



## Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Band

Alison Seeger - Director

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304 4th Street S. Walker, MN 56484

Dear Beginning Band Parents,

Your child will soon have the exciting opportunity to choose an instrument and play in band in the 6th grade! By choosing band for your child, you are not only giving them the opportunity to become musically proficient, you are choosing the group of students with whom they will spend a lot of time and develop long-lasting friendships. An education should prepare students for a career, teach them how to be good citizens, and train them to be intelligent human beings who can appreciate the beautiful things in life. Band students learn self-discipline, time management, personal responsibility, social skills, creativity, and the concept of working as an organized group toward a common goal. All of these skills will have a heavy influence on their work ethic and success throughout their school years and into adulthood.

Please look through the materials in the rest of this packet for more information regarding 6th grade band. This packet addresses the following questions:

- Who can participate in 6th grade band?
- When will my child begin band?
- How will my child select an instrument and how will I know which one they selected?
- How does my child join band?
- How will I obtain an instrument for my child?
- What is Summer Band, is it required, and how do I sign up?
- What are the benefits of being in band?

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to ask! I look forward to seeing your child in Band!

Sincerely,

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### **Who can participate in band?**

All current 5th grade students who are interested in learning to play a band instrument, read music and perform in a large musical ensemble are invited to participate in 6th grade band. Success on an instrument is determined by the desire to succeed and the motivation to practice consistently. Students participating in the beginning band program are part of an ongoing instrumental music curriculum from grade six through twelve. Band students at the middle and high school levels have additional opportunities to perform in special ensembles, participate in solo and ensemble contests and jazz band.

### **When will my child start band?**

Band instruction starts in the beginning of the school year along with an opportunity to participate in Summer Lessons. During the school year, students are signed up for band as a class that meets during the day during 3<sup>rd</sup> hour. Students will have a small group instruction 2 times per week along with an ensemble rehearsal on Fridays.

### **How will my child select an instrument and how will I know which one they selected?**

The process of instrument selection will take place in May of the 5th grade year. Each child will meet with Mrs. Seeger to help in the selection of an instrument best suited to him or her. The most important task during instrument selection is finding an instrument that each student will be successful playing and one that he/she is interested in playing. Instrument selection is based on the student's personal choice, physical characteristics necessary to play an instrument and the instrumentation needed to provide a well-balanced band.

### **How will my child select an instrument and how will I know which one they selected?**

Hands-On Instrument Selection: After a demonstration in May, the students will have the opportunity to actually play the instruments of their choice with the help of a Mrs. Seeger and the Instrument Ensemble Class! Based on this exploration, student interest, and teacher input, students decide which instrument to play in 6th grade band. Students will have an opportunity again in the Fall to choose an instrument to play in 6<sup>th</sup> grade band. Please fill out the Instrument interest sheet as soon as possible!

First Day of School: 6th grade band starts the first day of school! Those that did not attend summer band lessons will have to choose an instrument and will get a quick start introduction to their instrument.

### **How will I obtain an Instrument for my child?**

- A. Obtaining an instrument from a local music store. It will be necessary to obtain the following instruments from a local music store if you do not presently own one. All dollar amounts are approximate figures. To give your child the best opportunity for success, it is recommended that you rent or purchase an instrument from an area music store. The quality of instruments purchased from them is much higher than some of the "bargains" found from online retailers.
  - Flute, Clarinet, Percussion Kit - Approximately \$25 per month based on choice of new, like new, or used plus \$6.45 maintenance plan (Highly Recommended)\*



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- Trumpet or Trombone Approximately \$30 per month based on choice of new, like new, or used plus \$6.45 maintenance plan (Highly Recommended)\*
  - Alto Saxophone Approximately \$49 per month based on choice of new, like new, or used plus \$6.45 maintenance plan (Highly Recommended)\*
- \*Prices are an estimate and may not reflect individual store pricing.

B. Using a family or friend owned instrument. In many cases, families have instruments available from other family members or friends. While this is a great option for obtaining an instrument, that particular instrument may not be best suited for your child and could limit their success and level of enjoyment in band. If you do choose to use a family owned instrument, it is extremely important that it is in good playing condition. Instruments that are old, or which have been neglected for some time, often need the attention of a good instrument repair technician. Many music stores in the area have qualified repair technicians on staff. \*\*If you have a family owned instrument it is recommended that your son / daughter not assemble or play their instrument before their first lesson. Many instruments have been damaged from improper handling and poor playing habits are easily developed.

### **What is Summer Band, is it required, and how do I sign up?**

WHA offers free summer band lessons for any student interested in joining the WHA band program. Lessons are not required, but will give your child a jumpstart on band for the fall. Sign-up sheets and permission forms will be passed out in May and a lesson schedule will be determined before school is over. Lessons typically start at the beginning of June.

### **What are the benefits of being in Band?**

There have been numerous studies in recent years proving that instrumental music students rank higher in their classes, score better on standardized tests, and are better readers than their peers who do not play musical instruments. Music is considered to be one of the human brain's seven intelligences, but it is the only one that requires the use of all seven intelligences at the same time. This means that band students are using more of their brain power at one time than they will in any other class.

While the above information may be appealing to you as a parent, the most appealing thing about band to a student is that band is fun! It is enjoyable to create music with your friends. Band is unlike any other class students will take. It gives them the opportunity to get out from behind a desk and express themselves through music while exercising their bodies and brains at the same time.