Sixth Grade Band

Family Guide and Informational Handbook

Preparing for the 2022-2023 School Year

Central Heights Middle School
Patrick Marsh Middle School
Prairie View Middle School

Sun Prairie Area School District
Dear Family,

Thank you for taking a few moments to read and learn more about the band program in the Sun Prairie School District. We are very proud of the band program and the achievements of our students. We believe the band program is one of the best educational experiences possible for your child.

The Sun Prairie Band Program is recognized throughout Wisconsin as one of the best band programs in the state. Our ensembles have performed at numerous state, regional and national music conferences. Our high school jazz program has been selected to perform in the Essentially Ellington Competition in New York 13 times. Our bands routinely commission composers and have guest artists work with our students. The Sound of Sun Prairie marching band has won Grand Champion numerous times in recent years. Simply stated...there is a place for your child in this program. As one parent stated, “850 band students and families can't be wrong!”

Our hope is that this booklet will help answer many of the questions you may have about the band program and how to get started. However, if you do have a question please contact one of the band teachers at any time or go to the “JOIN BAND” section on our Band Website: www.spbb.org/join-band

We look forward to many years of collaboration and service together and are delighted to have you with us! Our school community and the Sun Prairie Band Program is committed to excellence and the belief and value of music education for our children!

With thanks and much appreciation,

The Sun Prairie Band Staff
Why Take Band?

Students of the arts continue to outperform their non-arts peers on the SAT, according to reports by the College Entrance Examination Board. SAT takers with coursework/experience in music performance scored 57 points higher on the verbal portion of the test and 43 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework or experience in the arts.

“GE hires a lot of engineers. We want young people who can do more than add up a string of numbers and write a coherent sentence. They must be able to solve problems, communicate ideas and be sensitive to the world around them. Participation in the arts is one of the best ways to develop these abilities.”

V. Smith, President of The General Electric Foundation

“In fact, mastery of the arts and humanities is just as closely correlated with high earnings, and, according to our analysis, that will continue to be true. History, music, drawing, painting, and economics will give our students an edge just as surely as the study of math and science.”


“The academic benefits of arts education also go beyond math and reading. An analysis of U.S. Department of Education data on 25,000 middle and high school students found that students who were highly involved in the arts performed better on a variety of academic measures than other students.”

Commentary by Rod Paige and Mike Huckabee

Education Week, January 26, 2005, Pg. 40, 52
Joining Band Is Easy!

1. Select “Band” on the 6th grade course registration form that is due January 26, 2022.

2. Participate in mouthpiece sampling in the elementary schools in March.

3. Attend an instrument fitting appointment on April 25 or 26 to select an instrument and speak to a music store representative.

4. Attend “Band Starts Now!” - our free summer school class designed to get our beginning band students started.

Sixth Grade Band Instruments

Woodwinds

- Flute
- Clarinet

Brass

- Trumpet
- Trombone
- Euphonium
- Tuba

Percussion
STEP 1
Mouthpiece Sampling
March-During the School Day

Mouthpiece Sampling is the process of trying different instrument mouthpieces. Students will try five mouthpieces including the flute head joint, clarinet, trumpet, trombone/euphonium, and tuba mouthpieces. A music educator will lead students through this process helping to narrow down what two instruments will work best for them.

In March we will be visiting all the elementary schools to do mouthpiece sampling with students during the school day. Don't worry if you're child is not there when we are, we can also do mouthpiece samplings by appointment. Just contact your future sixth grade band teacher.

**If you are interested in percussion, read the specific information on the next page.

STEP 2
Register For Instrument Fitting

Instrument Fitting is the process of trying the instruments recommended for your student with a music educator and making a final decision on what is the best fit. Fittings will take place on Monday, April 25 and Tuesday, April 26 at Prairie View. (regardless of what school your student will attend)

To make an appointment, visit www.spbb.org/join-band or contact any of the band staff listed on the back page of this booklet. Look for more information to come home once your student completes mouthpiece sampling.

Note: All students intending to enroll in band must make an instrument fitting appointment. This includes students auditioning for percussion. If you are unable to make one of the dates above work, please contact a teacher to arrange an alternative appointment. (See the last page in this booklet for contact information)
Percussion Audition & Preparation Workshops

The percussionist is a special and unique member of the band. They are the musicians called upon to play parts ranging from melody, to a cymbal crash, to a timpani roll and a variety of other sounds. Through the percussionist’s seven years of band they will have learned and experienced playing thirty to forty different instruments. The percussion student therefore, must learn to read both treble and bass clef. They must have a good sense of rhythm and it is a great advantage to have piano skills.

