



# Manchester-Shortsville Central School District

## "Red Jacket Schools"

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July 15, 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians:

We were saddened by the news that our middle/high school music teacher, Mrs. Emily Klempka, decided to make a career move to another school district. Her decision, along with a thorough review of teacher schedules, uncovered the fact that our two elementary school music teachers have not been fully scheduled, although they are indeed, full-time employed K-12 certified music teachers.

Since we are able to maintain all of our previous music program offerings with three full-time music teachers; one at the elementary school and two at the middle/high school, we elected not to hire a new person for Mrs. Klempka's position. Instead, one of our two elementary music teachers, Mrs. Katie Dutcher, will move up to the secondary level where she will take Mrs. Klempka's Middle School and High School course load and responsibilities. We are confident that Mrs. Dutcher's excellent skills, knowledge of her students, and the relationships she has developed, will be an asset to her and our students. Our other elementary music teacher, Mrs. Carrie Smith, will also have a full-time teaching schedule in September at the elementary school.

Although we added more Physical Education (PE) minutes into the elementary school day to meet the state mandated requirement, this did not have an impact on the music program. It did however, help bring to light that our elementary music teachers did not have full schedules, after we conducted a thorough audit of the master schedule to address the PE minute requirement. There has not been a budget cut, nor a cut to the music program; the district has addressed a scheduling issue. All our students' music classes will meet with the same frequency and duration as they always have.

There were concerns raised that I would like to respond to.

- Band students currently meet one time a week for 30 minute lessons and this will continue.
- Although the elementary school band, chorus, and percussion club practice schedules have not yet been established, they will continue to meet.
- It is our expectation that our music students will be afforded the opportunity to participate in All County and if the teacher decides to add the Solo Festival to the music program, the District will certainly encourage and support this additional opportunity.
- The annual recorder concert is scheduled during the school day and will continue to be part of the elementary school music program.
- Our third grade teachers, with the music teacher, plan an annual RPO field trip and this past year they planned a Rochester City Ballet field trip in Canandaigua. There is no reason these or similar field trips cannot continue to be offered to our third graders.
- Unfortunately, this past school year our elementary school music teachers decided not to take their students to the Darien Lake Music Festival. This is an opportunity, however, that the music teacher can choose to provide to our young musicians. As with all field trips and school music

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### **Mission**

*We will challenge all learners and work in partnership with students, parents and community to achieve high standards.*

competitions, the building principal helps with coordination, providing support, approves volunteers, and provides chaperones as needed.

- The March music in our schools activities, Flag Day and Veteran's Day assemblies occur during the school day and will continue to occur for our students.

Our elementary school students will have the same music class schedule, they will have morning practices, and weekly lessons, and they should be just as prepared for their assemblies and concerts as they have been in the past.

There were concerns raised about the secondary level music program that I would like to respond to.

- By moving a music teacher from the elementary to the middle/high school, we are replacing Mrs. Klemпка's full time music position with a full time music teacher. There is no staffing change at the secondary level.
- Directing the musical has never been a requirement of the secondary music teacher. There is a separate contractual stipend for the music director and assistant director positions and we are required to post these positions annually. The musical will occur as planned.
- Our talented and dedicated band teacher, Mr. Wight, started and continues to plan and coordinate the Disney competition trip for our middle and high school music students. Although he has appreciated the involvement, partnership, and support of the other secondary music teacher, the Disney trip is not required. The District supports this trip, planned by Mr. Wight, however, and will be sure that our chorus students have the same opportunity to participate as our band students even if Mrs. Dutcher is unable to attend.
- There was a concern raised about how the "new" middle/high school music schedule will not allow time for vocal practice. The secondary schedule is not new. Vocal practice often occurs 9th periods at the high school level. Ninth period at the high school is used for teachers to work with their students and offer them extra help. This period has been used by our secondary music teacher for vocal practice in the past and we expect this to continue moving forward.
- Our secondary students will continue to have the same opportunities as they always have. This includes participation in All County.

Rather than hiring an additional music teacher when it is not needed at this time, the District plans to hire a floating substitute teacher to help alleviate the pressure placed on other staff when there are uncovered classes and, most importantly, to ensure our students will receive instruction when their teacher is absent.

The District appreciates, values, supports, and fully understands the benefits of our music program for students. We want to continue to find ways to meet the needs of our students, while also supporting our teachers. We believe that this reallocation of resources will address an important need for students and staff, while also maintaining our high quality music program.

Please feel free to contact me at 585-289-3964 or email me at [charlene.dehn@redjacket.org](mailto:charlene.dehn@redjacket.org) at any time if you have questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,

*Charlene Dehn*

Superintendent of Schools

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