



SPRING LAKE BANDS

January 31, 2012

Dear Eighth Grade Band Students and Parents:

The intent of this letter is to provide you with some information about the Spring Lake High School Band Program. If someone from your family is or was a member of the HS band, you'll probably just skim through this, but for you new families, please read on.

It is my hope that every current eighth grade band student will continue playing in band because high school band is where the fun *really* begins. It is an enjoyable experience for students to be a part of a large ensemble in which they will meet new friends and also have a variety of performance opportunities. Mr. Grevengoed and I have put together a list of frequently asked questions. Please read them and if you have any questions that were not covered below, feel free to contact me.

Thanks,

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL BAND

What performing ensembles exist at the high school level? *Marching Band, Concert Band, Symphonic Band, Jazz Band, and Pep Band.*

What other performance opportunities exist? *Solo & Ensemble Festivals, All-State Band (audition required), and Pit Orchestra (audition required).*

Is band a full-year class (all three trimesters)? *Yes, band members are required to be in band for the full year. Only in rare instances do we allow a member to not be in band for a trimester. Check with Mr. Truskowski if you think you have a class conflict. Upperclassmen may be in marching band during first trimester, then jazz band for trimesters 2&3. Freshman members that pass an audition and are eligible for jazz band must also enroll in concert band (for freshman year only). Please contact Mr. Truskowski if you have questions about this.*

Is there a requirement to be in jazz band? *Yes, permission from Mr. Truskowski is required (usually an audition is necessary).*

Do all students play in the pep band? *Yes, the pep band performs at many girls' and boys' basketball games. All students are required to play in the pep band a minimum of 3 evenings during the year.*

The remaining questions pertain to Marching Band.

Do I have to attend band camp to be in the high school marching band? *Yes, and you'll be glad you did. Marching band and especially band camp is a lot of fun. Please read the enclosed article about marching band on page 3.. A detailed packet regarding band camp will be available for download at springlakebands.org toward the end of the school year. An informational meeting for parents will be held two weeks before camp.*

When is marching band camp? *Band camp will be held from July 23-27. It is held at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, MI.*

What is the cost of band camp? *Total cost for the camp is \$225. This covers lodging in the dorm rooms, meals, rehearsal space, and a marching band t-shirt. Students who have participated in fundraisers (not including magazine sale) have a fundraiser account with their profits from those sales. This credit can be used to defray the camp cost. A \$50 non-refundable deposit for band camp will be due on the final day of school this year – June 8. This secures each student's spot in the band. The remaining balance of \$175 will be due at the parent meeting.*

Are there any other fees associated with marching band other than the band camp fee? *There is a \$25 uniform usage fee. This will cover any repairs that need to be made to the uniform and will cover the cost of lost gloves, lost plumes, forgotten socks, etc. This must be paid at one of the uniform fitting dates (the fitting dates will be listed in the band camp packet). Freshman members of the band will also need to purchase their first pair of gloves (\$5) and a pair of black drillmaster marching shoes (\$30). Students will be fitted for shoes on the uniform fitting dates. Shoes will be ordered for students before the first performance.*

What fundraisers are left before the end of the school year? *\$1 chocolate bars (box of 50) will be available in the spring. There is also an Easter candy sale in March. Since the band will be going on a trip to Toronto, Canada in the spring of 2013, there will be plenty of upcoming fundraising opportunities.*

I participate in a fall sport, so I shouldn't play in the marching band, right? *Wrong, we have numerous golfers, runners, cheerleaders, basketball, and football players in the marching band. Rehearsal and performance conflicts can be worked out between the band directors and the athletic department.*

How often does the marching band perform? *The band will play at all home football games, a couple parades, and 3-4 marching band competitions. The band competitions are on Saturdays (usually in the evening). Students will receive a performance calendar in the band camp packet. Attendance at all performances is required.*

Are there any rehearsals outside of the school day? *Yes, the full band rehearses every Monday at the HS from 6:00-9:00 p.m. These rehearsals start on July 30 and run until October 15.*

What about percussion and color guard rehearsals? *These sections begin rehearsing before band camp and hold several additional rehearsals throughout the year. Students interested in auditioning for these sections will receive information in the spring.*

How are students graded? *Students will receive a bi-weekly participation grade which will reflect their work ethic, preparation, and behavior. Performances are a large percentage of the trimester grade – since every member has a spot on the field, it is imperative that students be present for all performances.*

Column: The best extracurricular activity at many high schools is band, particularly marching band

By Julie Mack | Kalamazoo Gazette
March 23, 2010

A friend and I who have eight children between us who have all gone through high school have a theory about extracurricular activities.

The theory is this: The best extracurricular activity at many high schools is band, particularly marching band.

The reasons have little or nothing to do with music, and everything to do with the unique characteristics of high school band and its ability to promote positive social relationships.

Here's what makes band unique:

- Counting summer band practice, it's often the only school activity that's year-round. So, unlike sports teams or the theater cast or the forensic team that's close-knit for several months, the band members are together all year, which tends to create close friendships.
- The fact that band is a class as well as an extracurricular offers two advantages. One is that band students get a teacher that they'll have for all four years, which can be a real asset in terms of having a school adult who gets to know them particularly well. The other advantage is that, since their class schedule is built around band, band students tend to have other classes and their lunch period together, helping to reinforce band friendships.
- At the risk of making a broad generalization, band kids tend to be the kind of high-achieving, relatively well-behaved students whom a parent would want for his or her child's social group. And peer relationships are a huge factor in whether a teen's high school years are productive or a train wreck.
- Band is unusual in that it groups all four grades together. Unlike sports, band doesn't divide students into freshman, junior varsity and varsity teams. That makes for a more united group as kids move through their four years of high school and gives more opportunities for older kids to mentor young kids. Incoming ninth-graders who participate in summer band practice or camp before entering high school have junior and seniors greeting them in the hallways even during the first week of school.
- Marching band is an excellent vehicle for teaching a host of skills such as discipline, teamwork and the importance of following directions. There's nothing like being the person who messes up a formation in a marching-band competition or hits a sour note during a concert to drive home the point that every individual's contribution counts, for better or worse. True, band is not unique in this respect, but I would argue that it drives those skills home exceptionally well. Band also is an activity where practice really does make perfect. It teaches teens that simply relying on raw talent doesn't cut it.
- Band directors, particularly of marching bands, like big numbers and typically work to accommodate every student. For teens who think they're not good at anything, band can be an activity where their contribution is valued and they can feel part of something big and important. It's also an area where struggling students can shine. Until he graduated, one of the best percussionists in my daughter's band was a boy who was developmentally disabled.
- Many other school activities don't pay off until junior or senior year. With band, even if teens want to move on in the upper grades, they've already received the benefits.



I fully realize the benefits of other activities. I've had kids in everything from mock trial to track and cross country to school musicals to the Art Honor Society, and they've all been wonderfully enriching experiences. But if I had an eighth-grader who was worried about making friends and nervous about high school, I'd be encouraging that child to give marching band a hard look.

Experts say that the key to high school success is rigor, relevance and relationships. Band hits on all three: It offers the rigor of learning to play music while marching in complex formations; the relevance of the discipline and team skills that benefit teens long after high school, and relationships that can develop and deepen over all four years of high school.

As for the music? That's the icing on the cake.