

Dear Parents of SnoSprings School Music Students,

It has been my pleasure to teach music for the past **33** years. I have taught pre-school through college level courses as well as private lessons and have thoroughly enjoyed these varied experiences. It is my greatest joy to work with elementary students and to show them that music is not only for the talented but for everyone. There's a wonderful quote from English professor and lyricist Henry Van Dyke that says, "Use the talents you possess, the woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best." This is my belief.

Building music confidence in young people reaps rewards that are not limited to music alone but extend to all aspects of a growing life. My college education and level I Orff certification have influenced me to teach music using an experiential approach. Speech begins the process, and through rhythmic speech, students find note and rest values, expression, form, and creativity. This ultimately leads to melodic exploration and performance. Students take the knowledge they have learned through music and apply it to new situations leading to higher level thinking skills.

In a 30-minute class of very young people, many reluctant to be heard, there is no time to waste, so students are actively engaged as they walk into the classroom. I capture their attention by immediately involving them in music activities that pique their curiosity. The learning in music class goes far beyond music and covers the vast spectrum of elementary education.

Students make 'presentations' in the form of singing, dancing, or playing a musical instrument in front of their classmates, and at performances in front of their parents. These presentations and the discipline from practicing, builds self-confidence in each student. We constantly study, reinforce and learn skills and techniques that will enhance learning in all of the non-music subjects:

- ? The mathematical relationships of learning the note values teach fractions,
- ? Reading is reinforced through singing lyrics and reading music.
- ? We study the science of sound through vibrations, sound waves, timbre, and overtones.
- ? They are physically active, learning timing, movement and coordination.
- ? They study music notation and learn to write music!

My music class is one where students aren't afraid to try and fail because it is sometimes in those failures that the most creativity happens. Music students do not progress at the same rate therefore all students are expected to encourage those that are finding it difficult. Many times their peers are the best teachers. We never use words like "that was easy" because developing musical skills takes hard work, dedication and perseverance.

Criteria for achievement is based on a philosophy that everyone can and will participate and everyone can and will succeed. Assessment of a student's success in music class is based on:

- ? Mutual respect
- ? Participation in class
- ? Effort and progress
- ? Testing
- ? Encouragement of others

I am constantly amazed and taught by my students. It is their creativity and interests that leads me to new adventures with them and a mutual respect for what we do together in the music classroom. It will be my joy to work with your students this year as we "use the talents we possess" and begin to develop them to the best of our abilities.

Sincerely,
Connie Policar