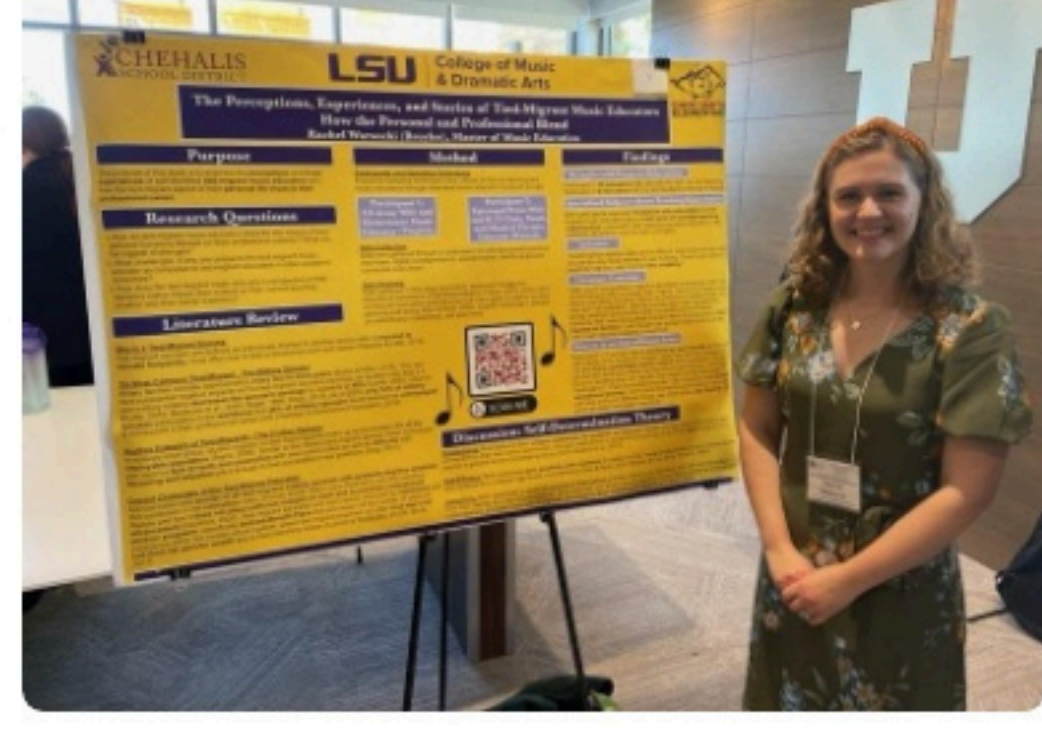


## Celebrating Our Staff

"I think we have such a great variety and richness to the music in this country and I try to bring that into my classroom."

-Rachel Warsocki, OSE Music Teacher

**OSE Music Teacher Rachel Warsocki: Inspiring Students and Fellow Teachers**



### Bringing a World of Knowledge to Chehalis

This may be Rachel Warsocki's first full year teaching music but she came to the job with a great deal of experience to offer.

In October, Warsocki, who teaches grade 3-4 general music and 5th grade clarinet and flute at Orin Smith Elementary, got to present her Master's thesis at the 2023 Symposia on Music Teacher Education, a biennial gathering of the national Society for Music Teacher Education.

Warsocki's thesis was titled "The Perceptions, Experiences, and Stories of Tied-Migrant Music Educators: How the Personal and Professional Blend." Tied-migrant educators refers to those who move to a different location because of their spouse's career. Her research project focused on interviewing music teachers, many of them military spouses like herself, who had moved to different locations in the world to teach music.

"I wanted to look at how have they have been able to embed themselves into the culture of their school and how they've been able to find success," Warsocki explained of the project.

Warsocki's husband is in the Army and prior to coming to teach at Orin Smith Elementary this school year, Warsocki had been at Louisiana State University working on her Master's Degree. When he was notified he would be stationed at Fort Lewis in Tacoma, the couple moved to Washington where Warsocki was hired by the Chehalis School District. Warsocki said in her personal experience, living in different areas of the country has enriched her experience as a teacher and a musician.

"It's fascinating to see the similarities and the differences in the music in several different areas of the nation. I think we have such a great variety and richness to the music in this country and I try to bring that into my classroom," she said.

Warsocki said the experience of taking a deep dive with these tied-migrant teachers gave her a better perspective on her own role as a music educator. She said she wanted to share her research with others not because she desired recognition but because she wanted the information to be able to inspire other music teachers like herself.

"I'm a big believer in research and how it can be incorporated into the classroom. The big question to be asked is how can you actually make research that's practical and applicable to teachers in the classroom?" Warsocki said.

One of the major themes of the conference was how to make classrooms more inclusive for both students and educators, which Warsocki said her thesis also fit into perfectly.

"Making sure people feel welcomed in our classrooms and creating experiences where everyone can grow into a better person and a better student is vital," she said.



### Learning From Your Students

Originally from Virginia, Warsocki grew up in an area where music education was supported in the schools. She played saxophone in her school band and still plays the instrument today, recently sharing her talent when she and her husband performed at the Orin Smith Veterans Day assembly. Warsocki said she always loved helping people and said she knew from a fairly young age that she wanted to grow up to be a teacher and it was a special teacher in her own life that inspired her to become a music teacher.

"I felt very blessed growing up to have a middle school band teacher who was great teacher and who really made a large difference in my own life," Warsocki said.

In college, Warsocki's focus of study was actually secondary music education in instrumental music. She student-taught in Virginia and then during her Master's work at LSU, taught at the non-profit program Kids' Orchestra, an organization that works predominantly with Title I schools in southern Louisiana without their own music programs.

"It was eye opening and humbling. There are so many schools in the country that don't have the luxury of having a music program like Chehalis does," she said.

Though students in Louisiana might have less opportunities for music in their schools, Warsocki learned that it did not mean their lives were poor in music. The area itself has a rich musical history and many of her students had instruments at home and family members who could play, though many were self-taught. Rather than focus on what the students didn't have, Warsocki said she chose to learn about what they did have and use that to make herself a better music teacher.

"They have a strong emphasis on ear training, musical exploration, and making music as a family activity and it was a good opportunity for me to learn how to use that in my classroom," Warsocki said.



### Coming to Chehalis

Warsocki says she was drawn to the music teacher opening at Chehalis School District because of the district's strong K-12 approach toward music. She teaches general music for grades 3 and 4 and a new beginning clarinet and flute group. An impressive 34 5th graders signed up to learn clarinet and flute this year. She praised the work of James Lintott Elementary music teachers Katie Giuliani and Bonnie Bezon for how well prepared students are to advance to music at Orin Smith.

"I've been surprised at how quickly my students have taken to their instruments. We have a strong music foundation that starts at James Lintott. All of the students came in understanding a lot about music and that foundation makes a huge difference," she said.

Warsocki views her role in the chain of music in Chehalis as being the place where students in grades 3 and 4 can get a solid basic knowledge of musical notes and reading music before they join choir, or orchestra in 5th grade, as well as growing in their general appreciation of music making and listening. This is accomplished through playing instruments such as recorders, marimbas, xylophones and even tuned percussion tubes called [Boomwhackers](#). In Warsocki's class, everyone is a musician and she wants to make sure her students feel confident in their musical abilities.

"Music is an avenue where almost everyone can find a passion for some part of it. There's such a collaborative aspect to music, and when it starts to click, that's such a meaningful experience for everyone, and I like being able to give that gift to students," Warsocki said.



[Notice of Non-discrimination](#)  
[Anti-bullying Policy and Procedure](#)