

Hello Meadowbrook Community!

I wanted to sincerely welcome everyone back to another wonderful school year! It was so great to see so many familiar faces walking in my door again on the first week of school, and I'm very excited for all the musical opportunities that we have coming this school year. It was also great to welcome so many new faces within the music room, and I promise, eventually, to learn everyone's names. I tend to be really bad at names, but I definitely remember faces well.

While I am the full time music teacher at Meadowbrook, this year there have been some changes for specials teachers across the district. So, this school year I will also be teaching the 4th and 5th grades at Hawthorne Elementary in the mornings. Because of this schedule change, Mrs. Barry and I sat down to better adjust Meadowbrook's concert schedule to what my schedule entails this year. The biggest thing that has changed is that the 5th grade will not have a stand-alone concert in March, but rather will have the entire Veteran's Day Program to themselves (which we are expanding more than it was last year). Because of this change and to make things fair to our current 5th graders, we are also expanding the number of songs that they sing at their 5th grade celebration. Which, in the past, were only about two songs from their previous concert. Instead we will learn some fresh songs for the celebration that the students might have some say in the selection. For everyone else, the concert schedule has stayed mostly the same. 3rd and 4th grades will perform the holiday concert in December, 1st and 2nd grades will have their own concert in mid-February, and kindergarten will get their own small concert around April/May.

As for what we have currently been doing in music, I've mainly been reviewing classroom procedures and expectations with them. I'm hoping to start some rhythm units with several grade levels soon, but mainly I've been obtaining a feel for how much music knowledge has been retained over the summer months.

We were also asked within our first letter to explain our classroom behavior management system, as parents with children in multiple different grade levels often get confused between expectations. Thankfully for all of you, my behavior management system stretches the same across the board... from kindergarten to 5th grade. It also hasn't changed much from last year, but I'll try to explain it as simple as possible. Each class I pick two helpers, and I keep track in a binder to make sure every student gets an opportunity to be one. Within class I have a traffic light with the goals of coming in/lining up, listening, and effort. I judge these goals as a class and not individualizing students. If the goals are going good then they stay on green, but if they are not they can move to yellow or red. Green means they earn a point, yellow is a warning, and red means they lose the point. The number of points at the end of music is the number of times the helpers and I roll dice to move farther on Super Mario Music World game board (last year the board was called Music Town). The students were particularly excited about my new game board because it has a lot more twists to it than last year and it is Super Mario themed. Each class is earning their way through the game board, and when they reach the end their class earns a celebration in music. Please let me know if you have any questions about my behavior management system or anything else music related.

Thank You!

Mr. Brian Falk

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