Dear Beginning Band Members and Parents,

Welcome to Beginning Band! Becoming a member of the band program is an exciting time for both students and parents. It is definitely something to be proud of.

Please read your handbook and return your contract by your first (next) lesson or sectional/rehearsal.

I have included a list of supplies. Please do your best to have these supplies by the first lesson.

Musical supplies can be purchased at Quinlan and Fabish Music in Prospect Heights. If traveling to the store is not possible, please order by phone calling 1-800-637-6872. Supplies can be mailed to your house or delivered to Mr. Rivera at your child’s school.

REQUIRED BAND SUPPLIES

All Players:
- Good quality working instruments
- Essential Elements 2000, book 1
- Pencil – every day!
- Music Folder (provided)
- Music Stand for home practice

Brass Players:
- Slide grease
- Valve oil

Woodwind Players:
- 3 good quality reeds at all times (best to buy a box at a time)
- Reed guard
- Cork grease
- Cloth Swab

Percussion Players:
- Essential Elements 2000, book 1
- Haskell Harr Drum Method, book 1

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at the number or email on the front cover.

Sincerely,

Mr. Eric Rivera
BAND DEPARTMENT GOALS

Because our music program is an outsourced program through a music company, the primary goal is to have as much participation and involvement from as many students and parents possible showing through numbers, how much your kids really love music.

One of the best ways to show involvement is by showing the numbers through participation. *It is essential that parents help remind students of their lessons and times, doing everything they can to have them at their lesson every week without fail.* The more lessons a student misses, the more behind the student will get, eventually resulting in the student quitting. This can be avoiding if the student shows up every week. If the student does this and perseveres to the end of the year, he/she will have accomplished much. See more on the attendance section.

Our secondary goal, no less important, is to heighten each student’s aesthetic awareness through musical art. While there are many other objectives that are also set for students, using the medium of sound as a means to communicate the feelings embodied in a musical work will always remain a priority.

Dedication and maturity are required to develop the uniquely human ability. Dedication, because the skills needed to re-create music are both numerous and complex. Maturity, because once the technical skills are learned, a musician must still be patient and open-minded in order to first understand and then communicate the essence of a composer’s work.

At the middle school level, the musical skills necessary to re-create meaningful music are developed, and the ability to listen critically to others and ourselves is maturing. Unless one can articulate reasons for an opinion regarding a work or a performance or demonstrate an alternative, an unsupported value judgment is considered inappropriate and should not be taken seriously by others.

It would be naïve to suggest that such a lofty goal can be fully realized at the middle school level, yet alone as a beginner. What *can* be realized is starting young people down a path that will eventually lead to aesthetic awareness. A person who is aesthetically aware will better be able to reap all that life has to offer and to share with others the wealth of his or her talent.
MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the District 46 Band Program is to promote musical appreciation, knowledge, and participation through the study and performance of quality instrumental literature. A music performance class has its own kind of content-content that has value, demands rigor, and is worthy of academic study. It is taught because it is one very important way of experiencing the art of music-an art that will help students develop a finer understanding of themselves and their humanity. The band handbook will outline the expectations for the students during their involvement in the program.

CLASS DESCRIPTION

What is the content of a music performance class? Students study and learn performance (individual) skills, ensemble (group) skills, discipline (responsibility) skills, and musical (expressive) skills. These skills teach students to become better individuals, better team players, more responsible in their daily lives, and better at expressing themselves. The band classes will have some requirements, which will need to be met outside of the school day. These events which occur after school or on a Saturday (i.e., concerts or contests) are required, and failure to perform at these events will jeopardize the student’s membership and/or grade in the program. Assignments, tests, and most of the requirements for the class grade are completed during class time.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The band program for Grayslake consists of various levels of bands. Membership is open to students in grades five through eight. The bands are divided by grade level:

Beginner Band (5th/6th):

The beginner band is for students with no previous band experience. Students have the opportunity to try and select instruments in the fall, as well as perform in concerts during the year. Students will learn the basics of playing an instrument, including proper posture, breathing, articulations, dynamics, rhythm, and expressive markings.

