**Manheim Central School District**

**Music Department**

**Mr. John Brackbill, Director of Bands, MCHS; Beginning Band Director, MCSD**

**Mrs. Alicia Brackbill, Beginning Orchestra Director, MCSD**

**Mr. Alden Hoke, Beginning Orchestra Director, MCSD**

September 15th, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians of

Greetings! We hope you and your family are well and thriving in our new normal. We are so excited at the prospect of working with your child this school year as they begin learning to play a band/orchestra instrument.

To give you an idea of what to expect from the 4th grade instrumental program, each child who elects to play an instrument will receive a 25-minute, small group lesson (**maximum of 4 students per group**) weekly throughout the year beginning in late September or early October. Students will be grouped by like instruments, but group days/times may change to ensure every student has a maximum chance of growth.

Students will receive a lesson schedule that communicates their lesson time and cycle day. Communication will also be made via Schoology and e-mail to help your students come to lesson regularly and experience success! In the spring, all of the 4th grade band and orchestra students from both elementary schools will join together for a combined concert, **or alternate performance experience** TO BE DETERMINED. This is an exciting experience for all involved, and really gives us a chance to show you what we’ve been working on all year!

In the days ahead, we will be meeting with your students to determine a “best fit” instrument for them based on their interests and their abilities to produce the rudimentary “beginning sounds” on an instrument. **We will be following strict COVID-19 protocols to ensure that any instrument a student comes in contact with has been thoroughly sanitized.**

While the school district does have a VERY limited supply of instruments available for use, these are reserved first for families with the greatest financial need. We recommend that students contact local music stores such as Menchey Music Service in Lancaster about “rental” or “rent-to-own” instruments. These instruments are generally in new or like-new condition, and geared towards student use. In most cases, stores will have a trial period where the regular monthly fee (or similar) amount covers the first 3-4 months of rental. If you are interested in one of the above programs, please contact me via e-mail and I will make sure you receive the necessary information! Flyers for these programs will also be sent home with your child.

Additionally, Menchey Music can bring rented instruments directly to the schools to reduce additional traveling and contact.

If you are interested in purchasing an instrument, please don’t hesitate to consult a music store or myself! The rental or lease programs as detailed above allow students the opportunity to try-out and use a ***quality*** beginner instrument. Oftentimes buying the least expensive instrument from the Internet can hinder student success and end up costing much more in repair and maintenance than the value of the instrument. I am happy to help you in this process!

In addition to their instruments, all BAND students will need the **“Sound Innovations”, Book 1** that matches their instrument; ORCHESTRA students will need the **Essential Elements, Book 1**that matches their instrument . Families may also choose to purchase a foldable wire music stand for home practice. Both the lesson book and music stands can be purchased at any local music store.

I know this is a lot of information to receive at once! If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact us via email (brackbillj@manheimcentral.org; brackbilla@manheimcentral.org; hokea@manhiemcentral.org). The instrumental music department will also be sending out helpful information through email blasts to the account you have provided myself and the district.

We look forward to working with you and your child this year! Their school lessons combined with your encouragement to practice daily at home will give them the foundation for an enjoyable and rewarding instrumental music experience!

Musically yours,

John Brackbill

Alicia Brackbill

Alden Hoke

Beginning Band and Orchestra Staff

Manheim Central School District