



Spring 2018

Welcome to Meigs!

I am excited to meet each of you. Hopefully I will be able to meet each of you on Thursday, May 3. The string students are looking forward to performing for YOU! I hope you are already considering playing a string instrument. This current year we had so many students that even after offering two classes of strings we had a waiting list. The string class has filled up quickly in recent years.

The strings program at Meigs offers an excellent musical experience for Middle School students. 218 students are enrolled daily in the strings program. The program provides many experiences to look forward to: concerts, honors groups, solo/ensemble, trips, etc. Our string orchestras received Superior ratings at the MTSBOA Concert Festival and will be traveling to St. Louis in May. Our top group was chosen this year to perform at the State Music Educators Conference. Have you considered the possibility of sharing in these kinds of experiences?

**Why is participating in the string orchestra class important?** Playing an instrument is a wonderful experience for any child. In fact my wife and I made sure that our three children played a musical instrument as well as piano. We have no regrets. They each were able to take advanced classes, participate in sports, be involved in many activities and go on to graduate from college. In addition, there is conclusive evidence that playing an instrument significantly improves a child's intellectual and social development. A few of many examples:

- ✿ Higher SAT scores from music students – The College Board
- ✿ Playing music linked to brain growth – Nature, April 1998
- ✿ Improved math, science, and language grades linked to the number of years of music instruction – University of Sarasota and East Texas University research.
- ✿ Goals and methods used bring about a balanced, progressively refined development of the brain and neuromuscular system – Dr. Frank Wilson, Professor of Neurology at University of California
- ✿ Teaches: discipline, responsibility – Gemeinhardt
- ✿ Provides: a sense of accomplishment, self-esteem and satisfaction, lasting friendships, team work experience – Gemeinhardt

**How do I get started?** The most important thing to do is to make sure you sign up for strings. At the beginning of the school year I will help students select the proper instrument. I will send home information with the recommended choice of instrument and where to best find a quality instrument for a fair price. Do not let cost deter you from playing an instrument.

Most instruments can be purchased with a low monthly rental rate with the option to be applied to purchase. There are also some school instruments available for students. I will do my best to make sure any student who really wants to learn to play an instrument has the opportunity to do so. If you already play a string instrument, don't worry. We have a few students each year who already play.

**What about sports and instrumental music?** I lettered in basketball and track all through high school and I have always tried to avoid conflicts. Meigs students participate in both sports and music. Some of my former students have even played professional sports. Even Vince Carter of the Dallas Mavericks professional basketball team played an instrument all through high school.

**What about related arts rotation?** String orchestra is scheduled to meet each day for the entire school year. P.E., Art, Drama, Computer are 9 week classes that are part of the related art rotation. String students are still able to take those classes during the opposite related arts block.

I hope to see you join the long tradition of fine instrumental groups at Meigs. I look forward to meeting you at the parent night. I will be more than happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions.

Sincerely,  
Matthew Taylor – Director of Strings  
Meigs Magnet Middle School  
[matthew.taylor@mnps.org](mailto:matthew.taylor@mnps.org)  
615-271-3222 ext. 103