

Welcome to 6th Grade Band

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Dear Parents & Guardians -

We are very excited to welcome you and your child into the band program at Delta Middle School! In the following pages you will find a lot of important information pertaining to band and obtaining an instrument. Below you will find a rough outline of the first month in 6th grade band and the following pages will answer many of the common questions parents may have.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns. Given the nomadic nature of teaching at both middle and high school, email is the best form of communication.

Sincerely,

Zach Enos & Jonie Crawford
Band Directors
Delaware Community Schools

You do **NOT** need an instrument on the first day of school.

DO NOT buy a new instrument from the internet.

The price is too good to be true as they will fall apart within a month, see details next page.

Week 1 & 2: We will spend the first weeks talking about instruments and helping your student make an informed selection. Once your child has narrowed down his first and second choice we will give them an opportunity to attempt to make a sound, usually it goes well, but sometimes there is a struggle and we will look for a “better fit.” Our goal is for every student to be successful and build confidence.

Information and advice on obtaining an instrument will be sent home. Parents will order and set up instrument rentals, which in most cases will be delivered to the school. We have a small inventory of instruments for families to borrow when renting or buying is an obstacle. Email us NOW if you think you might need help obtaining an instrument. More information on the following page.

Week 3 & 4: While instruments are being ordered, borrowed, repaired, and prepped we will learn about the fundamentals of music theory, rhythms, instrument assembly/safety, and general band knowledge.

Friday, September 1st: Our first day with instruments.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What instruments do we start with?

Flute

Clarinet

Trumpet

Trombone/Baritone

Percussion

Q: How will students pick their instruments?

A: Band students will spend the first weeks of class trying out and picking their instrument. This process is a delicate balance between a student's wishes, the needs of the band, and what instruments they can actually produce a sound on. Please also keep in mind that a band is like a baseball team; not everyone can play the same position. We need one drummer for every 15 band students yet everyone always wants to play the drums, so obviously we work to balance that for the benefit of the entire band.

Q: Why can't I play saxophone or a different instrument than what is listed?

A: Students try different instruments to ensure they will be successful; nothing is worse than thinking you're going to play the flute and then struggling to even make a basic sound. By trying instruments ahead of time we eliminate this problem. Saxophone is a difficult instrument to start on, we refer to it as a "level 2" instrument. The clarinet is much easier and students can switch later (mid year or end of year) very easily. If you are renting an instrument they will transfer any payments from the clarinet to the saxophone within the first year. Contact me with questions. Other "level 2" instruments: French Horn, Tuba, Oboe, Tenor Saxophone. We make the switch over winter break or the following summer. If you have already played a "level 2" instrument for a period of time, email Mr. Enos or Miss Crawford.

Q: Why can't I play *just* the drums?

A: Almost every student who joins band wishes to play drums or percussion, and just like in sports, for the good of the team not everyone can be a quarterback or shortstop. Percussion students actually play two sets of instruments: drums AND mallets (xylophone, marimba, etc). In the event that too many students wish to play percussion a simple rhythmic aptitude test will be used to help rank students. A good rule of thumb is one percussionist for every 15 band students.

Q: Where do I get an instrument?

1. Rent to Own Programs: You have options, but our preferred vendor is Paige's Music out of Indianapolis, they visit us once a week, have a very robust and efficient repair facility and can handle everything through their website. If you use another vendor, ask how long the term of the program is, sometimes they will extend out the term in order to advertise lower rates. , , both which offer no interest rent to own programs with various pricing levels.

Paige's Music: www.paigesmusic.com and click the big rental button, or call (800)382-1099.

Even if you are thinking of purchasing I recommend renting for the first year on the off chance your student changes their mind. Please, please, please, avoid the temptation of cheap instruments through amazon! (see below... their life expectancy is measured in months not years). *You can get better deals by selecting used options or calling the store and asking for “budget” used instruments, these are not always available or advertised as they are a first come first serve basis.*

2. Borrow a School Instrument: Delta has a limited number of instruments available for students who otherwise would not be able to participate in band due to financial constraints.

3. “Other”: Used instruments from a variety of sources. Borrowing from friends or family. Used instruments are a great option, I am happy to help in the process, just reach out to us and we will give you more details/information on where and how to find one.

Q: Wait, I checked online and I can get a brand new instrument for \$100 -\$200, or less!

Correct, BUT what you don't realize is that that instrument is an imported hunk of junk that will literally fall apart in your child's hand in a matter of months if not weeks. I wish I was kidding, I've seen it happen more times than I care to admit. To add insult to injury they are so poorly made that they cannot be repaired. Reputable and recommended brands: Yamaha, Bach, Conn/Selmer (but avoid the Prelude models!), Jupiter, Bundy, Besson, Gemeinhardt or anything from a brick and mortar music store that has to stand behind what they sell.. Search YouTube for “Buying Instruments on the Internet” for a cautionary tale video I put together.

Q: Doesn't band conflict with athletics/cheerleading/other school activities?

Nope! The four concerts are the only outside of school events for 6th grade (and 7th grade too!). You can be a cheerleader, a varsity football/basketball player and participate in band all the way through high school graduation, you can have your cake and eat it too!

Q: How much time outside of school does band take up?

Four nights only for the four concerts (October, December, March, and May)

Q: Do I need anything else besides an instrument?

“Tradition of Excellence Book 1” for their instrument (\$10.99 – in stock at Muncie Music Center or Amazon). A wire music stand is very useful and affordable at around \$10.

Q: Does playing an instrument really make you smarter?

Yes! Playing an instrument utilizes multiple areas of your brain, more so than other activities, and scientists have shown that the more the pathways are used the more they grow. Playing an instrument can actually make your brain grow. YouTube “How playing an instrument benefits your brain” by Anita Collins (3 mins).

