
FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

DATE: March 8, 2022

TO: Karen Melin, Chief School Administrator

FROM: Kate LaPlaunt, Assistant Superintendent

SUBJECT: Proposed Plans for Stabilizing Instrumental and Choral Music

Music Instruction in 2021-2022

For the 2021-2022 school year, instrumental and choral music instruction has been offered, in various capacities, at all elementary, middle and high schools across the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. At the request and support of the FNSBSD Board of Education, the plan for this year was to offer all 5th and 6th grade students enrolled in neighborhood schools the opportunity to take band or orchestra. To accomplish this, the plan was for 6.4 itinerant teachers, and as many general music teachers as possible, to provide instrumental music instruction, twice a week, for approximately 30 minutes.

Unfortunately, due to a variety of factors, we started this year with three general music vacancies, leaving hundreds of students without access to their general music curriculum. The difficult but necessary decision was made to move three (3.0) of the District Wide instrumental teachers into these vacant positions and further spread out the remaining itinerant teachers. The end result is that we are doing the bare minimum in regards to introducing 5th and 6th grade students to band and orchestra and this is only working because of the dedication of our general music teachers.

Sustainability and Success

It has been an ongoing goal to design and staff a district wide music program that builds as the students progress, and allows students to continue with their music interests from elementary school, through middle school and onto high school. In recent years, a disappointing trend has become quite apparent. The students in our district have invested time, money, and effort to be introduced to band or orchestra in elementary school, go into middle schools where they overwhelmingly do not continue with their musical education. A very simple factor is making a large impact, as in our current model most middle school students are only afforded one (1) elective per quarter.

The hope for music teachers is that students will choose to take band or orchestra all year long as their one elective. The reality is that many students want to try other things, including STEM, technology, video production, ELP, or art, and they do not end up taking two full years of music. The high school programs feel the effects of this, because over the years fewer students have been

choosing to continue music education in the high schools. This sets up a slow decline which over time has contributed to a reduction of music course offerings at all our high schools.

In order to build a strong music program, the system must support and provide access to music instruction at every stage. Music teachers agree that strengthening the middle school music programs will help build back stronger high school programs. An important step is to increase the number of electives offered at middle schools so that students may universally choose two (2) electives each quarter. This would allow students to select a music course and still try out other courses of great interest. The result would allow students three (3) years of quality music instruction with lessons averaging 50-minutes per day, for 4 or 5 days a week, prior to going to high school.

With all the other changes happening in our district, this is the perfect opportunity to infuse our middle schools with more opportunities. Already, with the addition of the 6th grade student, we will see more staff, and greater flexibility in scheduling. It is the position of the district, and music teachers, that middle schools and high schools should be on the receiving end of the district wide music teacher allocations, to create a sustainable and successful music program that builds and grows along with our students.

Fiscal Responsibility

This proposed program is not only the most effective way to reach the most students, it is also the most fiscally responsible option. The plan involves reallocating building specific FTE to a District Wide Music Program, and adding in approximately 6.0 FTE from the district to create a cohort of 13.5 FTE. These District Wide Instrumental and Choral teachers would work within their area of specialty and serve students at multiple schools. In several cases, teachers would be able to begin working with middle school students within their feeder school systems, allowing them to build their programs starting with 6th graders.

Support for Beginning Students

In my years working with music teachers, I have come to understand and appreciate the complexities of introducing a student to an instrument for the first time. Many band and orchestra teachers have explained how time intensive it is to personalize the instruction so that a student experiences success instead of frustration with their chosen instrument. To address this issue, and ensure that all beginning students feel supported, there is an additional option to allocate 2.0 FTE to hire a band and orchestra specialist teacher. These two teachers would focus their time initially on beginning middle school band and orchestra students, providing support, some 1:1 or small group instruction, and generally helping get the students to a place where they can benefit from large group instruction. Second semester they would partner with general music teachers at the elementary schools and spend several weeks at each school introducing 5th grade students to band and orchestra instruments. The addition of two teachers, one band specialist and one orchestra specialist, would ensure that all elementary students were provided an equal opportunity to make an informed decision as they head into middle school. Students would then see those same specialists the next fall as they begin Band or Orchestra, further establishing that our instrumental music program is designed to offer support to all students who wish to further their music education.

2022-2023 Music Programs

SCHOOL LEVEL	GRADE LEVELS	MUSIC OFFERINGS
Elementary Students	PreK - 5th Grade	General Music
Middle Schools	6th, 7th, & 8th Grade	Band, Orchestra, Choir, Guitar, etc.
High Schools	9th, 10th, 11th, & 12th Grade	Band, Orchestra, Choir, Jazz Band, Steel Drums, Guitar, Jazz Choir, etc.

STAFFING	BUDGET SOURCE	FTE and ESTIMATED COST	
OPTION 1 - as in 2022-2023 Proposed Budget			
Embedded in Middle School and High School FTE		7.5 FTE (at no additional cost to the district)	
CARES II/III FY23 Proposed Budget		3.0 FTE	\$354,000
OPTION 2 - Enhanced 6th-12th Grade Music			
FTE to support District Wide Music 6th - 12th			
CARES II/III FY23 to increase MS electives & music		3.0 FTE	\$354,000
OPTION 3			
Additional FTE to support Introduction for 5th and 6th Grade			
Specialist support for beginning Band and Orchestra students in grade 6, 1st Semester, and grade 5, 2nd Semester.		2.0 FTE	\$236,000
<i>(We recommend adding this option in the future as funding becomes available.)</i>			

Additional information

In response to information requested by the Board, rebuilding District Wide Band and Orchestra for 4th and 5th grade students at the elementary school level requires 9.6 FTE, at a cost of \$1,250,800. This would rebuild a model that allows for .3 Band and .3 Orchestra to each elementary school, with .1 being used for travel.

16 (schools) x .333 (band) = 5.33 FTE
 16 (schools) x .333 (orch) = 5.33 FTE
 Total = 10.6 FTE

CARES II/III FY23 Proposed Budget - Revised

Feb 10, 2022

\$15,092,814 Total CARES funds remaining
\$10,604,302 Proposed FY 23 Expenditures

\$4,488,512 Under/over remaining funds

<u>FTE</u>	<u>Total cost</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Department</u>
30.0	\$3,460,770	Classroom teachers	Regular Instruction
1.0	\$121,060	DW activity coordinator	
36.0	\$1,540,000	Elementary math and literacy teaching assistants	
5.0	\$215,000	MS math and literacy teaching assistants	
5.0	\$215,000	Charter math and literacy teaching assistants	
0.5	\$59,000	CTE Teacher	Regular Instruction
1.0	\$88,780	Recruiting tech	Human Resources
4.0	\$555,280	Nurse managers	Health Services
3.0	\$354,000	DW music	Middle School
1.0	\$128,325	System administrator	Technology
	\$430,000	eLearning licenses(secondary)	Alternative Programs
4.0	\$472,000	eLearning teachers (elementary)	Alternative Programs
2.0	\$236,000	eLearning teachers (secondary)	Alternative Programs
	\$120,000	DW art support	Teaching & Learning
7.0	\$881,468	Maintenance positions	FMD
	\$267,902	Summer school	SpEd
	\$38,920	Let's Talk	Communications
0.4	\$110,000	CEC Lease/Custodial	Alternative Programs
18.0	\$780,966	Teaching Assistants (Kindergarten)	Elementary
1.0	\$144,500	Sys Admin 2	Technology
0.5	\$53,519	SSM	Student Support Services
2.0	\$331,812	Asst Principals (HS)	Senior High School
121.4	\$10,604,302	Totals	