**IMPORTANT ORCHESTRA INFORMATION**

**CTA Humphrey, Conley, Galveston, Sanborn**

July 21, 2021

Dear 5th Grade Orchestra Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Orchestra program for the 2021-2022 school year. My name is Ms. Lim and I am looking forward to being your Orchestra teacher this year. It should be a year of fun, learning and exploration. All 5th & 6th grade students who are interested in seeing what instrumental music is all about have the opportunity to participate in orchestra or band. 5th Grade Orchestra is a Level I beginning Orchestra, which means students do not need music reading or playing experience.

Please be aware that Orchestra requires a **full-year commitment**, and will require **practice time (homework) outside of class**. With the proper amount of practicing, orchestra is very fun and rewarding and I hope your child finds enjoyment through making music this year! **In order to participate in Orchestra, your child will need to have an instrument and instrument accessories at the latest** **by Wednesday, August 11th**. On August 12th, students without an instrument will be enrolled in General Music for the year.

Most families rent instruments from a local music store. Students who choose larger instruments, or people with financial difficulties, will have the opportunity to APPLY for a CUSD Instrument Rental. A form to receive a district instrument will only be given out the **first 3 days** of school to interested students/families. The District maintains a limited supply for student rental. If you apply and receive a district instrument, there is a one-time fee of $40 to help off-set maintenance costs. I passed out the District Rental Application forms today to those students who said they were interested. If your child did not bring one home but you are interested in filling out the form, please email me ASAP as **the District Instruments are given out on a first come first serve basis.**

When you are ready to rent an instrument, it is recommended that you contact several music stores and ask about their rental fees and options. Most music stores offer insurance on instruments. This can be a good thing in case an instrument is left at a bus stop, on a bus, left on the school playground, etc. Also, if you are interested, you may also want to check into a rent-to-own program. This can be beneficial if your child continues orchestra through high school so they can save toward an instrument of their own. If you are planning to purchase an instrument on the internet or warehouse store (WARNING), I suggest calling local music stores to make sure they are capable of repairing that brand of instrument you are thinking about purchasing. Due to district policy, I cannot recommend music stores to you. Asking neighbors and friends about their instrument rental experience is advised. Purchasing an instrument from the internet or through a discount store is inviting because prices are so reasonable. The reason you are being asked to be very careful about these kinds of purchases is that often the instruments are of very poor quality and if broken, cannot be repaired. Additionally, many of these instruments will not tune properly and your child ends up becoming very frustrated during the year because the instrument does not work properly. My suggestion is a rental situation. When renting, ask to visually inspect the instrument and ask the salesperson to tune it. Generally brands like Eastman, Century Strings, Shen, or Angel instruments are solid instruments for school rentals. There are others, but I’ve seen the most success with these brands.

Students are required to bring the instrument, music sheets, and a pencil to each Orchestra class. A supply list will be given to your child that will include specific items to purchase for your child’s particular instrument choice. If your child will be receiving a district instrument, you will still need to purchase the necessary Orchestra supplies. Please review the list and make sure that all materials are brought to class by August 11th.

**Orchestra students will have homework** - - to practice the Orchestra instrument at home 90 minutes per week (ex: 15 minutes per day for 6 days = 90 minutes). This is a required part of the class and reflects their progress and grade in Orchestra. It is best to require your child to do this just as you require your child to do their homework in other subject areas. Practicing an instrument at home can even be a good study break between other homework. If students are not showing sufficient progress, then they will be required to turn in a parent-signed practice timecard weekly.

Last, but not least, you and your child need to make a **one-year commitment to the Orchestra program, including 2 potential evening concerts**. Parents, please plan to attend each concert, as your child’s participation is part of their grade and a vital part to the whole group. Concerts are a great way for the students to demonstrate skills as they improve and concerts are FUN! We will always find something exciting to play!

I would love to hear from you, especially if you have any questions or concerns. Email is the best way to reach me (please indicate in the email which school your child attends) as I travel to four schools each day. Additionally, all Orchestra information should be on our school’s website very soon. This will be a great resource for Orchestra information and downloadable forms.

Sincerely,

Ms. Lim

Email: Lim.Dora@cusd80.com (Absolute BEST way to reach me and get a fast response.)

CTA Humphrey Elementary Orchestra (morning)

Conley Elementary Orchestra (morning)

Galveston Elementary Orchestra (afternoon)

Sanborn Elementary Orchestra (afternoon)