

May 2, 2011

Dear parent/guardian:

Congratulations on your child's decision to play a musical instrument. Studies have repeatedly shown that there is no activity that does more to cultivate and predict academic success than participation in school music programs throughout elementary, middle and high school. Music is the practical application of many of the concepts learned in the classes your child will take during his or her entire academic career.

Your child, _____, came to the CLES band room today to try instruments for beginning band next year. Each student was asked to select his or her top three choices. Your child's selections were as follows:

___ Flute

___ Clarinet

___ Alto Saxophone

___ Trumpet

___ Trombone

After working with your child, we have determined that the **best fit** for him or her is _____.

We only listed a **best fit** that was different from students' top choice if it was obvious that your child would struggle with their top choice due to their physical makeup. Not every student may be able to play every instrument.

Acquiring an Instrument

There are many ways to get an instrument. It is HIGHLY recommended that families avoid the temptation to purchase the newest cheap instruments found in Wal-Mart, Target, or anywhere on the internet. These instruments look great, but are almost always cheaply made and are very costly to repair. (As you will quickly learn, repairs to instruments played by beginning band members tend to be a matter of "when" not a matter of "if".)

We recommend Fawley Music Company in Sabraton for instrument rental or purchase. Fawley's rent-to-own program gives parents instrument options without the commitment of buying, just in case the student decides not to continue in band.

Fawley's carries a full line of high quality instruments, has a repair shop in-house, and students can always trade instruments at little or no additional cost. Repairs are covered in the rental agreement. Fawley's number is 304.292.3351.

While you can certainly acquire an instrument in other ways, it is important to remember that one of the biggest factors in whether a student will have success in band is the quality of the instrument they are playing.

We also recommend waiting until a couple of weeks before school starts to get instruments to avoid the possibility of students damaging the instrument or developing bad habits.

Acquiring a Band Book

We are considering a change to a new band book next year, so we cannot tell you which band book to purchase at this time. However, Fawley's will carry the books, and the cost is usually under \$10.00. If you go into Fawley's a couple of weeks before school starts next year, they will know which book we have chosen.

Band Start Time

Beginning band will start with flutes, clarinets, and alto saxophones in the CLES band room on Monday, August 22 (the third day of school). Trumpets and trombones will start Wednesday, August 24. Until students are ready for full band (most likely sometime in late October or early November), the schedule will be as follows:

Monday – flutes, clarinets, alto saxophones

Tuesday – flutes, clarinets, alto saxophones

Wednesday – trumpets, trombones

Thursday- trumpets, trombones

Contact

If you have any questions, I can be reached at the University High School Band Office at 304.291.9275. My e-mail address is mpalmer@access.k12.wv.us. Additional information can be found in the Cheat Lake Elementary Band section at www.uhsband.net. I look forward to working with you and your child.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Palmer
Director of Bands