



**Elemental Music**  
**Statement on Cultural Equity and Inclusion**  
**Approved by BOD on November 17, 2019**

Recognizing the need for students to have improved continuity as they transition from elementary to middle school music programs, Elemental Music began providing high-quality music education in 2004 to youth in Santa Monica and its surrounding communities. What started as a free program to 25 students has since grown to support approximately 300 students annually. When Elemental Music became an independent 501(c)(3) in 2010, tuition was implemented, and we committed to make financial aid available to ensure that cost would not be a barrier to any family. Our programs have expanded to include more diverse ensemble offerings and a private lesson program for qualified students in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District.

We believe that through the study of music, students find a sense of belonging, community, work ethic, inspiration, and life skills that benefit them throughout their lives and careers. Students also gain an expanded worldview, increased cultural awareness and understanding, and curiosity to learn more about the arts and the wider world. We believe that all children have a right to access these benefits through the study of music. In addition to the cost of tuition, which we mitigate through financial aid, barriers to student access that we strive to overcome include: lack of transportation, parent work schedules, families with a primary language other than English, differences in cultural and educational backgrounds, physical and mental disabilities, differences resulting from gender and sexual identity, and access to quality instruments.

Through public performances, we are able to serve not only our students, but also their families and the greater community. These concerts and recitals are free and low-cost opportunities to experience live music from a diverse historical and cultural repertoire.

In many ways, a musical ensemble is a microcosm of our broader lives and world. Through participating, we join a close-knit community, at times working in small groups, and at other times everyone in harmony toward a single, collective effort. At times, we are in leadership roles, and at others, we are in supporting roles. Even with the presence of so many individual voices, all are working toward a common goal. We believe that our staff and Board of Directors should be similarly “in ensemble,” and that we should represent a reflection of those who participate in our programs. The staff and Board, together with the children and families that we serve, come from a multitude of differing backgrounds. Nonetheless, we all are working together to achieve something larger than us individually: providing high-quality music education to youth in our community.





**Elemental Music CEI Policy**  
**Approved by BOD February 16, 2020**

**Assessment**

Based on our mission and vision, while we recognize that we have already begun to reduce equity gaps and remove some of the barriers to full inclusion of families with varied financial circumstances and diverse cultural and social backgrounds, we are committed to better serve our community by increasing our outreach efforts, providing affordable access to high quality music programs, and exploring ways to deepen our impact to better serve under-represented populations/families.

**Goals**

As part of our ongoing effort for improvement, we will regularly review the composition of our staff and board with the goal of having the demographics of our staff and board reflect the community we serve, while maximizing the number of diverse perspectives in our leadership.

We will review all written documents, including our website, with the goal of providing Spanish translations for all materials. Further, we will increase our staff capacity for spoken communication in Spanish.

Recognizing that some participant families struggle currently to navigate certain administrative aspects of program participation (registration, financial aid application, etc.) we will develop support systems to mitigate barriers to participants fully engaging, in the form of informational meetings, individual assistance, and workshops.

We strive to improve our outreach to Latinx and African American organizations in the community through deliberate planning and communications with community members

We will continue our efforts to gather key data about our enrolled students, both during their participation in our programs as well as after they finish, in order to analyze the effectiveness of our programs, and in particular, where equity gaps may still exist.

We will use in our curriculum and repertoire programming a variety of selections that represent a broader range of cultural and musical backgrounds in order to provide students with a more expansive understanding of diversity in musical influences and styles.

We will investigate transportation issues for our current and prospective student populations with the interest of developing the capacity to assist with



student transportation or adjust planning to minimize lack of transportation as a barrier.

### **Approaches**

We will work toward accomplishing these goals through a number of approaches. Members of the staff and board will regularly participate in self-evaluation to determine areas to focus on for improvement. Short- and long-term goals will be established at regularly set aside time at program director and board meetings, during which all of the above goals will be assessed and reviewed.

The staff will continue to review and improve recruitment and hiring policies and practices with an eye toward aligning our staff composition with our vision for demographics that is reflective of the community we serve, with special consideration for increasing the multilingual capacity of the staff.

The board will continue to monitor and improve director recruitment with the goal of maximizing the diversity of perspectives and backgrounds among the board leadership.

The board will assure the resources necessary for the staff's work of reviewing and improving Spanish translations of our written documents, website, and publications.

The board commits to providing the resources necessary for the staff's work to create systems to mitigate barriers to participants fully engaging.

### **Desired Outcomes**

- That staff and board members embrace and celebrate diversity.
- That equity gaps for our program participants are reduced to insignificant levels or zero.
- That the demographics of our program participants are reflective of the broader community.
- That the composition of the staff and board reflects the diversity of the population we serve.
- That staff members are intentional in making program changes to close equity gaps and overcome barriers to program participation.
- That board members are intentional about confronting the issues that create barriers to inclusion.
- That no potential program participant be deterred from participation by a barrier that we create, fail to recognize, or fail to overcome.