

# Join Orchestra Today!

Courtney Mathern  
courtney\_mathern@bismarckschools.org

Sierra Poitra  
sierra\_poitra@bismarckschools.org

James Taverna  
james\_taverna@bismarckschools.org

Dana Van Heukelom  
dana\_vanheukelom@bismarckschools.org

Hello from the BPS Elementary Orchestra Team!

The moment you have been waiting for is finally here-it's time to sign up for 5th grade orchestra! This is more than just a music class-it's an incredible opportunity for students to dive into the world of music, build new skills, and get a head start for middle school and beyond. Whether your child dreams of playing on stage or simply wants to try something new, this is their chance to be a part of something truly special!

Step 1:

Choose your instrument! Students can choose a violin, viola, cello or bass to play next year. Each instrument is fun and challenging in its own way. All 4th graders had the opportunity to try out each instrument, to get a feel for each one.

Register Here:



Step 2:

Register for orchestra! You can return the paper for to your child's classroom teacher, or sign up online by using the QR code to the left.

Step 3:

Visit our local music stores (Eckroth Music [www.eckroth.com](http://www.eckroth.com), Arioso Music Academy [www.ariosomusicacademybismarck.com/](http://www.ariosomusicacademybismarck.com/)) and pick out your instrument. Each business offers competitive pricing and have starter kits with everything you need. Bass will be rented through the school. If you are unable to afford an instrument, we have a limited supply of instruments through our Share the Music program, for students who qualify. Please contact your child's orchestra teacher for information.

More Info:

No doubt you will have a bunch of questions. On the back, you'll find a list of Frequently Asked Questions, but please reach out to your teacher with any specific questions. Your classroom teacher (and maybe even your child) will know who your orchestra teacher is.

Mission:

The BPS orchestra mission is "To strive for excellence and serve the community." Music is about more than music. It's about growth, expression, responsibility, dedication, patience, mental health, team work and so much more. Studies constantly prove that studying music is one of the best ways to guarantee success in school for all children. Give orchestra a try. This could be your child's "thing."

### **How much does Orchestra cost?**

-The only cost for orchestra is the instrument. The classes, concerts and camps are all free! You're welcome ;). We highly recommend renting an instrument from one of our local dealers. They only sell quality instruments that will help your child be successful. They will also cover any maintenance the instrument will need (strings will break...) You will find cheap instruments online (especially the funky colored instruments). PLEASE don't buy these; you get what you pay for and these instruments will lead to frustration and unhappiness. The price of a violin rental is about \$1 a day (a little more for cello). If price is a problem, contact your orchestra teacher and we will help you find something that works.

### **When does Orchestra meet?**

-Each orchestra meets for 2, 1/2 hour classes a week (1 hour total). 90% of the time, orchestra is part of the normal school day for your children (between 8:45-3:00 M-F). Depending on school schedules, some schools may have orchestra before school (7:30 or 8:00 am), but we do our best to try and avoid this because 1. It is harder for the students to be successful and 2. It creates a lot of transportation issues for families (especially bus riders). If you think transportation is going to be an issue, please contact your orchestra teacher and check the schedule. We will do everything in our power to make orchestra work for your family, so let us know what you need.

### **Are there concerts? How many? When? Where?**

-We have 2 "mandatory" concerts a year (Covid permitting). One in December and one in May. The locations vary, but are usually at your child's future middle school or high school and happen in the early evening (7:00ish). There are also a handful of optional performance opportunities throughout the year (festivals, contests, etc.). These are certainly encouraged, but never mandatory. Try one out, if you like it, do some more and if it doesn't work for you, it's not a big deal. Some of the extra opportunities have a small cost, but scholarships are available based on need.

### **Does my kid have to practice?**

-Yep, but don't be afraid. We do our best to make practicing fun and very manageable. We hope parents will encourage their child to practice, but we don't want it to be a fight (don't force it). Hopefully, your child will enjoy playing and will have fun playing our practice games we send home. Your job as the parent is just to encourage. We will send home practice tips for both students AND parents throughout the year so it stays fun and positive.

### **What if my kid hates it?**

-That's not possible! Ok, to be honest, it happens. Orchestra is not for everyone, but the vast majority of the kids have a great time and learn a lot. Here's the rule, you sign up for 1 year at a time. If your child is miserable, they can quit at the end of any school year, BUT we believe part of our job is to teach kids to finish what they start. There will be days when orchestra isn't fun (because it is also hard). We need parents to encourage their kids to keep trying and to do their best. Part of that is sticking with it when the going gets tough. By the end of the year, your child will be a part of an amazing concert that they (and you) will be proud of. We want all of our students to experience that thrill as well as the sense of accomplishment they will have when they overcome the challenges they face.

### **I don't know the first thing about music. What if my kid stinks at this?**

-Let's call it what it is...it's beginner orchestra...they will all stink at this...AT FIRST. You will be surprised at how quickly "kringing cat sounds" start to turn into recognizable music. If you are not a "musical" person, this is the perfect opportunity to learn. Let your child teach you to play. It's great for both of you. There will be moments when you wish the sound would stop, but all of a sudden, you'll hear something you recognize and then you'll never look back.

### **Other questions?**

-Contact your orchestra teacher:

Solheim, Moses, Prairie Rose, Myhre, Will-Moore - Dana Van Heukelom [dana\\_vanheukelom@bismarckschools.org](mailto:dana_vanheukelom@bismarckschools.org)

Highland Acres, Roosevelt, Grimsrud, Lincoln, Centennial- James Taverna [james\\_taverna@bismarckschools.org](mailto:james_taverna@bismarckschools.org)

Sunrise, Murphy, Pioneer, Silver Ranch- Courtney Mathern [courtney\\_mathern@bismarckschools.org](mailto:courtney_mathern@bismarckschools.org)

Elk Ridge, Miller, Liberty, Northridge: Sierra Poitra. [sierra\\_poitra@bismarckschools.org](mailto:sierra_poitra@bismarckschools.org)