options for graduate study. Due to several circumstances (one of them being I did not want to relocate) I decided not to enroll in a program. At that time, and currently, ETSU has a gap in its degree offerings. There are no graduate degree programs for music at ETSU. It is time to reinstate the graduate degree programs for music. I, along with several others from our region, would be interested in enrolling in such a program if it were to be offered. My educational experience at ETSU is not unique. ETSU has provided me with the best knowledge and experience to live out my calling as an educator and musician. The Department of Music continues to boast an environment that is welcoming to all. I have no doubt that the drive for excellence and the passion for music lives on in all the faculty currently serving in the Department of Music at ETSU. Their goal of expanding degree offerings would continue to provide excellent training in music for all in this region.

Sincerely,

**Matthew Brickey**

Bachelor of Music, ETSU '14

Music Teacher, Cherokee Elementary School

Organist & Music Associate, Munsey United Methodist Church

September 9, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

As a proud alumnus of the East Tennessee State University Department of Music, I frequently think about the quality faculty that I had the tremendous opportunity to study under. The Department of Music truly has some world class educators with the pedigree to support many facets of learning which are sorely limited by the degree offerings at ETSU. The music faculty of this department is uniquely qualified and tenaciously passionate enough to take on offering higher degrees in music. As an alumnus, my hope is that the department will be ever growing in not only number of students, but quality of musician that it not only attracts but produces as well. Offering a master's program through ETSU Department of Music would certainly accomplish both of these goals.

My current position allows me to teach many various aspects of music. Every faculty member in the music department played a vital role in developing me musically to educate future lifelong musicians. That being said, in the field of music there are so many special subject areas such as conducting, music education, and performance that in a baccalaureate music education degree can only disseminated to a certain extent. Further training in the form of master's degree not only allows a lifelong learner to specialize in an area of music, but to hone that craft of being a music educator. It did not take me long to realize as a new music teacher that I did not know everything. I had been given a broad and thorough foundation in my undergraduate degree, but quickly recognized the need to keep learning and study certain areas more at a deeper level of understanding.

As I explore what my next steps to seeking a high degree in the subject area I love, I am torn that my alma mater does not offer a master 's degree in music. There were many classes that I can recall that I wish we could spend a whole semester on the related topics that were being taught and discussed. There was not enough time glean all of the knowledge ETSU Department of Music faculty possessed. Creating opportunities for this outstanding faculty to dive deeper and continue to mature music professionals such as myself is a logical choice. Please consider approving a Master 's in Music degree program for ETSU so that Buccaneers(and future ones) feel they can always continue learning at an institution they care deeply about. The entire region would benefit from a broader reaching ETSU Department of Music.

Sincerely,

**Clinton Long**

ETSU BM 2019  
Music Teacher: Lyle Creek Elementary School  
Conover, North Carolina.

# WEST RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

September 13, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Nick Routh, and I have been an area music educator for six years. I have spent the past five years working in Sullivan County Schools where I just received the award of Teacher of the Year for the entire system for this past 2020-2021 school year. I am currently at the new West Ridge High School serving as the assistant band director. I graduated from East Tennessee State University in December of 2014 with a bachelor's in music education. It is my hope that ETSU develops a Master of Music degree in Performance and Conducting.

Earning a master's in music prepares individuals to take on leadership roles in music classrooms, band and choir halls, orchestra pits, and one-on-one lesson environments. In addition to furthering essential musicianship skills in areas of orchestration and arrangement, music history, and music theory, a master's in music develops vital educational skills in areas of instructional design, academic research, technology, and contemporary teaching methods.

For certified teachers, a master's degree can increase their competitiveness in the job market and enhance their current abilities. Deciding whether to enroll in a program on-campus or online can depend heavily on a teacher's present situation. There are numerous local music educators who would heavily benefit from ETSU offering a masters degree designed around the working professional, such as myself. I am currently in my dream teaching position - one that I would rather keep than give up to pursue a master's that would not allow me to keep my present job. Having East Tennessee State University offer this degree would be a huge benefit to me and many educators in the music field.

