

Legacy Jr. High Bands

Dear 6th grade Parent/Guardian,

As a seventh grader next year, your student will have the opportunity to participate in the Legacy Jr. High band program. If you would like your student to show an increase in responsibility, exhibit more discipline, improve academic skills, gain a life-long talent, and more importantly feel a sense of self worth and accomplishment, then you want to get them involved with the band program at Legacy Jr. High.

All students are required to take a certain amount of fine arts credits. Your student's participation in the band program will fulfill much more than the required credits. Our classes meet as a part of the school schedule. *All students are welcome, with no musical experience necessary, for any of the brass or woodwind instruments. Students planning to enroll in percussion need to have completed at least one successful year of piano.* The beginning band program will teach your student everything they need to know in order to be successful on their instrument. You may rent or buy your instrument from local music stores at very reasonable rates. Our local music vendors are aware of the economy and are going to great lengths to ensure that instruments will be affordable for anyone who desires to play. Legacy Jr. High also has a limited number of large instruments for rent.

You do not need to choose which instrument your child will play at this time; I will assist you with that. Your student just needs to make the decision to play an instrument. Please read this letter completely for a list of instruments from which beginning students can choose and important information regarding each of these instruments. After registering for Beginning Band, I will meet with each student and parent/guardian individually to discuss which instrument they choose.

Wind Instruments – Woodwinds and Brass

Tuesday, February 1 from 3:30-5:00pm in the Band Room #1509 (Open house format)

OR

Wednesday, February 2 from 5:30-7:00pm in the Band Room #1509 during 6th Grade Open House

If you cannot make either of these dates, please email me and we will find a time that works.

Percussion auditions – Monday, February 7 from 3:30-4:30pm in the Band Room #1509 (no appointment necessary). Percussionists do not need to come on February 1 or 2. Percussionists, please come prepared with a piano piece that shows your ability in music, be prepared to count some rhythms, sight-read a melody on the piano, and complete a short evaluation of musical notation including note and rest names and values.

The students begin their experience with our **Summer Band Program** which meets for two weeks of training. It is best if students come for both weeks. More information on this program will be provided when we meet to discuss your instrument choice.

To begin your students experience with the LJH Bands, sign them up for Beginning Band Level 1 when they register for junior high. If your student has already played a band instrument for at least one year, you will need to arrange for them to play for me to determine if they are skilled enough to perform in one of our intermediate or advanced ensembles.

I am excited at the prospect of working with your student and allowing them the opportunity to explore the many benefits that playing an instrument has to offer. If you have any questions, please contact me at 801-402-4700 ext. 54728 or email me. I will be glad to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

John Madsen

Director of Bands

jomadsen@dsdmail.net

Woodwind Instruments

Flute

The flute is a popular instrument in the woodwind family. Due to its popularity future musical opportunities may be limited because too many students choose this instrument. For example, in a 60 member band you would want a maximum of 8 flutes.

Clarinet (the violins of the band)

A band needs a large number of clarinets. Later, many clarinetists expand their musical opportunities by learning to play other woodwind instruments in addition to the clarinet. Any student who is interested in playing the saxophone must start on clarinet.

Oboe & Bassoon (the double reeds)

Oboe and bassoon are instruments that present special musical challenges. Gifted students often find these attractive. You will typically have no more than two oboes and two bassoons in a band.

Brass Instruments

Trumpet

The highest pitched of the brass instruments. Sometimes there are too many trumpets. When this happens some trumpets decide to play the French horn, tuba, or baritone.

French horn

The French horn or horn, much like the double reeds presents special musical challenges. It is a very important instrument that typically is played by the more musically gifted students.

Trombone

Future musical opportunities are more abundant on this instrument than most. Many players later learn to play the baritone and/or tuba in addition to the trombone.

Percussion

Percussion is often the most misunderstood instrument. Many students are under the false impression that they will be playing drums and/or drum set all of the time. In reality the beginning percussionists spend the majority of the first year on the bell kit and snare pad. Percussionists are expected to learn all of the percussion instruments which include mallets (bells, vibes, marimba, xylophone, and chimes), drums (snare, bass, and toms), timpani, and auxiliary percussion (triangle, tambourine, claves, etc.). There is more responsibility and pressure put on the percussionists than any other instrument. Students must be self-motivated, hard working, dedicated, mature, and able to work in small groups or alone without constant supervision. **Any student interested in playing percussion must audition in order to even be considered for percussion.** During that time students will demonstrate their knowledge of note names (treble & bass clef), note values, time signatures, key signatures, and other basic music theory concepts. **A maximum of 10** beginning percussionists will be allowed in the percussion class this year. Students who are not selected to play percussion are invited to select

another wind instrument with the help of Mr. Madsen.

Important Considerations When Choosing an Instrument

Consider your body shape and design. Your body may not agree with your 1st choice of instrument. For example, if you have full lips you are going to find it harder to succeed on the French horn or trumpet.

Which instrument will allow you the most opportunities? If you choose a popular instrument you will have to be one of the very best players in order to reach your goals. For example, the top ensemble at most high schools take 8 flutes. You would be competing against over 20 other players for one of eight positions. A band is a lot like a sports team. Each position must be filled in order to be successful. It is in your best interest to choose an instrument that fits you and that is needed in the ensemble. Just like a football team only needs one quarterback at a time a band also needs a specific number of players on each instrument.

What instrument you are interested in. This actually has less influence than any reason. Since you probably have no experience on a band instrument you have no idea what the challenges of the instrument are. The instrument you think you want to play may be the worst choice physically. Have an open mind and think about the long term goals of playing an instrument. There is something to be said for motivation but that will only last a short while if the instrument you have chosen is not suited to you.

The Worst Reasons to Choose an Instrument

Every person in my family has played the same instrument. Music is not genetic. Just because one family member is suited to or has success on an instrument does not mean another family member will also.

We already own it. While cost is certainly an issue it should not be the deciding factor. A student who is not physically suited to play an instrument will struggle, fall behind, get frustrated, and ultimately quit. If you already own an instrument that is not suited to your student many of the area music stores accept trades or will buy your instrument. This would allow you to choose an appropriate instrument and not lose your initial investment.

All of my friends are going to play the (clarinet, etc.). The friendships made in band will last a lifetime. You will spend countless hours practicing, rehearsing, and performing together. Playing a different instrument than a friend will not hurt your friendship; it will probably help it by eliminating the competition that naturally comes within any section of the band.

I want an instrument that will fit in my backpack. If you can't find the motivation to carry home an instrument that won't fit in your back pack you probably don't have the motivation to play an instrument.

The Bottom Line

My goal is to get every student playing the instrument on which they will have the best chance of succeeding. Playing an instrument is challenging enough without placing avoidable hurdles in front of the student such as picking an instrument that the student will have physical problems playing. I have listed some considerations that should be discussed between student and parent/guardian. When I meet with each student and parent/guardian **please have at least two instruments in mind** as possibilities for the 7th grade year.