



Music at Brookfield

Brookfield School is thrilled to announce that we will be offering the option of Orchestra or Music Appreciation Class as part of the daily curriculum for all 4th-5th Grade students this year! Our 6th-8th Grade students will also have the opportunity to choose Orchestra or Music Appreciation as an elective course.

Our adventure in Orchestra Class will include:

- Singing & playing rhythmic and melodic patterns
- Daily ear training
- Reading musical notation
- Coordination warm-ups
- Maintaining a steady beat
- Fun orchestral techniques (such as tremolo & glissando)
- Following a conductor (dynamics, tempo, & time signatures)
- Music history lessons and listening
- Exploring improvisation & music composition
- Focused small group instruction for each instrument (violin, viola, & cello)

Our adventure in Music Appreciation Class will include:

- Studying musical patterns of rhythm, tempo, dynamics, & pitch
- Daily ear training
- Basic keyboard navigation (intervals & chords)
- Discovering how music is an integral aspect of culture around the world
- Music history in Western civilization
- Guided listening & readings to help students remember composers & famous musical compositions
- Exploration of music composition & lyric writing
- Crafting musical instruments from common household materials

Respectfully,

Ms. Bauer, violin

Mr. McBeth, viola

Mr. Tatum, cello

The Value of Studying Music

Plato once said that music “is a more potent instrument than any other for education.” You will find many teachers who agree with him. Recent research has found that music uses both sides of the brain, a fact that makes it valuable in all areas of development. Music affects the growth of a child’s brain academically, emotionally, and physically.

Music is academic. For some people, this is the primary reason for providing music lessons to their children. A recent study from the University of California found that music trains the brain for higher forms of thinking. Second graders who were given music lessons scored 27% higher on proportional math and fractions tests than children who received no special instruction. Research indicates that musical training permanently wires a young mind for enhanced performance.

Music is physical. Music can be described as a sport. Learning to vocalize pitch, use both hands in different ways, and keep rhythm, aids in the development of balance, posture, and coordination.

Music is emotional. Music is an art form. We are emotional beings and every child requires an artistic outlet. Music may be your child’s vehicle of expression.

Music is for life. Most people can’t play soccer, or football at 70 or 80 years of age but they can sing and/or play an instrument. Music is a gift you can give your child that will last their entire life.

Researchers at the University of Muenster in Germany have discovered that music lessons in childhood actually enlarge parts of the brain. An area used to analyze the pitch of a musical note is enlarged 25% in musicians compared to people who have never played an instrument. The earlier the musicians were when they started musical training, the bigger this area of the brain appears to be.
Pantev et al., *Nature*, April 23, 1998.

Studying music strengthens students’ academic performance. Studies have indicated that sequential, skill-building instruction in art and music integrated with the rest of the curriculum can greatly improve children’s performance in reading and math.
- Martin Gardiner, Alan Fox, Faith Knowles, and Donna Jeffrey, “Learning Improved by Arts Training,” *Nature*, May 23, 1996.

On the basis of observations and experiments with newborns, neuroscientists now know that infants are born with neural mechanisms devoted exclusively to music. Studies show that early and ongoing musical training helps organize and develop children’s brains.
- Susan Black, “The Musical Mind,” *The American School Board Journal*, January, 1997.

Research shows when a child listens to classical music the right hemisphere of the brain is activated, but when a child studies a musical instrument both left and right hemispheres of the brain “light up.” Significantly, the areas that become activated are the same areas that are involved in analytical and mathematical thinking. - Dee Dickinson, “Music and the Mind,” New Horizons for Learning, 1993.

Music participation provides a unique opportunity for literacy preparation. Whether the children are singing, playing, or listening, teachers direct them to listen and hear in new ways which exercises their aural discrimination. Playing instruments and adding movement to the lessons teaches children about sequential learning which is essential in reading comprehension.

A research team exploring the link between music and intelligence reported that music training is far superior to computer instruction in dramatically enhancing children’s abstract reasoning skills, the skills necessary for learning math and science. Shaw, Rauscher, Levine, Wright, Dennis and Newcomb, “Music training causes long-term enhancement of preschool children’s spatial-temporal reasoning,” Neurological Research, Vol. 19, February 1997

“The musician is constantly adjusting decisions on tempo, tone, style, rhythm, phrasing, and feeling--training the brain to become incredibly good at organizing and conducting numerous activities at once. Dedicated practice of this orchestration can have a great payoff for lifelong attentional skills, intelligence, and an ability for self-knowledge and expression.” Roney John J., MD. A User’s Guide to the Brain. New York: Pantheon Books, 2001.

When faced with a problem to solve, students in music and the arts produce more possible solutions, and their solutions are more creative, according to a nationwide study.
- N. M. Weinberger, “Arts Education Enhances ‘Real Life’ Personal Skills,” *MUSICA Research Notes*,
Spring 2000.