

A sample of a comprehensive explanation letter to be handed out at the recruiting demonstration, in follow up classroom visits or at the Information Night. Good information to publish in the school newsletter.

## School String Program Begins!

-----

### Hello \_\_\_\_\_ Grade students and families!

The last several days your student has had the opportunity to hear about the orchestra, choir and band programs. This year in \_\_\_\_\_ grade, the students have a chance to learn to play an instrument! Our school music program is excellent and a high percentage of our high school students participate in Orchestra, Band or Choir.

The students learned about the string program today. I am very excited to be able to help your child begin this new adventure of playing a stringed instrument. We will have a great time, gain many new skills, and perform wonderful music together this year. Many of you may already know about the school orchestras through older children or friends, but here are the orchestra details.

*First, what is orchestra or strings? It includes the string instruments: violin, viola, cello, and string bass.*

### Where and When

Any student may enroll in strings. Your child has indicated his or her desire to be part of the orchestra program! Classes will begin on Monday, September 8 at 7:30 AM in Room 317 of the elementary school. Orchestra meets as part of the regular school day.

### Information Night

We will have a Parent Information Night on Monday, August 25 at 7 PM in Room 317 of the elementary school where there will be a presentation and an opportunity to ask questions, see the room and meet me. If possible, please attend even if your student has an instrument. It would be a great chance for the kids to learn where the room is before the first day.

### How do I get an instrument and what is Rental Night

*Stringed instruments may be obtained in several different ways.*

1. Purchase an instrument outright - from \$100.00 (used) to \$400.00 (new)
2. Rent-to-own an instrument by the month - approx. \$15-40/month
3. Borrow an instrument from a friend or relative.

If you already own an instrument, I will be happy to advise on its condition and whether it needs any repair to be playable. There is no extra cost for music instruction at school; the major cost is the instrument, rosin and a \_\_\_\_\_ book. A shoulder rest and extra strings will be needed for violins and violas and an endpin rest for cellos and basses. A music stand for home use is recommended.

The Instrument Rental Night is scheduled for Monday, September 8, from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM in Room 317 at the elementary school. There will be representatives from several music companies present to allow you to purchase or rent an instrument. These are companies that I have worked with before so I know they will give you good service at good prices. At 7 PM there will be a short discussion of the rental and purchase options followed by time for you to obtain instruments. You may also go to the stores to rent or purchase ahead of time. Retailers at the Rental Night will be \_\_\_\_\_ (000-000-000), \_\_\_\_\_ (000-000-000), \_\_\_\_\_ (000-000-000), \_\_\_\_\_ (000-000-000), \_\_\_\_\_ (000-000-000),

*Please be careful about buying instruments on the Internet.*

*The prices can be low but often the instruments are usually very poor quality and unplayable.*

### Concert and Event Schedule

We will be scheduling three concerts for parents through the year (in bold) and there will be several special events in class.

September	In class visit by a violin maker
<b>October 20, Mon.</b>	<b>Parent Demo Night by the School String Orchestra, 7:00 PM (MS Gym)</b>
November	In class visit by University music students

A sample of a comprehensive explanation letter to be handed out at the recruiting demonstration, in follow up classroom visits or at the Information Night. Good information to publish in the school newsletter.

<b>Dec.15, Mon.</b>	<b>Holiday Concert/School String Orchestra, 7:00 PM (New HS Cafetorium)</b>
February	In class visit by professional Scottish and bluegrass fiddlers
April	String Orchestra Elementary Schools World Tour (During the day)
<b>June 1, Tues.</b>	<b>Gala Spring Concert/School String Orchestra, 7:00 PM (HS Cafetorium)</b>

### **Concert Dress**

Concert dress consists of white on top and navy-blue or black on the bottom with black socks and shoes. Skirts must be knee length or longer for the girls since they will be sitting on a stage. Slacks are also fine for the girls.

### **To Sign Up**

Fill out the registration form and turn it in to your school office or to me when I visit your class. If you are not sure, please turn in the form and attend the Information Night where I will answer questions so you can make a decision about your participation in the string program. I will also speak with students at school prior to the Rental Night to finalize instrument choice and to size them for their instruments.