Cadet Band (6th):

The Cadet Band is a second-year band class, which builds upon the skills learned in Beginning Band. Students will perform in concerts during the year, and will learn intermediate musical concepts, including posture, breathing, intonation, articulations, rhythm counting, and expressive markings. If a student in 6th grade who did not join band in 5th grade desires to be in band, that student must start with the Beginning Band and will be placed in the 5th grade band for the school year.
Concert Band (7th/8th):
The Concert Band consists primarily of 7th and 8th grade players in their 3rd and 4th years of instruction. They will perform in concerts during the year, as well as have the opportunity to perform in an in-house Ensemble and possibly Solo Festival.

CLASSROOM GOALS & RULES

No successful organization can function properly without well-disciplined participants. Band is not a mandatory subject and it is assumed that all students are willing participants. However, once students join the band program, they are expected to adhere to all the standards and expectations outlined in this handbook. Actions of one member reflect upon the reputation of all members; therefore, inappropriate behavior will be grounds for serious consequences. Band students are subject to the same behavioral rules as outlined in the student handbook.

GMS and Frederick Band Goals
- show respect at all times to others in the group
- play with good tone, pitch, balance and blend
- play musically (do not mistake noise, such as meaningless banging on drums as music)
- play with good posture, hand position, embouchure, and technique
- keep the instruments and room clean and neat.
- be organized
- work together as a group

GMS and Frederick Band Rules
- come prepared with instrument and all supplies (music, reeds, pencil, etc.)
- show up on time
- give 100% effort and concentration
- play only when asked to
- do not play other students’ instruments, including percussion instruments
- no food or drink in the band room or storage rooms (this includes gum or candy)

GMS and Frederick Band Consequences
- verbal or non-verbal warning
- private discussion concerning behavior
- parent phone call or conference
- principal conference
- possible detentions
ASSESSMENT POLICY

The progress in band will be determined by test and assignment grades, attendance, attitude, and effort. Students will periodically be given assignments and tests appropriate to their ability. They will be assessed on tone quality, posture, hand position, technical facility, and other fundamentals of music performance such as scales, rhythms (counting), articulations, dynamics and intonation. Progress will not be communicated in the normal letter grade format, rather in rubric form in which a student: does not meet, meets, or exceeds standards. Assessment will be done in most of the concepts stated above along with overall professionalism (participation, attendance, promptness, etc.)

PRACTICE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the regular school band classes, it is necessary for each student to practice at home. It is strongly suggested and encouraged that a certain time each day be set aside for individual practice. For this to occur, as logical as it may seem, your child needs to take his instrument home every day. If your child is not taking his/her instrument home, he/she is definitely not practicing his/her music, and probably not progressing. Practice time is most efficient when done daily for a shorter time, rather than to “cram” the day before band or an exam. Frederick Band members (Beginners and Cadet) are required to practice 15-30 minutes a day, for 5 of the 7 days of the week. Parents should monitor this practice and sign in the front page of their Essential Elements Book, confirming that the student has practiced the minutes stated in the practice calendar.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The attendance policy for each grade level is different. At Frederick:
** Students in both bands (5th/6th) are pulled out from their classes once a week for a half-hour.
** This schedule rotates every month to avoid students from missing the same class throughout the year.
** Also, if there are any major exams, reviews for exam, and possible group projects in which your child is a presenter, your child will be excused from the lesson with a note from the parent and teacher at least two days before the lesson stating the reason for the student’s absence. All other excuses are not valid.
** This has been discussed and agreed upon by Mr. Rivera, Mr. Detweiler, and Frederick teachers.
** For parents who are concerned that your child will fall behind in his/her other classes, there is no research found which supports this. On the contrary, students who participate in band end up doing better in their other classes because many of the other subjects are incorporated in band. As long as the student is diligent in doing his/her other homework, and having a student take notes for him/her, the student will be fine.
Ex: **math**(counting rhythms), **reading**(note reading), **history**(historical info on composers and pieces as they relate to their time in history), **science**(the waves and vibrations that occur to produce sound), **foreign language**(the many musical terms in Italian, German, etc.), **physical ed**(the tapping of the foot, while breathing, blowing, and moving their fingers), last but not least **aesthetics**(the ability to appreciate and express emotions through the arts).

**Also, this pullout program is administered throughout the state and the entire country.**

At GMS:

**Students are enrolled in a class, which meets and rehearse as a group every day.**

**The attendance policy and consequences stated in the GMS (yellow) handbook apply.**

**Students also have sectionals that meet once a week, and are pulled out of a class.**

Sectionals are rehearsals with like instruments (all trumpets, all percussion, etc.) This is necessary, because although we rehearse as one band every day, each instrument has its own specialization. It would be like learning addition, subtraction, division, and fractions, all at the same time. Although each is a math concept, it would be difficult to work on them all at the same time. Band is no different. Sectionals are needed to work on the intricacies of each instrument, where full ensemble rehearsal does not allow time.

