

2022 Partner in Excellence

Dr. Anna Braun



Dr. Anna Braun was an indispensable fixture in the East Brunswick musical landscape from the moment she picked up a viola at Frost Elementary School when she was ten years old. She has not put the viola down since, playing through her graduation from East Brunswick High School in 1981 and continuing to the present day. After earning her degree in Music Education from Trenton State College, and a brief interlude teaching orchestra in Trenton and Hamilton, Dr. Braun returned home in 1987 to begin teaching at Hammarskjold Middle School, coincidentally in the same music room where she honed her skills as a student! During her teaching career she earned a Masters in the Art of Teaching from Marygrove College and a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership from Walden University. Dr. Braun transferred to Churchill Junior High School in 2010. She reluctantly retired in June 2021 from her beloved career after a near-fatal bout of Covid-19 in January 2021.

The success of Dr. Braun's orchestra program can be attributed to her constant focus on improving the status quo. Her desire for her students to embody the district's motto of "Excellence in the Arts" meant her ensembles were sought out to perform at community events in East Brunswick, including the Mayor's Gala, the EB Public Library's 50th Anniversary Gala, the State of the District address, the dedication of New Hammarskjold, and the dedication of the Jo Ann Magistro Performing

Arts Center. Her advanced ensembles were selected to perform on multiple occasions at the annual NJ Music Educators Association Conference as well as at the National Association for Music Education Eastern Convention, where she premiered a new string orchestra edition of Holst's "Jupiter" by the acclaimed arranger Sandra Dackow.

Her tireless drive for excellence has been recognized throughout the state. In 2006 Dr. Braun received the Master Music Educator Award from the NJ Music Educators Association and the NJ Governor's Award in Arts Education. Her commitment to public school music education led her to serve on the Board of Directors of the Central Jersey Music Educators Association, as well as volunteering countless hours managing, hosting, and conducting Regional and All State orchestras. She served the EBPS community on ad hoc committees. She was instrumental in promoting the construction of the new Hammarskjold with the inclusion of an auditorium, so generations of performing arts students would have a state-of-the-art venue to showcase their talents.

Always exploring new technological and curricular developments, Dr. Braun received several EBEF Grants, one of which led to the founding of the popular annual Churchill Pops Concerts. Showcasing the musical talents, dancing skills, and best "rock-star fashion" of orchestra, chorus, and band students, pre-pandemic shows saw 350 students jamming on rock and pop music not normally associated with junior high musicians. Audiences and students enjoyed rock-concert style lighting with everything from fog geysers, strobes, digital lighting effects, even a giant disco ball! Dr. Braun further used her skills as a JMPAC lighting tech to enhance EBEF's "Celebrity Dance Off" shows.

Dr. Braun's commitment to the success of her students, along with her drive to push them to the height of their potential, are in no small part responsible for the sustained success of East Brunswick's orchestra program, one of the best in the state and a model for other districts. Dr. Braun is very proud of the hundreds of students who individually achieved excellence by successfully auditioning for Regional and All State Orchestra.

Dr. Braun's passion for music, thirst for knowledge, and boundless sense of humor have captivated students and fellow teachers for decades. Her commitment to and impact on the district's orchestra program do not stop with the students. Over the years, she has mentored countless student teachers and faculty members in East Brunswick who will carry on her legacy. [In fact, one of her former students will be taking her place as orchestra director at CJHS!]

A third generation EB resident, Anna was thrilled to watch her three children follow in her footsteps and be immersed in band, orchestra, chorus, and theater during their time in the East Brunswick Public Schools. Anna is embracing retirement by spending time with her two young grandchildren, her children, and her husband, Steven. She can't wait for her grandchildren to start kindergarten at Chittick School in a couple of years so she can watch the next generation thrive and grow in EB's outstanding education system. While we may no longer find Anna tuning hundreds of instruments at concerts, the fruits of her years of dedication to the district will continue to produce results for years to come.

