How To Join the Band or Orchestra

- Fill out the Band and Orchestra registration form online at your school web site.
- Rent an instrument (see below).
- Pay the $40 fee for music & materials (pay this with your other D64 student fees when registering your child for school through the Infosnap system)
- Attend weekly classes scheduled during the school day. Band students also attend weekly rehearsals scheduled before or after school. Classes start the week of September 4, rehearsals begin in December or January.
- Practice for 20-30 minutes every day!

How to get an Instrument
Instruments for young musicians are designed with the following characteristics:
- String instruments are scaled to the correct size for young hands and fingers (be sure to bring your child to the music store when renting a string instrument to be fitted for the proper size).
- Brass instruments are made of thicker metal for durability and dent resistance.
- Clarinets and oboes are made of plastic instead of wood for durability and easier care.

Typical rental prices
$25 per month - violin, viola
$40 per month - cello, flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone
$55 per month - alto sax, oboe, string bass
$65 per month - baritone, French horn, xylophone (percussion)

These are real instruments, not toys, and they represent a significant investment for families. It is most common to rent these instruments from a music store that specializes in this service. Most stores will apply your rental payments toward purchase. It is important to note that instruments require occasional adjustment and maintenance to play properly. Be sure to rent your instrument from a store that will provide this service!!

It is terribly frustrating for a child to learn on an instrument that does not play properly. We recommend the following stores for rental, purchase, and service. Please take advantage of the maintenance/insurance option provided by these music stores, it is well worth it.

Quinlan & Fabish, Arlington Heights 847-253-5592
Music And Arts Centers, Itasca, 630-467-1077
Michael Becker Fine Violins, Park Ridge (violin, viola, cello only) 847-823-5490

If you already own the instrument your child will be using, please have it checked by a qualified repair shop before the first week of school. It is important that the instrument works properly for your child.

Additional items, which are essential for student progress, include a music stand ($16) and a care kit for your instrument ($15-$45, varies by instrument).

When does instruction take place?
Students receive 30 minutes of instruction per week during the school day to learn how to play the instruments. Instruction is delivered in small groups of similar instruments. Students are pulled from academic classes for this instruction. Students are responsible for making up class work missed during this time. Band and orchestra teachers work with classroom teachers to devise a schedule that works well for everyone.
Band students also attend weekly rehearsals before or after school, starting in December or January and continuing until May. Students work together as a team to learn the fundamentals of ensemble performance (this is in addition to their weekly lesson class).

**Beginning Band Rehearsals**

The Field/Franklin/Carpenter Beginning Band rehearses at Emerson Middle School on Thursdays from 3:50 - 4:45 - Parents are responsible for transportation to and from Emerson for these rehearsals (please keep these days in mind when scheduling other classes or activities).

The Roosevelt Beginning Band rehearses on Wednesdays 8:00 - 8:45 at Roosevelt.

The Washington Beginning Band rehearses on Thursdays 8:00 - 8:45 at Washington.

Students will be required to practice 20-30 minutes per day, 6 days per week in order to make adequate progress on their instrument. Without regular practice, steady improvement will not occur. All beginning students will participate in at least 2 evening concerts during the school year.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Can I Switch from Orchestra to Band?**

We recommend that students continue their progress in the orchestra program instead of switching to a band instrument in 5th grade. We suggest that parents evaluate the following factors if a child expresses a desire to switch:

- Why did the child initially choose the string instrument? Has this reason changed?
- Did the child establish a diligent daily practice routine?
- Did the child achieve a level of success that enabled him/her to enjoy playing the instrument?
- Would these factors change with a band instrument?

If the parent determines that switching from orchestra to band is the best thing for the child, this decision will be honored by the Instrumental Music Department.

**Can I Play in Both Orchestra and Band?**

Occasionally, highly motivated student musicians are successful in both band and orchestra. These are students who love to play, and are willing to put in the extra practice time required to master two instruments. District guidelines allow us to pull students from class only once per week for band or orchestra. Consequently, students in this situation must take private lessons on one instrument outside of the school day, and receive instruction on the other instrument in a weekly lesson from a District 64 Instrumental Music teacher during the school day.

**Are some instruments more difficult to play?**

Yes, some instruments pose additional challenges for the beginner:

- **Percussion** - Percussion students learn two instruments at once, the xylophone and snare drum. They also play the most complex rhythms, and are responsible for maintaining a steady musical pulse for the band. Percussion parts in band are rarely doubled, so just about everything played by a percussionist is a solo (on a loud instrument). To ensure success, all beginning percussionists are required to have one year of piano experience or perform a proficiency exam given by a band teacher. Drum set is **not** included in the regular band curriculum. The drum set is played by only a select few percussionists in our top groups. Only students who achieve a very high level of proficiency will have the opportunity to play drum set in band.

- **French Horn** – Young students sometimes have difficulty in differentiating the notes on French horn, because a very slight change in the lip formation will produce a different pitch. It is helpful if the beginning student is familiar with the piano so that he/she can use it as a reference to be sure the correct pitches are being produced on the horn.

