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*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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BAYSIDE ELEMENTARY MUSIC PROGRAM RECEIVES $5,900 GRANT TO EXPAND STUDENT ACCESS TO MUSIC EDUCATION

STEVENSVILLE, MD - Big news is music to the ears at Bayside Elementary School, where the music program has been awarded a $5,900 grant—thanks to the efforts of parent volunteer Mrs. Luecking through her nonprofit group, the Queen Anne's County Education Partnership (QACEP), and the Mockingbird Foundation.

On June 17, 2025, music teacher Monica White was surprised after school by Principal Louisa Welch, Assistant Principal Mr. Rafter, Mrs. Luecking, and a group of chorus, band, and general music students and families with the announcement of the grant—the largest ever awarded by QACEP. The moment marked the culmination of a year-long effort that began back in September 2024, when Mrs. Luecking, the parent of a 4th grade chorus student, asked Ms. White for a wishlist of items that could benefit the entire Bayside music program.

Ms. White's response included practical and innovative tools: piano keyboards to double the number of students able to play at the same time, MIDI controllers compatible with Chromebooks, and a fourth riser step to support growing choral performances. Many of the new items are compatible with Quaver and Hal Leonard's Essential Elements Music Class—digital music education platforms being utilized by all elementary students in Queen Anne's County through federal grants written by Michael Bell through the Fine Arts Office.

"These new tools will not only give more students access, but will allow them to experience music the way their favorite artists do—by composing, experimenting, and creating," said Ms. White. "This grant directly impacts every student who comes through the doors of our music room."

Following the surprise announcement, Ms. White began working with students to identify additional items that could align with the school's budget to complement the grant funding and continue building a thriving music experience at Bayside.

Board of Education member Kendra Eichler (District 4) publicly praised Mrs. Luecking at the July 2 Board Meeting for her continued advocacy and partnership through QACEP, highlighting the meaningful impact parent collaboration can have on student learning.

"Ms. White continues to do a tremendous job providing dynamic, engaging musical experiences for her students," said Michael Bell, Supervisor of Visual & Performing Arts for Queen Anne's County Public Schools. "Her enthusiasm for music and the way she empowers her students to perform and create is inspiring."

The Mockingbird Foundation, a nonprofit founded by fans of the band Phish, funds music education programs that broaden access and engagement. The organization was impressed by Ms. White's program and the creativity and confidence it fosters in young musicians.