



## East Meadow Instrumental Music Program

Mr. Greg A. Williams, Director  
393 East State St, Granby, MA 01033  
<http://gwilliams.classdrive.net>



September

Dear Prospective Band Parent(s),

Thank you for taking the time to review some important information that could have a lasting impact on the future of your child. All parents are interested in providing the most advantageous opportunity for the welfare of their children; the following information may help you in that vitally important goal.

Each year East Meadow Elementary School offers the chance for every fourth grader (and some fifth graders) to participate in **Beginning Band**. We are very excited about our instrumental music program and eagerly look forward to this new group of budding young artists who will join this year's class of talented musicians. Please take the time to visit our website, listed above, and to complete and return the **PRE-REGISTRATION FORM** at the end of this packet.

You and your child are invited to join us for a brief informational meeting and beginning instrumental rental night on **Monday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30pm in the East Meadow Cafeteria**.

During this get-together, we will be discussing the various details concerning the initial steps in joining the band. Contrary to what many parents think, it is quite easy and very cost-effective to have every child enjoy this meaningful experience (based on flexible instrument rental programs, class lessons, band rehearsals scheduled just prior to school, and an atmosphere of cooperation). **Music For Everyone!** Staff from *Gerry's Music Shop* will also be onsite for assistance in instrumental rentals following our meeting. Your child should also have a rental packet from Gerry's Music Shop that you can review and begin to complete prior to the meeting.

Whether your child has or has not expressed an interest in playing an instrument, please join us, for it has been found that many people are unaware of the extended growth potential inherent in the study of music. Arts-related subjects have a positive impact on every area of study in school. Participating in band can offer your child a better understanding in all of his/her academic studies. Current research confirms **the study of music is one of the most effective tools to improve learning throughout a child's academic curriculum**.

One of the most positive impressions you can offer your child is the opportunity to learn self-discipline at the highest level via participation in band. Their social skills, communication skills, self-concepts, cooperative talents, and creative mind will all be nurtured through their study of music. These life-skills will serve as an important foundation as they take on various responsibilities in their future.

I will be answering your personal questions about our band program. I eagerly look forward to meeting you and offering further details as you make this crucial decision on behalf of your child's future. Unfortunately, we have found that the vast majority of students will not sign up for band if they have not taken advantage of the first enrollment registration. Therefore, if you cannot attend this meeting, please make an indication on the **Pre-Registration Form** and I will be delighted to call you or to arrange a personal meeting.

Thank you again for your time as we prepare to **Strike Up The Band** at East Meadow School with your child playing in the musical spotlight. These materials and additional resources can be found on the website listed above.

Musically yours,

Mr. Greg A. Williams

## The Beginning Band Instrumental Music Program

**COMMITMENT:** All students are asked to make a minimum one-year commitment to their instrument of choice. Only if for some physical reason, you or I feel that your child is having difficulty in succeeding on the instrument, I will be receptive to changing instruments.

Since I began directing the program in Granby, 40-45% of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students have enrolled in Beginning Band. We are very proud of this high participation rate compared to national average of 20-25%. In addition, 90% of beginners have successfully completed the first year and the retention rate for students joining the Junior High Band after 6<sup>th</sup> grade has been above 90%.

In the event you come to the conclusion that your child will not be continuing with the instrumental music program, please speak with Mr. Williams before committing to that decision.

**LESSONS:** All students are scheduled for a rotating half-hour pullout lesson each week during the school day between 8:30 and 11:00a. Each student is asked to bring his/her instrument, lesson book, and a working pencil to their lesson. If the student does forget, and no one is able to bring them to school in time, the student is still expected to come to the lesson. When a student does miss a lesson, the student should continue practicing the previously assigned lessons. All students must make up all classroom work missed during the half-hour lesson. This has usually not been a problem in the past.

The first lesson will be longer than a half-hour for some instrument groups. This is necessary to help the student get started properly.

**REHEARSALS:** On the first Tuesday or Thursday of February, the beginning instrumental students begin their band ensemble experience with rehearsals before school on both Tuesdays and Thursdays starting at 7:45am (they should arrive between 7:30a and 7:40a to be ready to start). These rehearsals are required along with the weekly scheduled lesson. Students may be dropped off or may ride the high school bus which will drop them off at East Meadow at approximately 7:30a.

**BAND CONCERTS:** The Beginning Band students will have an open rehearsal for parents on the first day of Beginning Band in February. Dress for this is regular school clothes.

The Beginning Band will have a demonstration at the end of the East Meadow Open House, usually scheduled for April. Dress for this event is regular school clothes.

The only formal concert this year for Beginning Band is scheduled for the last Wednesday of May at 7:00pm at the East Meadow Stage. All instrumental students are expected to perform and concert dress is expected – start planning now. Concert dress is Semi-Formal: boys: dress shoes and socks, slacks, and shirt (tie is optional) – Girls: dress, skirt and blouse, or slacks and blouse with dress shoes and socks or hose. Please no athletic sneakers, jeans, t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc. This is an important and special occasion in the students' lives.

**END OF THE YEAR MUSIC CELEBRATION:** The beginning band, advanced band and chorus students will have an after-school celebration on the last Thursday of May sponsored by the Granby Music Parents' Association.

**REGULAR PRACTICE (HOMEWORK):** The total weekly practice time as a beginner should not be less than 15 minutes on at least four days to start. By December, this amount should increase to 30 minutes. All students will succeed when they follow this daily practice schedule. Parents need to help their children meet this practice commitment. Practicing is the same as homework – it reinforces and solidifies concepts and materials presented during weekly lessons and band rehearsals. Students will receive a Home Practice Log to track their assignments, lesson days, and personal practice time.