I sincerely thank you all for considering a Master of Music degree at ETSU. I strongly believe that it would be a huge benefit for this area's educators and/or anyone looking to continue their education in music. As an ETSU alumnus, I would personally love to acquire another degree from your university. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Nick Routh**

Assistant Band Director  
West Ridge High School  
nick.routh@sullivank12.net

Hampton High School  
766 1st Ave  
Hampton, TN 37658

To whom it may concern,

I graduated summa cum laude from East Tennessee State University at the end of the spring semester in 2019 with a bachelor's degree in music education. I wanted to pursue a master's degree. So, upon graduation, I left my home here in east Tennessee and moved 8 hours northeast of here to the University of Delaware to further my education. I graduated there in the spring of this year and moved back home to teach. I plan to continue my education through a second master's degree and/or a doctoral degree. This, unfortunately, would mean I would have to leave home again.

To clarify, I enjoyed my time in Delaware, but I wish I had the opportunity to stay here and further my education in my home with professors I knew would take care of me. I don't think I have to explain myself when I say there is just something special about the faculty and staff here at ETSU. My music education degree here was five years and I spent every moment with faculty that really took the time to get to know me and work hard to help me succeed.

I have been informed that the department wishes to start up a master's program here at ETSU. I cannot recommend and support this decision enough. If I had the opportunity to stay here when I was looking for a graduate program, I would have absolutely jumped on the idea. Even now, I wouldn't hesitate to get a second master's degree if ETSU began to offer them. In addition to my own personal benefits from this, I strongly believe that this would make a huge difference in this area. To the best of my knowledge, the closest master's program to this area is a minimum of 2 hours from here. I believe offering a master's degree this close to home would open doors not only for graduating bachelor's students to stay in Johnson City or the surrounding area, but it would also allow current music educators in this area to further their education potentially without even leaving their current jobs. In addition to this, having graduate music students around could help the undergraduate students. At UD, the graduate students pushed the undergraduate students and were able to tutor them. Graduate students also create a new level of performance that can be achieved by creating even more friendly competition within studios and ensembles.

I believe starting this program would be immensely beneficial to all music students and professionals in the area. I would have stayed in Tennessee if this had been an option to me, and I am very interested in continuing my studies here again if I had the option. It would benefit not only me personally, but other students and educators in this area, and I firmly believe it would breathe new life into the music life in upper east Tennessee.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any further questions.

Thank you,

**Amber Moore**

Band Director  
Hampton High/Elementary School

September 4, 2021

To whom it may concern,

It has been brought to my attention the possibility of ETSU offering a master's program in music. I believe that this is a wonderful idea and opportunity for this school and this area. ETSU is my alma mater and I greatly appreciated the education I received from this school as it prepared me to become a band director. I received the tools and skills necessary to succeed in this profession. If ETSU offers a master's program I would certainly be interested in returning back to receive that. It would be convenient and accessible for me to do this living in the area and working full time. I am certain that this would be a robust and successful program having studied under the faculty of ETSU in the past. I look forward to seeing this course of study come to this school. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

***Isaac Saults***

Band Director

Johnson County High School

[isaults@jocoed.net](mailto:isaults@jocoed.net)



Hunter Mullins  
3934 Skyland Drive  
Kingsport, TN 37664

September 9, 2021

ETSU Department of Music  
216 Sherrod Drive  
PO Box 70661  
Johnson City, TN 37614

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support for the development of a Master's program in the department of music. As a former student and current colleague, I feel that this is a worthy and appropriate step for the department. I ended up pursuing a Master's degree at another school after completing my undergraduate work at ETSU. I would have likely pursued this degree at ETSU had it existed at that time. Over the last 10-15 years I have also heard many regional music educators express the desire for ETSU to offer this kind of opportunity. My observation is that there would be both a strong initial and sustainable interest in the program.

Sincerely,

**Hunter Mullins, Ed.D**

Instructor of Elementary and Instrumental Music  
University School, ETSU

September 2, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

It has been a pleasure to watch the music program grow leaps and bounds, especially the last few years. The choral and a cappella work that is currently being done at ETSU is second to none. I do, however, consider the fact that there is no opportunity for students to further their studies and earn a master's degree in music to be a serious weakness in the music program at ETSU. While serving as the choral director at Seymour High School, I strongly encouraged my students to seriously consider attending ETSU. Most of my students were very interested in ETSU, but the fact that there is no opportunity for them to go on and earn a master's degree in music often served as a deterrent to them.

At other universities, students can earn a bachelor's in music and then immediately continue their studies and earn a masters before entering the teaching profession. I support the decision to get a master's degree as quickly as possible because a beginning teacher's salary without a master's degree is fairly low. In addition, it is often difficult for music teachers to go back and work towards a master's degree because most music positions require a great deal of overtime, including weekends. Many music teachers also serve as choir directors at their church and usually have family obligations as well, so finding time to pursue a degree under these circumstances is extremely challenging.

