



Connect Charter School:

A Leader in PVA 2 of 3 Parts



Andrew Bolen
Connect Charter School
Music Specialist

Connect Charter School's music program is one that should be adopted by surrounding schools due to the work of our Music specialist Andrew Bolen. From grades 4 to 9, Mr. Bolen continuously works on new and exciting learning opportunities for each grade he teaches. Through Mr. Bolen's teachings, students can learn valuable life skills such as problem solving, self-expression and time management.

In grades 4 and 5, students are introduced to music by learning to hear, perform and appreciate music by studying different compositions. As the students move into grade 5, they learn to understand melody, rhythm, and how chords are related. Towards the end of grade 5, the students have the opportunity to test out different instruments to see what they might want to learn to play in grade 6, which is also known as 'The Petting Zoo.'

"Really like Mr. Bolen and learning how to play notes on instruments," explained a grade 4 student.

While most school music programs focus on music appreciation until grade seven, Mr. Bolen begins teaching band performance in Grade 6. This way, students have the opportunity to jump in with both feet and learn to play either a brass, woodwind or percussion instruments through a performance based program. The grade 6 classes are flooded with experiential experience beginning with Band Head Start Clinic, Fall Workshop, Winter Concert, the Spring Festival and finish with the summer concert.

"My favourite part about band is picking an instrument and then learning how to play it," stated a grade 6 student.

In grade 7, the students continue to advance their skills as a performer, listener, consumer, critic and composer of music. Students in grade 7 are encouraged to strive for musical excellence and express their feelings and ideas through music. These students are able to enjoy unique experiences such as witnessing the Royal Canadian Artillery



Grade 4 music class



Grade 8 Band

Band Concert perform, participating in a joint rehearsal and workshop with high school students and a guest director, and also by performing multiple times throughout the year.

“In band we get so many opportunities to learn from expert musicians,” tells a grade 8 student, “and I really like that we also get to work on our own compositions.”

In grades 8 and 9, students begin to further their understanding music theory and music literacy. Students also practice orchestrating music for small ensembles and continue creating, improvising and

arranging music. More specifically in grade 9, students learn to value music in our society with respect to music careers, and continue to value and understand music as a source of personal fulfillment. One of the main highlights for both grade 8 and 9 classes is attending band camp with guest clinicians, rehearsals, sectionals and further team building activities. The most memorable experience for the grade 7, 8 and 9 classes this year was attending the performance of “Treasure Island” at Central Memorial High School.

“Andrew Bolen is an engaging and amusing teacher,” explains Drama Specialist Heather Melville, “he instructs at the students’ levels of knowledge, yet he keeps expectations high.”

Mr. Bolen studied Education and Fine Arts at the University of Lethbridge, while his hobbies have always included composing and music technology. Mr. Bolen has had countless years of practice and performing experience before coming to Connect Charter School in 2005. The first instrument he learned to play was the organ, thus he was eventually drawn to his current instrument of choice, the keyboard. “Most people say I can play all instruments, but to that I say poorly,” jokes Mr. Bolen. The music programs at connect Charter School would not be nearly as successful as it is if not for the encouraging and supportive environment created by Mr. Bolen. He continuously asks the students to look for the positives in their compositions and performances, to inspire them to achieve their goals.

