

Upper Arlington 5th Grade Families,

My name is Todd Fessler and I am one of the three fifth grade band directors in Upper Arlington, along with Jon Parker-Jones and Kolin Redman. We've received many questions about the start of fifth-grade band this year and we wanted to give an update on the recruiting process and beginning instruction. We are looking forward to providing this instruction for our fifth graders this year, and have provided a resource detailing all of the positive reasons to join the band program [here](#).

Students may choose from flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, trombone, baritone, and percussion (melodic and rhythmic). Considering all of the intricacies with instrument assembly, embouchure formation, and initial tone production, we feel the best methods to teach these skills is through face to face learning. Once fittings are completed we are asking students to sign up for beginning lesson times taught at the high school after school. These mini-lessons will be taught in small groups to ensure proper social distancing and to minimize aerosolization spread. The most up-to-date information on the spread of Covid-19 through band instruments can be found [here](#).

We have purchased additional personal protective equipment for our high school musicians and have been playing for over 3 months in-person with great success. We are holding beginning band fittings on February 9, 10, 11 in the evenings with a start date the week of March 1. PPE for 5th grade band students will be purchased and distributed at their first mini-lessons in February. After a solid foundation has been established in these first lessons, we feel that students will be able to successfully transition to online learning for beginning band. This schedule is currently being developed and will be released as soon as it's finalized. We are hoping to meet with students after their school days when in virtual learning.

Parents and students should first complete the following [google form](#) to help us gauge interest for fittings. After you've completed the google form, you'll sign up for a personal [Ten-Minute Fitting Session](#). It is important every student be fitted for an instrument because a fitting helps ensure each student will find success on their instrument, and some physical characteristics are better suited to specific instruments. In a fitting, students will have the opportunity to try 2-3 instruments available in 5th grade band. Fittings will take place outside of the high school band room. Before your child attends their band fitting, please help them find their instrument match and learn about the different options [here](#). It's important that students try different instruments in addition to what they think they will like best. They may be better suited for a different instrument.

To ensure your child gets off to a great start, we encourage careful consideration regarding instrument selection. A professional line instrument is certainly not necessary at this time however quality should play a major role when considering a purchase or rental. Even beginner or entry-level instruments can vary greatly in quality. Cheap instruments or those purchased online may be seriously inferior; please refer to the recommended brands on the second page of this letter. Students should have all instruments and supplies by February 20. The most up-to-date information on required supplies can be found [here](#).

Unless your family already has an instrument that has been inspected by one of the following retailers, we recommend renting an instrument from a reputable music retailer. For your convenience, we will have Rettig Music helping with fittings, however, there are many reliable sources for music, instruments, and supplies including the following local retailers:

Rettig Music
Dublin
614-792-2100
www.rettigmusic.com

Music and Arts
Hilliard
614-876-9004
www.musicarts.com

Buckeye Brass
Dublin
614-499-8626
www.Buckeyebrassandwinds.com

