

January 15th, 2022

Music Department Chair Report for the Fall semester of the 2021/2022 school year

Music Department Members:

Grace Choi D.M.A. - Piano

Vasil Chekardzhikov – Jr. High Music

Brian Forbes – Band & Orchestra

Robert Hekel – Director of Choirs

Nikola Chekardzhikov /Dept. Chair/ - Street Band, Guitar & Drumline

The 2021/2022 school year marked some return to normalcy with going back to the in-class instruction, which made teachers, students, and parents very pleased. I can say that we had a successful Fall semester where all parties worked together to bring back the quality music education in the classroom, as well as the live concerts that we missed so much in the previous year. Here are the major developments that took place in the music department during this Fall semester:

Developments in the Music Department:

- *Summer Camps:* To compensate for the absence of in-person instruction last year, the school offered summer camps for a number of the arts classes and some of the most eager to learn students had a chance for an early start.
- *Classroom Upgrades:* Many of the music classrooms were upgraded before the start of the school year:
 - ✓ New guitars for our Jr. High Kids with Mr. V
 - ✓ New pianos and benches for the piano students of Dr. Choi
 - ✓ The two baby grands from the Riverside campus received serious uplift & tuning and are already in use by our choir and piano faculty Mr. Hekel & Dr. Choi

- ✓ New microphones for the music production class of Mr. Forbes

- *Live Performances:* With the late start in September, music teachers had just over a month to get performance groups ready for our biggest music event of the year – our fun Carnival. Despite that challenge, Carnival was a success and after the hiatus of 2020, once again students, parents and the community had a chance to hear and enjoy the performances of our students on the stages around campus.

They also took part at a new celebration – Breakfast with Santa, as well as the annual December performance at Barnes & Noble. In addition, Street Band performed at school rallies, our annual Suicide Prevention Walk, as well as at the Parade at Hesperia Days where their performance along with the Ambassadors placed them 1st among all Hesperia Schools. In December the Madrigals performed at a music event along with other choirs in Palm Springs to the acclaim of the organizers and audience.

Just around the corner: Street Band will take the place of the live band for Spongebob – The Musical in February. Please save the dates as it will be a great show!

- *Visit From Berklee College of Music:* We were able to bring from Boston the assistant director of admissions of Berklee College of Music to introduce our students to the possibilities of continuing their music education at this most prestigious musical institution. This is a first, and we were extremely excited to host him here at Encore.

Day-to-day business in the Music Department

As a department chair my main task once again was to support the music teachers in my department in their needs. Our day -to-day business was discussed at our meetings, scheduled during the second and last Fridays of the month. In addition, my colleagues were able to reach me by phone, text and email any time of the day, and they have used that to a varying degree.

Challenges of the new school year:

- Late start of the year - shorter time to get the groups ready for Carnival
- New sanitizing procedures within the classroom to keep our students and staff safe
- Re-training our students how to study/ communicate/ behave in-person
- The inconsistent Fridays' schedule