

Hempfield School District  
Landisville, PA

# Guidelines For The Hempfield Middle School Band Program

Revised and Published For  
Students and Parents  
Fall 2014

Centerville and Landisville  
Middle Schools Band Director  
Mr. Colin McCaskey

*Music, of all the arts, stands in a special region, unlit by any star but its own, and utterly without meaning, except its own. —Leonard Bernstein*

*Where words fail, music speaks. —Hans Christian Anderson*

*My heart, which is so full to overflowing, has often been solaced and refreshed by music, when sick and weary. —Martin Luther King, Jr.*

*Music is a moral law. It gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, a charm to sadness, and life to everything. Fine music is the essence of order and leads to all that is just and good . . . dazzling, passionate, and eternal . . .—Plato*

*The Mission of the Hempfield School District Music Department is to provide varied and engaging classroom, rehearsal, lesson, and performance experiences, to impart musical skills, knowledge and emotional expression, to enhance students' wellbeing, and to inspire and nurture the love of music in all students.*

## **Hempfield School District Music Department**

Welcome to the Hempfield Middle School band program at Centerville and Landisville Middle Schools! Since the first grade, you have been involved with many different kinds of performances within each grade level's music class. We are very pleased that you have chosen to continue to be a part of the proud tradition of band instrument instruction at Hempfield.

For you and for your parents, playing in your middle school band should be a terrific musical experience and a lot of fun. Dedicated participation in your middle school band will provide you with the opportunity to be part of a larger ensemble that rehearses more frequently to help you continue growing as a musician. You will also encounter new musical challenges that will enable you to develop stronger musical skills, personal responsibility and self-confidence, while striving for more advanced performing goals with your classmates.

Your middle school band will rehearse three times per cycle during the school day. Occasionally, your director may schedule extra rehearsals before or after school as needed, especially right before a performance. You may be required to perform in a parade, at a football game, and marching band competition in the fall, in a Winter Band Concert, and in the annual Spring Combined Middle School Instrumental Concert as scheduled on the school district calendar. For your convenience, all scheduled concerts are listed on the published School District calendar and on the School District's website. Your director will inform you and your parents about more specific information about dates, times, dress code, etc. well in advance of your performances, so you will be able to plan your personal schedule accordingly.

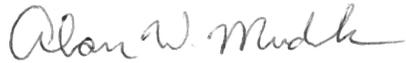
Parents/guardians: please note that your student will be required to attend and participate in all scheduled performances. Please be sure to support and discuss this level of commitment with your student to avoid any potential personal conflicts with these performances. Please understand that your student is not to be automatically excused from a performance or rehearsal during the week immediately preceding a performance, except for personal illness or personal emergency.

Hempfield's band program—especially through the unique and exciting challenges of the middle school years and its highly respected reputation on the high school level—provides students and parents with the potential to experience the joy and pride of self-fulfillment through the art of instrumental music. We respectfully ask parents/guardians to demonstrate your commitment to our middle school band musicians by supporting our instrumental music

program and by being a steady advocate for the value of music education in our school district. This handbook contains important information and departmental policies that guide the entire band program: please read this handbook carefully together with your student.

Through your understanding, patience, cooperation, advocacy, and support, we are confident that you and your student will enjoy an exemplary experience in the your middle school band and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan W. Mudrick".

Dr. Alan W. Mudrick  
Supervisor of Music Education

## **THE HEMPFIELD BAND PROGRAM**

After elementary school, Hempfield's middle school bands offer age-appropriate levels of instruction and performance that bridge the gap between elementary and high school experiences, including computer assisted instruction, experience with a combined middle school and high school performance at a football game, and with a combined middle school jazz band to complement the concert band experience. During these years students gain greater skills and ensemble experiences to enjoy more completely their participation in the band program.

On the high school level, students continue to develop and refine their individual and ensemble musicianship through more sophisticated repertoire linked with higher performance standards. The high school program also offers Marching Band, Jazz Ensemble, and other smaller ensembles as extracurricular activities that enhance the curricular Concert Band program. We strongly encourage all band students to take advantage of the many band performance opportunities available to them.

The band teachers at Hempfield strive to provide each student on every level with valuable musical instruction that will contribute to a well-rounded education. However, formal, individualized lesson instruction for all students concludes at the end of sixth grade. As you begin your middle school band experience, we strongly urge you to consider to seek private lessons on your instrument outside of school through our network of qualified private teachers in the community, each of whom are specialists on each family of instruments.

Your director is committed to having a balanced instrumentation of Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Saxophones, Bassoons, Cornets, Trumpets, French Horns, Trombones, Baritone Horns, Tubas, and Percussion instruments in each middle school to provide students with the most meaningful and satisfying band experience possible. Students who choose to play more popular instruments will be encouraged to consider switching to alternative possibilities when needed. When available, the school district will provide selected students with less common and more costly instruments (specifically, Oboes, Bassoons, French Horns, Baritone Horns, Tubas, and larger percussion instruments) to help balance each ensemble suitably. A nominal usage fee is charged.

