

View Ridge Elementary Music

The Goetz Gazette

Welcome to the May issue of the Goetz Gazette! This is your one stop shop for all things MUSIC at View Ridge Elementary School.

What are we up to in General Music?

1st Grade classes are continuing to develop their understanding of pitch and rhythm. We have been enjoying a variety of vocal warm-ups that include animal noises, composing musical shapes using string and even some stories with singing accompaniment. These past weeks we have been working on a few fun songs... "Down By the Bay" "Did You Ever See a Lassie?" and "No More Pie". Up till this point we have focused on whole class singing, but now we will be inviting students to sing solos in class using the songs that we have already learned. Research tells us that students learn best by singing by themselves, and this is a great chance for them to demonstrate their learning. Parents, be on the lookout for some upcoming homework assignments challenging students to sing a song they have learned for two adults!

2nd Grade classes are working on music literacy as they practice writing down what they hear using manipulatives, stick notation and eventually music on the staff. Students have been learning a variety of patterns using So, Mi and La. Now students are gearing up for their Cornerstone Assessment! Students will be using the skills they have been practicing writing rhythms and pitches to compose and perform their very own eight beat melody. We have also been enjoying a variety of songs such as ... "Down By the Bay" "Did You Ever See a Lassie?" and "No More Pie". Research tells us that students learn best by singing by themselves, and this is a great chance for them to demonstrate their learning. Parents, be on the lookout for some upcoming homework assignments challenging students to sing a song they have learned for two adults!

3rd Grade classes are in the middle of their recorder unit. Students have learned three notes, B, A and G on the staff along with the rhythms of a quarter note, half rest, half note and whole note. We are using a curriculum called Recorder Karate. Each song in the series gets progressively more challenging as students are required to develop their skills in music reading and performance. While playing a musical instrument such as the recorder, your student's brain is engaged in a variety of ways. When reading music notation they are **decoding** the symbols on the page and identifying patterns, utilizing the same skills they use when reading a book. They are engaging their **fine motor skills** by making precise finger movements on the instrument. They are also using applied math dividing note values into **fractions** of time such as whole notes (4 beats long) half notes (2 beats) and quarter notes (1 beat). While all this is happening they are also **self-assessing** their performance to identify and correct mistakes. Wow! Students earn a special colored "Belt" for each song they are able to perform, giving students a visual

reminder of their accomplishments and encouraging them to continue challenging themselves. All of these skills will prepare our 3rd grade students to start a Band or Orchestra instrument next fall as 4th graders. Please see below for info about the Instrument Petting Zoo at Eckstein in June! Students will get to choose which instrument they would like to play next fall.

4th Grade classes are in the middle of their recorder unit. Students have learned three notes, B,A and G on the staff along with the rhythms of a quarter note, half rest, half note and whole note. We are using a curriculum called Recorder Karate. Each song in the series gets progressively more challenging as students are required to develop their skills in music reading and performance. While playing a musical instrument such as the recorder, your student's brain is engaged in a variety of ways. When reading music notation they are **decoding** the symbols on the page and identifying patterns, utilizing the same skills they use when reading a book. They are engaging their **fine motor skills** by making precise finger movements on the instrument. They are also using applied math dividing note values into **fractions** of time such as whole notes (4 beats long) half notes (2 beats) and quarter notes (1 beat). While all this is happening they are also **self-assessing** their performance to identify and correct mistakes. Wow! Students earn a special colored "Belt" for each song they are able to perform, giving students a visual reminder of their accomplishments and encouraging them to continue challenging themselves. All of these skills are reinforcing what our Band, Orchestra and Guitar classes are learning in their individual lessons.

Here is a link to a short video that does a great job of explaining what kind of processing is happening inside our brains when we play a musical instrument. Check it out!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROJKCYZ8hng>

5th Grade classes are preparing to start their Cornerstone Assessment in which they will be asked to compose their very own song! Students will create a title, write lyrics and put the lyrics into a melody. We will be discussing what makes a catchy melody, how different melodies are structured and how to write down what is in our heads using music notation. Now that we have access to our recorders, students have an instrument to help them hear, sing and write melodies that are in an ideal vocal range for young children. Best of all, several lucky students might have their songs performed by our very own kindergarten classes at the Kindergarten Musical!

Upcoming Music Events...

June 13: Instrument Petting Zoo at Eckstein Middle School 6:00 PM

This event is for current 3rd grade students who are interested in playing a Band or Orchestra instrument next year. Students can try out a variety of instruments, make their first sound and decide what instrument they would like to play in the fall.

June 14: **Spring Concert** 7:00 PM

4th Grade and 5th Grade Band, Orchestra, Choir and Guitar

Instrumental Music (Band and Guitar)

Setting Up Good Habits...

As we return from Spring Break, it is an excellent time to recommit ourselves to forming good habits for success in Instrumental Music.

Daily, thoughtful practice on their instrument is an incredibly important part of the learning process. Here are some strategies that your student can use to maximize their practice time...

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Practicing your instrument does not have to be a burden or a chore! Your practice time can be turned into an exciting and productive activity that leaves you with feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction.

Practice regularly and consistently.

Practicing at a regular time for a sustained period 5-6 days per week is much better than practicing occasionally or the night before the test. When you practice you are establishing and developing habits of breathing, fingering, articulating, and music reading. These habits need daily reinforcement and maintenance. 20 minutes a day, 6 days a week is much better than two hours all in one session.

Have a specific time and place to practice.

Just as you would do with homework for your other classes, establish a regular time and place to practice. Practice in an area where you can avoid distractions and interruptions. Above all, make your practice time consistent and focused.

Practice makes permanent.

The old saying the “practice makes perfect” is *not* true! The reality is that *practice makes permanent*. If you practice mistakes, you will learn them and they will be difficult to fix. Remember that “perfect practice makes perfect!” Practice correctly without mistakes, even if that means going very, very slowly. When you make a mistake, mark it with a pencil immediately (ie: write the counting, fingerings, etc). **DO NOT PRACTICE MISTAKES**. It may take a few days to perfect something, but a patient, systematic approach will make your learning more lasting and will leave less to chance when it come time to perform.

Make something better.

Make sure that when you finish practicing, you can claim that some aspect of your music or technique is better than when you started. Making one thing better, then reinforcing it in the days that follow will produce better dividends than just running through things on “auto-pilot.”

Divide your practice time among the following areas.

1. **Warm-up:** around 5 minutes of long tones at the beginning of the book. Focus on breathing deeply and producing a beautiful TONE.
2. **Start with something familiar:** Start with something that you already know to get your brain and fingers moving and warmed up. Think note names, not just fingerings. Focus on TONE and remember the fundamentals... Am I sitting up straight? Am I using continuous air and taking good breaths? Is there any tension in my body that I can relax when I play?
3. **Weekly Assignment/Band Music:** Master your part. Find a spot you are struggling with and break it down into small chunks. Can you count it? Do you know all the fingerings? Can you sing it? Can you play it with a metronome? Work diligently to perfect the music, even at a slower tempo if necessary. Review, review, review!
4. **Solos and/or method books:** if you are studying privately, your teacher should be having you work from one or more books and/or solos. If you do not have a private teacher and would like some new things to practice, see me for suggestions!
5. **Review, warm-down, and clean instrument:** run-through any material that you worked on, warm-down with some long tones, and swab/clean the instrument as needed.

Remember.....the more you practice, the better you sound and the more fun it becomes to play. Besides, it's exciting to come to rehearsal knowing you can play the music!

Happy Practicing!

Mr. Goetz

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