I hope that you will seriously consider implementing a Master of Music Degree at ETSU. I truly believe adding this would provide a great service to both your current and future music students.

Sincerely,

**Jean Burkhart**

Retired Seymour High School Choral Director 1994 - 2021

September 10, 2021

To whom it may concern,

My name is Derrick Epps and I am a proud ETSU Alumni Class of 2017. I graduated with my Bachelors in Vocal Music Education and accepted a position teaching choral music at Northwest Middle School in my hometown of Travelers Rest, South Carolina. I have been fortunate to grow our choral program from approximately 80 students my first year to now averaging approximately 200 students involved in my music classes annually in my fifth-year teaching. I was also blessed to be chosen as Teacher of the Year for the 2021-2022 school year. I attribute my success to the valuable education, experiences, relationships, and skills I was equipped with during my time in the ETSU music department.

While achieving goals with my music students, I also have personal goals for myself as a music educator. One of these goals is to pursue a graduate degree in music, either in conducting or music education. If it were available, it would be a great honor to be able to return to ETSU, whether in person or online, as a student and continue to further my education and improve my craft. If it had been a possibility for me to pursue this opportunity immediately after graduating with my bachelors, I would assuredly have applied and sought to join that program.

I believe in music education and the power it has to improve the lives of students in our schools. I love East Tennessee State University and I hope that the opportunity to add a graduate music degree in the music department is implemented to better the lives of the people of the region and beyond.

Sincerely,

Derrick Epps  
Northwest Middle School, Travelers Rest, South Carolina

To whom it may concern,

My name is Brandon Woods, and I am a 2011 alumnus of the ETSU School of Music with a Bachelor's degree in Instrumental music education. I have since been teaching 10 years, going on my 11th year currently in public education. I graduated in 2017 from Liberty University with my Master of Arts in Music Education.

I consider the music education I received from ETSU very valuable, and I was more than prepared for my master's degree. I am writing this letter to voice my support of the ETSU adding a master's degree in music at ETSU. I believe that there is a need for this in our area, and that others will sign up and enroll in it. I know that if it had been around when I started on my master's degree, I would have come back to ETSU instead of going through Liberty.

I absolutely loved my time and education at Liberty, but it was chosen primarily because it was an online degree that I could do while continuing to teach. If my alma mater had offered something similar, I would have done that, as I still live local. I have many friends in the area with master's degrees from other institutions that indicated to me they would have enrolled at ETSU as well, had it been available.

If you need any more information, I am more than willing to speak to anyone about this and I appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

**Brandon D. Woods**

-----

**Director of Bands  
North Greene High School  
North Greene Middle School**

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is David Semones and I am the band director at Tennessee High School in Bristol. Just to give you some background information, I graduated from ETSU in 2004, and have taught for 16 years - 5 in Washington County, VA and 11 in Bristol, TN. I also currently teach private conducting lessons to potential drum major candidates across the region. I am a lifelong Buccaneer supporter (with many of my former students in your band program) and proud alumnus. I am extremely encouraged to see all the great things happening at ETSU! You have a wonderful faculty, facilities, marching band program, and things just keep getting better!

I have always been interested in conducting, having been drum major for the Marching Bucs in 2000 and 2001. I was also a student conductor for the basketball pep band in 2003. During my third year teaching, I enrolled in the ETSU conducting symposium taught by Dr. Zembower and Dr. Jack Stamp. This symposium encouraged me to take a private wind literature class with Dr. Zembower that same year. I had always hoped, and waited, for ETSU to begin its own conducting master's program in which I could enroll - unfortunately, it never happened for me. I have much respect for Dr. Zembower and his credentials, and I think he is the perfect person to assist with spearheading this program. My hope is that this program gets off the ground soon! I would have certainly enrolled in a graduate conducting program at ETSU if it had been option for me.

Because ETSU did not have this program, and because my passion for conducting had not changed since high school, I enrolled in the Master's of Music in Wind Conducting program at Messiah University (Mechanicsburg, PA) last fall (2020). My expected graduation date is December of 2022. I am loving this program and its flexibility with band directors working full-time jobs. Messiah's program is mostly online with a few summer intensive classes. As a current Master's in Conducting student, if you would like my input concerning how my current program operates, or ideas for your new program, I would be honored to provide you with feedback.

