

September 15, 2020

Dear Parents of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students,

I'm excited to welcome your class into the Newton Band program! The Newton Band Department has a long tradition of excellence both in the community and state wide. Every child has the opportunity to be part of our family and belong to one of the best small school bands in the state, and I can't wait to start working with your child on a fun activity that will bring pride and excitement to your whole family!

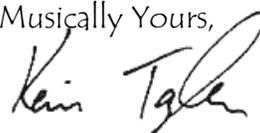
The benefits of joining the Newton band program are numerous: the development of positive self-confidence; strengthening muscle and hand coordination; students acquire a strong sense of responsibility, accountability, teamwork, and leadership skills. Did you know, studies repeatedly show that participation in band through grades 5-12 contributes to greater success in other classroom subjects—particularly math and reading—as well as greater chances of success outside of the classroom? Scientific evidence continues to uphold the arts as a vital component in the positive growth of every child. In a world where critical thinking skills are ever more important, the process of learning instrumental music develops that very part brain and brings forth the creativity and ability to think critically in all young people.

Over the coming weeks, your child will be coming to the band room to see and hear our beginning band instruments. They will learn the basics of how sounds are produced and also why various instruments are easier for some to play than others. Then all students will play-test each instrument\*\*—clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, and trombone—to determine where each student has the best opportunity to find their niche in the band program. (Aspiring percussionists will learn the basics of rhythm and note reading through one of these four, then switch at the end of 5<sup>th</sup> grade.) At the end of the week, students will be given an individualized results report and an info form will be sent home. Parents, **please sign and return the form to your child's 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher by Wednesday, October 7.**

Lastly, there will be an **information meeting for your child plus 1 parent/guardian(due to covid limits) in the Newton Fieldhouse on Monday, October 12, at 7:00pm.** Details of the music program will be explained, and we will have instruments on display from Rettig Music along with a representative to provide rental program information. If you already own the instrument your child will be playing, please bring it to the meeting for inspection and approval.

**This meeting is very important** and I urge you to make every effort to attend. It will enable you and I to meet and hear in detail about how to get your child started in this worthwhile activity. I look forward to meeting you on October 12 and am excited to start the future of the Newton Band!

Musically Yours,



Kevin J. Taylor

Band Director, Newton Local Schools

\*\*Due to Covid-19 restrictions, all students will be testing on their own individual mouthpieces provided by the band department. Mouthpieces will be sanitized after each class for 24-hours. Musicians wishing to play flute will be encouraged to start on saxophone and switch to flute toward the end of 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

# 10 Benefits of Being in the Newton Band

1. **It's a fun** activity worth the time. You don't have to have natural talent—just a desire to learn and be successful, and a commitment to excellence.
2. The skills gained through sequential band instruction, including discipline and the ability to analyze, solve problems, communicate and work cooperatively, are vital for success in the 21st century workplace. **Employers like band kids.**
3. It will make you a **better athlete**. Band develops those sections of the brain dedicated to hand-eye coordination and motor control—how your body moves. Not only that, but we train our lungs to be more efficient through the act of controlling the speed at which we breathe in and out (phrasing), a benefit that helps on the sports field as well!
4. As the instrumentalist constantly adjusts decisions on tempo, tone, style, rhythm, phrasing and feeling, he/she trains the brain to become **incredibly good at organizing** and conducting numerous activities at once.
5. **You will get to travel** with friends: King's Island in 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grades, Cedar Point and Florida in high school! It's as much fun as travelling with your family, but possibly times a million.
6. Research has shown that preschoolers who included 8 months of music lessons showed a **46% boost in spatial IQ** (the ability to perceive the visual world accurately to form mental images of physical objects, to recognize variations in objects). Compare this to non-music including preschoolers who showed just a 6% growth.
7. Researchers at Beth Israel Medical Center in Boston discover that trained **musicians have** significantly **larger brains** than those who do not have extensive training. The cerebellum, which contains about 70% of the brain's neurons, grows because of frequent practice of motor skills needed to play an instrument, similar to how a muscle responds to exercise.
8. Neuropsychologists find that because playing an instrument while learning to read music engages both hemispheres of the brain and involves multisensory processing, it encourages the neuroplasticity of the brain--the **brain's** ability to **absorb new information** and adapt.
9. **You will make friendships** and memories that will last the rest of your life. You may be 80 years old with an old band friend and saying, "Remember that time in band..."
10. **You will learn** that the best feeling **wins** are those that take a lot of work and dedication, commitment and loyalty, but there are few feelings as great as hearing your hard work paid off when the announcer at State Finals says, "Newton Band, your rating is...Superior!"