**As in Frederick, the sectionals will be on a monthly rotational schedule to avoid students from missing the same class all the time.**

**As agreed upon by Mr. Rivera, Mr. Smith, and GMS teachers, legitimate excuses are exams, review for exams, and possible group presentations in which the student is the presenter.**

**Students must have a note from the teacher, **two days in advance**, stating the reason for the sectional absence.**

Both schools:

**Unexcused absences can lead to the consequences stated in the Classroom Rules and Goals section.**

**BAND FACILITIES**

It is the responsibility of all students to treat the band facilities with respect and care. This includes music that is handed out. In order to keep the room clean and organized, students must keep their instruments in their assigned lockers. In addition, ALL INSTRUMENTS MUST HAVE A NAME TAG WITH YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS CLEARLY WRITTEN ON IT. Since many cases look alike, this will ensure that nobody mistakenly takes an instrument that does not belong to them. Students who habitually do not put away their instruments can receive consequences stated in the Classroom Rules and Goals section.

**UNIFORMS**

There are currently discussions going on about uniforms between Quinlan and Fabish and me. We will inform your students as soon as a decision is made. Until then, proper attire for concerts is dress slacks for boys with a button down shirt or sweater.
Casual or dress shoes. No jeans or gym shoes. Girls can wear dress pants or skirt and a blouse or a dress. No gym shoes or jeans. This applies to all bands until further notice.

PRIVATE INSTRUCTION

The importance and impact of private lessons on a student’s success cannot be overstated. Individual instruction is the best way to achieve potential, and a weekly one on one lesson with an expert player on your instrument will reinforce strengths as well as provide instruction for improvement. The most successful band students in any school study with a private teacher, and these students are learning the finer points of playing their instrument. However, I am aware that this is another cost to the many already present. If you are interested in private lessons, please email me or call me.

CONCERTS

There will be three concerts. The first concert for GMS band students is Oct 17, 2006. All other concerts at both schools will be announced. Students are required to attend all concerts.

AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS AT CONCERTS & EVENTS

It is difficult to imagine a school gymnasium as a performance hall, but that is exactly what it is during a band concert. We must make every effort to make the concert experience rewarding for our young performers and other audience members. To show our appreciation for the band and the audience, please be conscious of actions in a “concert” setting. Here are some points to consider as an audience member:

- The audience should remain seated throughout the entire performance.
- Applause is appropriate at concerts or theater productions-whistling and yelling is not appropriate in a performance setting.
- Conversation is not appropriate while a group is performing.
- Small children and young siblings are always welcome at a performance. Please keep younger children seated with you at all times. If children become restless, you are welcome to step into the hallway at appropriate times.
- Please do not bring cell phones or pagers from home. If you must, please turn them off prior to the performance.
- Hold applause until you are certain the selection is over.
- All performers are expected to stay for the entire performance.

Please join in the efforts to promote an inviting and rewarding concert hall atmosphere for our young musicians and performers.
FREDERICK AND GMS BAND STUDENT CONTRACT

All Frederick and GMS band members and parents, please read the following page carefully. Please SIGN, DATE & RETURN this page to Mr. Rivera by their next lesson or sectional/rehearsal.

The District 46 band program is dedicated to excellence in performance and the loyalty and citizenship of its members. Its members share a unique musical and social experience.

Membership in the band involves a strong commitment to the program, the director, and especially to the other members. If you have further questions about the handbook, please contact the director.

I/We have read and understand all of the guidelines and procedures stated in this handbook, with special attention to:

1. Attendance policy.
2. Classroom rules and consequences.

Student Name (print) ______________________________________________________

Student Name (sign) _____________________________________________________

Parent Name (print) _____________________________________________________

Parent Name (sign) _____________________________________________________

Date _______________________________
PARENTS

If you are a parent who would be willing to volunteer some time at a concert or other type of event, please leave your information in the provided lines. Whatever help can be given would gladly be appreciated.

Student Name____________________________________________________________

Parent(s) Name(s)_________________________________________________________

Home phone_____________________________ Work Phone______________________

Email__________________________________

Thank you for all of your time and participation.

Mr. Rivera