### **GUIDELINES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND Grades 7 and 8**

1. Students in the band program must perform exclusively on traditional band instruments: Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Saxophones, Bassoons, Cornets, Trumpets, French Horns, Trombones, Baritone Horns, Tubas, and Percussion Instruments (snare, mallet, Timpani and auxiliary). The School District may provide and loan students with less common and larger instruments as needed and as available for an annual, nominal usage fee.
2. We strongly encourage all middle school band students to study with a qualified private music teacher outside of school, including during the summer months.

3. Students in the middle school band program earn report card grades based on their developing musicianship, personal responsibility, and personal behavior. Musicianship grades are based on accurate performance of scale passages, rudiments, playing assignments, and other music selections as assigned by the band director. Responsibility grades are based on attendance in, and being prepared with instruments and music for sectionals, rehearsals, and performances. Behavior grades are based on following directions, attentiveness, listening, and courtesy in sectionals, rehearsals and performances.
4. Students may compete for sectional seating order at the discretion of, and according to specific criteria established by the director. The director may also invite select students from both middle schools to represent their school at the annual Middle School County Band Festival sponsored by the Lancaster Lebanon Music Educators Association (LLMEA).
5. Band students in both middle schools will have the opportunity to perform in a combined middle school jazz band that operates in the spring semester.
6. All students playing woodwind instruments must use cane reeds. All students playing cornet and trumpet must own a straight mute. All students playing woodwind and brass instruments must own a lyre for marching band. All students playing percussion instruments must play all percussion parts and must own their own drumsticks.
7. We strongly encourage and sincerely hope that all band students will continue to be involved with band program through the middle school years and through high school until they graduate. We also welcome heartily any students into the band program if they should choose to decide to start at any grade level.

#### **MUSIC DEPARTMENT POLICY CONCERNING ALL BAND STUDENTS**

1. All students are required to play with their band at all scheduled performances. Students who choose not to participate in required performances, lacking a credible excuse as determined by the director, will be subject to disciplinary action, receive a lowered grade, and/or be removed from the band.
2. The director may establish a uniform dress code for students in each performance.
3. The director will provide parents/guardians with written and/or email notification concerning students' rehearsal and performance schedules, uniform requirements, behavioral expectations, and other related policies.
4. Students' personal instruments are not covered by school insurance. We encourage parents/guardians to record each instrument's brand name and serial number and consider

including it as part of the coverage on their homeowner's insurance.

5. Students who play school-owned instruments will be required to pay an annual, nominal usage fee. Students who play school-owned instruments and their parents/guardians are not responsible for normal service and maintenance repairs on these instruments; however, students and their parents/guardians are responsible for repairing damages due to the student's neglect, abuse, and/or carelessness. We strongly encourage students who play school-owned instruments to participate in all available band organizations.
6. Students are required to bring their instrument and music to all rehearsals and performances.
7. Students are responsible for making sure that their instrument is always in good playing condition.
8. All Percussionists in Grades 4 - 12 must learn to perform on snare drum and mallets. We will add other school-owned percussion instruments as students gain experience.
9. We do not encourage students who play a band instrument to also play a string instrument, largely due to lesson and rehearsal schedule conflicts.
10. All students and parents must examine, understand, and abide by the guidelines and policies contained in this handbook. Failure to comply with these guidelines and with each teacher's rehearsal rules and expectations may result in the student's removal from the band and/or administrative disciplinary action.

### **Important Research Data from NAFME: The National Association for Music Education**

The mission of The National Association for Music Education (NAFME) is to advance music education by encouraging the study and making of music by all.

◆ Success in society . . . is predicated on success in school. Any music teacher or parent of a music student can call to mind anecdotes about effectiveness of music study in helping children become better students. Skills learned through the discipline of music, these stories commonly point out, transfer to study skills, communication skills, and cognitive skills useful in every part of the curriculum. Another common variety of story emphasizes the way that the discipline of music study particularly through participation in ensembles helps students learn to work effectively in the school environment.

◆ Schools that have music programs have significantly higher graduation rates than do those without programs (90.2% as compared to 72.9%). In addition, those that rate their programs as "excellent" or "very good" have an even higher graduation rate (90.9%). Schools that have

music programs have significantly higher attendance rates than do those without programs (93.3% as compared to 84.9%).

◆ Students in high-quality school music programs score higher on standardized tests compared to students in schools with deficient music education programs, regardless of the socioeconomic level of the school or school district. Students in top-quality music programs scored 22% better in English and 20% better in math than students in deficient music programs. Students in top-quality instrumental programs scored 19% higher in English than students in schools without a music program. Students in top quality instrumental programs scored 17% higher in math than children in schools without a music program. Students at schools with excellent music programs had higher English and math test scores across the country than students in schools with low-quality music programs. Students in all regions with lower-quality instrumental programs scored higher in English and math than students who had no music at all.

