

General Music at Graham Road Elementary

All students, Kindergarten through Sixth Grade receive General Music instruction twice a week with music specialist, Mr. Jake Harkins. In General Music, students develop skills in singing, movement, instrument playing, improvising, creating, composing, music listening, music notation, and understanding cultural connections through music.

Graham Road offers opportunities for students to participate in a Strings Elective (4th, 5th, 6th) with Ms. Taryn McCormick, or Band Elective (5th, 6th) with Ms. Linda Davidson, and/or Chorus Elective (5th, 6th) with Mr. Jake Harkins.

Kindergarten Music classes highlight activities such as song games from around the world, circle folk dances, vocal exploration, and fundamental rhythmic and pitch study using instruments such as drums, rhythm sticks, and tone chimes. Music literacy begins with experiences that take movement as an embodiment of sound and symbol system, and students track and scribe musical form using music maps to capture clusters and phrases of musical sound. Musical forms (ABA, short short long, balanced), are notated to solidify connections between repertoire and experiences between movement, singing, and instruments. Social emotional learning skills, including invitations, turn taking, sharing, collaboration, and communication are at the forefront of each music lesson.

First Grade and Second Grade music continues to build on the skills planted in Kindergarten. A more complex movement vocabulary is developed including double line set folk dances. Students begin exploration and melodic study on the barred instruments (xylophones) and simple pentatonic folk song melodies. Students create and perform rhythmic pieces on unpitched percussion instruments. They explore improvisation techniques with movement, rhythm, and melody. Second grade students begin to experience more complex musical forms such as canons/rounds with singing, movement, and instruments.

Third Grade and Fourth Grade music continues to build on the skills from Kindergarten, First Grade, and Second Grade. In General Music classes, students improvise, create, and compose (notation) their music ideas, as well as perform them for one another. Students develop a growing complexity in movement vocabulary including concentric circle partner folk dances and create movement pieces with partners, and square dances in small groups using established movement vocabulary. Students study increasingly complex melodies in song, literacy notation, and instruments, including the 7 modes (*Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, and Locrian*). Instrumental opportunities expand, as Third Graders learn melodies and chords on the ukulele, and Fourth Graders may take a Strings Elective—learning violin, viola and cello.

Fifth Grade and Sixth Grade music continues to build on the skills from Kindergarten, First Grade, Second Grade, Third Grade and Fourth Grade. In General Music classes, students study a variety of folk songs from around the world, such as Sea Shanties and Lullabies, and songs in other languages such as Spanish, French, German, Norwegian, Zulu (South Africa), and Ewe (Ghana), to name a few. Students explore cultural connections from around the world,

through song, dance, and play. Complex movement vocabulary, including the 8 Laban Efforts (glide, float, etc.), levels, pathways, direction, and choreography are explored with folk dances, and movement with music from around the world and various time periods. Students compose movement pieces with partners and in small groups. Students discover the evolution of music notation from line maps, pictographs, and song dots (Kinder, First, Second grade), through bridge and blended notations (Third, Fourth Grade), to Traditional Music notation on a five-line staff (Fifth, Sixth Grade). Functional Harmony is explored using triads on the barred instruments, and students create, compose, and notate their own rhythmic and melodic compositions.

Fifth and Sixth Grade students may continue their elective strings study, or switch to Band (trumpet, flute, etc.). They may also choose to take the Chorus (singing) elective. Some Sixth Grade students receive up to 5 days a week of music experiences! These ensembles--Strings (4th, 5th, 6th), Band (5th, 6th), Chorus (5th, 6th), and Percussion (4th, 5th, 6th) perform in an annual Spring Concert for the school and community.