



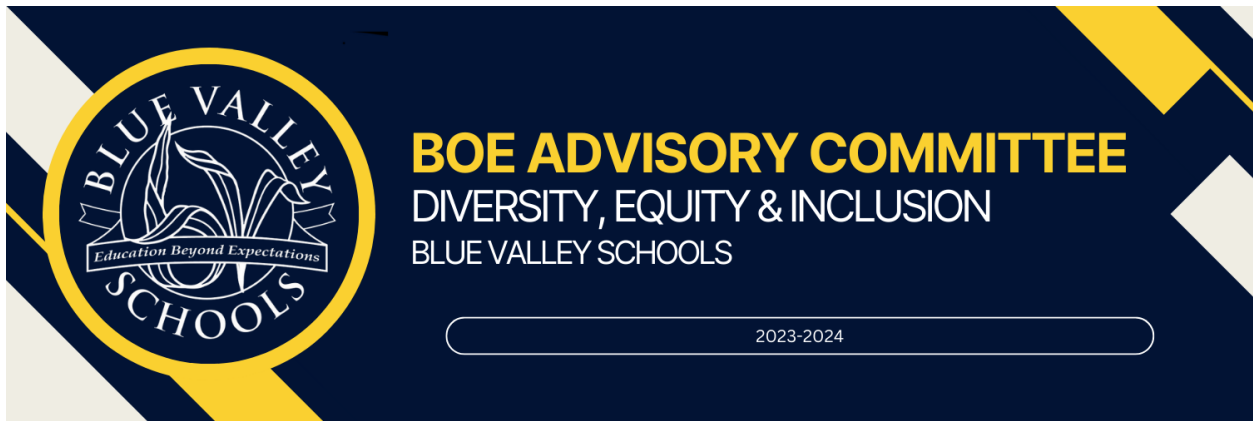
**Attendees:**

Kelly Wessel  
Scott Roberts  
Chris Gray  
Terri Newman  
Lisa Jensen  
Jodie Dietz  
Tonya Merrigan  
Samantha von Ende  
Sonya Evans  
Manal Wiedel  
Angela Mosby  
Alicia Anderson  
Lindsey Weiss  
Dennis Morton  
Richard Noble

Scott Roberts welcomed everyone and introduced Adam Lundine, K-12 Performing Arts Coordinator for the district. Adam asked the panel of teachers attending to introduce themselves. The panel included the following:

- Allegra Wolff, Band Director at Aubry Bend Middle and Blue Valley Southwest
- Michael Ritzel, Music Teacher at Oak Hill Elementary
- Alison Mayes, Orchestra Director at Timber Creek Elementary, Aubry Bend Middle, and Blue Valley Southwest
- Mallory Murphy-Dyer, Music Teacher at Harmony Elementary
- Mark Adair, Band Director at Blue Valley Middle
- Emily Wilson, Assistant Principal at Harmony Middle

Adam introduced the topic: the selection of performance materials.



The presentation began with a review of the BOE policies, e.g., 4600 (Selection of Resources) & 2450 (Religious Holidays & Activity Conflicts). He discussed how there is a process for the selection of pieces.

Adam discussed the history of music and why most of the approved pieces are from Western music. Blue Valley Schools' has a music library of over 15,000 titles from which teachers can select pieces.

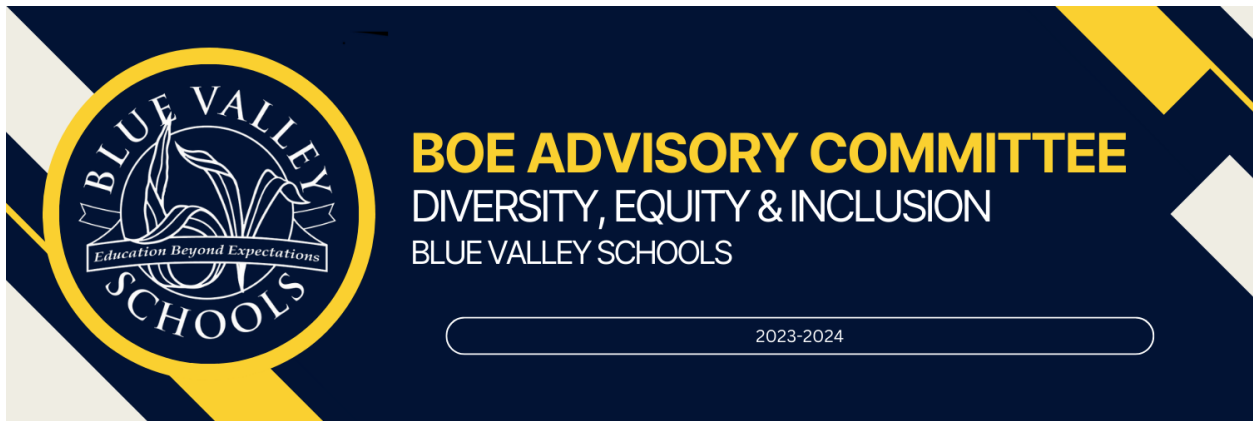
During the professional learning development time on October 13th, Adam met with the music teachers to discuss the current resources, what is available, and how they can expand their resources. They also discussed how they can provide additional resources that better represent the students in their classrooms. The teachers discussed how they could research additional resources and what community resources they could use to expand the music library.

Adam then asked the panel a series of questions.

