

September 8, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and 7/8 Band Students,

It is great to have students returning to the building, even though we are not back to a so-called normal routine by any means! You are going to notice many changes this year, one of which, is I will not be there in person, welcoming you all back to the classroom.

It has been a whirlwind since the end of February for me, and as for all of you once we shut down in March. It was disappointing having to cancel so many performances, events and activities last year in the music department; while not being able to celebrate and wish our senior musicians well, as they left our little family.

This year, Mr. Fancher and I are going to try to get back to as much normalcy as we possibly can, and we will work through all of this together! Yes, you will notice that Mr. Fancher will be your “in school” teacher and will be working with you during your 7<sup>th</sup> period rehearsals on band music the days you are physically in the building. I will be working with you on the days you are learning from home via the platform of Teams. We will no longer be zooming with students like we did during the shutdown last year. All class materials, meetings and individual instrumental lessons will be found/taking place on Teams and will be under my guidance.

When you come back next week, you will notice you are all following a specific “track.”

Track A Students: in school learning on Mondays & **Thursdays**, virtual learning on Tuesdays & **Fridays**

Track B Students: in school learning on Tuesdays & **Fridays**, virtual learning on Mondays & **Thursdays**

Track C Students: in school learning Mondays, Tuesdays, **Thursdays & Fridays**

Track D Students: Remote learning from home Mondays, Tuesdays, **Thursdays & Fridays**

**\*Underlined/bolded days are the days you have 7/8 Band in school or virtually**

You will also notice that your schedule states that 7/8 Band meets on C/D Days, which means you will have band during 7<sup>th</sup> period on Thursdays and Fridays and on A/B days, you will go to your other scheduled class during 7<sup>th</sup> period. These day letters **will not** rotate this year. Mondays are always A Days, Tuesdays are always B Days, Thursdays are always C Days and Fridays are always D Days. I hope that clears up any confusion you may have.

On **Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup>** Mr. Fancher will be meeting with Track A & C students in the band room during 7<sup>th</sup> period (starting at 12:29PM). I will be working with Track B & D students through a Teams meeting starting at 12:29PM. On **Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup>** Mr. Fancher will be meeting with Track B & C students in the band room during 7<sup>th</sup> period. I will be working with Track A & D students through a Teams meeting starting at 12:29PM.

I know you are all excited about getting back to playing those instruments in a group setting!! You will not need your instruments until at least the second week of school starting Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup> (track A & C students) and Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup> (Track B & C). It is important on the days you are virtually learning with me, to join the Teams meetings, since I will be taking attendance and working with you during class time.

There will be a lot more information coming, as we continue to prepare for the start of the school year. I am still working on an individual lesson schedules that are going to work best with your schedules. I will also be posting class information to Teams and my school website for your reference. I ask that you also regularly check your school email, so I can keep in communication with you.

I do need to tie up some loose ends from last school year. If you were in Pep Band last year, and still

have a flipbook and or any parts, such as the lyres or music, please make sure you turn those into Mr. Fancher so he can store those away properly for me.

I am sure you all have many questions about how the year is going to run. You will notice that the district calendar does have musical performances and events scheduled throughout the school year. Yes, we planned to come back to a normal school year, however, that is not the case for at least these first 10 weeks of school. Until further notice, these performances, events and extracurricular activities are currently postponed. We have however, started to brainstorm how we can still work towards virtual performances for our band and chorus students. More information to come...thank you for your patience and understanding.

I wish I could have done this in person. Actually I wish I could have told you all my exciting news like I had planned, at our March concert, after the HS Band performed a piece called "Seal Lullaby." Once that concert got cancelled, I decided to wait until I would get to see you all in person. Well, that won't be the case either. Because of my condition and some health issues I have been dealing with, my doctors are not allowing me to come back to work for the time being but are allowing me to work from home. With that being said, my husband Alan and I are happy to announce that we are expecting our first baby, due on our first wedding anniversary, October 11, 2020.

Sweet Pea, as we have been calling our little buddle of joy since we found out I was pregnant back in February, is a little camera shy, or is hungry...you decide! We don't know what we are having yet but are super excited for our new adventure to begin!



I miss you all so much and can't wait to "see" you! For you 7<sup>th</sup> graders and new students to the district, I am sorry I am not going to be meeting you in person for some time. I know it is going to be an unusual year, and not like you had hoped or planned for, but we will all get through this together. Be patient and respectful, not only Mr. Fancher, who is taking on a tremendous workload to start the school year, but also to your classmates. Each and everyone of you are in different situation, so take care of each other and remember, that if we want any kind of normalcy back, we need to be patient, and understanding of everybody's comfort level while following the rules put into place by the administration for our safety. If you should have any questions, please contact me, via email at [mknowles@alcsny.org](mailto:mknowles@alcsny.org).

We aren't going to hit the ground running like we have in past years, and that's okay! There are many new policies and technologies that we are all learning and using for the first time, so there will many be hiccups along the way. We will get through it together!

Musically Yours,

Melanie H. Knowles  
7/8 Grade and HS Instrumental Music Allegany-Limestone CSD