

Greetings Prospective and Returning band member families!

Mr. Michewicz and Mr LaPrise are getting ready to start the 2022/23 band year, and by all accounts it is shaping up to be our best year ever.

Band Classes will be held in the mornings at West Catholic High School. **6th – 8th grade students** (one year or more experience) will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:15 to 8:05, starting August 30.

5th Grade (Beginners) will meet on Wednesdays and Fridays from 7:15 to 8:05. beginning on Wednesday September 15th

On every band day rehearsal, all students will be bussed to their respective schools directly after.

To get the ball rolling, Mr. Michewicz and Mr. LaPrise will be visiting St. Anthony, Holy Trinity, and Holy Spirit during school hours (TBD) the weeks of August 29th and September 6th to present and demonstrate the exciting aspects of being a part of the Catholic Schools band program! This is mostly for 5th grade, but and 6-8th grade questions are of course welcome! We will cover all band instruments and answer any questions students may have. Parent Information will be sent home immediately after these meetings. This will include the all the very easy ways to obtain a beginning band instrument for your child! It is soo easy!! (This info is also located below)

We will have an instrument fitting night where students can try out any instruments with professionals on site, September 8th, at West Catholic High School (in the MAK) from 6 – 8 pm. West Michigan Band instruments, will be on sight for any purchase, rent to own needs / information. If you are unable to make this fitting, now worries simply contact Mr. Michewicz and make an appointment with him that is convenient for you. We can meet at West Michigan Band most any time and try any and all instruments to your hearts content. We just want a good fit as to optimize success for your student! (Mr. M's text/call: **616-450-9390 anytime!**)

Below are the start dates, and some frequently asked questions. Again, feel free to contact Mr. Michewicz any time with any questions: michaelmichewicz@grwestcatholic.org, or text / call **616 – 450 – 9390**.

**Band starting dates
(at West Catholic High School)**

6 – 8th grade band	Tuesday August 30	7:15 – 8:05
5th grade beginners	Wednesday, September 17th.	7:15 – 8:05

Frequently Ask Questions

- 1.) **When will the band students meet?** Beginners will meet on Wednesdays and Fridays from 7:15 to 8:05. 6-8th (students who have played for one year or more). Will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:15 to 8:05
- 2.) **When do they start?** 6-8th grand band students will start meeting the week of August 30th. (Please come on your grade level days.)
5th Grade Band will start after the afore mentioned fitting times on Wednesday September 17.
- 3.) **How does transportation to West Catholic work?** Parents can drop their students off at West Catholic at 7:05 am and their bus will leave West at 8:10 am and bring them to their parish school. However, if you, as their parents, are more comfortable driving them both ways, you are certainly able to do that. Please just park for pick up on the West side of the school building near the football stadium.
- 4.) **What if I cannot make the trek to West 2 to 4 times a week?** I encourage parents to try. Over the years, many parents have gotten together and established a carpool. Over the years many parents have found that dropping their students off at 7:10 is actually more convenient for their work schedule.
- 5.) **How much does it cost?** The cost is \$230 per student for the year for all students. This helps cover buses, music, music equipment, instruction (stands, percussion equipment, repairs etc). **This payment will be collected thru your parish school and is due by Nov.2, 2022.** If you have a beginner, there is also the cost of obtaining an instrument and instructional book to consider.
- 6.) **What if my family is going through a hardship and we just cannot afford band even though we see the merit in it for our child?** I do not want cost to be the determining factor in denying your son/daughter this wonderful opportunity. You may contact me or your school principal in confidence, and we will do all we can to provide the help needed.
- 7.) **How will 5th grade beginning students be able to choose an instrument?**
Students need to be fitted for instruments so they will have the chance to have the most success. We are scheduling an evening (September 8 (from 6 -8) where students can come during this time to West Catholic (in the MAK) and try instruments with professionals in a safe manner. Please have them start thinking about what they would want to start on now. Considering two different

possibilities is recommended. You can have your child check them out via youtube. We start on Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone and Bells (Percussion). Drums is not drum set per se, but it is part of percussion (mallet instruments, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, timpani's, triangle etc.). Bells is where we start. All of the instruments can lead to secondary instruments that we have at the school like tenor sax, piccolo, bass clarinet, or tuba for examples.

