

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am excited about sharing the art and fun of taiko with your students in an after-school club!

Taiko ensemble playing is rooted in an ancient musical practice that has continued but has also been transformed by innovators in California in the 1960s. Performing in a taiko ensemble requires collaboration and teamwork, active learning, and focus. It is deeply embedded in the history, culture and ethos of Japan, providing an opportunity to participate in music from a diverse perspective. Practice and performance include developing rhythmic musical skills, body awareness and coordination, breath and strength training and phonetic rhythmic language (kuchishoga).

Part of the culture surrounding playing taiko is respect (for the art form, history, teacher) and focus. Participants must demonstrate these values during rehearsals and any performances.

The ensemble may have opportunities to perform and connect with the community at events such as community circles, walk and roll events, for other after-school clubs at Oakhurst or potentially community events.

Rehearsals would be on Tuesdays, beginning October 7, 2025, from 3:00 to 4:30. Students would be dismissed from classes directly to Bucket Taiko. Parents are expected to make arrangements for after-school care or pick their student up promptly at the end of rehearsal. If you would like your student to have a snack prior to the practice, please provide an extra one in their backpack for that day. Each Tuesday that we have practice, afternoon pickup will need to be changed in Pickup Patrol to Taiko Drum.

To help develop and ensure group unity and cohesion, it is important that students commit to the ensemble and are at practices consistently for the practices. If you have experience with taiko or cultural expertise about Japan to share and would like to volunteer, please let us know. There will also be other opportunities for parents to volunteer to enhance the student experience.

The taiko bucket ensemble has been funded by a Decatur Education Foundation grant awarded in late 2023.

Sincerely,
F. Argean Vokes, M.M. Ed
Retired Music Teacher, Oakhurst Elementary School