I truly believe that a conducting program at ETSU would be extremely successful with candidates such as myself who have an interest in conducting but wish to study locally. I also feel that with the faculty you currently have, your program would be a huge draw for non-local candidates as well. The potential benefits of this program would not only help ETSU, but also local secondary band programs. Having more experienced, local professionals learning from your faculty would provide a positive trickle-down effect into local public schools; and these effects could serve as a huge recruitment advantage for ETSU in search of potential music majors.

Thank you for taking the time to read this e-mail. Should you have any questions for me, please do not hesitate to send me an e-mail ([semonesd@btcs.org](mailto:semonesd@btcs.org)) or call me at (423) 773-3522. My hope is that this program will begin soon and that it will grow to become yet another feather in the cap for the ETSU Department of Music!

Sincerely,  
David Semones

**David F. Semones**

*Tennessee High School, Director of Bands*  
1112 Edgemont Avenue  
Bristol, TN 37620  
(423) 652-9315 (office)  
[semonesd@btcs.org](mailto:semonesd@btcs.org)

August 26, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Cory Seguin, and I received my degree in music education from East Tennessee State University in 2019. Since graduating from ETSU, I went on to pursue my master's degree in clarinet performance from Austin Peay State University. I finished my master's degree in May 2021 and am currently working as a woodwind instructor for the Kingsport City Schools band programs and have a private studio based in Kingsport, TN.

I believe that a master's program at ETSU would be a very beneficial program for the school and the region. As an alumnus, I would have taken the opportunity to continue my education at ETSU. My last year at ETSU was when Dr. Lisa Perry got the position as the clarinet professor. Unfortunately, I only got a year with her before I graduated, but she helped find a great masters professor to help me get to where I am today. If I had the option to continue my studies with her, I would have taken that opportunity. I also believe that having a masters program would help to elevate the level of music education in the region. More teachers would be able to pursue a masters degree, which would great impact the overall music education in the region. With the growth that the ETSU music depart has seen over the years, I believe a masters program would be a huge draw for people in the region, or even across the state of the Tennessee.

Thank you,

Cory Seguin

September 3, 2021

To whom it may concern:

My name is Jacob Pitts, and I graduated from East Tennessee State University with a bachelor of music degree in the fall of 2010. Since then, it has always been my goal to pursue a master's degree in my field of study to better myself as a musician and an educator. However, with my established career of more than ten years as a band director, both time and distance have been major obstacles to achieving that goal. I have often thought if there were such a program offered at ETSU that would allow me to continue teaching and keep me from having to travel long distances, it would be ideal. The education I received from ETSU has served me well, and I would greatly desire to earn my advanced degree from the same music department. If you have any questions or desire any further input, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jacob Pitts  
Director of Bands,  
East Ridge Middle School  
Meadowview Middle School  
[pittsj@hcboe.net](mailto:pittsj@hcboe.net)  
(423) 946-5219

September 8, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with sincerity that I write a letter in support of ETSU's Department of Music launching a Master of Music degree in Performance and Conducting. In fact, I am disappointed that I will not have the opportunity to participate. Having already completed my Master's in Music degree from another university, I do not currently have plans to enroll in a second Master's degree. However, if ETSU had offered this degree program back in 2016 when I began applying for a Master's degree, I would have, without a doubt, attended ETSU for my Master's in Music degree (upon acceptance).

Although I am not seeking an additional Master's degree at this time, I would potentially be interested in this degree program in the future because its concentration is different than my other Master's degree in music education. Studying a concentration in Performance and Conducting is of great interest to me, and I would consider enrolling in some of these classes if I were given the opportunity. I look forward to seeing this program be developed and introduced at ETSU because I believe there is a multitude of interested candidates locally, regionally, and abroad. I am confident the exceptional faculty and staff at ETSU would produce top notch educators, performers, and conductors that would enhance our area's music scene in both the classroom communities and on stages in performances.

Most sincerely,

**Allie Mitchell, B.A., M.M.**

Director of Bands-Surgoinsville Middle School  
Director of Bands-Church Hill Middle School  
Assistant Director of Bands-Volunteer High School  
Phone: (423) 202-8754  
Email: allison.mitchell@hck12.net  
Address: 1462 Valley St, Kingsport, TN 37660



To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Jensen Gonzalves, and I am a recent graduate from East Tennessee State University with my degree in Music Education. I currently work for Isaac Saults as his woodwind instructor for his marching band at Johnson County High School.

