

Ms. Cathy Higgins  
NCLB Title II-D Program Manager  
Office of Educational Technology, Division of Instruction  
New Hampshire Department of Education  
101 Pleasant Street  
Concord, NH 03301

February 25, 2011

Dear Ms. Higgins:

This letter is in support of the Seabrook Middle School's proposal to the Title IID Mini-grants. The proposed project is focused on expanding our music program so all students can participate, but it also aligns the spirit of learning in music to support students in mathematics. This is my second year at the helm of Seabrook Middle School, now in its 5<sup>th</sup> year as a school-in-need-of-improvement. We have focused on the professional development of our teachers and hiring the best teachers we can attract into our school. We have implemented Study Island as a new program that helps students to achieve mastery in many curricular areas, including math. We have made considerable pathways towards computers in classrooms and access by students. The recent FlipVideo project is showing tremendous potential as students engage in more content-based projects. You can clearly see the results of those efforts as you walk about our school. We are struggling to gain a foothold for mathematics achievement. One of our newest teachers, Dan Glover has been working hard to bring high school level Algebra to our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. His efforts to connect math with other curriculum areas has been profound. He is technology-savvy and optimistic about what our students can do! Our music teacher Matt Woolley has been proactive in trying to grow our music program for all students. Our low socio-economic factors prevent some kids from participating with instruments. These are some of the same children struggling with math.

I find it interesting that these teachers have teamed up to engage students around the similarities in learning to make good music and the thinking strategies necessary to be successful in Algebra. Certainly it is innovative, but more importantly it may just be the pathway needed by our students. I know they can, the teachers believe that they can, but we need to convince the students that they can! I hope that you will fund this project for the technology but more importantly for the inspiration that it can deliver. The kids love these two teachers and together with my Assistant Principal Bryan Belanger, I can foresee the connected curriculum they are promising. I pledge my support for their work and in helping to carry the vision forward as a winning strategy for learning. Please call upon me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Les W. Shepard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Les Shepard  
Principal

# School Administrative Unit No. 21

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Winnacunnet, South Hampton, Seabrook, North Hampton, Hampton Falls, Hampton

Ms. Cathy Higgins  
NCLB Title II-D Program Manager  
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Dear Ms. Higgins:

This letter is in support of the Seabrook Middle School Title IID proposal for Seabrook Communicates! I am relatively new in this SAU but realize already how much of a cultural shift there must be to raise the aspirations of Seabrook children and the Seabrook community. Through review of the SINI plans, I understand how frustrating it has been as they try everything they can to increase their students' scores in reading and math. The reading and writing skills are showing promise but the math is still a very large problem and it is exasperated by a negative view. Through this proposal the teachers are "in a very positive and concerted way" trying to raise students' enthusiasm for learning and their self-confidence. The alignment of music and math is not a widely conceived idea, but the research on math anxieties and students' loss of motivation to something that is not within their reach is well documented.

I applaud these teachers of math and music and technology for trying what their instincts tell them: "That students can learn math just as they learn music!" This is a novel approach by a school struggling to raise its children to a higher level of achievement. My previous experiences at Timberlane documented that students successful in music were usually also successful in their academics. They learn how to study, manage their time, prioritize their obligations, and work together to achieve a magnificent performance. We know that only 2 students from Seabrook applied to the National Honor Society this year at Winnacunnet. Very few Seabrook students participate in clubs or on teams. This proposal is truly an effort to spawn achievement, success, confidence, and raise aspirations of all Seabrook students. It is my hope that together with the school leadership this team will be successful. I pledge my personal efforts and the support of the SAU administration for the success of this project. The math and music teachers, Dan Glover and Matt Wooley are exceptional in their dedication to advancing the students. It's an unusual combination, but I believe their ideas are salient. The Seabrook students are lucky to have them as champions for the cause!

Please let me now if you need any further information.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Hopkins, C.A.G.S.  
Assistant Superintendent of Schools