- 8.) **How do I go about getting an instrument?** There are three ways in which to do so. You can rent one on a rent to own plan offered thru West Michigan Band Instruments or other music stores (very easy and affordable). You can buy a new or used one outright from West Michigan Band Instruments or others. Or you may find a used one elsewhere at a good price. If you do find a used one, I recommend that you get it checked out first and thoroughly cleaned by a professional or a reputable music store (Mr. Michewicz can also be of service here if you wish). You will want to make sure that you are aware of any possible repairs that are needed. Also, beware of Sam's Club, Wal-Mart, or internet instruments; often times these are not worth the materials it took to build them. Reputable names are: Yamaha, Bach, Selmer, Bundy, Gemeinhardt, King, Vito, Conn, Antigua and others. If you are unsure, call West Michigan Band Instruments and ask them if they carry the brand in question. They will carry all the major band manufacturers and would be able to tell you if someone is trying to sell you a dud.
- 9.) **What books do they need?** If they are just beginning, they will need The Essential Elements Class book for their instrument. West Michigan provides this book and a stand free with their Rent to Own deal.
- 10.) **Do I have to do business with West Michigan Band Instruments?** Certainly not. You can go to any music store you choose. I do not in any way work for them. I simply recommend them because they have done a good job in dealing with our Catholic Schools over the years. West Michigan Band Instruments is located on the NW corner of Plainfield and 4 mile.
- 11.) **Do the band students have concerts?** Yes, we do at least two a year combining with other schools including West Catholic.
- 12.) **Are there after school rehearsals?** No
- 13.) **How many schools are involved in combination?** Four. They are in no particular order: Holy Spirit, Saint Anthony's, Assumption and Holy Trinity. They, along with West Catholic, Saint Patrick's and All Saints Academy, are the schools currently involved in our West Catholic band program. It should be noted that All Saints and St. Patrick's are involved with both West Catholic and Catholic Central.
- 14.) **As a band student, will my child have other opportunities?** Yes. There is a Middle School Jazz band in which students can audition. We have several students playing in Mass at their own parishes. We have some students participating in the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Solo and Ensemble Festival. We have a summer band program. We have taken bands on the road. We have even had students writing their own pieces. As opportunities arise, we

try to offer them to our students. Opportunities will increase after the decreasing trends of Covid 19.

- 15.) **What if my child wants to try band but is not sure whether they would like it?** West Michigan Instruments, as well as others, often offer a four-month or so trial period for returns. That should get your child through the first concert. By then, you and your child should know. However, **the cost to participate will still be due by Nov. 2nd**. I recommend that you encourage your child to stay with it for the year; it gets better with time and often kids will not see that at first. Gratification is not instant but definitely comes with time and some effort put in by them.
- 16.) **What if my child is an athlete?** So was I and so is nearly 95% of our High School Band students. They all came up through the ranks learning that reasonable conflicts can be resolved. Many of my high school students end up being leaders on their teams. Band naturally shapes and fosters future leaders. Most parents want students to be well rounded as they one day leave Grade School; this is one more chance to help make that happen.
- 17.) **Why is band important?** First, music is one of the most splendid gifts God has ever given us; to participate in that gift is an honor. Second, students will gain both personal intrinsic growth and a stronger ability to interact with others. Third, there is overwhelming and undisputed evidence to support improvement in core academics through participation in band. High school students observed around the country participating in organized music programs finished an average of forty points higher on the Math portion of the SAT test and 30 points higher on the English. Music is also recognized as helping to make easy the learning of another language IE Spanish, French, Latin or Chinese. It even helps to produce better readers and writers. I strongly encourage your own research.
- 18.) **If I have any questions whom do I call or email?** Call / Email Darren LaPrise at West Catholic—616-233-5931 or darrenlaprise@grwestcatholic.org and or Mr. Michael Michewicz: michaelmichewicz@grwestcatholic.org, or text / call 616 – 450 – 9390.