



Mokena Junior High School

District 159

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July 2018

Dear Meteor Families,

During the last school year a school board committee was formed to analyze the status of our instrumental music program. The committee considered the quality of our band programs, our desired outcomes, how we compare to our neighbors, and what we could do to develop the highest quality band program possible for our students and the Mokena community. After a great deal of deep consideration, the committee made a recommendation to the administration to make some significant changes to the band programs at Mokena Intermediate School and Mokena Junior High School. The administration has agreed with their recommendations, and we are moving forward to seek out qualified individuals to fulfill the needs of what we believe will be a fantastic band program. We plan to bring our recommended individuals to the August board meeting in order to implement these changes this fall.

The most important change to the program is that we believe students need more time with direct, guided instruction. In many schools this comes in the form of band sectionals taught during the school day by a dedicated band teacher. Currently, there simply is not enough time in small groups to work with students during the morning whole group band time. Students need this regular feedback to improve their skills. Therefore, starting in fourth grade and continuing through eighth grade, we are adding sectionals to the way we instruct our band students.

The way sectionals work are that the students will be separated into small groups according to instrument and will be assigned a thirty-minute session each week. Students will come at their assigned time for specific instrument skill instruction. Students will be rescheduled for sectionals if they are going to miss a test, quiz, or some other major instructional activity. The schedule of sectionals will rotate in a way that makes it so no child should miss the same class more than once a quarter except in very rare occasions. Each grade will have a designated sectional day so both students and staff can plan ahead. Sectionals are not optional and will be a part of the student's band grade.

A second major change is that band will be an academic elective course that is equal to our other exploratory classes like computers, communications, art, general music, and Spanish. Students will be graded on their performance, attendance, participation, and other curricular measures within the whole band lesson and during sectionals.

Whole group band class will remain during its normal time before school. We will continue to participate in the contests, parades, and concerts as we always have. We confidently believe that the changes to the program will enhance these activities and provide our children with the full, rich instrumental band experience that we expect from our Mokena bands.

If you have any questions regarding the changes in the band program, you can contact me at MJHS or Mrs. Karen Bussean at busseank@mokena159.org.

Sincerely,

Michael Rolinitis, Ed.D.
Principal