

April 28, 2008

Dear Fourth Grade Parents and Students,

Enclosed please find information which should answer many of your questions regarding fifth grade music choices, the selection process, and the logistics of obtaining an instrument for your child to use next year. The music curriculum provides the opportunity for our students to see and hear demonstrations of the various instrumental and vocal options available to them in fifth grade. All fourth grade students have had the experience of "test driving" the various brass, woodwind, percussion and string instruments used in our middle and high school music program.

Please return the attached Music Choice Sheets to your child's music teacher no later than Thursday, May 8. All students should indicate a first and second choice. Students will be notified of their choice the following week in music class. Please remember that participation in any of the fifth grade music choices is for the entire 2008-2009 academic year.

Music classes fall into two broad categories. General music class focuses on developing skills in the areas of singing, listening, movement, and the recorder. Instrumental music classes focus on the development of playing skills for a given instrument. Brass, percussion, and woodwind instruments are taught as part of band class. Strings are taught as part of orchestra class. All instrumental classes are at the beginning level.

For those students and families choosing general music as their music class for fifth grade, simply fill out the attached Music Choice Sheet, and submit it by May 8. For those selecting instrumental music, please read on.

Choice of musical instrument is primarily up to each student and their family. Please note that in certain situations, physical characteristics may preclude the playing of a particular instrument. Any questions should be referred to the music teachers listed below. Specific questions regarding your child's ability to play an instrument due to orthodontic appliances should be referred to your orthodontist. Please also note that playing a musical instrument requires a certain amount of home practice. A general guideline is that beginning instrument instruction requires twenty to thirty minutes of home practice, five days per week.

Instrumental music choices available to fifth graders include:

Brass: trumpet/cornet, French horn, trombone, baritone

Percussion: primary focus on snare drum with additional instruction on other miscellaneous percussion instruments, including bells (piano or keyboard background is preferred for percussion students).

Strings: violin, viola, cello, bass

Woodwinds: flute, oboe, clarinet, alto saxophone

Those choosing instrumental music, have the option of acquiring an instrument directly through our school music vendor, Quinlan & Fabish. See the enclosed sheets for information on instrumental rentals from Q&F. You may order all of your child's equipment (instrument, book, stand, reeds, etc.) in one of two ways:

1. From their website: www.gandf.com
2. By calling 630-654-4111 (any sales rep. can assist you)

Although Q&F is the school's music vendor, you are under no obligation to deal with them. Q&F does provide a weekly service visit to the school, which is convenient in obtaining an instrument and in getting instruments repaired. We wish to remind you that used musical instruments are acceptable, but please have the instrument's condition checked by a qualified instrument technician, or by one of our music teachers. Instruments need to be in excellent repair in order for beginning students to experience success.

Band Instruments:

Acceptable brands are: Armstrong, Artley, Bach, Buffett, Conn, Fox, Gemeinhardt, Holton, King, Ludwig, Noblet, Pearl, Selmer, Signet, Vito, Yamaha.

Please be aware that instruments purchased from discount and wholesale stores are not accepted for repair at most music stores. Inferior material, construction, and workmanship cause these instruments to be frequently not repairable.

On-line instrument purchases can be disappointing and frustrating due to the unknown nature of the instrument, its condition, and the vendor. We encourage you to contact any of the music teachers listed below regarding questions you may have regarding the purchasing process.

String Instruments:

String instruments represent a wide variety of brands, models, and sizes. Renting string instruments, as opposed to purchasing, is recommended as the instruments need to be sized to the specific child and ultimately all students will grow into full size instruments. We encourage you to contact the string teachers listed below with any questions you may have.

Thank you for your time. We're looking forward to working with your children as they begin this new phase of musical exploration. Please don't hesitate to phone or e-mail any of the faculty listed below with your questions.

Ellen Everson – choir and general music
Katy Sinclair – choir and general music
Tomeka Reid – orchestra
Rozalyn Torto – orchestra
Brad Brickner – band
Lee Gustafson – band
Cathy Janovjak – band