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SCHOOL CULTURAL ARTS PROGRAM FOSTERS CREATIVITY

Kari McGann, Supervisor of Humanities

“Art is not what you see, but what you make others see,” said Edgar Degas. The Cultural Arts program in Readington Township Schools offers multiple opportunities for students to share with others and help them “see” what the arts are all about. Comprised of art, music, band, orchestra, and chorus classes, the Cultural Arts program helps students develop communication and self-expression abilities, performance skills, critical thinking skills, and an appreciation of history and culture. Beginning in kindergarten students participate in the arts program to experience new ways of thinking, learning, and creating. Elementary students enrich their cultural awareness through singing, playing instruments, painting, sculpting, and building their appreciation for the arts. Our students have multiple opportunities to showcase their talents through school concerts, art displays in the district, community exhibitions, and township events.

Art classes in our elementary schools provide students with an understanding of symmetry, balance, and depth; art and art forms in nature; awareness of different subject matter in an artwork (e.g., portraits, scenery, still life, and abstraction); and choices of lines, colors and other visual elements through creation of two- and three-dimensional art.

The music program at our elementary school is lively, engaging, and a real favorite among our youngest students. This year at our primary schools, students will take a musical journey around the world, learning music from a variety of cultures and countries. Families and community members are invited to the singing celebration on May 24th at TBS and on May 26th at WHS. Check each elementary school’s website for specific time information.

At Holland Brook Elementary School students may begin training in a musical instrument and join the *Samba Kids* drumming program. The strings program introduces students to the basics of violin, viola, and cello. These musicians will perform in the HBS Instrumental Spring Concert in June. Additionally, the fourth and fifth grade concerts performed folk dances, played Orff instrument accompaniments, and even demonstrated a two-part recorder piece to an enthusiastic audience in March.

As students move into our middle school, the visual arts program engages students in collaborative exploration of multiple approaches to art and design problems utilizing various materials and tools to explore personal interests, questions, and curiosity. Students develop their own personal style in drawing (shading), painting (self-portraits), sculpting, and computer design. Each year Readington Township has 8th graders accepted into the 9th Grade Gifted and Talented art program at Hunterdon Central.

The Drama program at Readington Middle School performed for a packed house with a performance of “The Fiddler on the Roof,” during the first week in March. Singing, dancing, and acting all came together in a performance that showed the power of community. The show was complemented by a pit orchestra with two eighth grade musicians; Violinist Evan Glas and Flautist Maya Montell were featured soloists.

The orchestra program at Readington Middle School has a wonderful collection of violin, viola, cello, and double bass musicians. Our orchestra students travel to music festivals each year to be adjudicated by fellow music professionals, and have historically been awarded ratings of Excellent

and Superior. Several 6th grade students have been invited to participate in the Central Jersey Music Educators Association (CJMEA) Honors Orchestra in April. The Viking Chamber Orchestra, new this year, is an auditioned grades 6-8 orchestra that has concentrated on more challenging pieces. The Eighth Grade Orchestra and Viking Chamber Orchestra will be participating in the *Music in the Parks Music Festival* in Hershey, Pennsylvania this coming May!

Readington Township's Cultural Arts program fosters students' love and creativity in the arts. Visit our elementary students as they perform in May at their singing celebrations. Community members are invited to attend the June 15th Somerset Patriot's baseball game to hear Holland Brook chorus members' perform. We welcome you to attend a performance by our musicians from our middle school band and orchestra as another opportunity to enjoy the arts in Readington Township. The beautiful world of art is alive and well in Readington Township Schools!