**WELCOME TO BAND!**

Dear 5th and 6th grade Students and Parents,

This week your child will see an instrument demonstration about the band program here at Lees Corner. All students in the 5th and 6th grade have the option to learn an instrument as part of the band program.  Students who choose to join the band will participate in a one-hour lesson once a week ***during our specials block***.

***Band classes will begin the week of September 13th.***

**CHOOSING AN INSTRUMENT**

There is a good chance your child already has a strong idea of what instrument they want to play in the band. If your child is confident in their selection you may allow them to sign up for that instrument. This year, we will not be allowing students to “test out” instruments during school, but Mrs. Hill will meet with students during their music classes to talk through options, let the kids see the instruments up close, and ask questions. I will provide guidance when asked. For most instruments, hand size, arm length, lip size, and dental structure are the key factors involved in finding the right fit. Parents, please email me if you have any questions or want more guidance on this.

**RENTING AN INSTRUMENT**

Most music stores in the area provide an instrument rental/purchase plan.  Fees paid during the rental period can be credited toward the purchase of the instrument at a later time. I will provide flyers to some local stores.

FCPS offers financial assistance for band so that every child can participate. If you would like to formally request financial assistance, please indicate that on the google sign up. Instruments For All is the name of our program that can provide flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone or percussion instruments for a reduced fee.

**Are we playing in person or virtually this year?**

We are having band classes **IN PERSON** this year. FCPS has come up with guidance that allows us to play in person in band this year (similar to the guidance around eating in school). FCPS is working on issuing bell coverings (masks that attach to the instrument to prevent aerosols from the bell), musician face masks. In the band trailer, I plan to teach as much as possible with the windows open, weather permitting, or even outdoors when possible. I will spend lots of time explaining the safety protocols and new routines for band our first few classes, and reminders will be given throughout the year as needed.

**Do you accept 6th grade beginners?**

**YES!!!** We would love to have as many 5th and 6th graders as possible in our band program this year, which means many 6th graders will be taking on this opportunity for the first time.

**How much time outside of regular school hours will this take up?**

All of our band classes happen during the school day. We hope to have our Spring Concert at the end of the school year. Beyond that, band students are expected to practice regularly at home (10-15 minutes per day) but that is done individually so your student is free to work it into their schedule however it best suits your family.

Sign-Ups are due by Thursday, September 2nd. If you have any questions, please email me at nphill@fcps.edu . I look forward to working with your children this year!

With Care,

Mrs. Natalie Hill