It has come to my attention that there is a possibility that ETSU will be offering a master's degree in music, and I wanted to display my interest in the idea. I originally attended James Madison University for many years before transferring and completing my degree at ETSU. One of the reasons I choose JMU was the possibilities that the school had with furthering education with master's degrees in music. It was appealing because I would be able to get to know the professors over many years of instruction and performance. The idea that the professors would not only know my name on their rosters but also get to know me personally and be able to see my love for music was special to me. I personally enjoy getting to know my professors enough to have conversations with them about music deeper than what is in a textbook.

Transferring to East Tennessee State University was one of the best decisions that I could have made, and it has made me a better person than I was before 2019. If ETSU were to offer a master's program in music I would be very interested in enrolling and would enjoy getting to work with my professors again if the opportunity were to come around.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jensen Gonzalves', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jensen Gonzalves

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Jessilyn Slagle. I am currently the middle school chorus director at Sullivan Central Middle School in Blountville, TN. I am also an alumnus of ETSU. I graduated with my Bachelor's Degree in Vocal Music Education in December of 2018. Regarding the music program offered at ETSU, I can only offer my highest praise. Coming into the music program, I had little to no knowledge of music content knowledge or of any teaching pedagogy. I can now say with full confidence, that after graduating from ETSU's music program, I was fully prepared to enter the work force and become not only an effective educator, but also an effective musician. I was able to obtain a teaching job only short a month after graduating, and I feel that is all due to the wonderful program I went through at my time with ETSU.

ETSU's music program was filled with talented, caring and extremely knowledgeable staff. They took someone like me, who had no music background but a desire to learn, and taught me, challenged me, pushed me into becoming the music educator that I am today. They offered guidance and counsel, rigorous but effective courses, and musical experiences that have changed me for a lifetime in the best way possible. The ETSU Department of Music has all of my respect and gratitude and I would quickly recommend their program to anyone aspiring to become a musician of any kind.

With all of the admiration I have for the Music Department, I want to personally highly advocate the need for a Master's program to be offered. Many of my colleagues had to travel to other schools to obtain any sort of masters in the field that was relevant to their degree. I personally, would have loved to have further pursued my education if their had been a masters program offered at ETSU. The idea of going somewhere unfamiliar to obtain my masters did not appeal to me and so I have settled for my bachelor's. However, if a masters program became available through the ETSU music program, I would even consider going back and obtaining my masters now through this new program. The staff at the Department of Music is amazing group of educators and I have full faith that they would do amazing things with a masters program. As you are considering creating this program, please understand that I have no doubt there would be numerous students that would continue their music education beyond a bachelor's at ETSU if they were given the chance to do so. I know I would have loved that opportunity during my time at ETSU. Those years in the ETSU Music Department were some of the best of my life and looking back, I would have loved to have continued that experience and continued to grow in my passion for music and for teaching.

Thank you so much for your time reading this letter,

**Jessilyn Slagle**

August 29, 2021

To whom it may concern,

My name is Morgan Tingle Sharp and I am a proud graduate of the Music Program at East Tennessee University. I was in the Music Program getting my bachelor's degree in Music Education from 2012-2017. I'm writing this letter in support of the addition of a Master of Music degree within the Music department at ETSU. I currently teach K-5 Music in Clarksville Montgomery County, and on this side of the state, and around the country, having a master's degree certainly gives you an advantage in pay, knowledge, and job acquisition. I've been wanting to go back to school for my master's in Music for some time, but it is certainly hard to drop everything once you have joined the work force to go back to school.

If there had been an option for me to continue forward in a Master of Music Degree program directly after earning my bachelor's when I was at ETSU, I would certainly have done so, for Education, Conducting and Vocal Pedagogy. I encourage everyone I know in college, to go straight on to graduate school if it is their desire to earn a master's or a Doctorate in Music. It gives you more time to develop your voice or your instrument, and it is an easier transition to that next step from there. I certainly wish ETSU had a Master of Music degree when I was there. The professors there are wonderful, knowledgeable, supportive, and caring, and I would have loved to continue to study Music with their guidance.

Adding a Master of Music will make ETSU competitive with the other Universities in the state and will be a big draw for new students considering ETSU. I hope you can make this possibility a reality for the Music Program at ETSU, the Professors and Students deserve it, for all of their hard work and dedication.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Morgan Tingle Sharp**  
Nashville Elementary