

MUSIC CLASS

Mr. Michael Baur

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What is my child going to be learning in Music?

My primary goal is to help your children become literate in music. Music literacy is something that I feel very passionately about. I will be challenging your children to not just read and understand music, but to be able to create music. Students will be asked to decode and encode tonal and rhythmic patterns through aural and oral activities and then transfer their knowledge to body percussion and finally, instruments. Your child will be learning music based on five objectives: rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and timbre. All activities are designed to meet the New York State Arts Standards, NAFME National Standards for Music, and encourage literacy. A typical music lesson involves singing, movement (both structured and improvisatory), body percussion, instrument playing, and exploration. Students will also be reading rhythms, engage in solfège vocal training, and ensemble performance. The source material for the general music class consists mainly of folk songs, spirituals, play parties, and other traditional texts through which students gain an understanding and appreciation of the history and culture of America and others worldwide.

Who is Mr. Baur?

My name is Michael Baur and I am so excited for the opportunity to teach your child music. The 2017-2018 school year will be my twelfth year teaching here in the Islip School District. I received a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education K-12 from the Crane School of Music in Potsdam, NY, and a Master of Arts degree from Stony Brook University. I have also done additional musical literacy coursework at Shenendoah University, as well as Conversational Solfège and First Steps in Music training at Hofstra University.

I am a certified Orff-Schulwerk instructor and regularly attend SCMEA and LIAOSA Saturday professional development workshops and have attended annual American Orff-Schulwerk Association national conventions to further enhance my current lessons, learn about new techniques in elementary music education and collaborate with fellow music educators from all across America. I am a big believer in music literacy and incorporate *Conversational Solfège* by John Feierabend at Commack Road Elementary to encourage students to be tuneful, beatful, and artful as well as being musically literate by the time they reach middle school.

I regularly attend LIAOSA and SCMEA Classroom Music and Choral Workshops during the school year to enhance my own personal learning and to see other educators' lessons, methods, and strategies. I have also had the privilege of presenting at the SCMEA PEAK Classroom Music Festival as a guest clinician.

My students have performed as part of SCMEA All-County Chorus ensembles, participated in Community Choirs such as the MYO Suffolk Childrens' Choir under the direction of Mr. Craig Knapp, and have performed with the ACDA Eastern Division Honor Choir in Providence, RI.

I currently serve on the Suffolk County Music Educators' Association (SCMEA) Executive Board as the Assistant to the Vice President for All-County Festivals and have previously served as the Public Relations Chairperson and as a festival chairperson. I work at Hofstra University as the West Music liaison for the Orff-Schulwerk teacher training levels in the summer and I also hold current memberships in SCMEA, NYSSMA, NAFME, ACDA, LIAOSA, and AOSA.

Curriculum

The general music curriculum at Commack Road Elementary School utilizes the Orff-Schulwerk approach with many activities from *Gameplan* written by Randy DeLelles and Jeff Kriske as well as an emphasis on music literacy through the use of John Feierabend's *Conversational Solfege*.

ORFF-SCHULWERK

Orff-Schulwerk, named after Carl Orff, is a methodology of teaching music. The components of an Orff-Schulwerk education involve singing, playing, moving, creating, improvising, chanting, and keeping a beat on anything they can find. An Orff classroom is a non-competitive atmosphere where children are encouraged to take risks. Orff encourages children to experience music first and learn to read and write it later, much the same as spoken and written language. We will be using rhymes, songs, poems, literature, and dances as basic materials and supplemented by drums, sticks, pitched instruments, movement, and recorder.

CONVERSATIONAL SOLFEGE

(taken from www.feierabendmusic.org)

Conversational Solfege is yet another permutation of the "hearing eyes-seeing ears" axiom. It synthesizes the logical, practical, and philosophical issues raised by earlier music literacy advocates while integrating contemporary thinking and research. Merging true music literacy skills with the conviction that the finest quality music should be used in the process leads to an exciting and effective curriculum.

Nobody is too great to write for little ones; indeed, he must do his best to be great enough for them.



