

Oak Hills Local School District Music Educator Chelsey Sweatman Named Winner of the National 2026 Spark Award

The Spark Award Committee, in partnership with MakeMusic Cloud and Alfred Music, is thrilled to announce the 2026 Spark Award.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The Spark Award Committee, in partnership with MakeMusic Cloud and Alfred Music, is thrilled to announce that Chelsey Sweatman, Choir Director at Bridgetown Middle School, has been named the grand prize winner of the 2026 Spark Award.

The Spark Award is a prestigious national recognition designed to honor music educators who demonstrate an exceptional impact on their students, facilitate extraordinary musical and personal growth, and show an unwavering commitment to bridging the gap between the classroom and the local community. Out of hundreds of competitive nominations submitted by students, parents, and administrators across the country, Mrs. Sweatman rose to the top as a true exemplar of excellence in music education.



The selection committee evaluated candidates based on three core pedagogical pillars, with Mrs. Sweatman showing exceptional strength in each category:

1. Instilling a Lifelong Love of Music: Mrs. Sweatman is celebrated by her community for creating a vibrant, high-energy environment where music is accessible and joyful for every child. Nominations from her students frequently describe her not just as a teacher, but as "family," highlighting her unique ability to make even the most timid singers feel powerful, confident, and celebrated every single day.

2. Contribution to the Larger Music Education Community: Under her direction, the Bridgetown Middle School choral program has achieved immense technical prestige, consistently earning superior ratings and securing consecutive first-place finishes at regional competitions over the past three years. To continuously push pedagogical boundaries, Mrs. Sweatman regularly

collaborates with guest clinicians and fellow music educators to ensure her students are exposed to the highest standards of vocal training.

3. Multi-Disciplinary Community Involvement: Beyond standard classroom instruction, Mrs. Sweatman goes above and beyond by funding and integrating professional acting workshops, such as partnerships with Playhouse in the Park, directly into the school's annual musical productions. Her dedication ensures that local school performances are not just educational milestones, but magnificent cultural celebrations for the entire Oak Hills community.

"Mrs. Sweatman represents everything the Spark Award was created to celebrate: passion, artistic leadership, humanity, and a relentless belief in the potential of young musicians," said the Spark Award Committee in a joint statement. "The overwhelming support and beautiful testimonies rallied by the Oak Hills community made it clear that her impact will resonate for generations to come."

As the 2026 Spark Award winner, Mrs. Sweatman will receive a grand prize package including national programmatic recognition, custom classroom resources, and a feature spotlight shared across music education networks.

"I am honored to be the 2026 Spark Award Winner! It is my lifelong mission to spread joy, light, and kindness through the power of music!" said Mrs. Sweatman in a statement reflecting this achievement. "My hope is that through my student's time with me that they not only have a high quality choir experience, but throughout the process, they leave my classroom as better humans."

The Oak Hills Local School District community is invited to join the committee in celebrating Mrs. Sweatman's incredible achievement and her continued dedication to shaping confident, creative, and inspired young citizens through the power of song.

About the Spark Award: Sponsored by MakeMusic Cloud and Alfred Music, the annual Spark Award recognizes outstanding primary, secondary, and private studio music educators across the United States who spark a lifelong passion for music in their students and demonstrate exceptional leadership within the music education ecosystem.

About MakeMusic and Alfred Music: Since 1922, Alfred Music has created educational, reference, pop, and performance materials for teachers, students, professionals, and hobbyists across all instruments, styles, and levels. MakeMusic, a world leader in music technology, is the creator of MakeMusic Cloud—the interactive practice application—and Sight Reading Studio. Together, Alfred Music and MakeMusic provide comprehensive, connected resources that empower musicians and educators to experience the joy of making music.

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