

Dr. Mark F. Diaz
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Austin, TX 78734

November 30, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

As the former superintendent and former board member of the Texas Educational Service Center Region 13, it is my pleasure to write a letter of support for the New School of Music (NSM). In August 2013 at Cedars International Academy, I met with Mr. Richard Spencer the Executive Director of the New School of Music, to discuss his vision of enriching disadvantage students' lives by sharing his love of jazz. Cedars at that time had over 85 % economically disadvantaged students and over 90% minority students.

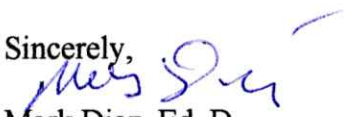
Under his tutelage New School of Music provided guitar lessons to our students inviting them into a world they might have never had the opportunity to experience or even imagine. The research is clear that music education is vital for students' high academic success as well as empowering them with the skill set to have a well-balanced life. The children's' pride and sense of self-worth, was outshined by their parents as they carry their guitars around campus. Parents of the students who had faced the litany of poverty issues on a daily basis had hope in their eyes as they walked to and or stayed with their loved ones during the guitar lessons. Without doubt NSM has strengthened, encouraged and improved students' and their parents lives.

In addition to their weekly lessons New School of Music offers once in a lifetime experience for students to learn from worlds-class jazz educators such as Don Braden, Andre Hayward, and Joe Morales. NSM offers scholarships, Masterclass Series, Concerts, Texas Blue Jazz Festival and the well Texas Jazz & Blues Camp.

The instructors are, without exception, patient professionals, who take pride in sharing their knowledge. I once asked an instructor who had just finished a Broadway tour why he is giving of his talent. He replied with modesty, it's just a way for me to give back. Likewise, Richard, in his quiet demeanor is driven to give back. Since 2013 he has given back to students, parents, and to jazz and blues with his New School of Music.

I am extremely pleased to write this letter of support for the New School of Music. If I can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



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