

North Scott High School Bands

June 2009

Dear Band Parents and North Scott High School Band Members:

Please take a few minutes to read this letter. We are providing you with this valuable information at the beginning of the summer to help you plan things such as summer camps and vacations. We hope that it will answer many questions and explain a few matters that we feel are important.

WE INVITE ALL PARENTS, especially the parents of incoming 9th graders or new students, to join us for an informational meeting on Monday evening August 3 at 7:00 p.m. The North Scott Bands are a very active group, with many activities that may be new to you and your student. We would like to give you some important information and answer any questions you may have about your child's participation in the North Scott Bands. We will be going over our handbook, rules and expectations, and doing a demonstration of our webpage features at that time. We will also discuss fund-raising opportunities for future band trips. We highly encourage parents to attend this meeting. Please feel free to complete the enclosed forms and bring them to this meeting. We must have both forms returned by the beginning of the school year.

We were very pleased with the sixth North Scott Band Showcase and Spring Jazz Concert and the participation in the Essentially Ellington Festival in New York City. We feel these events allowed parents and students to see the results of the hard work put in by our many instrumental music students at all levels. The guest artist appearance is a tremendous opportunity for our students to learn from the masters and experience the world of professional music. There is much to be proud of in the North Scott Music Department.

Marching Band Camp

Drum Line (All percussion and double reed players who do not play another instrument) will begin on Monday, July 27, from 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m.

All Incoming Freshman will have their first marching band rehearsal on Monday, August 3, at 8:00 a.m. Bring your instruments!

All Juniors and Seniors will have their first marching band rehearsal on Tuesday, August 4, 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Bring your instruments!

Full Marching Band (9-12) will begin on Wednesday, August 5, 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. All Marching Band Camp activities will wrap up on Thursday, August 6. We plan a fun trip to Great America on Friday, August 7th for those students who have taken part in all marching camp activities.

We will offer lessons to all high school band members beginning on Monday, July 20. All students have been given an opportunity in the spring to sign up for two half-hour long lessons. This is a great way to get into the swing of things before school starts, get started on the All State audition process, and earn extra points toward band letters. **NEW THIS YEAR...**students may earn one lesson credit for first quarter by attending both of the available summer lessons they have signed up for. If your son or daughter did not sign up at school for these lessons, and is interested, please call us at school anytime after the 20 of July to schedule them. The band office phone number is 285-3316.

All State Audition materials will be available on the IHSMA web page (www.ihisma.org) about August 1st. The summer lessons are a great place to get started on the All State etudes and start to develop the good practice habits needed to be successful in instrumental music.

THE NORTH SCOTT BAND WEB PAGE is designed to keep students and parents informed about the program, as well as share with others information about our program. The web address is: **www.nsband.com** or it may be accessed through the North Scott Schools web page. This letter and other downloadable information may be found under the "Communications" heading on the web page. Our grading policies and other information are available under the "Handbook" heading on the main web page. We also send out a weekly e-mail newsletter to parents, listing all upcoming activities and relaying other pertinent information.

EMAIL LIST: If you have an email address and would like to receive weekly emails (very informative and great reminders for upcoming events/announcements), please email us at "mike.mcmann@north-scott.k12.ia.us" and type "band email list" in the subject. Again, this is another efficient way to keep up with what is happening throughout the year. We have received VERY positive feedback from those on the mailing list in past years. (Almost 95% of the parents were on last year's list). If you are already on our list and have been receiving emails from us, there is no need to send us your address (obviously!)

THE 2009-2010 BAND CALENDAR IS READY!! We have created a full-functioning band calendar for the upcoming school year. On our webpage (www.nsband.com), you can click on "full calendar" to view it in list view (you can also download printable list-views). On the full calendar page, you may scroll down the calendar and click on any words in red or blue to learn more about the event. The new, **full color** band calendar may be downloaded all together, or you may download each month- whichever you prefer. We just wanted to let everyone know what would be happening throughout next year to ease the planning of your own schedules! Please find a b/w sample (August) of the band calendar enclosed with this letter.

BAND HANDBOOK This document states and explains all of our policies, procedures, schedules, etc. for the North Scott Band Department. You may view and/or download it from our webpage (www.nsband.com, click on "handbook" at the top). We ask that all students and parents read it and fill out the verification form. If you are unable to view or download it from the computer, please call us (285-3317), and we will send one out to you immediately.