Because the percussion section is so different from other sections, there will be auditions held to determine who will be playing percussion next year. We need to maintain a balanced instrumentation; therefore we need to limit the number of percussionists in the band. Previous experience with percussion instruments does not guarantee that you will be selected for percussion through this audition process. For these reasons, be sure that you have a second choice ready if you are not selected for percussion.

In order to help students prepare for the audition, we will have two percussion workshops for students to learn and practice the audition material. These workshops are not required, but recommended.

Tuesday, April 12- Percussion Workshop at Prairie View 3:30-4:30 PM
Wednesday, April 13– Percussion Workshop at Patrick Marsh 3:30-4:30 PM

The percussion audition will be held at your future middle school band room.

Tuesday, April 19- Perc. Auditions -Central Heights 3-4:30 PM
Tuesday, April 19- Perc. Auditions- Patrick Marsh 3-4:30 PM
Tuesday, April 19- Perc. Auditions -Prairie View 3-4:30 PM

Auditions are on a first-come, first-served basis. If you are unable to attend this day, you must contact the band teacher at the school your student will attend to schedule a time before the April 19th. (See the last page in this booklet for contact information)
STEP 3
Instrument Fitting

Monday, April 25 (3-8 pm) Prairie View
Tuesday, April 26 (3-8 PM) Prairie View

At your Instrument Fitting Appointment, students will have an opportunity to try their top two recommended instruments. A music educator will lead them through this process of first trying the mouthpiece then the entire instrument. Student success is the most important part of this process. Clearly, the student needs to like the instrument, but the music educator will make sure that it is the correct “fit” for them. Parents are an important part of this decision making process. When the final decision is made within this appointment, the music educator will discuss the goals and objectives for the upcoming school year. Ward Brodt Music will be at both final fitting nights so that you can order supplies and make arrangements for an instrument rental if needed. You will also be able to sign up that evening for the Band Starts Now! Class (free)

Instrument Rental/ Supplies - In order to take band each family needs to make arrangements to either rent or purchase and instrument and supplies. Students selecting the flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone will need to rent from the music store. The estimated price ranges from $23-$33 per month for these instruments. Students selecting the euphonium or tuba will need purchase supplies, but will rent an instrument from the school. ($50 per year) If you are renting a school instrument it will be added to your school fees in Infinite Campus. Students selected for percussion will be informed of their selection prior to the instrument fitting night. These students should still come to the fitting to review goals and objectives and to make arrangements to purchase sticks, mallets, books, and accessories from the music store. All students will need the designated lessons books and miscellaneous supplies. Again, the music store will take of all your needs.

You will not have to put money down the evening of the final fitting (April 25 & 26). We do not want finances to prevent your child from participating in band. If you have financial concerns, please contact your band director. All instrument rental agreements should be completed by the first week of June so that materials will be ready in time for the Band Starts Now! Summer Class. (all rentals/supplies can be ordered on-line!!)

Contact: Rob Smith at Ward Brodt
Email: Rsmith@ward-brodt.com
Phone: 608-220-6104
Website: www.wardbrodt.com
STEP 4
Band Starts Now!
August 22-25, 2022

The first day your child will begin band will be in our Band Starts Now! Class. Band Starts Now! is a five day class that meets just before school starts at your child’s future middle school. Students will meet in like instrument classes for 90 minutes each day. The class is offered as a Sun Prairie School District Summer School Enrichment Course. There is no fee for this course. Your band teacher will register your child for this class. Students will learn how to produce the first five notes on their instrument. The students will also learn about instrument care and maintenance including a brief history about their instrument. The goal is to lay a solid foundation of fundamental knowledge and skills needed to begin study of their instrument.

Registration For Band Starts Now!
We will take care of registration for you! (Central Heights students may attend at Prairie View OR Patrick Marsh)

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<th>Patrick Marsh Classes</th>
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<td>8:30-9:30</td>
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<td>Flute Class</td>
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What if your student cannot attend the Band Starts Now! class?
We will host band start-up classes the first few days of school at both middle schools. More information will be sent to you if you are in this situation. However, plan on the following tentative times and dates:

Central Heights
September 6-9: 3:30-4:30 PM

Patrick Marsh
September 6-8: 3:30-4:30 PM

Prairie View
September 6-9: 3:30-4:30 PM
Sixth Grade Band Enrollment
To-Do List

☐ My student has indicated that they would like to take band on their sixth grade course registration form due January 26, 2022.

☐ My student has tried mouthpieces during mouthpiece sampling in March or by appointment with a band teacher.

