

# **Metro-East Lutheran High School Students Honored As All-State Musicians**

by Angela Mueller  
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**EDWARDSVILLE** – Two Metro-East Lutheran High School students have earned All-State honors from the Illinois Music Education Association.

Erin VanMiddendorp, a senior at MELHS, has been selected for the All-State Orchestra, and Kate Mueller, a freshman, has been selected for the All-State Band. The musicians will travel to Peoria, Ill., to participate in the Illinois Music Education Conference from Jan. 25 to Jan. 28. The conference will conclude with performances by the All-State Band and Orchestra on Saturday, Jan. 28.

To be selected for All-State, students had to submit audition videos to the ILMEA, which were then judged by a panel of professional musicians. The highest-scoring musicians from across the state were then named All-State Musicians for 2022-2023.

“This is a great program because the top players and singers in the state get to have the experience of playing and singing with other students at their level,” said Karen Shimkus, music teacher at MELHS. “It pushes students to achieve at their highest level.”

VanMiddendorp, who plays the violin, was also an All-State musician in 2022.

“I really enjoyed how immersive All-State is,” she said. “We were fully immersed in so much music in a way that was very energizing.”

VanMiddendorp is concertmaster of the SIUE Suzuki Advanced Chamber Orchestra and she also plays with the Alton Symphony Orchestra. She previously was first violin for the Webster University Young People’s Symphonic Orchestra and also earned the Camper of the Year for the Eastern Illinois University Music Camp. In addition to playing the violin, and occasionally the viola, in the strings ensemble at MELHS, she also plays the flute in the school’s band and is in choir.

Mueller, who plays the clarinet, has performed in the ILMEA District 6 Honors Band since 2019 and was first chair clarinet for the 2022 All-Illinois Junior Honor Band, which was held at the University of Illinois. She is currently an alternate with the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra.

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