



Dear 5<sup>th</sup> grade student and parent(s),

As you know, when you move to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Lakeridge Junior High School you have the opportunity to learn to play a band instrument. There are many different instruments to choose from, and I'm writing to encourage every single student to give it a try!

We start students on one of four instruments: flute, clarinet, trumpet or trombone. This helps us teach to students more specifically, and give students the basic tools they need for when they decide to switch to another instrument (so many options!).

Beginning band meets as a class at Lakeridge Junior High. We split students into several classes, which are specific to their family or instrument. There are woodwind and brass classes, with up to 40 students in each class. This works extremely well for a focus on individual instruction as students are just learning to make sounds and read music, and the entire band (every beginning band class) performs together at all of our concerts. You do NOT need to know how to read music! We start from the beginning.

In band you get to give concerts, have fun Friday rehearsals, share a fun experience with friends, take your music on tour and so much more! There is so much to look forward to, including being a part of the excellent, well-known program at Lakeridge High School in the future. Having music performance as a part of your education creates interesting, well-rounded and engaged students. Don't miss out on the chance!

This is an extremely exciting time for the Lakeridge bands as new students are entering the program and developing their musical talents. We highly encourage you to give band a try. It is a great community of great people, and you'll make friends that will last a lifetime. Music is something that you can be a part of for the rest of your life! I encourage *everyone* to give it a try while they can before deciding it's not for them. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me!

Sincerely,

Corey Alston

Beginning Band Director

[alstonc@loswego.k12.or.us](mailto:alstonc@loswego.k12.or.us) 503-534-2319



[www.pacerband.weebly.com/beginning-band](http://www.pacerband.weebly.com/beginning-band)

# Beginning Band Program Information

1. ***When are classes held?*** Band is a class that your child will attend each day during the school year.
2. ***What about private lessons?*** Private lessons are not required, but are recommended and an asset to any student learning an instrument. Taking lessons over the summer can give students a head start as we begin the school year. A list of private teachers will be available at the spring parent meeting to be scheduled.
3. ***When and how do I choose my instrument?***  
We will hold Instrument Fitting nights on March 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> at Lakeridge Junior High, in order to make sure your student is on the one that he or she will be most successful on. Please sign up for a 20 minute fitting slot at the SignUp Genius link at [www.pacerband.weebly.com/beginning-band](http://www.pacerband.weebly.com/beginning-band). You can also watch videos of different instruments to get to know them a bit before the fitting.
4. ***What will we need to get started?***  
Don't worry about these things quite yet, but in the fall, the materials list will include the following:
  1. Quality instrument
  2. Band Binder (1 inch)
  3. Band method book
  4. Music Theory workbook
  5. Instrument care kit (cleaners, lubricants, etc.)
  6. Instrument-specific accessories needed for your child to play (reeds, neck strap, mallets, etc.)
  7. A music stand
  8. BERP (brass instruments only) – more information: [www.berp.com](http://www.berp.com)
5. ***We have a used instrument at home. Is it okay for our child to play it?*** Please make sure that any instrument you are considering is of good quality and in good repair. The early stages of playing an instrument are challenging, and an inferior instrument can cause extra frustration for your child. It is best to have your used instrument checked out by a certified music repair technician and any repairs completed prior to the start of classes
6. ***What should we know before purchasing an instrument?*** Most parents will choose to rent an instrument rather than purchase one right away. If you decide to purchase, you should know that there are a number of very low quality instruments that have been flooding the market in recent years. Many of these instruments are advertised on internet auction sites or found at discount stores or wholesale clubs. While these instruments appear to be an inexpensive alternative, they almost always become a source of frustration for students and their parents due to their poor construction and non-standard parts. These instruments often play very out of tune, have an inferior sound and generally cannot be repaired! We have, unfortunately, seen families purchase an instrument of this type, only to find in a few months that it is no longer usable. Before making a purchase, parents are strongly encouraged to contact Mr. Alston for information about recommended brands of instruments and trusted dealers. You should also check with the place of purchase to make sure they can provide quality repair for the instrument.
7. ***How much time should my child devote to practicing at home?*** Home practice is important to your child's success. Students who maintain a regular practice routine enjoy their music class more and demonstrate more consistent progress. An average of 15-20 minutes per day, five or six days per week, is recommended for the beginning student.
8. ***Can my child participate in instrumental music and sports/ after school clubs?*** YES! Because band classes meet during the school day, there is no conflict with sports or other after school activities. Our evening activities are limited to three or four times per year when we present our concerts. Dates for these events will be given to parents the first week of school. We find that our successful band students are also successful athletes, academic students, leaders and citizens outside the band room.

We hope that you find this information helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions you may have. We look forward to having your child in our Lakeridge Junior High Band program!