



LETTER FROM MS. CABREL-WATSON

Dear 6th grade musicians,

Welcome to the West Hall Band program! Myself, Dr. Smith, and Ms. Schiller are so excited to make music with you. You may not realize it yet, but joining band may be one of the most impactful decisions you will make within your academic career. My band story was such a rollercoaster. I begged my mom to play something cool, like drums, saxophone, or french horn (when in reality, all instruments are super cool), but she insisted that I would only be able to carry around a small instrument like the flute (which is now my favorite instrument). From there, I continued to play in my middle school band that had only 5 people, with mediocre music, and very little learning. When I graduated to high school band, my whole experience changed. I saw instruments bigger than me that I had never seen before. I was playing music that was levels above my capabilities. I was up all night, sitting on my floor, desperately trying to learn my scales before being called on in class. As I pushed myself to catch up, I improved dramatically, started taking lessons, and made it into a collegiate flute studio. Throughout all of that, my teachers NEVER took the time to help me individually or listen to me. While I loved music and playing my instrument (enough to make it my livelihood), I was always disappointed that my own program never catered to me.

Through my lived experiences, my personal music education philosophy is “No Student Left Behind”. I want to ensure that every student in my band room has an equal opportunity for success in whatever fashion they see fit, whether that be musically, academically, socially, behaviorally, and/or personally. If your goal is to be a rockstar trumpet player, I want to provide you with enough resources and performance opportunities to achieve that goal. If your goal is to have fun with friends and play fun music, I want to hear your suggestions for field trips and popular songs we can play. If your goal is simply to meet new people, I want to host countless events and activities that allow you to expand your horizons. While I may be one of the newest teachers at West Hall, and may require a lot of patience and empathy, I plan on doing my absolute best to be the teacher that **works for you**.

There are going to be many moments when you first start your instrument that you will feel angry, frustrated, and challenged. You might wonder, “Is my neighbor picking this up faster than me?”, “Why won’t this note make any noise?”, “Is there something I am missing here?”, “I’m so out of breath and my face hurts”, or “Ms. Cabrel-Watson is driving me crazy!”. Or, maybe you are killing it in class, but there are some students that need to move at a slower pace. You could be thinking “Wow, my friend STILL needs help on that?”, or “That part is so easy, why are we still reviewing it?”. I urge you, please, **be kind to others and be kind to yourself**. When you were a baby, it probably took you 8-10 months to pull yourself up from the ground and start walking. But before that legendary moment, you were laying, then crawling, then waddling with a hand held. That moment comes at different times with different people. And once we’re walking, there are still many more challenges to face, like climbing, running, skipping, and jumping. But once we’re walking...goodness, it feels so, so good.

Band is a life lesson of **delayed gratification**. This process will take time. I promise to be understanding and committed if you promise to be diligent, forgiving, and present. I am looking forward to the best year ever at West Hall with you! Go Spartans!

Ms. Isabella Cabrel-Watson, Director of Bands West Hall Middle School

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