



SAN GABRIEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Maritza Fairfield
Lauren Creiman
(909) 445-1001

San Gabriel Unified Hits the Right Notes with New Music Immersion Experience Program

SAN GABRIEL, CA – Roosevelt Elementary School students are sharpening their focus and gaining confidence thanks to the school’s new Music Immersion Experience (MIE), which enhances student achievement through comprehensive music and performing arts lessons.

“Music has taught me to express myself,” fourth-grader Nicholas Tang said. “It has taught me that hard work pays off, and it gives me something fun to do.”

The program, which launched schoolwide earlier this year, is provided for free to Roosevelt students by the San Gabriel Unified School District.

“Students are excited to learn, and we are watching them come alive through music,” MIE coordinator Samantha Theisen said. “When you walk into a room and see our students get in the ready position – quiet, attentive, with their instruments held in the right place – this indicates that they are developing a habit of achieving excellence. I am excited to see what this program can do long-term.”

MIE extends the school day to accommodate a fundamental music lesson period for all students and an extended music instruction period for second- through fifth-graders.

During the fundamental music period, transitional kindergarten and kindergarten students participate in a 30-minute general music lesson; for other students, the lesson runs for an hour. First- through third-graders rotate through violin, percussion and choir. Fourth- and fifth-graders take three courses: choir, percussion, and a choice of woodwind, brass or string instruments.

Students choose their own subject during the elective period. Courses include ukulele, guitar, handbell choir, dance, Latin percussion, rock band, jazz, piano, chamber voices and composition through percussion.

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Roosevelt parent Mary Gonzalez noticed a newfound confidence in her daughter since the program began.

“It helps my child develop her critical thinking skills as well as her communication skills,” Gonzalez said. “My daughter is enjoying music and practices at home every day. She has become more positive about working hard, and sees the music class as a reward, not a required course.”

Under Theisen’s direction, who brings 25 years of music education experience to the program, the MIE program thrives with a team of 18 resident artists, six assistants and one teacher on special assignment.

Each resident artist is a professional musician with an education background, and helps to instruct music courses. Assistants monitor students during the lesson, and adjust posture, expression and instrument placement to help students learn proper technique without disrupting the lesson.

“We believe music is a vital part of a well-rounded education, and we are thrilled to provide this one-of-a-kind music program to our students,” SGUSD Superintendent John Pappalardo said. “We are working diligently to nurture our students to become responsible, productive citizens capable of long-term academic and professional success.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

032817_SGUSD_MUSIC1: Roosevelt Elementary transitional kindergarten students discover their rhythm during a Music Immersion Experience class this winter. The MIE program aims to enhance student achievement through comprehensive in-class and after-school music and performing arts lessons.

032817_SGUSD_MUSIC2: Roosevelt Elementary School third-graders sing their hearts out during the fundamental portion of the Music Immersion Experience program. After piloting the program for transitional kindergarten through third-graders in 2015-16, Roosevelt Elementary expanded MIE to serve all students this year.

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