- **Oboe** - The oboe is a sensitive and delicate instrument that requires great care and attention to detail. Oboe reeds are expensive, approximately $10 each, compared to about $2 for clarinet reeds. They break easily if the student is careless, but will last for weeks if cared for properly. If a student is interested in oboe we recommend that he/she starts on clarinet and switches after a year of study.

Consistent daily practice will make it feel easier to play any instrument; **“The easiest instrument to play is the one that is practiced every day, and the hardest instrument to play is the one that is rarely practiced.”**
Students may begin the study of these string instruments in 4th grade.

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**String Instruments**

**Violin**
The violin is the most well-known string instrument. It is also the smallest of all the strings and has the highest pitch.

**Viola**
The viola is slightly larger than the violin and has a deeper pitch in comparison. Its sound is warm, deep and powerful. It is in the "middle register" of the string family.

**Cello**
The cello is larger than the violin and viola. It has a beautiful, mellow sound. The cello must rest on the floor because it is too big to be held like the violin or viola.

**Bass**
The bass is the biggest instrument in the string section. It also plays the widest assortment of music, from classical to jazz. It is about 1 1/2 to 2 times taller than the cello. Whenever possible, District 64 will provide a bass to use at school so you don’t have to transport your rental instrument from home.
Students may begin the study of these band instruments in 5th grade. Name ____________________

Woodwind Instruments

The Flute embouchure* is produced by blowing a focused stream of air across the tone hole, similar to blowing across the top of a pop bottle. Start the sound by saying the word “pooh” followed by a steady stream of air. If the upper lip has a “cupid’s bow” or a dip in the center, it may split the air stream and make it difficult to get a sound on the flute. **We need 8 flutes in the band.**

The Clarinet embouchure* is formed by rolling the lower lip over the bottom teeth to form a cushion for the reed to rest on (be careful not to roll too much lip over the teeth). Do NOT do this with the upper lip - the top teeth touch the mouthpiece. Wrap the lips firmly around the mouthpiece and blow a steady stream of air. Fingers must be long enough to reach all keys and cover all holes. **We need 14 clarinets in the band.**

The Saxophone is played in a similar manner to the clarinet. It is important to be able to reach your pinky fingers around to contact all keys. **We need 4 saxophones in the band.**

Brass Instruments

The Brass instruments are played by blowing a steady stream of air through the lips with sufficient airspeed to cause them to vibrate. Notes are produced by adjusting lip tension and changing the length of the instrument. The trombone length is adjusted by using a hand slide. Other brass instruments use valves to divert the airstream to tubes of differing lengths.

The Trumpet embouchure* is produced by saying the word “em” and blowing a high-speed air stream through the lips, causing them to vibrate. Place the mouthpiece half on the upper lip and half on the lower lip. Aim for a buzz that sounds like a mosquito. **We need 12 trumpets in the band.**

To produce the Trombone embouchure*, bring the lips slightly forward by saying the word “prune,” then “em” and blow a high speed air stream through the lips. Place the mouthpiece 2/3 on the upper lip and 1/3 on the lower lip. Aim for a buzz that sounds like a bumble bee. **We need 10 trombones in the band.**

To form the French Horn embouchure*, place the rim of the mouthpiece on the lower lip, bring the lips together and blow a high speed air stream to cause them to vibrate. Notes on the French Horn are “close together”, which means that a very slight change in the lip formation will produce a different pitch. It is helpful if the beginning student is familiar with the piano so that he/she can use it as a reference to be sure the correct pitches are being produced on the horn. **We need 2 French Horns in the band.**

The Baritone is a small sized tuba and is played with the same embouchure* as the trombone. **We need 2 baritones in the band.**

Percussion Instruments

Percussion students learn two instruments at once, the xylophone and the snare drum. They also play the most complex rhythms, and are responsible for maintaining a steady musical pulse for the band. Percussion parts in band are rarely doubled, so just about everything played by a percussionist is a solo (on a loud instrument). To ensure a successful start, **all beginning percussionists are required to have one year of piano experience or perform a proficiency exam given by a band teacher. We need 6 percussionists in the band.**

*Embouchure is a French word for the lip formation used to play a musical instrument.
Recommended Percussion Equipment

Xylophone and snare drum are the two main instruments that percussion students study in band. A solid foundation on these instruments enables the percussionist to master all instruments that they are called upon to play. Traditionally, percussion students rented a bell kit to practice at home, since real xylophones were prohibitively expensive, and were not available on instrument rental plans. But now, most music stores offer a real xylophone in their instrument rental program. Percussion students can finally practice on a real instrument, just like their peers. Band teachers recommend the following equipment for beginning percussionists:

- Student Practice Xylophone (similar to the one pictured above)
- Snare Drum Practice Pad and stand
- Percussion Accessory Kit, which includes:
  - Fundamental Stick Bag
  - Drum Sticks Vic Firth SD1 General Jr
  - Musser M2 Mallet
  - Timpani Mallets Vic Firth T1 General
  - Yarn Mallets – Mike Balter Blue Medium Soft
  - Pitch Pipe F-F
Did you know ...

