

With the assistance of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding, grade 3 and 4 students at Buffalo Public Schools' (BPS), PK-4 Early Childhood Centers (ECC), have access to new stringed instruments, recorders, and small group, instrumental lessons. BPS Schools #17, #50, #54, #61, #64, #65, #82, #99 will each receive 30 stringed instruments – 16 violins, 6 violas, 4 cellos, and 4 basses - bass and cello storage racks, and 50 recorders. Participants receive weekly, small group lessons, where they learn fundamental string pedagogy and performance techniques. Currently, there are a total of 325 students participating in string lessons. The addition of stringed instruments has been so well received that, collectively, more than 200 students are on waiting lists as additional instruments are purchased.



Beyond the enjoyment of playing a stringed instrument, research consistently shows that playing a stringed instrument promotes significant cognitive, physical, and social benefits. Reading notes on a page that represent beat, rhythm, and scales are a musical lesson in division, fractions, and pattern, contributing to a greater understanding of mathematics. The fine movements used to create a sound, improve connectivity between auditory and sensorimotor areas of the brain. The mental, physical, and emotional rhythms students experience while performing, have been proven to improve focus and strengthen student concentration. Other significant benefits of playing a stringed instrument include having higher college acceptance percentages, strengthening mental health and lowering levels of depression and anxiety, and developing strong social skills.

In addition to receiving new stringed instruments, classroom music teachers at ECC buildings will be receiving 50 recorders to provide access to introductory, instrument performance. For young students, recorders provide kinesthetically appropriate access to an instrument that strengthens fine motor skills, hand dexterity, and finger placement. The skills obtained from playing the recorder may be transferred to band and orchestra instruments, as well as the piano.

As children learn to play the recorder, learning to coordinate their breath, their fingers, and their tongue helps brain development, and fosters an early love for music performance and builds confidence as they play simple songs and scales.

