

Below is a list of Frequently Asked Questions for GPS Elementary Band and Orchestra classes.

Not all instruments are created equal. Look for name brand instruments, which are brands that have proven their quality over time. The quality of the instrument is a very important factor in your child's success. The following are commonly considered name brands for Brass and Woodwinds: Bach, Besson, Blessing, Buffet, Bundy (older models), Cannonball, Conn, Eastman, Evette, Gemeinhardt,

No. Private lessons outside of school are not required, but are recommended if you're financially able. If a student joins late or switches instruments at a later date, private lessons may be necessary in order for the child to make proper progress. The Band/Strings teachers at your school can provide you with names of private instructors.

Are there any commitments outside of the school day?

Band/Strings classes meet during the school day. However, students are expected to practice at home to be successful. The expectation varies slightly from teacher to teacher, but averages approximately 10-15 minutes of at-home practice per school day. There are also two or three evening concerts each year that students are required to attend.

Does my child need previous music experience to learn an instrument in 5th Grade?

No. 5th Grade Band/Strings is a true beginning level course. (Your child is even taught how to open the case.) Prior experience is not necessary, but can be beneficial. Prior experience is highly recommended for Percussion students.

What if my child wants to play an instrument that is not considered a "Starter"? Will they be able to change instruments when they enter 6th Grade?

Students are able to change to a closely related instrument when entering 6th grade, if agreed by all involved parties (student, parent, teacher). The most common transfers are Clarinet to Saxophone; Trumpet to another brass instrument; any band instrument to Percussion; and Cello to Bass. The decision to change instruments is based on each individual student, including factors such as physical characteristics, student effort and responsibility throughout 5th grade, and musical skill. Summer classes or lessons before the 6th grade year are often recommended. Ultimately our goal is to do what's in the best interest of each student.

My child didn't play an instrument in 5th Grade, but would like to start in 6th Grade. Is that possible?

In most cases, it can be very difficult for a student to join as a true beginner in 6th Grade. Since they will attend class with students in their second year of instruction, it is recommended that new

students gain some experience through Summer School, summer music camps, and/or private lessons outside of the school day. The final decision is made at the campus level.