

Orchestra in New Fairfield

Building a Seamless Program for our Young Musicians



Board of Education Curriculum Subcommittee
New Fairfield Public Schools
December 16, 2024



Orchestra in New Fairfield

Elementary Student String Numbers (Grades 3-5)

- 2022-23: Total students = 95
- 2023-24: Total students = 107
- 2024-25 (current): Total students = 115

NFMS Student String Numbers (Grades 6-8)

- 2022-23: Total students = 14
- 2023-24: Total students = 24
- 2024-25 (current): Total students = 27
- 2025-26 (anticipated): Total students = 35

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Current Elementary Student String Numbers (2024-25)

Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
51	35	29

Current NFMS Student String Numbers (2024-25)

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
6	10	11

Moving Forward

- **Initiate an orchestra program at NFHS:** To address our current 8th grade students needs and bring back current high school students who may have been unable to play in past years.
- **Include middle school orchestra lessons for 6th-8th grade students:** To strengthen skill development and mirror the current band program at the middle school.
- **Ensure consistency of lessons for all 3rd-5th grade students:** To build foundational skills and success for students that can be brought forward in the middle and high school years.

The Benefits

Building a **sequential, grade 3–12 strings program** allows us to:

- Provide students with consistent access to high-quality instruction from elementary through high school.
- Mirror the current band & choir programs for equity across musical disciplines.
- Provide opportunities for collaboration between band, choir, and orchestra, enriching the overall music education experience for all students.
- Strengthen our music program when compared to other districts locally, in the state and nationally.

Next Steps

- **HS Orchestra Course Proposal** (*NFHS Program of Studies*)
- **One additional full-time orchestra teacher**
 - Allows us to hire a certified, high-quality teacher to transition our program to the high school and ensure staffing for lessons at the middle school.
 - Ensures all students across levels in the district (Grades 3-12) have access to orchestra lessons and playing in an ensemble. Access to lessons as well as ensemble opportunities ensures skill development to grow a strong program of young musicians.

Q & A

- **Is there space to accommodate expanding the NFPS Orchestra Program?**
 - The NFHS band and orchestra room will be scheduled collaboratively.
 - We continue to assess space for lessons and ensemble at NFMS per our space utilization study.
- **Will there be enough students moving forward?**
 - Current 8th grade orchestra students have indicated their interest in continuing to pursue orchestra next year and some current high school students (9-12) may also join.
 - Our enrollment in strings at NFES continues to grow.
- **Will the additional teacher have a full schedule?**
 - The additional staffing will provide for both HS orchestra and strings lessons across the MS and ES; both string teachers in the district will have a full schedule across the three buildings.
- **Do we have the resources/equipment to support a program at the High School?**
 - We continue to provide for music supplies in our district and school curriculum budgets and build instrument options. The PTO and FAPA Boosters have been wonderful partners as well.