



Bellefonte Area Middle School Band

Miss Brenna Bixler, Director

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Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 Bellefonte Area Middle School Band! I am very excited to be working with you this year. Please read all of this information together, ***especially the middle school instrumental safety guidelines***, then complete and return the attached form at the end of the packet. ***Keep this syllabus as a reference to use throughout the year***. This packet is also posted on my website. Knowing everything in here will get you off to a good start.

Music is an enriching experience for everyone involved, whether as performers or members of an audience. Along with musical skills necessary to become a performer, students will learn skills through music that benefit them beyond the program, including abstract thinking, problem solving, sense of community, heightened sense of responsibility, and teamwork.

As parents, you need not know anything about music to provide a positive influence for your child. Support them by helping them track and record their practice time and efforts. Ask them to perform a favorite piece, or something new that they are learning. Practice should never be just putting in time, but always with a specific goal of improving. Like any skill, interest and effort are ***far*** more important than talent. Your interest in their playing will help guarantee their success.

Below is some information that you should know about the BAMS Band program, including expectations/grading. Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Brenna Bixler

Homework Expectations

Consistent practice is the most vital component to learning how to play an instrument. ***In order to demonstrate steady progress on your instrument, and in order to receive full credit for your practicing, you need to practice at least 100 minutes a week (for example - 25 minutes 4 days a week, or 20 minutes 5 days a week) and bring your practice chart to your lesson filled out and signed.*** The more you focus on concepts that we discuss in lessons during your practicing, the more benefits you will reap from your practicing. Putting in extra practice time can really help you improve, as long as you stay focused and practice the concepts we discuss in our lessons. Try to use your practice time as well as you can.

Grading (Will be explained in detail below)

Lessons	60 points
Rehearsals	56 points
	116 Total

Lessons (Individual or Small Group Instruction- 60 points per marking period)

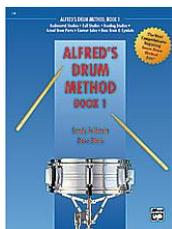
In order to maintain steady progress on your instrument, you will have one small-group lesson per 6-day cycle. Lessons are held during the school day for a full class period.

The cycle day of your lesson will be consistent throughout the year, but the time of your lessons will rotate. This way, you won't keep missing the same class. You will need to look at your lesson chart to know what day and time your lessons are. You will receive a new lesson chart each month.

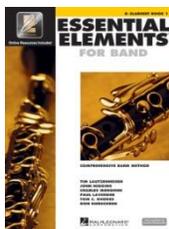
Students will need...

All Percussionists: Alfred Drum Method Book 1 by Sandy Feldstein and David Black

All Other Students (Woodwinds and Brass): Essential Elements Book 1, Book 2, or Book 3 depending on where you ended the year with Miss Zimmerman or me last year. We will pick up right where you left off. New students will begin with Essential Elements Book 1. You can buy these books anywhere you would like. Robert M. Sides in State College should have them in stock. You can also find them many places online, such as Amazon and eBay. Other supplies to think about include reeds (3 hardness, juno is a great brand), cork grease, valve oil, cleaning cloth (woodwinds), interior cleaning snake (brass). Please email me if you have questions about equipment.



Percussion Book



Woodwind/Brass Book



Reeds



Valve Oil



Cleaning Snake

Unless your lesson day is day 6, the due date of your lesson in the gradebook will not read as the same date as your actual lesson. This is because the gradebook program will not allow different due dates to be entered for different students.

You will be graded on 6 lessons per marking period. ***Teachers will excuse you from class for lessons. It is your responsibility to let your teacher know you have a lesson at the beginning of the period. If you forget your lesson or do not turn in an absence card, it will be recorded in the gradebook as a zero. There are two excuses for missing a lesson - absence from school or if your teacher decides to hold you from your lesson for a large test or major project. These are the only reasons you can schedule a makeup lesson. A lesson absence card (provided in the band room) must be turned in within two school days after the missed lesson in order to schedule a makeup.*** I understand that everyone forgets once in a while. This is why I offer a **ton** of extra credit. This is all explained in the extra credit section.

Each student will receive a practice chart. If your chart is not filled out with a parent signature at your lesson, you will not receive credit for practicing. The only excuses for not practicing are having a broken instrument, being sick, or being on vacation.

Attendance	2 points
Practice	4 points
Preparedness	<u>4 points</u>
	10 Total

Rehearsals (Mixed Instrument Group Instruction- approximately 56 points per marking period)

Rehearsal will occur during 9th period and will take place in the gymnasium. Each student will attend rehearsal once per every 6-day cycle. Rehearsals will not exceed 25 students. Students should bring all of their materials to take home (backpack, chromebook, etc.) to rehearsal so that they will not need to return to their locker before dismissal at the end of the school day.

Students should refer to their school schedule to see what day of the cycle they have rehearsal. Rehearsals are a scheduled class, so you do not need any special passes to come to rehearsals.

Positive Group Contribution (You must have your instrument to contribute)	8 points per cycle
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If students are participating in hybrid learning this year and only attend school during certain days of the week, they will sometimes miss rehearsals because they are not in the building on their rehearsal day. In these cases, students will not lose any points. With the way the cycle is built, chances are very high that their next rehearsal will hit on a day they are in the building, and we will look forward to them joining us then.

Performances

As of right now, there will be no live middle school instrumental performances for the 2020-2021 school year. Plans for preparing for, implementing, and streaming virtual performances of small ensemble groups and solos are in the works. These recorded performances would take place during the students' lessons and/or rehearsal times during the school day. The hope is that these performances will be shared on various virtual platforms throughout the year.

Newsletter

About once a week, I send out a **newsletter via email to parents** containing program information and, this year, it will include recordings. If you do not receive an email from me within the first two weeks of school, please email me at bbixler@basd.net to let me know and I will add you to our list!

Extra Credit (approximately 30 points possible per marking period)

There are three ways to earn extra credit.

Watch an online concert and turn in a concert reflection sheet	5 points
Practice extra (1 point per 25 min.)	15 points
Take a bonus lesson during the last cycle	<u>10 points</u>
	30 Total

Add/Drop Procedure

Students will automatically have ensembles added to their schedules based on their participation last school year. To drop, a note from the parent/guardian to the director of the ensemble is required. The director will then contact the student's guidance counselor and administration for approval. If a student drops an ensemble within the first week of a marking period, the student will receive no grade for the course. After the one-week deadline has passed, the student's current grade (at the point of the drop) will be recorded on his/her final report card.