### **Panel Question 1: How do you approach the process of selecting literature for your students/ensemble?**

Answers included the following:

- Look at the objectives and standards.
- Select pieces that have a curricular focus and on the developmental level of the students.
- Every child has a mirror (see themselves) and a window (learn about others).
- At the elementary level, there are so many pieces that students get through. Want to make sure that the pieces students sing "do no harm."
- Spoke to the challenge of selecting pieces that students can learn from those that meet standards and are relevant.
- Make sure that you select pieces that students get excited to perform. A lot of digging to do to find quality pieces that students want to listen to that challenge them and make them feel represented.
- For orchestra music, most of the music was created during the 1600s, which covers the foundation of Western music. It is challenging to find alternative selections that are not just white men deeply rooted in the Christian religion. Looking for more options for



students to enjoy what they are doing and students feel represented and connected to the music.

Adam highlighted some differences in the performing arts curriculum and other contents. Performing Arts teachers have to select their texts every year, or a different lesson every single week. Tasked with big challenges to select a curriculum that represents their students, challenges them, and brings joy. A lot of responsibility on these teachers.

**Question 2: What are some of the challenges you face in providing diverse and inclusive activities and performances in your classroom?**

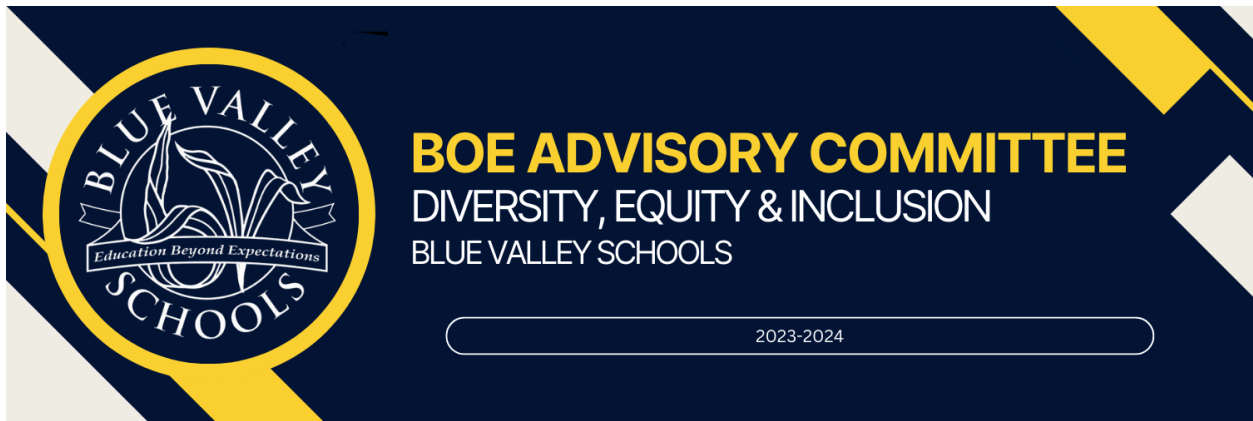
Answers included the following:

- Worries about appropriation. Music that's new is varied but hard to find (emerging area).
- Can feel like an imposter if teaching about experiences that are not authentic to the teacher.
- The challenge of having courageous conversations with students. Ask students about music at home and culture to learn from the students.
- In the choral world, online resources where you can buy to perform are not varied in diverse backgrounds and that's because not all cultures wrote down their music and recorded it. It is passed verbally through generations. Things can get lost in translation and lose their quality when not a primary source.
- In the band world, it is important to google the composer and make sure that they are aligning with the music and that someone is not financially benefiting from another individual's culture.
- Diversity of instrumentation – all performances that are planned look the same. So what can I do to change it? Give students other experiences. Perhaps paired with choir or visual arts.

Adam discussed how at the last professional learning they created an in-house database of resources to share to provide access to more diverse pieces.

**Q3 - Can you describe a past experience where you made a student from an underrepresented group feel seen and heard in your class?**

Answers included the following:



- The middle school schedule allows for students to participate in the theater performance or as part of the tech crew. Schools cast based on ability which allows students to see all sorts of representation.
- At middle school in selecting pieces for plays and musicals – look at themes, developmentally appropriate, not focused solely on a relationship - are their varied roles for all students. Plays that were once considered appropriate are no longer.
- One of our band teachers had a composer come to the school and share with the students the process of creating a piece. Inspired students to go on a composing journey. A student is now in a job as a composer.
- A school worked with students to combine Western instruments with traditional classical Indian dance.
- A story about a student from India who brought flutes from India and was able to incorporate them into the ensemble. It was something never heard before and the students in the audience were exposed to it.
- If performing a song in which there may be a student or family member who speaks the language, the family member comes in and teaches the language.
- The internet can help to bring a primary speaker into the classroom as well.

The panel then took questions from the committee members.

Scott thanked Adam and the panelists for coming.

Dr. Merrigan acknowledged the conflict in the Middle East and the students and families that are hurting in our community.

Samantha von Ende shared from the JCRB/AJC that students are experiencing an increase in anti-semitism and that they are a resource to help.

Dr. Merrigan emphasized that from a district perspective, we are about having safe and inclusive environments for every student. Jodie Dietz discussed the statement the Board of Education made at the Board meeting in October about the schools being about safety.

Kelly Wessel presented the community celebrations and observances for the school newsletters for January and February. The committee members reviewed and approved them.