

# **Bismarck Public Schools**



## **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Band Handbook 2020/2021**

Program Overview  
And  
Registration Information

# Welcome to the Bismarck Public Schools 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Band Program

Dear 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents,

Your child will soon have the exciting opportunity to choose an instrument and play in band in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade! In January, the fifth grade students will be attending an instrument selection and possible orientation day at the middle school they will attend next year. During this day, the fifth grade students will attend a concert, where the instruments will be demonstrated. After the concert every 5<sup>th</sup> grade student will have the opportunity to try a few different band instruments in order to determine which one will be the best fit for that student.

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 6<sup>th</sup> grade band. This packet addresses the following questions:

**Who can participate in 6<sup>th</sup> 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?**

**Should I rent an instrument right away in April and let my child try playing it?**

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

**What are the benefits of being in band?**

If you have further questions which need to be answered, please contact one of the band directors below or call the fine arts office at 323-4082.

We look forward to seeing your child in band next year!

Sincerely,

The Bismarck Public Schools Middle School Band Staff

**Horizon Middle School**

Melinda Halverson

melinda\_halverson@bismarckschools.org

Sona Houle

Sona\_houle@bismarckschools.org

**Simle Middle School**

Ryan Clark

ryan\_clark@bismarckschools.org

Craig DeVos

craig\_devos@bismarckschools.org

**Wachter Middle School**

David Augustadt

david\_augustadt@bismarckschools.org

**Middle School Percussion Specialist**

Brad Stockert

brad\_stockert@bismarckschools.org

## Who can participate in 6<sup>th</sup> grade 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, jazz band and marching band.

## When will my child begin band?

Band instruction starts in the beginning of the school year along with an opportunity to participate in a jump start summer band camp. During the school year, students are signed up for band as a class that meets during the day in their 6th grade schedule. Students will have band every day and on average students will have small group/sectional time three days per week. Weekly schedules will vary from school to school, but will all follow a similar model.

## 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 January of the 5th grade year. Each child will meet with a music teacher or musician for several minutes 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.

After the instrument selection process, you will receive information as to what instrument your child chose.

## How does my child join band?

## **January**

### **SIPS Concert & Instrument Demos:**

All fifth grade students in the district will attend a High School Wind Ensemble concert. The students will also attend a High School Band, Middle School Band or Jazz Band concert at the Middle School they will attend next year. The concert at the middle school will be a short concert and a demonstration of all the instruments available for 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to play in band. These concerts will also highlight the type of music that students will be able to perform as they progress through the program while giving them an opportunity to experience these instruments in a performance setting.

### **Hands-On Instrument Selection:**

After the Middle School Concert the students will have the opportunity to actually play at least two instruments of their choice with the help of a music teacher or musician that has experience playing these instruments! Based on this exploration, student interest, and teacher input, students decide which instrument to play in 6<sup>th</sup> grade band.

## **Mid January/Early February**

### **Middle School Registration:**

During the month of February, counselors from the middle schools will assist 5<sup>th</sup> graders in registering for their 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes. At this point your child should sign up for band even if they are unsure of the instrument that they will be playing in class. Their exact class period will be determined later.

## **Late March – Early April**

- Parents receive notification of their child's instrument selection & band camp registration form.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade band directors finalize 6<sup>th</sup> Grade registration.
- Families arrange for the rental/purchase of an instrument. We recommend families pick up their instruments in July or arrange for delivery to Summer Band Camp.
- Students should not assemble or try to play instruments, but should wait for instruction to begin in Summer Band.

## **August**

### **Summer Band:**

To enable 6<sup>th</sup> grade band classes to begin more efficiently and progress faster at the beginning of the school year, Bismarck Public Schools provides a Summer Band Camp for incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade band students. This camp is a two week, half day experience that places each band student with a specialist on their instrument. Though this session is NOT REQUIRED, it is STRONGLY ENCOURAGED. If a student cannot attend the summer band camp, six private lessons are highly encouraged. Attendance at Summer Band and private lessons are not a prerequisite for 6<sup>th</sup> grade band class.

The Summer Band Camp will tentatively be held at Simle Middle School from August 10-14 and 17-20 with a Concert at Simle on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Any schedule changes will be noted in future mailings.

### **First Day of School:**

6<sup>th</sup> grade band starts the first day of school! Those that did not attend summer band camp 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)\***

### **Trumpet      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)\***

### **Euphonium      Horn      Oboe**

**Approximately \$59 per month based on choice of new, like new, or used plus \$6.45 maintenance plan (Highly Recommended)\***

### **Bassoon**

**Approximately \$79 per month based on choice of new, like new, or used plus \$8.95 maintenance plan (Highly Recommended)\***

*\*Prices are an estimate and may not reflect individual store pricing.*

## B. Using a family 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. Our local music stores 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.

## C. Scholarship Opportunities

Scholarship opportunities are available for qualifying families on a limited basis at some of the middle schools and through the Share the Music Program. Please communicate any needs to your director. Each school will work diligently to secure instruments for students in need.

### Should I rent an instrument right away in April and let my child try playing it?

NO. It is strongly recommended that families reserve a rental instrument from a local music store in April or May. Families are then encouraged to wait to pick up their instrument until the week before summer band starts. Some of the music stores also offer the option to have your instrument delivered to Summer Band Camp. This will prevent the start of poor playing habits and instrument damage from improper handling.

## Summer Band Camp

Bismarck Public Schools provides a district wide Summer Band Camp for incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade band students. This camp is a two week, half day experience at the beginning of August at a single district location. During this time students are placed into a small group lesson setting with a specialist on their instrument. Because of each instrument's uniqueness, this program provides students with an accelerated level of progress. This includes assembling and caring for their instrument, producing a proper sound, and mastery of each instrument's first five notes.

In addition to the small group lessons, the half day schedule includes music theory instruction and full band rehearsals. At the end of the two week camp, the students have the opportunity to perform in their first band concert. Along with the musical benefits of the camp, students also get to meet and work with district band teachers from all levels and meet other students who will be their future classmates as they progress through the band program.

Band camp ensures student success and enables the band to progress at a quicker rate right from the start. If your child is unable to attend band camp, please do not let that discourage your child from joining the class.

This year Summer Band Camp will be held at Simle Middle School from August 10-14 and 17-20. Any schedule changes will be noted in future mailings. Reminders about the camp will be sent via Powerschool as a Power Announcement. Up-to-date information can be found under district announcements on the BPS website and fine arts section (Activities tab, district activities, fine arts) on the district website.

# 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.

## Student Quotes About Band

### What are students saying about band?

#### Quotes from students who have been in band for 3-5 years:

- ♪ “You meet a lot of awesome people and your instrument section becomes like a family.”
- ♪ “It is a great opportunity to make friends with similar interests, but it is also a great way to make memories and learn something new.”
- ♪ “It’s like learning a whole new language with notes.”
- ♪ “I get to experience the joy of doing something I enjoy with other people.”
- ♪ “After a concert I feel like I have really accomplished something.”
- ♪ “You get to know each other really well and get to play fun music, too!”
- ♪ “It’s very hands on.”
- ♪ “It is a wonderful thing when we come together with our friends to create beautiful music that can help us express our feelings.”
- ♪ “It’s a nice change from all of our other classes.”
- ♪ “I like being in band because it’s a great way to express yourself and it’s a good outlet if you’re stressed or upset.”
- ♪ “I love the instrument I play and how it comes together with other instruments. Band has given me a hobby, friends, opportunities, and so much more.”