

Hello from Ms. Zenner!

azenner@pausd.org

Nixon Room B - 1



What a great first Trimester!

I am so excited to be part of the Nixon community! My first trimester as your music teacher has been rewarding! A little about me:

Last school year, I was hired in Palo Alto Unified to teach elementary strings to an amazing group of students. (including a few at Nixon!) Before this, I was the violin, orchestra, and music appreciation/general music instructor at Yew Chung International School in Mountain View.

Prior to Yew Chung, I was an orchestra teacher for the Paradise Valley Unified School District, in Phoenix, Arizona. I was responsible for the string music programs at three elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. I participated in state music festivals, reinforced theory and aural skills, and prepared my students for multiple school and public performances. In addition, I mentored a student teacher.

Philosophy as an energetic music educator: I feel it is necessary to teach technique, theory, and skills as outlined in the National Standards and use creative approaches to learning. Through the understanding of music's technical aspects, students develop enthusiasm for music and an appreciation of art; attributes that will serve them well their entire lives.

Research: In addition to research on school day kindergarten violin instruction, as part of my Master's Degree from San Francisco State University, I have co-authored, with Dr. Margaret Schmidt from Arizona State University, a published study titled "A Teacher's Childhood." The study examines the educational development of music educators from college through their first years of teaching. I have presented this research at the Narrative Soundings International Conference, Narrative Inquiry in Music Education (NIME2) in 2008, and at the Arizona Music Educators Conference in 2010.

Updates



Classroom Music at Nixon

Music class at Nixon is a place where students not only learn music, but we also build community. Music should help to bring all of our students together to create a safe, enjoyable, and creative place to learn. Each class starts with the song “We come Together to Sing” as well as warm-ups using solfege (Do, Re, Mi, etc). Keeping with inclusiveness, as a school with a large international community, we learn about and continue to appreciate music from many cultures.

Kindergarten

We are already on a roll echoing and reading simple rhythms, which includes eighth notes and quarter notes. Maintaining a steady tempo and finding our singing voice (not talking or shouting voices) are our main goals in Kindergarten. Moving our bodies to music and using classroom percussion instruments also help insure we learn how to keep a steady beat. We look forward to performing “The More We Get Together” at our Freedom Heroes Assembly!

First Grade

Using our classroom instruments, including the glockenspiel and xylophone, student are showing that they can keep a steady beat and echo rhythms, independently. We had a unit early in the year which focused on songs about clocks that helped strengthen this concept. Movement games are also some of our favorite activities in first grade. Currently we are singing the song “Walk and Stop” and “Seven Jumps.” For the Freedom Heroes Assembly we will perform the song “Kindness Goes Far” which reinforces producing a beautiful tone in our singing voices.

Second Grade

We are emphasizing more independence in making music as we combine student lead singing, moving, and playing of our classroom set of Orff Instruments. In September, “Charlie Over the Ocean” was a fun music game to sing, we also provided the accompaniment for the song on our xylophones and marimbas! In October, we learned a complicated team dance while we sang the song “Draw a Bucket of Water.” Second Grade is looking forward to singing “You’ve Got a Friend in Me” for the Freedom Heroes Assembly.

Third Grade

Third graders have begun to delve into music literacy. By the end of the year, students should be able to read the lines and spaces of the treble clef. We are currently solidifying whole notes/rests, half notes/rests, quarter notes/rests, eighth notes, and beginning sixteenth notes. Additionally, we are learning songs with multiple vocal parts, including the folk song, “Remember Me.” In November, we practiced our improvisational skills in the song “Old Joe Clark.” We will perform “Be an Upstander” at the Freedom Heroes Assembly.

Updates

Fourth Grade

With music twice a week for forty minutes, we are able to cover a lot of material in music! Using the recorder as a tool to music literacy, we are becoming fluent in treble clef. We are also preparing for instrumental music next year! Please look for information this spring about our students selection of instruments for 5th grade.

Our goal throughout the district is to have all of the fourth grade students assigned to their instrument by the end of the year. We are already beginning to discuss what instruments fourth graders may want to play next year. Choices are:
Flute, Clarinet, Trumpet, Trombone, Euphonium, Bells, Violin, Viola, Cello. We will ask for some parent involvement in the selection process, and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions!

We have begun preparing “Do the Good You Know” for the Freedom Heroes Assembly. Feel free to ask your student to sing it for you at home!

Looking further into the year, we will have a performance for parents at International Night on May 25. We are excited to perform music from all around the world! In fact, we have already begun preparing by learning a folk song from Taiwan. The performance will include, singing, playing percussion, xylophones, marimba, and of course, our recorders!



Fifth Grade

Instrumental music teachers team has been working hard beginning our students on their new instruments, which is not an easy task! I am sure during the holidays your student can play a short tune for family and friends!

In addition, as we move through the holiday season, family routines often shift with the long weekends or weeks off. Please help your child to remember their instrument and materials after the holiday breaks.

Important dates for 5th grade:

- Wednesday December 6, 10:30-11:30
String Informance for Mrs. Mumford
Room B-1
- Monday December 11, 1:00-1:40
String Informance for Ms. Lynch
Room A-6
- Monday December 18 1:00-1:40
Band Informances
Ms. Macy - room A-1
Ms. Rubenis - old music room
Mr. Hunter - room A-3
- Tuesday March 27 - Band and Strings
Performance @ Curriculum Night

Thank you PiE for our instruments!

