

McKechnie's before-school Band program is at very high risk of being **completely shut down**, eliminating the opportunity for younger beginners to learn music. The entire Gr4/5 & Gr6/7 before-school program at McKechnie will be shut down due to a perceived conflict with the new Magee afterschool program for Gr6/7s.

The motivation for Magee to start the "free" after school program (on Wednesday @ 3:15pm for strings & Thursday @ 3:15pm for band at Magee) was to gain more students into their high school band programs. If Magee's mission is to encourage more participants to join band/strings, doesn't it make sense to have the kids well-acquainted with music from a younger age and encourage students to develop an interest in music as early as possible?

McKechnie's Gr.4/5 band program is helping the Magee band program in many ways:

- Promotes an early interest in music
- Teaches beginners the basics of note reading and rhythm – all necessities in being able to play any instrument
- Creates an opportunity for young students to try music in a familiar setting
- Is convenient for families to allow their children to start music at a younger age

Once students have the basics of music, they will:

- Have the interest in continuing music in high school through a band or an orchestra
- Easily transition to a new program at a new school
- Easily earn new pieces with their established musicianship skills (making it less laborious for the music teachers to teach a large group in high school)

Without an early introduction to music at the elementary school level:

- Kids will develop other interests and become so busy in those other areas that starting "band" later on is a less likely option because it's not something they're familiar with
- Students will not develop an appreciation for music and will not be interested in trying this once they're in high school because they feel at a disadvantage of being far behind others
- Learning music will seem out of reach and more difficult than taking electives such as art, drama, home economics, shop skills, etc.

Please help **save the McKechnie Band Program!** It's a very unique opportunity for McKechnie's students to have the chance to learn a new instrument at the school in a convenient, before-school program. We are one of the very few elementary schools to still have a school band and it would be extremely sad to see this opportunity abolished. Thank you!