

Dear Beginning Band Parents,

Congratulations! You have made a wonderful decision in your child's future and success as a student and beyond. By participating in band and the study of music, your student will learn many valuable life lessons, such as teamwork, self-discipline, improved self-esteem, confidence and the ability to set and attain goals. Welcome to the band program at Laingsburg Middle School!

To assist you in preparing for the exciting world of instrumental music, I have included a list of equipment and accessories. First and foremost is an instrument. The school has a limited amount of instruments for students to use at this time. They are available on a need basis and some students may need to share instruments in order to accommodate all students. Therefore, it is recommended that students rent or purchase an instrument.

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**WHEN DOES BAND START** - Band will begin the first week of school. **Students will need their instrument for their second band class.**

**INSTRUMENTATION** - The beginning band instruments are: flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, trumpet, trombone, baritone horn (euphonium), and percussion (bell kit with practice pad and stick bag with sticks.) It is extremely important that we achieve a proper balance of instrumentation, so please have a minimum of 2 choices of instruments. We need a lot of flute, clarinets, trumpets, trombones and baritones. Often too many students sign up for saxophone and percussion. We must limit the number of students beginning on these instruments. Remember that all instruments provide the opportunity for musical experience, growth and fun! Instruments do not grow – children do! Without proper instrumentation, the band will not sound right.

**HOW CLASSES WORK** - Each student will have band class daily during the school day. All classes are 50 minutes long. Students do not miss academic instruction during band time.

**GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS** - Band is a full year course. A positive attitude and a commitment to the entire year of band is necessary. Students need to work to be the best musicians possible. Attendance with instrument, pencil and book is required at all band classes in order to succeed. Band concerts are the outgrowth of our class studies and are required of all students. Being a successful musician is the result of steady practice and a willingness to do your best at all times.

**PRACTICING** - This is band homework. Students must practice at home in order to reinforce and develop the skills they learn in class. (Imagine how well a sports team would do without regular practice!) A new assignment is given every class. For best results set a practice time of 15 - 20 minutes each day in an area away from distractions with a good chair, lighting, and a music stand. Parents, remember that you are part of your child's success in music through your encouragement and monitoring of their practice time.

**SUPPLIES** - Clarinet and Saxophones should have at least 2 good reeds at all times, but it is recommended that any instrument with a reed have a box of reeds stored in the case (or at home). Start with a 2 or 2 1/2 strength reed. All woodwinds also need to have a swab for cleaning their instrument. Saxophones need a neck strap. Brass players should have valve oil, slide oil or slide cream as needed for their instrument. Percussionists need two matching drum sticks (sizes 2B or 5A), which should be included in the stick bag. **It is also best if all students have an inexpensive fold-up music stand at home for their practice sessions.**

We will be using *Essential Elements 2000 Comprehensive Band Method-Book 1*. The book includes a Play-Along CD & DVD as well as some computer software to enhance your student's practice time.

I have included a list of recommended music stores where instruments may be purchased or rented and all of the accessories and books should be available. Most of these stores offer rent-to-own programs as well. If you are planning to rent, the earlier you do so, the better your chances are of getting a newer or better quality instrument. Rentals are in high demand in September as all music programs are starting up.

## **ADVANTAGES TO RENTING**

- Student has his/her “own “ instrument to take pride in and responsibility of.
- There is a limited commitment if you are not sure your student will stay in band all 3 years of middle school or may change instruments.
- A good quality instrument. The quality of the instrument will determine your student’s success.
- You can take advantage of a Rent-to Own option so that the money spent is going towards the ownership of the instrument.

