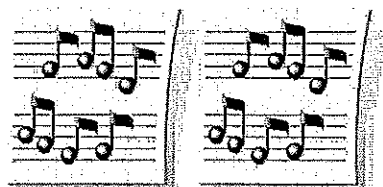


# FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Central Woodlands 5/6

400 Alta Dale SE, Ada, Michigan 49301 ph 616.493.8790



### \*Important Music Information\*

Dear Fifth Grade Parents/Guardians,

Spring 2018

This is a very exciting time of year for the fifth grade students as they prepare to make their sixth grade music selection. Students have been learning about instruments and ensembles throughout the school year. Now they will choose a music selection for themselves. During the music fittings process in early spring, music directors will meet with each fifth grade student guiding them to align their interests with the best sixth grade music choice: either an instrument in the band or orchestra, or using their voice in choir.

**Sixth grade music is a 1-year commitment for the entire 6<sup>th</sup> grade year.** Joining a music ensemble is the same as joining a team. The students work together and depend upon each other to create music in class and at the concerts. Being part of a band, choir, or orchestra is a rewarding experience!

#### **FITTINGS PROCESS for STUDENTS**

On **Monday, March 5**, 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will attend an afternoon concert given by the 6<sup>th</sup> grade band, choir, and orchestra. At a set time block on **Tuesday or Wednesday, March 6 or 7**, each child will participate in a "fittings" session with the music directors. The band and orchestra directors will check teeth, lips, arms, and finger length for a proper fit and have students produce a sound on instruments. Students match pitch and sing for the choir director.

Music directors will then recommend the best choices for each student. In preparation for choosing an instrument or joining choir, please begin discussing sixth grade music participation with your child/children at home. Directors provide advice, but also hope to learn about your child's interest.

#### **INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC MEETING for PARENTS**

Parents/Guardians of students who choose a band or orchestral instrument are requested to attend the instrumental music meeting. Choir parents do not need to attend.

**Thursday, May 10, at 6:00 PM in the Cafetorium at Central Woodlands.**



## **OBTAINING AN INSTRUMENT**

During this music meeting, families will learn about how to obtain an instrument. Students are encouraged to have rented their instrument prior to the start of the school year. Under the instrument rental plan, students receive a new or gently used instrument in good working condition. All repairs are free during the rental period. Most stores will require a down payment to reserve the instrument. Some music stores do include a method book and wire music stand with the rental price. Please ask for the instrument to be delivered to your child's school in late August along with other items purchased, such as the method book, music stand, and materials. This will allow all music students to start playing during the first week of school. We prefer that the instruments not be in the students' hands until teachers can show the students how to assemble the instrument, create the proper sound, and teach proper technique. We encourage attendance at this meeting to guide you with obtaining a quality instrument. No student will be denied an opportunity to play an instrument for financial reasons. Talk to a music teacher if affording an instrument is a concern.

## **CENTRAL WOODLANDS MUSIC DEPARTMENT**

Being part of the Central Woodlands Music Program is a fun and rewarding experience! Students will gain pride as they work hard to refine their own skill set while forming friendships with the other musicians. Such effort is worthwhile because of the many success stories we have seen come through our programs. The Central Woodlands music department is proud to welcome your child to the tradition of excellence established by all of our music ensembles! The music directors can assist you in answering any questions regarding this letter or about our programs. Contact information is listed below:

|                              |                   |                    |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Orchestra &amp; Choir</b> | Laurie Boomers    | lboomers@fhps.net  |
| <b>Orchestra</b>             | Andrew Pool       | apool@fhps.net     |
| <b>Band</b>                  | Michelle Benjamin | mbenjamin@fhps.net |
| <b>Choir</b>                 | Pam Kriekard      | pkriekard@fhps.net |

### **Percussion Policy**

Students trying out for percussion are evaluated on steady beat, rhythmic accuracy, sight-reading, and performance of a learned piano piece (bring the sheet music/book to the try-out). Since a limited number of percussion students can be accepted, a good fit for second choice is recommended. In order to be placed in the percussion section, students should have had a minimum of two years of piano prior to 6th grade.

### **Saxophone Policy**

Saxophone is not offered in sixth-grade band; therefore, students interested in playing saxophone in 7th grade should start by playing another instrument in 6th grade. Clarinet is a good choice to begin with because of the easy switch, but other woodwind instruments would be acceptable, too. Saxophone auditions occur at the end of the 6th-grade school year. At the audition, students produce a sound on the saxophone and the director will evaluate whether or not the saxophone would be a good fit. Also, candidates are evaluated on their attitude, effort, attendance, and playing ability throughout their 6th-grade school year. It is understood that those students who are allowed to switch are to enroll in several summer private lessons to prepare for success in 7th grade band.

## **FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)**

### ***What instrument should my child play?***

Each child is fitted for an instrument during the “fittings dates” at school to determine the instrument that is best suited for that child. When we fit the students, their teeth, lips, length of arms and fingers, along with pitch matching ability for choir are taken into consideration. This recommendation is not absolute, but it gives the students and their parents a good idea of the instrument that might offer a successful experience. Students, with their parent’s guidance, will then be asked to submit their first and second choice. Most often, the students are able to play their first choice, however, some students may be encouraged to play their second choice if instrumentation of the ensembles dictates.

### ***We have an instrument in our attic. Could our child play it?***

The answer depends on many factors. First of all, can the child physically play the instrument? There are physical characteristics for some instruments that will allow for greater success. If these characteristics are not present, the instrument could be very difficult to master. Secondly, is the instrument in good working condition? When an instrument has not been used for several years, quite often the valves and slides are frozen on brass instruments and the pads will need replacing on woodwind instruments.

### ***Can you remind me the difference between band and orchestra?***

Within the orchestra, you’ll find string instruments such as violin, viola, cello and bass. In the band, students can play flute, oboe, clarinet, trumpet, French horn, trombone, baritone, tuba and percussion. These are the only instruments offered in 6<sup>th</sup> grade music classes.

### ***My best friend is joining band, choir or orchestra. Should I, too?***

Friends are very important in a young child’s development, but should not be the deciding factor for instrument choice. It is very important that during this process the focus is on the instrument and ensemble best suited for individual student interest and strengths. When helping your child/children decide, consider that 6<sup>th</sup> grade music choice is a one-year commitment.

Please don’t hesitate to contact us with questions. We look forward to working with your students and helping them to reach their musical potential.

Musically yours,

Amy Burton-Major, Principal

Michelle Benjamin, Band

Laurie Boomers, Orchestra & Choir

Pam Kriekard, Choir

Andrew Pool, Orchestra

