

BELVIDERE SOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL BANDS

Let me take this opportunity to welcome all incoming sixth grade band students and to welcome back the seventh and eighth graders. I hope that all of you enjoyed your summer and are ready to begin what I know will be a rewarding school year. The following is important information that should be read, understood, and shared with your parents. There are parts that require filling in information for my records. I expect that the **personal information, bus permission form, Parent Volunteer and received band handbook forms** be returned no later than Friday, August 21, 2015.

SIXTH GRADE BAND Sixth grade band will rehearse during first or second period on every "A" day. Sixth grade band students must have an instrument and method book (**Tradition Of Excellence Book One**).

GRADES Grades in band, like in any class, are very important. I base grades on performance in both band rehearsals and lessons, periodic quizzes (on your instrument and written), HOME PRACTICE, and your ability to listen to and follow directions. One thing that you must remember is that band is a performing group. Like any team, we count on each other's participation. **You are expected to be present at performances and must understand that grades will be lowered if you have an unexcused absence.** There will be times when we take trips. Students must realize that they will not be allowed to participate if their school behavior is not exemplary.

BAND LESSONS Band lessons are a very important part of our band program. Each student will be put into a lesson group based on instrument. The lesson groups will rotate each week. This will prevent students from missing the same class week after week. The students will have a 15-20 min lesson each week. Students will be taken out of class for their lessons. The administration and teachers have agreed to this procedure. If a student misses a lesson it is the students responsibility to sign-up for a make-up lesson. This should be done within a week of the missed lesson. All regular band lessons will be taught during the regular school day. Before and after school times are reserved for make-up lessons and help sessions for honor bands and solo and ensemble contest. The band lesson schedule will be posted each week on our band website at: www.bsmsband.com

DAILY REHEARSAL We spend about 40 minutes each day rehearsing our music. It is important that you are prepared for each rehearsal by having your music learned. Each day we try to put the individual parts together, and we cannot take the time to practice habits, I am enclosing a home practice card. Please fill out the card each week and have your parents/guardians initial it. I realize that most of you have other important activities (athletics, cheerleading, church work, etc.) and you must keep up with your homework, but to improve playing skills, daily practice is a must

JAZZ BAND An important part of our band program is jazz band. This is an extracurricular class which meets before school two days a week. The class is open to 7th and 8th grade trumpet, trombone, saxophone, flute, guitar, piano, and drum students. Students are responsible for their own transportation for the early morning rehearsals. Jazz band meets at 7:30 a.m. every Tuesday and Thursday (I will inform the students the date Jazz Band Rehearsals will start).

COMMUNICATION Often, information in the form of a letter will be given to you during band rehearsal. It is most important that these information letters get home to your parents, because they contain information such as dates and times of performances. This year I have already handed out the band handbook to students in band rehearsal. If you did not receive or lost your band handbook please see Mr. Hedding for another copy. It is important that parents and students read the band handbook and understand the information. To help get updated information to the parents and students I have developed a band web site. You may find us at **www.bsmsband.com**

PURCHASING AN INSTRUMENT If you are in the market for a new instrument or just looking to upgrade your current instrument, please visit a reputable music store. Instruments that you purchase through retail department stores or catalogs may not be the same high quality that you would see at a music store. Many times instruments purchased through retail department stores cannot be repaired by local instrument repair professionals. See your local music stores for quality band instruments. Guzzardos Music, Voigt Music, Rockford Music are the music stores the school uses.

INSURANCE Please keep a record of your instrument serial number. Belvidere Community School District does not carry any insurance on personal property because of the exorbitant cost. If your household insurance has a high deductible, it might be wise to insure the instrument separately.

INSTRUMENT REPAIR If properly maintained, brass instruments simply should not need repair. Woodwinds do require pad work every few years. If students will properly maintain their instruments the way I will teach them, repairs will be greatly reduced. Should you need your instrument repaired, please either take it to one of the music stores in Rockford or send it to one of the two music stores that call on our school. If you have maintenance insurance or are renting from a specific company, it is a must that you send it to that store. Please make sure I know this information before sending the instrument in for repair. Please understand that I am no expert on instrument repair except to say that instruments are precision made. Like precision made items, they are costly to repair. It is wise to maintain your instrument. A very old instrument which is properly maintained will almost always play like new, many times better.

FUND RAISERS I make no apologies for our fund raising efforts. Our students have raised well over \$100,000 during the past few years. Because of fundraising, we have modernized our band department at Belvidere Middle School far beyond what normal school budgets could ever supply. This year, as last, I want to have our major fund raiser right at the beginning of the school year. The product is of the highest quality, and the student prizes are extremely generous. Won't you please help us to help ourselves and all school district taxpayers?

One final word to parents--- A very important part of our program is the help and support we get from you. There will be times during the year when we will need your help. I hope there will be (as there always are) a few to help us out. Please send Mr. Hedding an email if you would be willing to help out sometime this school year. You may reach me at: bhedding@district100.com Also please check out our **band website at: www.bsmsband.com**