☐ My student attended an instrument fitting appointment and selected an instrument. Fittings are April 25 & 26. (Percussion students were selected after the audition prior to the instrument fitting.)

☐ I have made arrangements for an instrument and supplies for my student at instrument fittings (April 25 & 26) or on my own. (Instruments and supplies from Ward Brodt will be delivered to your student’s middle school the week before the Band Starts Now! Class)

☐ I have put the Band Starts Now! class dates in our calendar. (August 22-25) (If you child cannot attend this class, please inform the band teacher at your school and plan to have your child participate in the three day start-up the first week of school).

Note: If you missed one of these boxes or have questions about any of the steps on this page, please contact a band teacher to discuss. (see the last page in this booklet for contact information.)
What About the Other Band Instruments?  
Oboe, Bassoon, Bass Clarinet, Saxophone, Horn

These instruments are VERY important in a musical ensemble, however we start beginners on the “core” instruments of the band (flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, tuba, percussion). Through research and experience, we have found that having students start on one of the core instruments has allowed them to start more successfully.

We will invite interested students to begin the study of the oboe, bassoon, bass clarinet, and French horn in the winter of their 6th grade year. Students will be considered for one of these instruments based on their interest, progress, practice habits, correct “fit” for the instrument, and balance of the ensemble.

Near the end of the 6th grade year the number of saxophones needed for 7th grade band will be determined. Students will then be given the opportunity to try out for saxophone. Summer lessons are recommended for those who are selected.

We know that some students may not be chosen to play the saxophone in the 7th grade band. We recommend to those students that they continue on clarinet and play saxophone in jazz ensemble, pep band, and marching band.

Our ultimate goal is that your student is successful in band and music. We believe that starting students on these “core” instruments will help lay the foundation of musical excellence. It will also provide us with a vehicle to help balance the band instrumentation offering your child the very best musical education possible.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact a band director at the middle schools. (see the last page in this booklet for contact information)
Tips For Success: Practicing At Home

Small group and individual lessons offer students one of the most important ways to grow as a musician and to develop their own expressive “voice” through their playing. Being able to express ideas through an instrument requires technique and technique requires practice, patience, and perseverance. Through the study of exercises and musical literature contained within the lesson book(s), students will develop technique, and with it, the ability to communicate in a profound and expressive way.

Similar to other academics, your child’s “homework” is to practice on a daily basis. Daily practice is essential to success. Remember, it is the efficiency and consistency of their practice routine that is as important as the amount of time spent.

Parents should help their child establish good practice and study habits from the beginning. Through a consistent approach, student progress and achievement will become increasingly apparent! Please encourage your child by asking them to perform for you at home. Your praise and approval of their accomplishment will, in many cases, provide instant gratification and that “pat on the back” students often need to experience in recognizing achievement and success. Encourage your child to realize the ensemble is a team and everyone counts!
Questions and Answers:

When do students start?
Band Starts Now Class (August 22-25) or during the first three days of school.

When should I rent my instrument?
To ensure availability, it is recommended that an instrument be reserved as soon as possible. Although you will not need the instrument until August, it is better to secure arrangements with Ward Brodt Music as soon as possible including reservation and discussion of payment options.

What instruments does the school rent?
Students studying the larger instruments such as the euphonium, tuba and percussion will pay a rental fee for use of a school instrument. However, these students will still need to purchase the correct supplies such as mouthpieces, reeds, books, etc.

Do the schools have smaller instruments to rent?
While the middle schools do own some smaller instruments such as trumpets, clarinets, and flutes, these instruments are reserved for those in financial need (If interested in more information, please contact us). When at all possible, we recommend renting from a music store to insure that your child will be using a quality instrument.

Can my student play piano or guitar in band?
The instruments we teach are the wind and percussion instruments found in the concert band. This does not include guitar or piano We do however encourage students who know how to play piano and guitar to join us in jazz band.

Where do I get the instrument and necessary supplies?
Ward Brodt Music
Contact Rob Smith at Ward Brodt
Phone: 608-220-6104
Email: Rsmith@ward-brodt.com
Website: www.wardbrodt.com

When does band meet?
Large group band meets every other day, all year round. Students will also have one small group or individual lesson each week. These scheduled individually in the fall.
The Scoop on Band

Can my student be involved with other activities besides band?
YES! Our middle schools are very lucky to have many different clubs and programs that students can join. All of these groups work very hard to make sure that we can share our students’ time. Band students are involved in sports, drama club, the school musical, student council and much, much more!