### **Why Orchestra**

- When your son/daughter decides to join orchestra he/she is choosing to embark on an adventure of learning that has the potential to impact their entire life. The skills learned benefit a student in all phases of their academic career and in many career paths later on.
- Orchestra literature is one of Western culture's great treasures. Playing a string instrument integrates a person's physical, intellectual and expressive qualities. This provides a very positive experience at an influential period in the lives of students.
- There has been much publicity about recent research that indicates the powerful effect music can have on the intellectual and creative development of children. One noted author, teacher and musician Don Campbell, has written a book on "The Mozart Effect" which describes how children listening to the music of Mozart have increased verbal, emotional and spatial intelligence, plus improved concentration and memory. In an orchestra, students not only hear the music of Mozart, but they are actually involved in playing his music!
- Research is continually showing that early music education has multiple benefits for brain development and for teaching structure and discipline in study habits. String instrument instruction, by the physical nature of the playing, has been shown to have extra benefits. If you want details on any of this, let us know.
- The opportunities for lifelong participation are numerous. For those who excel in musical ability, many colleges offer scholarships for string instrument players. There are many community orchestras as well as countless church music groups. In addition to standard orchestra concerts, string instruments are also used in a variety of other musical settings. They often provide accompaniment for musical theaters and choral productions. String ensembles are used for an endless variety of entertainment functions.
- Some of you may be thinking, "but I can't carry a tune in a bucket". As parents we have all had different backgrounds in music. Let us assure you there is no relationship between your singing ability and your son/daughters musical ability. Generally we find interest to be the biggest factor in success. Every year most beginners' parents come away amazed at their son/daughters' success in strings.
- Through participation in orchestra, students can experience an added dimension to their education. I encourage you to take advantage of this enrichment opportunity.

### **How to support your student once orchestra starts!**

- Instrumental music instruction is a very exciting time in your child's life. As with many of us our expectations can exceed our grasp in the beginning stages. Don't let your child get frustrated if they aren't playing whole songs by the end of the first day. Music instruction like any other academic pursuit take time, effort, self-discipline, a little external discipline (parents), and encouragement (parents and teacher). We will have a tune or two that we can play within a month!
- Practice is a sensitive area for many of us who might have experienced a pressured music situation at an early age. Your child's class experience will be positive enough so that they will want to practice at first. Later they find out it takes some work and isn't as easy as it first seemed. This is the time parents can be helpful. Encourage them and listen to them play the new material they are working on.
- Don't feel that you need to fix difficulties that may occur in the practicing: often just saying "Good work!" is plenty. If you want to be able to say more, there are photos and instructions in the textbook, *String Explorer*, which can help you if your child has questions. There is also a website with music games to go along with the book,

A sample of a comprehensive explanation letter to be handed out at the recruiting demonstration, in follow up classroom visits or at the Information Night. Good information to publish in the school newsletter.

www.stringexplorer.com. The CD that will be distributed in class can be used to play along with and can even be loaded on your computer so that the student can change the tempo.

- Help them to plan and budget the time they have. This can be helpful in all academic areas and is a wonderful life skill. A good rule of thumb is to practice at least 15 minutes every day. Some students may need help to find a time of day that is free from distractions.
- Music is just like the real world. The most successful people are usually the ones who work the hardest - a lesson which will definitely help them in their other academic areas as well as life.

### **Summary**

1. Turn in registration form at your school office by Tuesday, August 26.
2. Attend the Information Night on Monday, August 25 at 7 PM at Room 317.
3. Attend Instrument Rental Night Monday, September 8 at 7 PM at Room 317 if you need an instrument or materials.
4. Students will begin Monday, September 8 at 7:30 AM without instruments.

### **Materials Needed**

- Instrument, bow, case, rosin
- \_\_\_\_\_ book
- Shoulder Rest (Violins, Violas) End Pin Rest (Cellos, Basses)
- Folding Music Stand (Recommended not required).

Everything will be available at Rental Night from the various dealers.

### **Questions**

Any time during the year you have questions please feel free to call or email. I will be happy to answer your questions. Please visit our classroom anytime during the year. We are looking forward to working with all of you in this exciting venture.

Thank you for your cooperation and welcome to the Schools Orchestra program.

*Teacher name, email and number*