

**Upper Perkiomen School District
Elementary Instrumental Music Program
Instrument Sign-up Letter**

Dear 3rd, 4th and 5th Grade Parent or Guardian:

WELCOME!

Your child will attend a musical instrument demonstration this week! Each year at this time, students eagerly await the opportunity to join the instrumental program. The study of music could be one of the most valuable steps in your child's education. Current research shows that playing an instrument for at least two years increases brain development and – along with developing responsibility, mental discipline, teamwork and self-esteem – will provide enjoyment while fostering a lifelong appreciation of music and other arts.

STEP 1 – EXPLORE INSTRUMENTS

It is important that you and your child put some serious thought into this decision. It is a decision that could impact your student for a lifetime!

If your child is not sure what each instrument looks or sounds like, the internet can be a useful tool. Check out the list of sites below:

#1) www.dsokids.com (click on the "Listen" tab at the top of the page)

#2) YouTube – type instrument name and explore videos

STEP 2 – SIGN UP

If your child is interested in playing an instrument...

[Please click here to sign up to play an instrument.](#)

The sign-up form should be completed by all beginning *and* returning instrumental students. Please sign up by Friday, September 20th.

STEP 3 – INSTRUMENT TEST DRIVE

Mr. Bennett will give each *beginning* student who has completed the sign up the opportunity to take a test drive on the instruments to verify their decision. ***Instrument choice and instrument size (stringed instruments) will be determined during the test drive.*** Please do not order an instrument until the test drive is complete.

STEP 4 – GET AN INSTRUMENT, MUSIC STAND & BOOK

Interested students will need to supply their own instrument, music stand and lesson book. Instruments can be rented or purchased from local music stores or borrowed from family and friends. ***Your child will bring home the ordering details after their test drive.*** If you would rather purchase an instrument, purchases should be made from local music stores. Purchases made from the internet are attractive, but are risky and often counterproductive.

STEP 5 – ATTEND INSTRUMENT RENTAL NIGHT – Tuesday, October 22nd, Zeswitz Music Store in Reading will conduct a meeting on **Tuesday, October 22nd at 7:00PM in our HIGH SCHOOL auditorium.** Mr. Bennett will answer questions about requirements and expectations of the elementary instrumental program. Zeswitz representatives will be available to deliver instruments to families who have already ordered them on-line and to assist those who still need to obtain an instrument. **Beginning** students and their parents must plan to attend this informative gathering. (2nd and 3rd year students and their parents are not required to attend).

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

3rd grade students, who would like to play an instrument this year, must choose a **stringed** instrument (violin, viola or cello). 4th & 5th grade students may choose either a band or stringed instrument.

Please visit the [Zeswitz Music](#) website for information on instrument rental pricing and benefits. Mr. Bennett will provide detailed instructions (including stringed instrument sizing) once we've met with your child for the test drive of instruments so that you can proceed with obtaining the instrument, lesson book, and music stand.

Attitude and commitment! Your child needs encouragement and support in this new venture. This is a **commitment for the entire school year**. Establish a practice routine during the first week of lessons. The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities - make home practice a priority. Your student will receive a ½ hour group lesson once every 5 days on their assigned day number until the end of the school year. Encourage attendance to all lessons in addition to supporting home practice. Lessons will begin shortly after our Zeswitz meeting (which will be held on Tuesday, October 22nd).

We are anxiously looking forward to working with Upper Perk's energetic elementary musicians again this year! We hope to meet you on Tuesday, October 22nd at the Zeswitz instrument night in the high school auditorium.

Sincerely,

Mr. Brandon Bennett
Elementary Band & Orchestra Director
bbennett@upsd.org
[Mr. Bennett's teacher page](#)
(215) 679-6288



[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP TO PLAY AN INSTRUMENT THIS YEAR!](#)

Upper Perkiomen School District Elementary Instrumental Music Program An Overview

- Lessons -** Lesson schedules will be determined once all instrument requests have been processed. Students will have one ½ hour group lesson during the school day in each 5-day cycle (always on the same day number). The lesson timetable will rotate so that students are pulled from different subjects.
- Concert -** Our elementary winter concert for experienced students only will be held on Tuesday, January 21st, 2020. Our spring concerts, which will include both beginners and advanced students, will be held during our Arts Week in May 2020. All concerts begin at 7PM and will be held in the new Upper Perkiomen Middle School auditorium. All instrumental students are required to perform.
- Practice -** Students are required to practice a minimum of 15 minutes per day, 5 days a week. In order to be successful on their instrument, a student must establish a consistent practice ritual in a quiet area of the house.
- Assignments -** Students will be given weekly playing assignments. Written assignments will be given periodically throughout the year.
- Feedback -** At the end of January, and again at the end of the school year, students will receive an instrumental progress report.
- Instrument -** Best rule for instrument care...don't leave your instrument anywhere that you would not want to be! For example, staying in a hot car in the summer would be harmful to you – it will also damage your instrument!
- Parents -** **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE MUSICAL TO HELP YOUR CHILD.** Students are very excited in the beginning of this new venture but will need your help and encouragement. The sooner your family establishes expectations and a practice schedule (maybe make it part of homework time), the easier it will be to maintain your child's interest. A student who wants to practice is rare, but a student who knows practice is "non-negotiable" will put up much less of a fight when the initial excitement wears off. Stay involved. Ask questions like "What did you learn in lessons today?" or "Can you play something for me?" Encourage your child to play for you and others. Avoid any statements that include the word "quit." Children will interpret these statements as a lack of support for them and will quickly lose motivation to play. Think of this as a long-term commitment. Remember that being involved in the music program can make a remarkable difference in your child's overall school experience!
- Students -** Stay positive! You CAN do it! Take one step at a time! Have fun!
- Family -** The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities (Steven R. Covey). Talent is never enough. With few exceptions, the best players are the hardest workers (Magic Johnson). We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit (Aristotle).