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INSTRUMENTAL ASSISTANCE: Collection drive reduces number of students who must share in music programs

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Some trombones and trumpets were harder to give away than others, but donors to a musical instrument collection drive for the Clark County School District have managed to "make a dent" in the number of students having to share the same instruments in class.

Rick McEnaney, director of fine-arts education for the school district, said he could sense the trepidation on the part of some donors who had mixed feelings about parting with a beloved musical instrument.

One donor was an older woman and former concert performer who had stopped playing the violin.

"I could tell she still had some connection to it, but she wanted someone to be able to use it," McEnaney said.

Parting with other musical instruments was not nearly as wrenching. Many parents gave away their children's instruments that had been collecting dust in the attic or closet.

In all, the Make Music Matter Las Vegas appeal has collected 90 instruments through a promotion at Dunkin' Donuts stores and at a benefit concert by the Nevada Pops on Sept. 26.

All but a broken-down clarinet were good enough for use or were repairable. The clarinet will be disassembled so its parts can be recycled.

Make Music Matter also raised more than \$2,000 to pay the cost of refurbishing the instruments and purchasing new accessories such as mouth- pieces and instrument cases.

The Public Education Foundation still is accepting musical instruments on behalf of the school district. The instruments will go to high school and middle school music programs in "dire need" of resources, officials said.

Because the demand for music outstrips the supply of instruments, McEnaney estimates that 300 instruments must be shared by two or three students in the same classes.

Resources are tight since the school district cut \$120 million in programs this school year.

Because enrollment came under the projections this school year, there was some anxiety that art and music programs would undergo further reductions.

But McEnaney said he is grateful that no fine-arts teachers lost their jobs because of lower-than-

anticipated enrollment.

There were no program cuts, either, although some classes were consolidated.

But music teachers did not have to switch subjects to keep a job.

"As far as I know, we don't have any music teachers teaching algebra," McEnaney said. "That wouldn't be good for the students or the teachers."

A music teacher might be teaching more "music appreciation classes" so he or she can teach more students rather than only teaching a few students on how to play a particular instrument, McEnaney said.

In all, an estimated 180 teachers in the school district went through "surplussing" or a reassignment to another school to balance staffing and enrollment, said Ruben Murillo, president of the Clark County Education Association.

Neither Murillo nor district officials were aware of any teachers losing their job because of lower-than-expected enrollment.

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