## **ADVANTAGES TO OWNING**

- Student has his/her “own“ instrument to take pride in and responsibility of.
- Your student will have an instrument to use throughout middle school and high school.
- A good quality instrument. The quality of the instrument will determine your student’s success. When purchasing instruments please be very cautious. There are many low cost instruments available through Internet vendors, pawnshops and stores like Wal-Mart, Costco, and Target. These instruments are made very poorly and with inexpensive materials. They often break within the first year and there are no replacement parts available for these instruments causing the instrument to become worthless. Remember the saying, “You get what you pay for.” Please try to purchase from reputable vendors and name brands that have stood the test of time. I have included a list of recommended vendors and Brand-name instruments. There are often many good quality used instruments available at many of these music stores for a lower price. If you have any questions in regards to an instrument or equipment, please feel free to send me an email or contact me at school. I would be glad to assist you in this important decision.

### **A Rationale for Music Education**

Why music should be included as a basic part of the curriculum

1. Music is worth knowing.
2. Music is one of the most important manifestations of our cultural heritage. Children need to know about Beethoven and Louis Armstrong as well as about Newton and Einstein.
3. Music is a potential in every individual that, like all potential, should be developed to it fullest.
4. Music provides an outlet for creativity, self-expression and individual uniqueness. It enables us to express our noblest thought and feelings.
5. Music teaches students about unique aspects of their relationships with other human beings and with the world around them, in their own and other cultures.
6. Music opens avenues of success for students who may have problems in other areas of the curriculum and opens approaches to learning that can be applied in other contexts.
7. Studying music increases the satisfaction students derive from music by sharpening sensitivity, raising their level of appreciation and expanding their musical horizons.
8. Music is one of the most powerful and profound symbol systems that exists.
9. Music helps students learn a significant lesson - that not all aspects of life are quantifiable.
10. Music exalts the human spirit.

Adapted from The School Music  
Program: Description and Standards,  
Music Educators National  
Conference, 2nd ed., 1987.

"I would teach children music, physics, and philosophy; but most importantly music, for in the patterns of music and all the arts are the keys to learning." - Plato

### **About The Laingsburg Band Program**

Future opportunities for band members

The Laingsburg Community Schools have one of the most outstanding band programs in the area, and it all begins in our elementary schools. The concert band is the core of the band program. It meets in all Laingsburg Schools during the school day. Beginning in the 7th grade and running through High School, band students have the opportunity to participate in Solo and Ensemble Contest and Concert Band Contests and Honor Bands. The High Schools' Concert Bands have taken many trips to different locations, including an opportunity to perform at Disney World's Magic Kingdom, Epcot Center, and Hollywood Studios, as well as Cedar Point during 7th & 8th grade. Students also have the chance to play in other groups outside of the Concert Bands. Jazz Bands is offered as a zero hour class in High School, which participate in various Jazz Festivals throughout the state. In addition, the award winning Laingsburg Marching Band performs for football games and marching festivals. This wonderful future is waiting for you when you join the beginning band program!

### **Some Frequently Asked Questions About Elementary Band**

#### **What about academic instruction?**

Band classes are scheduled so they do not conflict with classroom instructional time. No academic classes are missed by those students attending band. Did you also know that the study of music makes you smarter? Students with experience in music performance scored higher on the SAT's: 51 points higher on the verbal test and 39 points higher on the math test.

#### **Can my child be in both band and P.E.?**

Students may participate in both band and P.E., as they do not meet at the same time.

#### **My son/daughter is a good athlete. Will this be a problem?**

Concert Band and sports do not conflict in middle school. Even in the upper grades, remember that concert bands meet during the school day. Outside of the occasional conflict of a game and a concert on the same night, this is usually not a problem. In fact, sports and music compliment each other in many ways, including the development of responsibility, self-discipline, commitment, self-confidence, self-esteem, leadership skills and the importance of practice to achieve success.

#### **Do we need to take private lessons to be in band?**

The instructors will provide all necessary instruction for beginning band. However, private lessons are great to make the most of your abilities, to review and solidify the basics, or for getting you over any rough places. You can benefit at any level, whether beginner or professional.

I look forward to making music with your children and instilling a lifelong appreciation of music

Musically

Thomas Cousineau  
Director of Bands  
Laingsburg Community Schools