FORMS Included in this letter are two mandatory forms that the students and parents must sign and return to the directors at the beginning of the school year. The first form refers to the reading and understanding of the band handbook, and includes uniform sizing. **The second form is our medical form. We have always completed one of these forms for any trips and are asking that all students and parents complete the form at the beginning of each year so that we can be prepared for all trips away**

from North Scott.

UNIFORMS All band members must purchase black socks and plain black shoes to complete the marching band uniform. Every student in the band will be fitted with one of our BRAND NEW marching band uniforms. Marching band uniforms, concert dresses and concert tuxedos will be kept at school. We furnish coat, trousers, gloves, bow ties and cummerbunds, and dresses. Each student must supply his own **black socks and black shoes (PLAIN BLACK, NO COLORED TRIM)**. Men will need a **white tuxedo shirt for the concert season. You may contact any tuxedo rental store. Skeffington's in Northpark Mall has always given a special discount on the tux shirt if you mention the North Scott Band when shopping there.** Please also note that we do not wear the concert uniforms for the Graduation ceremony in the spring. For this warmer weather performance, we ask the students to wear "nice" clothes of a lighter nature. This outfit should **not** include jeans or jean skirts, shorts, t - shirts, flip-flops, gym shoes, etc. We want the students to look nice for their audience.

PERFORMANCES - You will also find enclosed a list of all band performances for the entire year. These could change because of weather or community conflicts, but it is not likely. **Attendance at these performances by all members is strictly required, except for serious illness or a death in the family. We must be notified if a student is sick, or otherwise unable to attend a performance, by a phone call BEFORE the performance.** Unless it is an immediate emergency, WE NEED TO BE NOTIFIED AT LEAST TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE. An unexcused absence will result in an "F" for that performance. For the band program to be successful we must have every student in attendance. We have had a few questions about the admittance fee charged at our concerts. All fund raising profits for the Dining Tour and any other fund-raisers go directly to individual students' trip accounts. Rather than have another fundraiser for operating costs of our program, we charge a minimal fee for our concerts.

INSTRUMENT RENTAL - There is a \$40.00 per year rental fee if your child is using a school owned wind or percussion instrument. This minimal fee covers only a **portion** of the yearly maintenance performed on these instruments. Our inventory is quite old and many of these instruments need the maintenance to keep them in good working condition. **This fee should be paid by August 13, the first day of school. Send the check to us and make it out to: North Scott High School Band.**

EVALUATION - Successful students practice regularly and attend all lessons. Lessons account for approximately 50% of the quarter grade. These private lessons come out of other regular classes. Students sign up for lessons on the lesson schedule one week in advance of the lesson, after checking with the classroom teacher regarding tests or any other potential conflict. We will then send the schedule for the week to teachers on each Monday morning. Students are responsible for 5 lessons during each quarter, one of which may be an approved concert attendance verified with a program, brief description and evaluation of the concert, and ticket stub. (FIRST QUARTER WE WILL REQUIRE ONLY 4 LESSONS, INCLUDING THE AUDITIONS, BUT NO CONCERT WRITE-UPS WILL BE ACCEPTED.) Only 1 lesson per week will be allowed. Only 2 lessons per quarter out of the same class will be allowed. **Chair placement audition time (two lessons beginning in the middle of marching band season) will be scheduled into two 8-day cycles. These will be required lessons.** You will sign up for the first cycle and we will schedule you for the second cycle. This way all students will have the same number of days to prepare etudes. Students studying privately outside of school on their primary band instrument are required to schedule 3 lessons with us each quarter and turn in a voucher for the other 2 lessons signed by your lesson teacher indicating assignment and the amount of work completed. **FRESHMEN** must sign up for their first lesson within the first 2 weeks of the year for book assignments. Students not participating in marching band (Varsity football players) will be graded 100% on their lessons and

computer assignments. Lesson material is considered homework. Regular practice and lesson attendance are necessary for your student's musical development as well as his or her academic success.

What we expect of the students:

Responsibility. The students are responsible for signing up for individual lessons on their own each week. It should be understood that signing up for a lesson means they have properly prepared the assigned materials and are ready to play them for a grade. With the large number of students involved, each lesson slot is valuable, and therefore should be utilized in a productive manner. The students are also expected to understand their responsibility to the large ensemble. This includes attendance at ALL required performances. If they cannot attend, they are to notify us at least TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE of their absence, so we may have time to make adjustments. This is crucial – any last-minute absences will be a detriment to the entire ensemble. It is also their (and the parents') responsibility to communicate any other pertinent issues with us.

