

**DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
Wilmette Public Schools**

INFORMATION ITEM

Date: February 25, 2019

To: Members, Board of Education

From: **Katie S. Lee**
Administrator for Curriculum & Instruction

Kelly Jackson
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Subject: Instrumental Music Student Survey Update

BACKGROUND

District 39 offers an Instrumental Music Program for students in grades 5-8. Historically, parents have expressed dissatisfaction with students being pulled out of a core content class for instrument-specific, small group lessons. They have also expressed concern about early morning school rehearsal times.

As a result, District 39 began working with a survey consultant, Shannen Mitchell, to gather input/feedback from parents and students through focus group conversations and surveys. The primary goal of the survey was for District 39 to better understand the preferences of students and parents relative to current instrumental music programming, so recommendations for changes could be made. On March 19, 2018, Shannen Mitchell presented¹ several key findings to the Board of Education which were included in the Instrumental Music board report.² Here is an excerpt from the March 2018 report:

910 parents participated and 670 students participated in the survey. The majority of participants in both groups were formerly or never enrolled in band or orchestra. Of the parents who participated in the survey, 313 (35%) have a student currently enrolled in band or orchestra, and of the student respondents, 262 (38%) are currently enrolled in band or orchestra.

To examine the main barriers to participation, all parents and students were asked questions about morning full band rehearsals and overall structure of the program. Parents and students who formerly or never participated in

¹ March 2018 Board of Education Recorded Video <https://bit.ly/2Xh0Ued>

² March 2018 Report to the Board of Education: "Instrumental Music" <https://bit.ly/2HNqA9S>

band/orchestra were asked additional questions about barriers to participation. These parents and students cited the following:

- *getting up early for rehearsals,*
- *having a lot of other activities already going on,*
- *missing other classes for instrument-specific, small group lessons*

Shannen Mitchell shared that getting up early and missing regularly scheduled classes for instrument-specific, small group lessons were not only “barriers to participation” but also the “primary pain point with the program for both students and parents”³ as revealed in the open-ended comment sections of the student and parent surveys. After reviewing the survey results, Ms. Mitchell recommended that District 39 keep rehearsals in the morning and establish a process that ensures students are not frequently missing the same academic classes.

Administrators identified a couple of “first step” improvements:

- Later start time for morning rehearsals; rehearsals begin 20 minutes later -- 7:35 am compared to 7:15 am
- Instrument-specific lesson rotation schedule that ensures band/orchestra students would not miss more than four other classes per content area

These recommended improvements have been implemented. Teachers and principals have informally reported positive results and noted a decline in negative feedback from parents and students about the instrument-specific lesson schedule. This report will focus on students and their perceptions and experiences with the new scheduling implementation.

2019 Student Survey Results

During morning rehearsals, students were asked to complete survey using a four-point rating scale. The questions were written based on previous years’ parent and student feedback. In addition, students were offered the opportunity to comment after each response.

Overall, the results are positive. 89% of students are finding that they are able to manage completing missed work for classes missed due to a small group lesson. Also, 89% of students are reporting a positive experience with the new scheduling approach. When asked about their ability to reschedule in the event of a conflict, 72% of students find it easy to do.

Grade Level	Total Survey Responses n = 412	Total Band/Orchestra Students n = 522
5	172	210
6	106	154
7	67	77
8	67	81

³ March 2018 Board of Education Recorded Video <https://bit.ly/2Xh0Ued>

Question 1	Grade	1 Very Difficult	2 Difficult	3 Easy	4 Very Easy	3 & 4
How would you rate your ability to manage completing missed work for your other classes?	Overall	5 (1%)	38 (9%)	216 (52%)	153 (37%)	89%
	5th	1 (0.6%)	20 (12%)	97 (56%)	54 (31%)	87%
	6th	1 (1%)	11 (10%)	44 (42%)	50 (47%)	89%
	7th	2 (3%)	4 (6%)	35 (52%)	26 (39%)	91%
	8th	1 (1.5%)	3 (4%)	40 (60%)	23 (34%)	94%
Question 2	Grade	1 Very Difficult	2 Difficult	3 Easy	4 Very Easy	3 & 4
How would you rate your ability to reschedule a technique class (small group lesson) this year in the event of a conflict?	Overall	19 (5%)	96 (23%)	150 (36%)	147 (36%)	72%
	5th	9 (5%)	46 (27%)	66 (38%)	51 (30%)	68%
	6th	5 (5%)	19 (18%)	36 (34%)	46 (43%)	77%
	7th	1 (1.5%)	16 (24%)	25 (37%)	25 (37%)	74%
	8th	4 (6%)	15 (22%)	23 (34%)	25 (37%)	71%
Question 3	Grade	1 Very Negative	2 Negative	3 Positive	4 Very Positive	3 & 4
How would you rate your overall experience with the technique class (small group lesson) schedule?	Overall	5 (1%)	39 (10%)	168 (41%)	200 (48%)	89%
	5th	2 (1%)	10 (6%)	74 (43%)	86 (50%)	93%
	6th	1 (1%)	10 (9%)	41 (39%)	54 (51%)	90%
	7th	1 (1.5%)	11 (16%)	23 (34%)	32 (48%)	82%
	8th	1 (1.5%)	8 (12%)	30 (45%)	28 (42%)	87%

NEXT STEPS

The Instrumental Music Program teachers and administrators will continue to review and improve the student experience. Although the results are favorable, more can be done to support specific students in how to manage the completion of any missed work from classes. It is evident that more particular attention needs to be made so that the students' ability to reschedule an instrument-specific, small group lesson comes with ease.

Parents will also receive a survey regarding the instrument-specific, small group lesson schedules with the same questions. Using this winter data as baseline, the same survey will be given to students and parents at the end of May with a goal to reduce the quantity of "difficult", "very difficult" "negative", and "very negative" ratings. The board will receive updates throughout this improvement process.

Recommended for presentation to the Board of Education,


 Raymond E. Lechner, Ph.D., Superintendent