

School of Music's James Mick receives grant to collaborate with local school

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Contributed by Jenny Stockdale

James Mick, assistant professor of music education, in collaboration with Diana Geiger, Boynton Middle School Orchestra Director, received a *Red and Gold Grant* through the [Ithaca Public Education Initiative](#) (IPEI), which aims to connect local schools with the community.

The grant made it possible for Mick to visit Boynton Middle School throughout the semester to work with the orchestra. As a capstone experience, Mick will be conducting a piece with the orchestra at Boynton's May 9 concert.



The collaboration, titled "Learning How to be a Professional Musician in Middle School," has been a win-win for everyone involved. Diana Geiger has been able to enrich her curriculum and provide a new experience for her students, and the Boynton Middle School students have been able to explore various aspects of performing music under different directors. Mick has been able to work with local students and stay involved with the public school educational system, and a handful of music education students from Ithaca College were able to observe and help with rehearsing the 70-plus member orchestra. For many of these students, it was a first-time experience conducting a middle school group.

Prior to being hired at Ithaca College in 2011, Mick taught elementary and middle school orchestra in Texas and high school orchestra and jazz outside of Syracuse, NY. Mick conducts the *Ithaca College Sinfonietta*, an all-campus orchestra for Ithaca College students, and was recently named the 2013-14 Music Director of the *Ithaca Community Orchestra*. Additionally, Mick teaches courses in string pedagogy and rehearsal techniques, helps manage student teachers, and supervises underclassman music education majors.

The Ithaca Public Education Initiative was founded in 1996 to connect school and community through collaboration, engagement, gifts, and grants. This year, IPEI has awarded nearly \$30,000 in *Red and Gold Grants* for one-time projects that strengthen and enrich the Ithaca schools.

Congratulations James!

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