Effort. We do not have a set standard for all 150 band students. The individual lessons allow us to cater to each student and evaluate them based on their potential and work ethic. As long as they are making an effort, (practicing regularly, attending lessons prepared, etc) they will be fine.

Attitude. The success of this program depends greatly on the attitude of the students involved. It takes only one individual to negatively impact an entire ensemble. The students have CHOSEN to be a part of this ensemble, and we expect them to maintain a positive attitude. Any concerns on the students' and parents' behalf should be communicated to the directors. We will be more than happy to answer any questions and work together to resolve the situation.

What you can expect of the directors:

- As teachers, it is our responsibility to provide an educational, well-rounded, worthwhile musical experience for all students.
- We also believe that band should be FUN! However, the true enjoyment of band comes from working hard and knowing that you are contributing positively to the ensemble. It comes from setting a goal and achieving it. We want all students to experience this success and how rewarding this program can be.
- We RESPECT each individual that enters the program. We care about their TRUE self-esteem. This means, however, that we will not hand out empty compliments to all students involved. High self-esteem does not just come from someone telling them "Great Job". They know whether or not that is actually the case. It would be an insult to their intelligence to praise them for work they know is not to their personal standard. And when we pay them a compliment (which we often do), they know we MEAN IT. To us, that is TRULY helping their self-esteem, because our compliments will be solidified in their own feelings.
- Our doors are always open to students and parents- sometimes all it takes is a little communication to resolve issues. As much as we would like to, we do not always have time to seek out certain individuals or parents of students who are having problems. Please call us or attend parent-teacher conferences. (Also, keep in mind we have 150 students in the program)
- We start off talking to the general population when addressing issues in rehearsal- even if it is one individual causing it. We do not single out students until every other option has been exhausted. In this case, the intent is not to humiliate, but rather to use this as a last resort.

-EVERYONE is given a chance. We teach without bias and make sure every student gets exactly what he or she has earned.

-ULTIMATELY, we want them to be successful when they leave us. Sure, keeping up with music in some capacity after high school would be nice, but we do not *expect* it. We do want to make sure that they have the tools needed to be able to do whatever they want when they graduate. This includes responsibility, a strong work ethic, individual and group success, belonging, roles within a larger group, commitment to those roles, the ability to appreciate and understand art, and the experience of achieving their goals and being successful.

*One of the greatest thrills for us is to hear from a former student that they are happy and successful and realizing their dreams!

MUSIC BOOSTERS - We would also like to invite you to become an active member of the Music Boosters. This group purchases our uniforms and robes, gives music camp scholarships, assists with band and choir trips, awards college scholarships, and sponsors the Senior Music Salute. The Music Booster Board will be contacting you to help work at the concession stand and for their annual pizza sale. Their first meeting of the school year will be August 17, at 7:00 p.m. in the high school band room.

We would certainly like to see all of you at all of our performances for the year. Our band program has a statewide reputation for excellence, having performed at the Iowa Bandmasters Association State Convention seven times and having earned numerous division I ratings at Large Group Festival. The jazz program is one of the most active in the eastern Iowa, western Illinois area, offering many opportunities to learn from professional clinicians and performers. Jazz 1 has been selected twice to perform at the Iowa Bandmasters Conference, and last year was one of 15 bands from the entire United States selected to participate in the Essentially Ellington Festival in New York City in May. **The students appreciate when their hard work is rewarded with your attendance at their performances.** Additionally, it's a great way to reflect our community pride and spirit for our music groups.

We hope you have found this informative and helpful. If you have any questions, please call us at the high school. The band office phone number is 285-3316. Also, remember to log on to www.nsband.com for more information. If any problems ever arise, please feel free to call and make an appointment to see us.

Sincerely,

Bill Kessinger
Instrumental Music Director

Mike McMann
Instrumental Music Director

North Scott High School Instrumental Music

This form MUST be returned with any payments by Thursday, August 13, the first day of school.

I have read and understand the contents of the Summer Band Letter and will be responsible for the information contained in the letter.

Student signature (Date)

Parent (guardian) signature (Date)

Rental Fee (\$40.00) for: School owned instruments and percussion_____

**LANCER MARCHING BAND UNIFORM SIZE
(Only incoming Freshmen and new students this year)**

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

_____ I need a new uniform. Sizes are indicated below:

Height: _____

Weight: _____

Jacket Size: (34R, etc.) _____

Trouser Size (Waist & Inseam) _____X_____