What opportunities are in the different levels of band at the Middle Schools?
Your first year in band is about learning the basics of playing your instrument. However, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade band students can be involved in Jazz band, Pep Band, various small ensembles. Our seventh and eighth grade groups perform locally, tour the elementary schools, and go to a local university for a clinic each spring.

Does being in band take up a lot of time?
Like any new skill, learning an instrument takes patience and practice. Students will meet their potential through consistent and routine practice.

Can my student participate in Band, Choir, and Orchestra?
Yes, it is possible to take up to two performance music classes throughout students’ secondary coursework in Sun Prairie.

Can a student participate in both sports and band?
YES! We have many students that are involved in numerous sports and do band. In fact, many varsity athletes do band in the high school.

Is there a band uniform?
Yes. sixth, seventh, and eighth grade band students wear the same uniform at all of our performances. Your child will be fitted for the band shirt during fall registration or the first week of school. The fee for this shirt will be added to your registration costs (around $18.50). Black pants, black socks and black shoes are also needed to complete the band uniform but are the responsibility of the family to acquire.
Tips For Renting: The Importance of a Quality Instrument

Unfortunately, school music courses are not strangers to adversity. Cuts in funding, reductions in staffing, and conflicts in scheduling have often presented challenges to supportive parents and dedicated music teachers. Ironically, the most recent assault may be coming from some of the equipment in the instrumental room. Big box stores have recently sent a flood of poor quality flutes, clarinets, trumpets, and saxophones to many local schools.

Repair technicians, music teachers, and other music professionals who have had the opportunity to examine these instruments agree: they are difficult to play (if they play at all), impossible to play in tune, and often unrepairable due to substandard materials and nonexistent replacement parts. The pot metal, soft plastic, and unseasoned wood these instruments are made of increases the likeliness of bent keys, dented tubing and warped bridges resulting from daily assembling and student use! These instruments are a certain guarantee that the beginning music student will become discouraged and drop out of the music program. If enough students and their families suffer this experience, it is certain to adversely affect our school music programs.

Some parents purchase these instruments instead of renting, thinking they are saving money. However, in fact, this may cost them immeasurably. Between the purchase price and inevitable repair cost(s), they can spend between $200-$400 within the first weeks, and their child will have spent many frustrated hours trying to play an instrument that by its very design is unplayable. No one likes to experience repeated failure; so predictably, these students drop out of the music program, believing that music is not for them. The parents now have an instrument that is worthless and a child who feels like a failure. Rent a quality instrument and when in doubt, seek the guidance and assistance of your child’s ensemble director.

**Why should I rent an instrument and not purchase one at the beginning stage?**
It is important to give your child the chance to learn the instrument before making that big investment. Also, instruments rented are fully covered if the instrument needs a repair—this is great piece of mind!
Can we use an older instrument that I used to play as a child? Yes...IF the instrument is of good quality. We would recommend that before your child begins the program that you take it to a music store such as Ward Brodt to have it looked over and put in “good playing condition”. Ask your band teacher if you need more information.

Why does the quality of the instrument matter? Remember that a good quality used instrument is a better buy than a poorly made new instrument. If the instrument is constantly in and out of the repair shop, your “bargain” quickly evaporates. In addition, reputable music retailers will often have rental programs designed to allow ample time to test the student’s level of commitment before the parent has to make a purchase decision. Not all instrument manufacturers and retailers provide a warranty on your purchase that will ensure reparability and low maintenance costs. Many instruments of very low quality are on the market now and are closer in quality to toys than to musical instruments. These “instrument shaped objects” will not play in tune or hold adjustment and often can not be repaired due to the low quality materials used in their construction.

What if I purchased or have an instrument already am I’m not sure about the quality? If it is a new purchase keep the receipt. Have a band teacher or instrument repair technician inspect and play the instrument. If possible, talk to a band teacher before purchasing an instrument.

What about an instrument from Ebay or Craig’s List? Be very careful purchasing an instrument off of the internet. It is difficult to impossible to tell the quality of the instrument by just a picture. We recommend having a music teacher or repair technician play and inspect any instrument before you buy it. Simply stated, if you find something contact us so we can help!

Here are some brands you can trust:
Woodwinds: (flutes, clarinets, oboes, saxophones)
• Vito
• Leblanc
• Gemeinhardt
• Yamaha
• Selmer

Brass: (trumpets, trombones, horns)
• Holton
• Conn
• Yamaha
• Bach
Sun Prairie Bands

The Sun Prairie band program offers a comprehensive approach in which students may choose from an abundant array of musical experiences. Each level of the band program adds another dimension to the student’s total experience.

