



WITH THEIR CLARINETS, Chase Copeland and Brianna Klima (above) warmed up for class at Oberlin Elementary. Samantha Anderson (below) practiced a note on her French horn.



Youngsters learn to make sweet music

Students carried black cases into the band room, and set them carefully on the floor or balanced them on their laps.

As they talked to their neighbors, each took his or her instrument out of the velvet-lined case and carefully

put it together. Some students wet reeds in their mouths while others practiced their finger positions.

From flutes to clarinets to trombones, drums to trumpets and other horns, each student was ready to play.

It was the first week for fifth graders to have their instruments at band class at Oberlin Elementary School, so the students are just starting to get used to them.

Teacher Christie Morris said the younger students started by trying out different instruments, because sometimes physical features don't allow the students to play one. She said she likes to put each student on the instrument they want because, that is the one way they will practice.

Each prospective band student then has to take a music theory test, she said, and if they pass, they are in. Parents then are invited to the school for an instrument display. The students know which instrument they will be playing by that time. The next morning, which was Friday, Sept. 10, the students get to start learning on their instruments.

Mrs. Morris said one of her biggest goals is to help students develop a love and enthusiasm for music. She said it is important to help build their self-confidence and self-discipline.

Each student, said Mrs. Morris, wrote down goals for her at the beginning of the year.

"It would be nice to see those goals accomplished, or at least have the students on their way to accomplishing them, by the end of the year," she said.

Mrs. Morris meets with the fifth grade woodwinds for 20 minutes a day and then the brass and percussion for 20 minutes in the afternoon.

Last year, she said, there were two band teachers so the groups could be split up, but this year she is the only one. She said she could do the groups every other day, but then the students need to play every day.

The sixth grade class meets in the morning. With the sixth graders, she went through their first-year band book quickly, and now they are on to their second-year book.

She said she has them playing sheet music twice a week. During the second semester, she added, she hopes to go to three times a week.

Each week, the band students do awards. Every student has a song they have to play. They then get an award if they are able to do it. The awards hang on the walls. Mrs. Morris said most of the fifth graders are on level 1 while the sixth graders are on level 3 or 4.

The students' first concert will be at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 6, and then there will be one at the end of the year.



ON THE DRUMS in sixth grade are Chad Williams, Dakota Soderlund, Josh Ritter and Tim Larson (left). Garrett Berry (above) puts his trombone together before band class started.



Story and photos by Kimberly Davis