"From the beginning of his education, the child should experience the joy of discovery." ~ Alfred North Whitehead

Promethean Board in Music Class

As in their regular education classroom, students have access to a Promethean Board in Music class. This board allows additional opportunities for the students to interact and directly participate in the learning process. The way that music is taught in the classroom has not been altered, but rather enhanced by the addition of this board. Students will be able to actively and effectively compose music, create musical forms, analyze music, and view multimedia images and videos that will enhance their understanding and enjoyment of music and the musical process.





Commack Road Chorus

All Chorus sign-ups were completed in June. Rehearsals will begin the week of September 19, 2016. A specific CRES Chorus letter was sent home to all students who have joined. The rehearsal groups learn the same music and perform as one chorus. Students who are enrolled in Band or Orchestra have been assigned to a chorus rehearsal group which DOES NOT conflict with their Band or Orchestra rehearsals. Below is a list of the scheduled chorus performance dates. This is subject to change and additional performances may be added at a later date.

Winter Concert – Wednesday, December 13, 2017 at 7:00pm – Islip High School
Festival of the Arts – Tuesday, May 15, 2018 at 7:00pm – Islip High School
Spring Concert – Tuesday, May 22, 2018 at 7:00pm – Islip High School

All three performances are required events for all chorus members as it is the culmination of our work in rehearsals. Please mark your calendars.

Commack Road TrebleMakers

The Commack Road TrebleMakers is an advanced level choral ensemble. Students who are selected to be a part of this ensemble have demonstrated above average vocal ability during their general music classes and at the TrebleMakers audition in June. TrebleMakers will meet after school on Fridays. The first rehearsal will be Friday, September 15, 2017. Separate letters with permission slips were sent home to those students in the ensemble.

Vocal NYSSMA

Each spring the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) runs a solo and ensemble festival that allows students of any age to prepare a piece of music and perform it in front of an adjudicator. The advantages of this festival are that it allows the student an opportunity to learn a quality piece of instrumental or vocal literature and develop proper technique and style. Students then perform as a soloist for an adjudicator which is one of the National Standards for Music. The adjudicator scores the students based on predetermined criteria and that score is used to nominate students for All-County ensembles the following year.

Students may prepare NYSSMA solos on their band or orchestra instrument as well as voice and recorder. NYSSMA participation is highly encouraged to help the students grow musically!

Classroom Management

Students are expected to meet the classroom expectations each day that they have music. Students are given the opportunity to make correct choices. *Mistakes* are ENCOURAGED as it promotes growth.

If a child's behavior interferes with the learning of the rest of the group, a reminder will be given or the child will be separated from the group. If the behavior does not improve, I will take additional steps to ensure that your child understands his/her role within the classroom and to ensure that all students are afforded a safe and positive learning environment. This may include meeting with your child privately, phone calls home, and meetings with families if necessary.



Recorder

Your child will begin playing recorder in the fall of fourth grade. Recorder instruction in fourth grade will focus on the basics of the instrument, care, basic playing technique, and melodies incorporating the reading of music notation. All recorder instruction will take place in the music classroom and there is no outside work required.

Recorder instruction continues in fifth grade. The goal of recorder study in fifth grade is to review what was learned in fourth grade and add additional notes, develop proficiency, and be able to use the recorder as a supplemental wind instrument in the music classroom adding to the singing and playing of the percussion instruments that they have been studying since second grade. Again, all work will take place inside the music classroom and there will be no outside work required.

What is expected of my child during music class?

Each child should be coming to music ready to enjoy and participate in the activities of the day along with following certain specific expectations discussed during the first week of school:

1. To enter and exit music class quietly.
2. To raise their hand before they speak.
3. To listen when others are speaking.
4. To keep hands and feet to themselves.
5. To participate actively in the classroom activities.

These are the basic expectations. We also speak a lot about respect: respect for each other, the teacher, the instruments, and themselves. **Active participation is expected.** Because of the nature of our music instruction, the effort and participation of the entire class is needed for our activities to come together effectively. Children are challenged to discover, improvise, and take risks.

Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions or concerns by calling the school at 631-650-8642 or emailing me at mbaur@islipufsd.org. If you leave a message for me, I will return it as soon as I can. I wish your student much success this year at CRES!