

**Letter to the Editor printed in The Danvers Herald June 12, 2008,
and The Salem Evening News June 17, 2008**

Danvers High has proud musical tradition

To the editor:

As the incoming co-presidents of Danvers Parents for Music Education, we salute this year's graduating class for an extraordinary year of musical excellence and academic achievement.

During 2007-2008, the Danvers High School Falcon Band staged unforgettable patriotic half-time shows, performed flawlessly in the Macy's parade at Universal Studios in Florida, and in the New Year's Eve parade at Disney World. The high-school choral groups also reached new heights, sending 16 singers to the Northeast District Festival Chorus, with one of them, Stephen Schapero, attaining all-state honors.

Many studies have indicated a strong link between a commitment to musical excellence and academic success. Here is an unscientific, but very telling study of our own: All of the officers of this year's National Honor Society at Danvers High School were involved in the high-school music programs.

Graduates of the DHS music programs will bring their many talents this fall to colleges and universities such as Harvard, Cornell, Boston College, Boston University, and the Culinary Institute of America, to name just a few. And many of them credit the band and choral programs for giving them the tools to succeed. They say it best in their PME scholarship applications, and here is a small sampling:

r "I have learned hard work, dedication and discipline. These values have shaped me ... and I will always stand by them.

r "The DHS music program shaped me into the strong leader that I am today."

r "I wouldn't change my marching band experience for anything. It is far too valuable."

r "Seeing other musicians who were serious, dedicated and hard-working, started to rub off on me. I took the initiative to become not just a better musician, but a better student."

r "My involvement with the DHS band helped me make lasting friendships, and gave me the confidence to express myself without a mouthpiece."

We strongly urge current high-school students, and those who will be freshman in September, to take full advantage of the music programs at Danvers High School. Under the dynamic leadership of Band Director Ron Parsons and Choral Director Matthew Haynes, you will have fun, experience life lessons beyond the classroom, and thrive.

In a PME scholarship application, one student put it succinctly, but completely: "Being part of the high-school music program has been amazing ... a life-changing experience."

Musical excellence and academic achievement: It's an extraordinary combination.

PETER COLLINS

STEVE O'CONNELL

Danvers