

Re: Grade 7 and 8 Year-end Band Trip

Dear Mitchell Middle Parents,

I've had a few years now to settle in to my Music/Band teaching position here at Mitchell Middle School, and I am very pleased with the way our Annual Music Event calendar is shaping up.

Last year our Grade 8 Band students had the opportunity to participate in a Band Camp weekend at the International Peace Gardens with 2 other Hanover Schools, and we anticipate this becoming an Annual event for many reasons. The date of this year's Band Trip is Friday morning, June 1st to Sunday afternoon, June 3rd.

One of the reasons we have chosen to repeat this trip going forward is that the cost is very manageable as compared to other popular Band trips. The current working cost is about \$225 per student which includes food, transportation, concert, clinicians and lodging. (For comparison, an Edmonton Band Trip is typically \$500 up front and then some food and shopping money tacked on after the fact.)

(*Note: More students attending brings the price down for all...)

Secondly, the travel time is better: rather than a 4 day trip to Edmonton where 2 full days were mostly travel, International Music Camp at the Peace Gardens is a 3 day trip and all 3 days will have the opportunity for learning. Last year, students performed on their instruments for 12 hours over the course of the weekend.

The accommodations at IMC are very clean, secure and comfortable, providing an overall better experience for students (as compared to a hotel stay).

The IMC website link is provided, and from there you should also be able to check out the International Peace Gardens. <http://internationalmusiccamp.com/>

There are more positives which I can share with you if you would like more information about this decision, but by far the biggest advantage of this trip is that 3 Hanover schools are right now working towards participating in this trip together. We look forward to collaborating with the students of Toban Janzen at Clearspring Middle School, and Markus Goertzen at Stonybrook Middle School. These are all feeder

schools into the SRSS and so we have invited Band Director Mark Loewen to join us, basically as a kick off Grade 9 band before Grade 8 is over.

Last year, our collective group of Band teachers were so impressed by the huge improvement that came from this one weekend, but disappointed at the timing of it; the students made HUGE progress but our Middle School programs only got to enjoy the benefits of it for the last two weeks of the year before passing them off to Mr. Loewen at the SRSS.

This year, we are tentatively planning to take **both the Grade 7 AND Grade 8 Band** students, and going forward, turn it into solely a Grade 7 Band trip. This way, no one group of students misses out on a Band Trip, and going forward the Middle Schools will still get to enjoy the benefits of the learning experience for an extra year in our smaller programs.

I will be sending home a letter in the next few weeks giving a rough draft of our itinerary and answering some questions that I think will be common. At that point I'll be asking for families to confirm their participation. Staying back from the trip is an option, but it is my hope that most families will be able and willing to participate.

Last year, many students were able to completely pay for their trip by the fundraising opportunities provided.

If fundraising is not your thing, you are also welcome to pay for the trip outright.

Thank you for your continued support of Music at Mitchell Middle,

Shannon Sawatzky
Mitchell Middle Music Educator