**Matthew Distante General Music Value Statement**

 I believe that every student has a right to a quality music education. General music students are often treated differently than band, orchestra, and choir students, and that affects their education in a negative way. I want to provide an interesting, engaging classroom where my students will learn a vast array of musical vocabulary, literature, and content. I want my general music students to walk out of the class with an increased appreciation for music and a desire to keep music as an important part of their lives. Every student’s music education deserves to be treated with the utmost care and attention, regardless of whether they are in a performing ensemble or not.

 I believe that every student should not only learn the given subject matter, but also applicable life skills. My job is not only to teach general music, but also to teach skills unrelated to music that my students will utilize outside of the classroom. I aim to teach discipline, accountability, and work ethic; maintaining a class environment where the work is easily achievable while still challenging. Students should be able to look back at my class and feel like they have learned something, and my ultimate goal as an educator is for a student to utilize a specific skill that I have taught them to make an important decision in their lives. Whether or not they credit me with that skill is irrelevant, as long as it helps them down the line.

 I believe that my students should be able to view me as a mentor, assistant, and most importantly, a friend. My students should feel comfortable going to me for anything from school issues to personal struggles. My classroom is a supportive, encouraging environment where my only goal is to help my students along in their pursuit of knowledge. If a student has a goal, I want to send them on the right path to go about achieving it. I do not want to be perceived as just another teacher, but instead I want to be seen as an inspiration and guiding hand. Student achievement is my main concern, and if a student is struggling with their classwork or personal life I want to ease their burden as much as possible and dedicate my time to helping them. I plan to make myself available for my students as often as possible, and always be a resource that they can come to in a time of need.

 I believe that music is a diverse art form with roots in many different cultures and should be taught as such. My class will introduce the students to music from all areas of the world and how they have impacted others. From exploring the roots of jazz in South Africa to the fundamental melodies of Korean folk songs, we will go around the globe and appreciate music for what it actually is, an amalgam of different ideas and creations from every corner of the Earth. I also aim to celebrate my students’ cultural heritage, so I will connect with my students on a deeper level and personalize my lessons to best benefit the class that I have for the year. By doing this, I believe that I will encourage a level of respect and appreciation for different cultures everywhere, and hopefully that will inspire students to do their own research and enjoy different genres of music from around the world.