

Dear 5th grade parent,

The end of the 2018-2019 school year is quickly approaching and as you speak to your child about their upcoming middle school experience, we would like to take the opportunity to tell you a little about the LMS band program and how your child can get involved.

Below is some information based on many frequently asked questions:

What will my student do in band class?

- ♪ Learn/review basic music reading skills
- ♪ Practice note reading, notation and rhythm reading skills on a regular basis
- ♪ Learn specific skills on chosen instruments
- ♪ Play varied music alone and as a group
- ♪ Practice time management and goal setting skills by developing practice plans and goals
- ♪ Practice critical listening skills through listening to and reflecting on various types of music
- ♪ Work on constructive criticism skills by listening to and evaluating our group performances
- ♪ Practice teamwork and group discussion skills

What does my child have to do outside of class for band?

- ♪ Each student is responsible for his or her own practice time and homework assignments
- ♪ Students practice to complete homework assignments out of the assigned music book
- ♪ Students will prepare for periodic playing tests given in class
- ♪ 6th grade band will participate in 4 concerts that are graded performances outside of school

What does the instrument fitting involve?

Starting Monday, April 1st, we will begin fitting students for brass, woodwind and percussion instruments. All students will be participating unless Mrs. Jones or Mr. Edwards are notified in advance. Percussion will be TRYING OUT for limited spots in the band. This will be done at the same time as the fitting and only students who indicate that they wish to TRYOUT will do so.

Brass and woodwind fittings will consist of assessing the student's ability to:

- 1) Produce a sound on the instrument's mouthpiece only
- 2) Hold the instrument properly and with natural ease
- 3) Produce a sound characteristic of that instrument when it is completely assembled. For brass instruments we will also look for the student's ability to match and sustain pitch.

Percussion tryouts will consist of testing student's abilities to:

- 1) Keep steady tempo
- 2) Echo rhythm patterns
- 3) Read and clap rhythms accurately
- 4) Hold sticks and read/play rhythms on the snare drum with natural ease.

We will only be inviting 15 students to join the percussion section for the 2019-2020 6th grade band.

Any student who wishes to try out for percussion will be allowed but please be aware that not everyone who tries out will be invited to play percussion. Those students who are not selected for percussion will have the option of choosing another instrument from those that Mrs. Jones or Mr. Edwards recommends.

If you do not want your student tested for band, please contact Mrs. Jones via email at becky.jones@usd469.net prior to testing.

What brass and woodwind instruments will my student be allowed to play in 6th grade band?

All students can choose from the following instruments: Flute, Clarinet, Trumpet and Trombone to start. Percussionists, again, will be invited to play in that section. Towards the end of their 6th grade year students will have the opportunity to expand their playing by trying other instruments such as Oboe, Bassoon, Bass Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone, Horn, Baritone and Tuba. **PLEASE NOTE THAT CLARINET STUDENTS WILL BE GIVEN FIRST OPPORTUNITY WITH REGARDS TO SWITCHING TO ANY SAXOPHONE.**

Why do you only let a few students participate in the percussion section?

This decision was made based on what is best for the students in our classroom both from a music education and classroom management standpoint. I would be happy to discuss this in more detail with anyone who might have questions or concerns. Please don't hesitate to contact Mrs. Jones at 727-1197 or becky.jones@usd469.net.

How will I know what instrument my student should play?

We will send out individual letters that will address your student's fitting and will give you our recommendations as to which instrument we believe they would have the most success playing based on their fitting outcomes as well as what they indicated they want to play after trying everything. We understand that some students may already have an idea of what they want to play and we want to do whatever we can to accommodate their wishes. However we do ask that you keep an open mind and know that our recommendations are based on what we believe is in the best interest of your child and their success in band, in our professional opinion as musicians and music teachers.

Instruments are expensive! How will I afford this?

We have several options available to for parents who have concerns about purchasing an instrument. We will briefly discuss options regarding instrument rentals at the information night listed below.

What happens after the fitting?

After the fitting there will be an informational meeting for parents of students who are interested in participating in band on **Monday, May 6th at 6:00pm at the Lansing Middle School Band Room**. At this short meeting you will receive information about the LMS band program and how your student will be involved. Reps from the Tune Shop will also be available to answer questions and do instrument evaluations on instruments you already have at home that might need a little love before they're played again. **We highly encourage all parents of students interested in band to attend this meeting** as there will be a great deal of information handed out and covered. Please see the following link for access to our band calendar:

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=becky.jones%40lansinglions.org&ctz=America%2FChicago>

Also, please visit our band website at:

<https://www.usd469.net/vnews/display.v/SEC/Lansing%20Middle%20School%20%28Grades%206-8%29%7CActivities%3E%3ELansing%20Middle%20School%20Band>

I am not a musician! How can I help my student if I don't know anything about band?

This is a great question and a very valid concern. I would highly encourage you to check out the book "The Music Parents' Guide – A Survival Kit for the New Music Parent" by Anthony Mazzocchi for some great insight into what to expect as a band parent and how you can help your child succeed in music. It is \$6.99 on Amazon.com and a very quick, easy read. Also visit his blog at musicparentsguide.com for some great articles and answers to questions. As always, you can also contact Mrs. Jones or Mr. Edwards with any questions or concerns you might have as well.

If you have any questions about instrument fitting, the band programs in the Lansing School District or if you just have questions about band in general, please don't hesitate to call. We can also be reached through the email address listed below.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to meeting all of your children!

Sincerely,

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