

May 2017

Dear Rising Eighth Grade Parents,

We are pleased to announce a change to our eighth grade Visual and Performing Arts Program for the 2017-2018 school year.

As you know, Middle School students in grades six and seven take a rotation of Theatre, Art, and Music for one term each. For the fourth term, we have traditionally allowed students to indicate their preference, and with their input we have assigned each to a fourth quarter Fine Arts class. These fourth quarter classes become an opportunity for greater exploration in that field; students have loved being able to play in a rock band, to perform a play, or to create art for themselves and the community.

With the current system, sixth and seventh graders have the opportunity to experience all three of the visual and performing arts areas that we offer before deciding on one of them as a favorite or an area for specialization. We love that this format allows exploration of all of the Fine Arts areas, especially as most students entering sixth grade have not had exposure to a dedicated Theatre class.

Beginning next year, we are making a change that will continue those benefits and will allow eighth graders to delve more deeply into one arts area. We will offer to eighth graders a semester-long course for the second half of the year. In the first week of school, each eighth grade student will fill out an application including an essay explaining why they would like to take Theatre, Art, or Music for the second semester. We will read applications and determine second semester class placement. In this way our eighth grade students will have the opportunity to articulate their interests in the arts and to advocate for themselves.

Students who take Theatre in second semester will take Art and Music in the first and second term; likewise, students who will take a semester of Art will take a term each of Music and Theatre, and of course students taking a semester of Music will take a term of Theatre and Art. Thus the rotation will be:

<u>Quarter 1</u>	<u>Quarter 2</u>	<u>Quarters 3 & 4 (Semester 2)</u>
Theatre	Art	Music
Art	Music	Theatre
Music	Theatre	Art

Please note that this change will impact the Visual and Performing Arts program but will not change our procedure for our first semester Musical during Elective nor for second semester Chorus during Elective.

Please let me know if you have questions or comments. We have shared the changes with students, and they seemed excited and pleased.

Best,

Anne, Margo, Jennifer, Bo, and Kristin

Anne Allen, Visual Art
Margo Buchanan, Theatre
Jennifer Green, Music
Bo List, Theatre
Kristin Seymour, Head of Middle School