

Olathe East BANDS

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Parents and Students:

First and most importantly, we are **SO** very excited to get school started and see all the students this year! Even in a modified format it will be very exciting to get back to making music! I am writing to cover some of the initial plans for each class and very briefly cover some of the information that I would typically cover with students at the beginning of the year. Obviously we have a large amount of parents that are very familiar with our program and how things work and then we have a wonderful group of students and parents that are new to Olathe East. However, I would encourage everyone to read this information closely as things will look very different than they have in the past. As always, the best way to contact me is by email if you have any follow up questions. I am trying very hard to reply to emails within 24 hours. I would also encourage new parents to become familiar with the band website. It has a lot of information about the program on the public side of the website. On the members only side of the website are the monthly booster minutes and also a record of every email I send out to parents so that you don't have to search for it in your in box if you need to reference it. The password for the members only side of the website never changes and is "Hawks". I would also encourage new parents to join the private Olathe East Band Boosters page on Facebook. This is a place where parents ask questions when they are needing quick answers. It has been a wonderful resource for a lot of parents.

Right now I am going to focus all of my information on the virtual instruction model since that is the mode that we are in right now. Obviously, when we transition to in person learning there will be a lot of additional information that I will need to share. With regards to the specifics of each class I share more of that information with the students next week in the classes. This information is intended to help get you ready to start.

- **Marching Band 1st Hour-** There is still a lot that is not known about what the fall athletic season will look like. However, regardless of what happens with sports I want to be able to have a unit of instruction on marching band this fall so we are going to move forward with our plans. For wind players, we cannot start Monday night rehearsals in person until we have our performance masks and bell covers here. They have both been ordered and I hope that they will be in during the next couple weeks. In the meantime we will be working on the show music and the same wind warmups that we used last year during our regular scheduled class zoom meetings. We will play during every zoom class session so please make sure to have your instrument close at hand when you start those zoom classes. We can give you time in class to put it together. As soon as we have the masks and bell covers we will start having Monday night rehearsals from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Please put September 21st on your calendars as the first Monday night for winds and we will hope we have everything by then.
- **Drumline 2nd Hour-** We had our first battery rehearsal today at 7 a.m. and they did a very nice job considering it was the first time we had seen them since March. For our zoom class meetings we will be focusing on technique on practice pads so everyone will need a practice pad and sticks for each zoom class. If you do not own a practice pad and are going to purchase one please let me know as I have one you could borrow. In the meantime, we will start full drumline (Pit and Battery) rehearsals on Monday, September 14th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. We will continue with Monday evening rehearsals until sometime in late October. In addition I would like to have a 7:00 to 7:30 a.m. rehearsal next Thursday morning. If your child does not

drive and doesn't have a transportation for this rehearsal just let me know and I can excuse them. I know It is very tricky since students have to be back online by 7:45 a.m.

- **Concert Band 3rd Hour**- We will play our instruments during every zoom class that we have. So, please make sure you have it close at hand. We can give you time to put your instrument together during the class time. Information about school instruments is below.
- **Jazz Combo 4th Hour**- This class will also play during every class zoom session. Once again, if you are playing on a secondary instrument and need a school instrument please see the information below.
- **Freshman Percussion Class 7th Hour**- This class is small this year which will be very beneficial to the students in the class. It will almost be like small group private lessons. I am very excited about what these students will be able to achieve with this type of individual attention. We will start with rudiments so students will need a practice pad and snare sticks for each zoom class. If you do not own a practice pad and are going to purchase one please let me know as I have one you could borrow.

Music

The next logical question would be how are students going to get their music? While we are in virtual learning the school district wants us to distribute learning materials through Synergy. There will be emails coming out to detail how to access this information. Synergy will be the Learning Management System (LMS) that holds all of our class assignment information and has all of the music in it. I have been busy this past week and a half loading a lot of our content into this LMS. Until we are back in person this is how we will distribute all class materials.

School Instruments

I know that we will also have students that will need a school instrument (tubas, French horns, etc.). Please email me directly and I will make plans.

Grading

Grading for band this year will be very similar to our typical grading structure. We will base it on a combination of class participation, playing tests, and performances (if allowed). We are working on updating the band handbook with changes for the year and will go through the revised handbook in zoom classes next week and I will also post it on the members only side of the website.

Remote Learners (students who chose not to do in-person)

We did receive confirmation from the district that students who are enrolled as remote learners will be able to still receive band instruction this semester. For now, their instruction will look exactly like the students who had enrolled for in-person since we are all virtual right now. Once we return to in-person learning we will have to make modifications to the plan. We will let you know what that looks like once we get to that point.

Thanks,

Mr. Smikahl