Middle School Band

All beginning band students start in the sixth grade and have full band every other day and one weekly small group or individual lesson. This format continues in seventh grade. The eighth grade band students have band every day plus a weekly small group or individual lesson.

All three middle schools offer jazz ensembles for students in grades 6-8 to participate in. The middle schools in Sun Prairie combine for a middle school jazz festival that takes place each February. Past soloist/clinicians for the middle school festival have included Matt Buchman, Jim Huwe, Lennie Foy, Doug Stone, Ron Carter, Phil Ostrander and Josh Paris. The middle schools in Sun Prairie also host a citywide honor band every November. Conductors have included Patty Schlafer, Matt Gregg, Marti Fults, Tim Gleason, Steve Bina, Lizabeth Rosenthal, Melody Snyder and John Rash.

The bands have worked with clinicians such as Erik Morales, Brian Balmages, Richard Saucedo, Dr. Charles Young, Lennie Foy, Dr. Glenn Hayes, Dr. John Climer, Dennis Glocke, Michael Sweeney and Samuel R. Hazo. The individual student achievements include the WSMA Middle Level Honors Orchestra and Band, WI-NBA All-State Band, Tri-State Honors Band, UW-Milwaukee Honors Band, and WSMA State District and State Solo/Ensemble Performances.

Beginning in the Fall of 2022, “Central Heights Middle School” will open its doors to join Patrick Marsh and Prairie View in serving students in grades 6-8 across Sun Prairie.
Music has been prominent in the community since 1876 when the Sun Prairie Brass Band Association was first formed by Dr. Charles Crosse. The SPBBA supported the Sun Prairie Cornet Band which played at many community events and holiday functions throughout its' existence. In 1907 music first became a part of the Sun Prairie public school curriculum and the first public school band was created in 1925.

Today there are over 800 students enrolled in Sun Prairie public school bands. Students in the Sun Prairie High School Band program participate in Concert Red, Concert White, Symphonic Band or Wind Ensemble, which meet every day for credit. Students may opt to participate in any portion of our extra curricular program which includes 3 Jazz Ensembles, two Jazz Combos, pep band, full orchestra, pit orchestra, chamber groups or our summer competitive marching band, the Sound of Sun Prairie.

All band students also participate in a composer in Residence program that features a guest composer working with all of the concert bands. Past composer include: Charles Rochester Young, Jim Bonney, Sam Hazo, and Richard Saucedo.

The Wind Ensemble has been invited to perform at both the Wisconsin WMEA and WNBA convention, and regional MENC conventions in Minneapolis and Cincinnati. The Wind Ensemble has also earned top honors at the Dixie Classic National Adjudicators Festival in St. Louis, at the Branson Jubilee National Concert Band Festival in Branson, Missouri and Carnegie Hall. The Jazz Ensemble I has performed at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic with Wynton Marsalis and the WMEA convention with Clark Terry. The jazz ensemble has been a 14 time national finalist in the “Essentially Ellington” festival, placing 3rd twice. The Sound of Sun Prairie has won its’ circuit Championship honors in 14 of the last 20 years in the Mid America Competing Band Directors Association summer circuit.
Want to Learn More?

For information, videos, and more, visit:

www.spbb.org/join-band

You can also view a video overview of all that band in Sun Prairie has to offer by scanning this QR code or visiting:

bit.ly/SPBandVid

Registration Dates at a Glance

Mouthpiece Sampling
March: Band teachers will be visiting your student’s fifth grade classrooms to help them try out mouthpieces

Percussion-Specific Dates
Tuesday, April 12: Percussion Workshop at PVMS, 3:30-4:30 PM
Wednesday, April 13: Percussion Workshop at PMMS, 3:30-4:30 PM
Tuesday, April 19: Percussion Auditions at students’ future middle school, 3-4:30 PM

Instrument Fitting Dates
Monday, April 25: Instrument Fittings (by appointment) at PVMS, 3-8 PM
Tuesday, April 26: Instrument Fittings (by appointment) at PVMS, 3-8 PM

Band Starts Now!
August 22-25: Summer startup classes
Meet the Middle School Band Teachers

Central Heights Middle School

Mr. Melrose
318-8134
ipmelro@sunprairieschools.org

Mrs. Rush
318-8021
rkrush@sunprairieschools.org

Patrick Marsh Middle School

Mrs. Haraldson
834-7627
smharal@sunprairieschools.org

Mr. Gleason
834-7625
cpgleas@sunprairieschools.org

Prairie View Middle School

Mrs. Gleason
834-7825
eegleas@sunprairieschools.org

Mr. Quaglieri
834-7839
mequagl@sunprairieschools.org