◆ Students of the arts continue to outperform their non-arts peers on the SAT, according to reports by the College Entrance Examination Board. In 2006, 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. Scores for those with coursework in music appreciation were 62 points higher on the verbal and 41 points higher on the math portion.

◆ Schools that have higher levels of student participation in the fine arts receive higher academic ratings and have lower dropout rates. Average student enrollment in fine arts courses is 17 percent points higher in high schools that are rated “exemplary” than in those rated “low performing,” based on data from 951 high schools. Schools with the lowest dropout rates on average have 52% of their students enrolled in fine arts classes while schools with the highest dropout rates have only 42% of their students in fine arts courses.

◆ The Georgia Project found that school districts in Georgia that made staffing and funding of their arts programs a priority tended to have higher overall rates of student participation in the arts, and higher rates of arts student retention. Such districts tend to have lower dropout rates in grades 9–12 and thus keep their students in school longer and graduate more of them. They tended to graduate more of their students with college prep diplomas, percentages increasing with diversity of arts curriculum and percent of students participating. . . . these findings . . . indicate strong arts programs need not come at the expense of academic achievement. Rather, the arts are an important factor in achieving academic excellence.

◆ Music is an extremely rich kind of experience in the sense that it requires cognition, it requires emotion, it requires aesthetics, it develops performance skills and individual capabilities. These things have to be developed and all have to be synchronized and integrated so that, as students learn music, they stretch themselves mentally in a variety of ways. What we are finding is that the kind of mental stretching that takes place can be of value more generally, that is, to help children in learning other things. And these other things, in turn, can help them in the learning of music, so that there is a dialogue between the different kinds

of learning.

◆ Harvard Project Zero researcher Larry Scripp investigated how intensive music study could serve as the basis for academic excellence. His research . . . attempted to identify innovative ways to incorporate music into the curriculum and then measure its impact. Among his findings: notational skills in music, not musical performance, correlate positively with achievement in math and reading: The ability to process musical symbols and representations . . . is a leading predictor of music's association with learning in other subject areas. James Catterall (Prof. of Education, UCLA) stated, in response to Scripp, "Since our education systems ideally focus on academic and social development, the arts should legitimately be considered in the array of potential instructional strategies contributing to these goals."

◆ Children with music training had significantly better verbal memory than those without such training, and the longer the training, the better the verbal memory. Researchers studied 90 boys between the ages of 6 and 15. Half had musical training as members of their school's string orchestra program, plus lessons in playing classical music on Western instruments like the flute or violin for one to five years. The other 45 students had no training. Students with musical training recalled more words in a verbal memory test than did untrained students, and after a 30-minute delay, students with training also retained more words than the control group. In a follow-up one year later, students who continued training and beginners who had just started learning to play both showed improvement in verbal learning and retention.

◆ Playing a musical instrument significantly enhances the brainstem's sensitivity to speech sounds. This relates to encoding skills involved with music and language. Experience with music at a young age can "fine-tune" the brain's auditory system.

◆ Young children who take music lessons show different brain development and improved memory over the course of a year, compared to children who do not receive musical training. The brains of musically trained children respond to music in a different way to those of untrained children, and that the musical training improves their memory. After one year the musically trained children performed better in a memory test that is correlated with general intelligence skills such as literacy, verbal memory, Visio spatial processing, mathematics and IQ.

◆ To put it simply, we need to keep the arts in education because they instill in students the habits of mind that last a lifetime: critical analysis skills, the ability to deal with ambiguity and to solve problems, perseverance and a drive for excellence. Moreover, the creative skills children develop through the arts carry them toward new ideas, new experiences, and new challenges, not to mention personal satisfaction. This is the intrinsic value of the arts, and it cannot be overestimated.

◆ The arts are not just affective and expressive. They are also deeply cognitive. They develop the tools of thinking itself: careful observation of the world, mental representation of what is observed or imagined, abstraction from complexity, pattern recognition and development, symbolic and metaphoric representation, and qualitative judgment. We use these same

thinking tools in science, philosophy, math and history. The advantage of the arts is that they link cognitive growth to social and emotional development. Students care more deeply about what they study, they see the links between subjects and their lives, their thinking capacities grow, they work more diligently, and they learn from each other.

◆ An education rich in the arts and humanities develops skills that are increasingly crucial to the productivity and competitiveness of the nation's workforce: the ability to think creatively, communicate effectively and work collaboratively, and to deal with ambiguity and complexity. Just as important, exposure to the arts and humanities fosters cultural literacy: the ability to understand and appreciate other cultures, perspectives and traditions; to read and understand music and literature; to craft a letter or essay; to design a Web site; and to discern the "hidden persuaders" in a political or commercial advertisement. Arts and humanities education also develops skills necessary to participate in one of the fastest-growing, economically significant set of occupations and industries in the American economy—the arts, cultural and intellectual property section. The "creative workforce"—which includes traditional artist categories (dancers, musicians, painters, actors, photographers, authors), as well as individuals employed in advertising, architecture, fashion design, film, video, music, publishing and software development—is growing at a rate more than double that for the rest of the nation's workforces.