Hello from MAG!

School music has started, *in-person*, at Orcas public schools. Hooray! The high school band even performed 'live' at the Homecoming week bonfire on the Village Green on October 8th. Holiday concerts are being planned, albeit only open to families at this time.



HS Pep Band on the Village Green

This year, there are 116 students in Band and Strings programs. High school musicians meet at 7:15am, Mondays to Fridays—known as 'zero hour', an hour before the regular class schedule begins. If you know one of them, do commend them for their commitment!



Bell cover in use

"We are just PLEASED to be playing together again! I start my day out with two hours of awesome students and music." Pamela Wright, Strings Director & General Music

How do they do it?

- Masked in the music rooms
- Students spaced 3 feet apart
- Individual music stands instead of shared
- Bell covers for wind instruments

There is much to look forward to: Auditions start soon for state and regional contests and honor festivals such as SJMEA Honor Orchestra and the Western International Band Clinic. Selected students may apply for scholarship grants from the Joyce Burghardt Fund to help with fees. Middle and high school students will likely, once again, participate in solo ensemble events off-island in February. These musical experiences motivate practice and do so much to build confidence in students.

Fifth and sixth graders, many whom are new to Band and Strings, are finally able to progress on learning their instruments, together. One of the most anticipated events of the music program—a trip to the Seattle Symphony, is on the calendar for March and we are all hopeful this will happen.

The elementary music program is in full swing. Instead of singing, younger students play Orff rhythm instruments and will soon do the BAL-A-VIS-X program of rhythm-based exercises. Bucket drumming will begin in the spring, while 4th graders will learn ukulele.



Elementary students in the music wing

"It is great to have students back in the band room, rehearsing regularly. I am already seeing a lot of progress from students!"
Darren Dix, Band Director & Bucket Drumming

MAG has been able to help the school music program nurture these intrepid musicians with YOUR longstanding support. In 2020-21, MAG contributed almost $10,000 to school music, meeting needs like software purchases to aid virtual learning, on top of music scores, equipment, instruments, proper storage for uniforms, and other music room necessities.



Strings class with individual stands

Thank You, 2020-21 Sponsors!
We are grateful to the local business sponsors of 'Music Student of the Month' ads in Islands' Sounder, for shining a light on students who have shown outstanding effort and passion for learning music.

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Eric Webb, OISD Superintendent, recently thanked MAG on behalf of the district, "I believe that our students are truly enriched by their musical education! I truly appreciate your continued commitment to and support of our programs!"

We are thrilled for the musical opportunities that our students will experience this year. They will need all our encouragement and support for a 'normal as possible' school year. We know we could not do it without you. Thank you so much for 'keeping the music alive'!

Sincerely,

Music Advocacy Group (MAG)

Stay tuned to School Music:
Website: OIMAG.org
YouTube: Orcas Island Music Advocacy Group
Facebook: Music Advocacy Group of Orcas Island