**Making music is fun.**
There’s nothing new about this assertion; people have known it since before recorded history. Making music brings people together, breaks down barriers and almost always leads to a good time. Playing really well can make you feel like you’re on top of the world. And even if you’re not brimming with talent, doing your best and even messing up occasionally is a lot more engaging than staring at the TV.

**Making music is good for the brain.**
Over the last decade, a series of new scientific studies has demonstrated a link between active music making—not just passive listening, but actually taking part—and increased brainpower. Students who make music show improved spatial-temporal reasoning, which is the foundation of later success in math and science. And they actually get better grades than students who don’t study music.

**Middle school and high school students** who participated in instrumental music scored significantly higher than their peers in standardized tests. University studies conducted in Georgia and Texas found significant correlations between the number of years of instrumental music instruction and academic achievement in math, science and language arts.

*Source: University of Sarasota Study, Jeffrey Lynn Kluball; East Texas State University Study, Daryl Erick Trent*

**College admissions officers** continue to cite participation in music as an important factor in making admissions decisions. They claim that music participation demonstrates time management, creativity, expression, and open-mindedness.


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**School District 64 Instrumental Music Department**

The mission of the District 64 Instrumental Music Department is to enable students to experience the joy of musical performance in a band or orchestra setting.

- **Brian Jacobi**
  Curriculum Specialist, Band Teacher, Washington and Lincoln

- **Eric Bachmann**
  Band Teacher, Emerson, Field, Carpenter and Franklin

- **Erica Faulhaber**
  Orchestra Teacher, Emerson, Field, Franklin, Carpenter

- **Max Hellermann**
  Orchestra Teacher, Lincoln, Washington, Field

- **Natalie Jacobsen Prim**
  Orchestra Teacher, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Washington

- **Alex Teater**
  Band Teacher, Emerson, Franklin, Field

- **Jamie Zimmio**
  Band Teacher, Lincoln, Washington, Roosevelt
Your child is invited to join the District 64 Band and Orchestra Program!

Sign up NOW for Fall instruction.

4th Graders may join the Orchestra and begin studying a string instrument such as the violin, viola, bass or cello.

5th Graders may join the band and begin studying a wind or percussion instrument such as the flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, baritone, or percussion.

Lessons are offered as part of the school curriculum. Beginning band and orchestra students pay a $40 fee for music and materials used in the program. Instruments may be purchased or rented through popular rent-to-own programs.

This week, your child will attend a school assembly showcasing the talents of our middle school band and orchestra musicians. It is a joy to see the faces light up when young students witness a live musical performance! Band and orchestra teachers will follow up with a visit to third and fourth grade classrooms next week to give your child an opportunity to try out band and orchestra instruments (instruments mouthpieces are sprayed with an alcohol based sanitizing spray designed specifically for this purpose before each student tries an instrument).

Consider giving your child a gift that can last a lifetime!

How To Join

If you already know how our program works and how to get an instrument, simply submit a registration form online at your school’s web site. If you are new to the program, plan to attend one of these registration events:

Thursday, May 10
4:00 – 7:00 P.M. at Emerson

or

Thursday, May 17
4:00 – 7:00 P.M. at Lincoln

You may drop in at any time on either night, but to control numbers it would be helpful if you follow this schedule:

Last Name A-H  4:00 - 5:00
Last Name I – P  5:00 - 6:00
Last Name Q – Z  6:00 - 7:00

Plan on spending about 30 minutes, depending on wait times. Parents and students should attend together. String students will be measured for the appropriate size instrument. Band students will have the opportunity to try the instruments, and parents will have the opportunity to learn about instrument rentals.

If you are not able to attend, please email Mr. Jacobi at bjacobi@d64.org to receive the registration information. Let us know which school you attend, what grade your child will be in next year, and which instrument you are considering.

What our former students say...

“I fell in love with music because of the incredible and passionate teachers in the District 64 instrumental music program. I eventually studied music at Northwestern University and have traveled internationally for my career at WFMT. After sharing my musical upbringing with countless friends and colleagues, I’ve recognized how truly blessed I am to have received an exemplary music education in my formative years.”
- Michael San Gabino, Associate Producer and Host of Introductions at WFMT, Lincoln Middle School Class of 2005

“Music has made a significant difference in my life. Without band I would not have half of the friends, leadership opportunities or scholarship chances that I have had since I started playing in fifth grade.”
- Ashley Jasinowski, College Student, Lincoln Middle School Class of 2002

“The musical foundation I received in the District 64 Band program enabled me to launch a career that has included performances with The Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The St. Louis Symphony, and The Houston Grand Opera. Through music, I learned discipline and persistence, which helped me to develop stronger academic skills as well.”
- Colleen Mathieu, Professional Musician, Lincoln Jr. High Class of 1994

"My start in music with District 64 has ended up taking me all over the globe, paying for over half my college tuition, and has given me something I’m passionate about to do with my life. Everyone should seize the opportunity to see where music will take them.”
- Brittany Lasch, Professional Trombonist, Emerson Middle School Class of 2002