## Beginning Band Registration Night Information

1. Families should attend this meeting whether they already have an instrument or plan to rent. The initial informational portion will be less than 30 minutes, at which time families who already have instruments are welcome to depart.
2. Families renting an instrument must first see me to register (parent and student) for your instrument of choice. Sometimes there are physical considerations and instrument limitations that I feel should be discussed prior to finalizing your choice.
3. Proceed to the Gerry's Music Shop tables to arrange for the instrument that you and I have agreed upon and the corresponding lesson book. The purchase of a music stand is also recommended and is sold at registration at a discounted price.

**RENTAL INSTRUMENTS:** Rented instruments will be delivered to me, as students should not attempt to play their instruments prior to their first lesson. Some instruments can be easily damaged and bad playing habits can be developed very quickly. Students will receive their rental instruments during their first lesson.

**OWNED INSTRUMENTS:** If you have an old instrument, especially a woodwind instrument that has been sitting around for a number of years, chances are it will not play properly without some repairs. Sometimes a woodwind instrument will play fine for a few days until the felt pads fail and then students have an instrument that no longer plays properly. I strongly recommend that you rent an instrument until your instrument can be evaluated for reconditioning. It is much easier for a beginner to start on a properly working instrument and, due to the large repair/reconditioning load in September/October, repair shops may not be able to have your instrument ready in time for lessons. **ALL STUDENTS MUST HAVE AN INSTRUMENT FOR THEIR FIRST LESSON THE LAST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER.** If you do use your own instrument, you will still need to purchase a method book - **Standard of Excellence, Book 1 – Enhanced Version.**

**INSTRUMENTATION** - The beginning band instruments are: flute, oboe (limited), clarinet, alto saxophone (limited), tenor saxophone (limited), trumpet, horn, trombone, baritone horn, and percussion [total percussion: bell kit with snare drum] (limited). It is extremely important that we achieve a proper balance of instrumentation, so please have a minimum of 3 choices of instruments. We need a lot of clarinets, trumpets, horns, trombones and baritones. Often too many students sign up for flute, saxophone and percussion – and honestly too many do not continue. Those who select horn, trombone, and baritone are in smaller lesson groups and tend to still be playing years later. Therefore we must limit the number of students beginning on these other instruments. Remember that all instruments provide the opportunity for musical experience, growth and fun!

**A special note regarding oboe and horn:** These two wind instruments are especially excellent choices for students who enjoy singing and welcome a special challenge. Some piano experience is also a great advantage, but is not mandatory.

**A special note regarding percussion:** Total Percussion is the most demanding instrument as student must learn both pitched (bells/xylophone) and non-pitched (snare, bass drum, cymbals, etc.) percussion instruments. Some piano experience is also a great advantage for pitched percussion, but is not mandatory.

### **FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BAND MEMBERS**

The Granby Public Schools have an outstanding band program, and it all begins at East Meadow Elementary School. The concert bands are the core of the band program. It meets at East Meadow School before the school day and in the Junior Senior High School during the school day. In the Junior Senior High School, band students have the opportunity to participate in the Jazz Ensemble, Basketball Pep Band, Solo and Ensemble Contests, Concert Band Adjudications, and the District and All-State Festivals for Band, Orchestra, and Jazz Ensemble. In March 2009 the Junior High Band will travel to Washington, D.C. to give a national music conference presentation with Mr. Williams. This wonderful future is waiting for you when you join the beginning band program!

## BEGINNING BAND PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

CHILD'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to receive Music Parent emails?  Yes  No

### INSTRUMENT CHOICE:

1<sup>ST</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>ND</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_

3<sup>RD</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_

**WOODWINDS:** flute, oboe (limited), clarinet, alto sax (limited), tenor sax (limited)

**BRASS:** trumpet, horn, trombone, baritone horn

**PERCUSSION:** total percussion (limited)

### MEETING ATTENDANCE:

\_\_\_\_\_ WE PLAN TO ATTEND THE RENTAL MEETING

\_\_\_\_\_ WE ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE MEETING, BUT WOULD LIKE A PHONE CALL FROM MR. WILLIAMS

### INSTRUMENT PLANS:

\_\_\_\_\_ WE PLAN TO RENT AN INSTRUMENT

\_\_\_\_\_ WE OWN AN INSTRUMENT (what instrument do you own \_\_\_\_\_)

### Please use this option only if absolutely necessary.

Although our schedule is designed to have the least impact on what students are missing (a special might only be missed a total of 1 hour during the year), there may be a few families **with specific academic areas of concern**. **After reviewing your child's morning class schedule** and discussing the impact of this rotating schedule, please indicate which classes and/or support services that your child should not miss for lessons. These missed lessons will not be made up and responsibility for attending these classes/supports instead of lessons is that of the student, not Mr. Williams or the classroom teacher. If you have a question, please leave a message for your child's teacher to discuss.

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer           | <input type="checkbox"/> Grammar          | <input type="checkbox"/> Language Arts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library              | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature Study   | <input type="checkbox"/> Math             | <input type="checkbox"/> Music         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Therapy | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Therapy | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | <input type="checkbox"/> SPED Support       | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech           | <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies       | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing            |   |  |

We have read, understand, and accept our responsibilities as outlined in the **Beginning Band Registration Materials** information. We believe that we are all responsible for making lessons, rehearsals, and performances run smoothly. We are willing to do our part!

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR CHILD'S HOMEROOM TEACHER NO LATER THAN  
Monday, September 18<sup>TH</sup> in the morning**