**Attendance and Assessment**

Someone once said, “Ninety Per Cent of life is showing up….” In the case of instrumental study, this is certainly true. I might throw in that showing up “prepared” is terribly important as well. On the most basic level, if a student attends their lesson (and ensemble rehearsal) weekly, with all their materials, they are going to do just fine, enjoy making music, and making some progress on their instrument. *My experience has been that it is not actually playing the instrument that is difficult for students, it is simply showing up with instrument and music at the correct time that presents the biggest challenge.* If the student and parent/guardian are working together to practice regularly and bring the instrument/folder at the right day/time, then all should go well!

The lesson rotation provides a schedule in which a student is “pulled” from their regular classes in order to take a 30 minute instrumental lesson. This schedule rotates through the day, so a child never misses the same period twice in a row. The exact rotation is for **seven** periods, so the time is only repeated every eight weeks. If a student misses a lesson, there are times built into the schedule for make-up lessons on most days. Please see me for a pass if you wish to make up a lesson.

For those who have qualified for band or orchestra (green belt for band, orange belt for orchestra), weekly rehearsals are held from 2:45-3:30 p.m. during the “Say Yes” season. **Orchestra rehearsals are currently held on Mondays and Band Rehearsals are held on Thursdays.**

This year, for the first time, we will have a special attendance incentive. All Band and Orchestra members with 90% lesson attendance or better will qualify for a field trip to Seabreeze Amusement Park for special Music Days in June. We will have an opportunity to perform at the park along with ensembles from all over the state, and receive judges’ feedback. We will also get to go on rides all day long! Stay tuned for details…..

Regarding **assessment**, students give themselves a number at the end of each lesson for their performance, preparation, and effort. We use 4 for “Exceeds expectations”, 3 for “Meets Expectations”, 2 for “Developing”, and 1 for “Needs Improvement.” I either accept their assessment, or we discuss it and come to a mutual resolution. We also record how many days they practiced during the week, and if the parent/guardian initialed the practice log. The expectation is that the student practices at least FIVE times a week—the lesson itself may be counted as one of those days.

The word on the street is that if the student comes to lessons, prepared and regularly, that Mr. Willard is a *really* easy grader. I would say that is mostly correct…..

At the end of the year, students have a choice of a final assessments. They can either participate in the NYSSMA Solo Festival in May, or take the district instrumental assessment in June.